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THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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Amir arrives in Istanbul to attend Humanitarian Summit



Erdogan ally becomes PM, vows stronger presidency



Gaza 'Spiderboy' seeks to storm Guinness world records



21 titles in seven years isn't bad, says Guardiola



## EDUCATION MINISTER HALTS PRIVATE SCHOOL FEE HIKES

GROUPS SLAM 'CONSPIRACY' AGAINST JUDICIARY



Min 27°  
Max 41°  
High Tide 01:27 & 12:08  
Low Tide 06:42 & 19:38



150 FILS  
NO: 16882  
40 PAGES

## YEMEN GOVT TO END PEACE TALKS BOYCOTT

**DOHA:** Fragile peace talks aimed at ending fighting in Yemen are making progress as a truce largely holds, the UN envoy for the country asserted yesterday after the impoverished Arab nation's government agreed to return to the negotiating table. The Yemeni government last week announced it was suspending talks being held in Kuwait with the Houthi rebels, accusing them of refusing to accept the legitimacy of the country's internationally recognized president.

During a Saturday meeting in the Qatari capital, Doha, with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the emir of Qatar, Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi agreed to send the government delegation back to the talks, according to a UN statement. Foreign Minister Abdulmalek Al-Mikhlafi said on Twitter that the government had agreed to give the peace talks a "last chance". "We have fixed all the references. This is a first step on the path for a real peace that leads to implementing Resolution 2216 beginning with withdrawals, surrender of weapons and the restoration of state institutions," he said.

Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, a heavy-weight inside the rebel movement, renewed his rejection of Hadi's legitimacy and called the talks a "waste of time". A truce between the warring parties that began April 10 has largely held despite violations by both sides. Speaking at the Doha Forum conference yesterday, UN envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed said that the drop in violence

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SANAA: Yemenis take part in celebrations marking the 26th anniversary of Yemen's 1990 reunification in the capital yesterday. — AFP

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Education Badr Al-Essa issued a ministerial decree yesterday aimed at halting private school fee hikes. According to the decree, private schools should abide by the decision or face consequences. Schools violating the decree will receive a warning letter, which will be followed by suspension if the educational facility continues with the violation, said the decree. It stressed that any additional expenses and charges taken unlawfully by the violating schools should be returned in accordance with the new decision.

Earlier this year, the National Assembly approved a recommendation stipulating that all fee increases by private schools must be suspended immediately until a parliamentary committee reviews the issue with the minister of education. The recommendation was passed following strong criticism by MPs against a number of private foreign schools that unilaterally raised their fees before obtaining a permit from the ministry. Essa had said the government accepted the recommendation, adding that the ministry had formed a committee to study the issue of fees at private schools.

Separately, liberal political groups yesterday strongly criticized what they called an attempt by the government to reduce the independence of the Kuwaiti judiciary in a new draft law under preparation.



Badr Al-Essa

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## CALL TO RAISE MINIMUM WAGE FOR DEPENDENT VISA TO KD 450

STUDY SEEKS TO DOUBLE DAILY FINE FOR ABSCONDERS

### News

in brief

#### Ramadan begins June 6

**KUWAIT:** The holy month of Ramadan will begin on Monday, June 6, meteorologist Adel Al-Saadoun told KUNA yesterday. The lunar calendar is the reference Muslims use for marking religious occasions and seasons. The holy month of Ramadan is the ninth month, and is a month of fasting from sunrise till sunset during which additional prayers and acts of worship are observed. The start of Ramadan is not announced according to astronomical calculations alone, but the testimony of sighting the crescent by two men or a man and two women is required.

#### Tow truck hotline

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry yesterday announced a special hotline 22277722 to call a tow truck in the event of traffic accidents or breakdowns on highways and roads for a fixed fee to any area of Kuwait.

**KUWAIT:** The government is mulling increasing the minimum wage for expatriates to be eligible to issue dependent visas for their family members, as the state scrambles to find a solution for its demographic imbalance problem. The current law stipulates that a foreigner must earn a minimum KD 250 a month to apply to sponsor his wife and children, but a recent study suggests increasing the amount to KD 450, which excludes a majority of expatriates working in Kuwait.

The average salary of expatriates in the private sector stands at KD 251 a month, according to statistics released earlier this year by the Labor Market Information System (LMIS), which is affiliated to the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB). Meanwhile, nearly 94 percent of expat workers in general earn less than KD 600 a month. Almost 95 percent of employees in the private sector are foreigners, and it currently employs nearly 75 percent of expatriate workers in Kuwait (not including domestic helpers, who make up 17 percent of expatriate workers).

The study also calls for increasing the

finer paid by expats facing absconding charges from KD 2 a day to KD 4, while increasing the maximum amount from KD 600 to KD 1,000. It also suggests increasing visa fees paid to immigration authorities and limiting the ratio of every expatriate community in Kuwait to 20 percent compared to Kuwaitis' population, which if applied, would affect large communities in Kuwait such as the Indian and Egyptian communities.

In parallel, the study makes several suggestions to help encourage Kuwaiti manpower to work in the private sector, at a time when almost 87 percent of Kuwait's national labor force works in the public sector. These suggestions include paying child allowances to female workers in the public sector similar to their male counterparts, regulating work-from-home activities, organizing labor training sessions for Kuwaitis in cooperation with co-operative societies and schools and allocating sites inside co-op societies where young Kuwaiti women can 'showcase their culinary talents'.

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CANNES: British director Ken Loach celebrates onstage after being awarded with the Palme d'Or for the film "I, Daniel Blake" during the closing ceremony of the 69th Cannes Film Festival yesterday. — AFP

## LOACH WINS CANNES GOLD WITH TALE OF AUSTERITY

**CANNES, France:** British director Ken Loach won the Palme d'Or top prize at Cannes yesterday for the second time in a decade with his moving drama "I, Daniel Blake" about the shame of poverty in austerity-hit Europe. The award marked a major upset at the world's top film festival in favor of the leftwing director, who turns 80 this year and is known for shining a light on the downtrodden. He beat out runaway favorites including the rapturously received German comedy "Toni Erdmann" by Maren Ade, one of three women directors in competition, and US indie legend Jim Jarmusch's "Paterson" starring Adam Driver as a poetry-writing bus driver. Both left empty-handed.

Loach now joins an elite club of two-time victors at the French Riviera festival including Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Emir Kusturica. "We must give a message of hope - we must say another world is possible," Loach said as he accepted the prize. The runner-up Grand Jury prize went to Canadian wunderkind director Xavier Dolan, 27, for his hot-tempered family drama "It's Only the End of the World" featuring a cast of A-list French stars which had been widely panned by critics. Britain also claimed the third-place Jury prize, for Andrea Arnold's high-energy "American Honey" starring Shia LaBeouf in a tale of disadvantaged US youths selling magazines door-to-door.

The best director prize was shared by

Romania's Cristian Mungiu for his drama "Graduation" about the moral rot of corruption in a post-communist society, and France's Olivier Assayas for his supernatural thriller "Personal Shopper" with Hollywood phenomenon Kristen Stewart. Philippine star Jaelyn Jose won best actress for her mesmerizing performance in Brillante Mendoza's "Ma' Rosa" as a mother selling drugs to survive who falls prey to corrupt police.

Iran's Shahab Hosseini clinched best actor for Asghar Farhadi's taut moral drama "The Salesman", about a married couple thrown into turmoil after the wife is attacked in their home. Farhadi also scooped the screenplay honors. Hosseini had also starred in Farhadi's breakout success, 2011's "A Separation", which won an Oscar for best foreign language film.

"Divines", a gripping drama about a young French teenage girl from a tough immigrant suburb who dreams of getting rich quick, got the nod for best first film, the Camera d'Or. Directed by Houda Benyamina, it starred her sister Oulaya Amamra. The nine-member jury was chaired by "Mad Max" director George Miller, who called the 12-day festival "one of the most intense experiences of my life".

"I, Daniel Blake" moved many to tears at Cannes but drew mixed reviews. It tells of a carpenter's Kafkaesque struggle to get benefits in Britain's shrinking welfare state

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## ABU DHABI SACKS STAFF AMID AUSTERITY

**ABU DHABI:** Thousands of layoffs at state-linked companies in Abu Dhabi are a fresh sign the Gulf's wealthy oil states are hunkering down for a long period of austerity as low crude prices pressure their economies. Since mid-2015, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other countries in the region have curbed spending on some construction projects and reduced energy subsidies to limit budget deficits caused by cheap oil.

Now some governments are also starting to reduce staff at the companies they control, many of them in the energy industry, in order to ensure the firms are not a drain on state finances if oil prices stay low for several years. Abu Dhabi's National Oil Co (ADNOC), with around 55,000 staff, has cut hundreds of jobs in the last few months and will have reduced its workforce by at least 5,000 by the end of 2016, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The reduction will occur across most of its 17 subsidiaries as part of a restructuring following a reshuffle of the firm's leadership this month, they said. An ADNOC spokesman did not con-

firm or deny the cuts but said: "In keeping with the entire oil and gas industry, ADNOC is constantly looking at ways to be more efficient and more profitable, particularly in the current market environment."

"Thousands of staff at ADNOC and its affiliates" are affected, said one source in the industry, asking not to be named. ADNOC has "asked its affiliates to cut costs", said the source, pointing out that job cuts are the obvious outcome "as more than half of the operating cost is that of the staff". A source at ADNOC confirmed the job cuts but did not want to comment on actual figures. An Abu Dhabi lawyer confirmed dealing with cases of scores of ADNOC employees who have lost their jobs.

The UAE's oil and gas recruitment market is set for its most difficult year in over a decade in 2016, a report from recruiters Morgan McKinley said. "The oil and gas industry is still feeling the pain, as was to be expected. Overall redundancies have been on the increase," said Trefor Murphy, managing director for the region. Most layoffs at Abu Dhabi state firms are not in

response to production cutbacks; the UAE has not reduced its oil output, and says it is proceeding with long-planned oil and gas development projects.

Nor do the layoffs mean Abu Dhabi is running out of money. With hundreds of billions of dollars in its sovereign wealth fund, the emirate could draw down its reserves to sustain current levels of spending for decades. But the government wants to minimize the speed of the draw-down as it looks ahead to the possibility of many years of low oil prices. Last year, Abu Dhabi acted ahead of other Gulf states in cutting domestic fuel and electricity subsidies. Now it is applying the same approach to state-linked firms.

In Qatar, state-controlled firms such as Qatar Petroleum and Qatar Rail have been laying off staff. State companies in other states such as Saudi Arabia and Oman have been looking at ways to reduce costs but have so far not resorted to major job cuts. Most cuts at state firms in Abu Dhabi and elsewhere involve foreign staff

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**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen off by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah upon his departure to Istanbul, Turkey yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photo



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is greeted upon his arrival to Istanbul.

## KFAED OFFERS \$6.4 BLN LOANS TO 82 COUNTRIES

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has offered 372 transport loans worth KD 1.9 billion (\$6.4 billion) to 82 countries by the end of December 2015, KFAED has said. They constitute up to 34 percent of the total loans presented by the fund, it added in a statement.

The integration of the transport sector which is the backbone of infrastructure in any country, positively affects other development sectors, it noted. The fund has contributed to the financing of a multitude of road projects in the beneficiary countries, according to the acknowledged international engineering specifications.

Many world countries have lauded KFAED's development role over the past 54 years, in particular its soft loans to the transport sector, the statement said. The KFAED extends Loans on concessionary terms to finance development projects in the developing countries, it added. It also offers technical assistance to finance the costs of the feasibility studies of projects, as well as the training of nationals at the target countries. — KUNA

# AMIR ARRIVES IN ISTANBUL TO ATTEND WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

**ISTANBUL/KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrived in the Turkish City of Istanbul yesterday to attend the World Humanitarian Summit. His Highness the Amir and his accompanying delegation were received at Ataturk International Airport by Istanbul Deputy Governor Ismail Gultekin, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Turkey Abdullah Abdulaziz Al-Thwaikh, Kuwaiti Consul General Mohammad Al-Fahad and Turkish Air Force Academy Commander Major General Fethi Alpaly.

His Highness the Amir was seen off upon departure at Kuwait International Airport by His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser

Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and top Sheikhs and senior officials.

His Highness the Amir's accompanying delegation includes First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas

Al-Saleh, Director of the office of His Highness the Amir Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Abulhasan, head of the Amiri protocols department Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Suleiman, head of media and cultural affairs at the Amiri Diwan Yousif Al-Roumi, head of the political and economic affairs Sheikh Fawaz Saud Nasser Saud Al-Sabah, and senior officials at the Amiri Diwan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. — KUNA

## ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS EXPO HELD TOMORROW

**KUWAIT:** The Arabic manuscripts exhibition, organized by the National Library of Kuwait, is a gateway for those interested in old Islamic history and culture, an official said yesterday. The exhibition, to be held tomorrow, will provide an insight into the world of Arabic manuscripts and documents, Director General of the Library Kamal Abduljalil said.

The exhibition coincides with the country's celebration as capital of Islamic culture for 2016, said the official, adding that the event was held under the sponsorship of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL). Abduljalil said that a side lecture on Arabic manuscripts and their historical significance will be held on the sideline of the event attended by diplomats, scholars, and those interested in history. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Saber Chowdhury and his accompanying delegation.

# CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES SPEAKER, IPU PRESIDENT

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Saber Chowdhury at Bayan Palace yesterday. The meeting was attended by head of the protocols department at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and head of the honorary delegation MP Faisal Al-Shaya.

Ghanem and Chowdhury had held a meet-

ing earlier to discuss means of promoting parliamentary ties and shed light on the latest regional and international development. MPs Shaya, Dr Khalil Abul, Madi Al-Hajri and Kamil Al-Awadi attended the meeting. Also yesterday, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Chowdhury, in presence of Shaya and head of the Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikhha Etimad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Crown

Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Minister of Information, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, as well as Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Saber Chowdhury. —KUNA photos



Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Saber Chowdhury are pictured inside the National Assembly yesterday.

## KUWAIT, SOUTH AFRICA EYE CLOSER TRADE TIES



**KUWAIT:** A scene from the meeting between Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry and South Africa's Ministry of Trade and Industry delegations. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** A visiting delegation of South Africa's Ministry of Trade and Industry and Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) discussed yesterday ways of boosting bilateral cooperation and promoting South African products in Kuwait.

The South African delegation's visit aimed at developing bilateral trade and economic relations, KCCI's Director-General Rabah Al-Rabah said in a press statement following the meeting held at KCCI's building. He voiced the KCCI's willingness to cement and bolster bilateral economic ties and to tap foreign expertise in order to carry out development projects in Kuwait, believing that the country's development drive would not be affected by falling oil prices. Meanwhile, head of the visiting South African delegation, Yunus Hussain said during the visit the team had presented information on this African country's business and investment atmosphere. He pointed to available attractive investment opportunities covering various sectors such as agriculture, trade services, developed industries and medical and pharmaceutical technologies in South Africa. — KUNA

## KRCS STRESSES KUWAIT'S HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITY

**ISTANBUL:** Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Anwar Al-Hasawi said yesterday that it is important to promote Kuwait's humanitarian activities and initiatives across the world.

KRCS is participating in an exhibition held on the sidelines of the World Humanitarian Summit just as part of its role in the humanitarian and charitable field, especially regarding refugees and internally displaced persons, Hasawi said in a statement.

He underlined the significance of the exhibition as a major humanitarian and social event that attracts all humanitarian organizations and agencies to the same place in order to promote their humanitarian and relief efforts.

Boasting Kuwait's humanitarian contributions worldwide, the senior KRCS official said Kuwait has now become a world icon for humanitarian activities and efforts serving people from different world countries.

Meanwhile, the Information Ministry's foreign media researcher Ahmad Dashti said Kuwait's involvement in the summit came at the invitation of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, noting that humanitarian needs have largely increased since

the World War II. He boasted that Kuwait attaches much attention to the humanitarian domain so it is well-positioned on the world humanitarian map.

Dashti reiterated his country's keenness on partaking in all humanitarian forums and gatherings with a view to manifesting Kuwait's great humanitarian role. He added that thanks to all these humanitarian efforts and initiatives, His Highness the Amir was awarded the UN title of the Humanitarian Leader and the State of Kuwait as the Humanitarian Center.

Hasawi had earlier emphasized the importance of uniting positions between regional and international humanitarian organizations to best serve the victims of natural disasters, conflicts, and wars. "It is important to face challenges and crises in the region," Hasawi said on the sideline of a meeting for the GCC General Secretariat and Gulf Red Crescent Societies, adding that uniting humanitarian efforts at all levels was key in saving people from suffering.

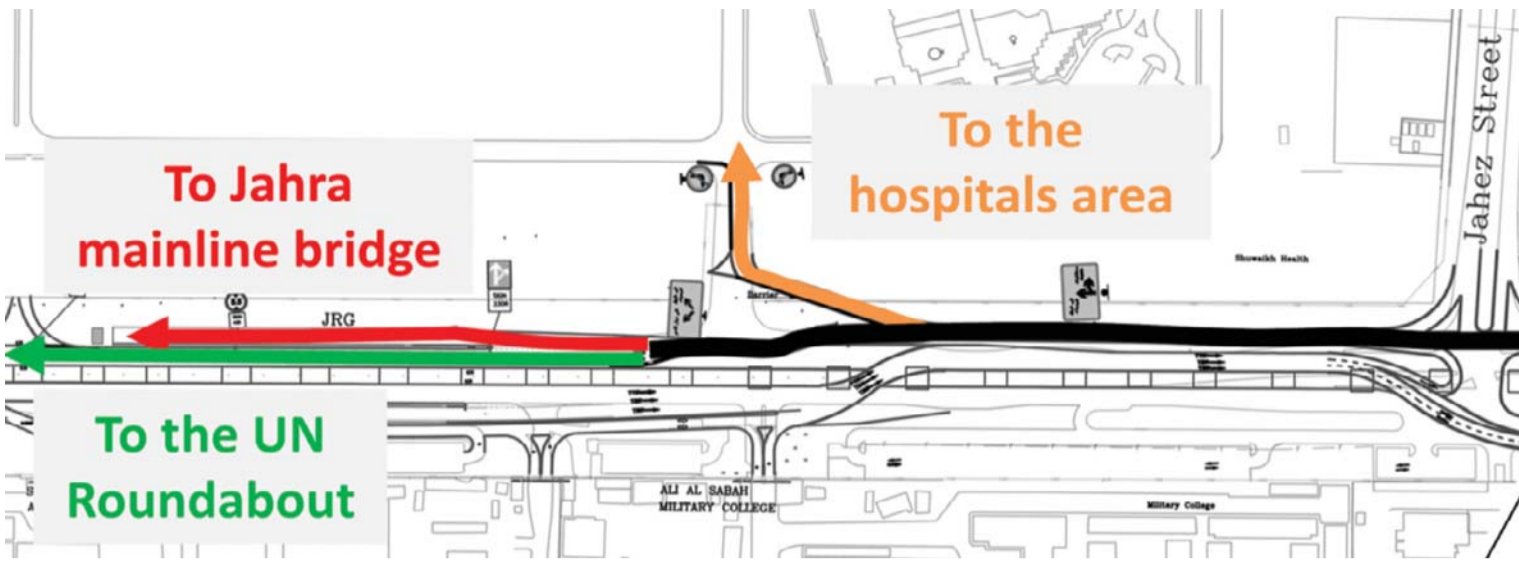
Hasawi said that Kuwait will take all necessary measures to ensure that the needy and those who suffer around the globe are taken care of, adding that the KRCS was willing to cooperate on this aspect with all who are eager to do so. — KUNA



**ISTANBUL:** Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Anwar Al-Hasawi (left) visits an exhibition held on the sidelines of the World Humanitarian summit. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a written letter from President of Eritrea Isaias Afwerki related to bilateral relations and ways to enhance them on all levels. The letter was delivered to Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah by Eritrean Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Mohammad Omar Mahmoud. — KUNA



## MINISTRY ANNOUNCES PARTIAL OPENING, DETOUR ON JAHRA ROAD

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Public Works announced yesterday the partial opening of 1.75km of service road on the Jahra Road Development Project. The opening commences after the intersection of Jahra Road with Al-Jahez Street and ends near to the United Nations Roundabout in the direction of Jahra.

Furthermore, there will be changes to the current detour - those wanting to go to the hospital area must take the right exit immediately after the traffic light at the intersection of Al-Jahez, and enter into the Islamic Medicine Center (IMC). Additionally, the exit of IMC will be closed and road users will need to take alternative routes within the hospital area to exit onto Al-Jahez Street or Jamal Abdul Nasser Street.

However, road users wishing to go towards Jahra or the United Nations (UN) Roundabout should continue straight for a few hundred meters after the Al-Jahez intersection traffic

lights, keeping left to continue at-grade to the UN Roundabout, or keeping right to continue onto the mainline bridge.

Engineer Ahmad Al-Hassan, the Assistant Undersecretary for Road Engineering Affairs at the Ministry of Public Works, commented: "This particular area of the project has seen great progress over the year with the opening of 4 km's of mainline and service road in January, and this partial service road opening in the opposite direction."

"The roads have been clearly marked with directional signs and for the safety of all, we ask road users to take extra caution, especially in the first few days while people familiarize themselves with the new traffic patterns in this area. As for the remaining parts of the project, work is continuing as per the contract and road users can expect to feel a smoother flow of traffic," he went on to explain.

"The Ministry of Interior and the General Directorate of Traffic have been working closely with us, and inspections have been carried out to ensure that all safety standards and necessary opening procedures have been met. As always, we seek to ensure minimal disruption and the opening of this service road took place early Monday morning. Road users can expect a number of significant improvements on the Jahra Road as we plan for more openings this year," added Yasser Boudastour, Project Engineer at the Jahra Road Development Project.

This mega project involves the construction of 17.7 km of viaducts (7.3 km of mainline Jahra Road, 2.4 km of bridges on linked roads and 8.0 km of ramps), including a trough at the 2nd Ring Road intersection, 10 pedestrian bridges, and service roads. The Jahra Road project also includes major service and utility relocation and works.

## KUWAIT CHAIRS AAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

**TUNIS:** Kuwait's Minister of Electricity and Water Ahmad Al-Jassar chaired yesterday the 28th session of the General Conference of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency (AAEA), as the agency's 2017-2018 budget was announced, and voting began to elect a new AAEA Director General. The use of atomic energy was very instrumental to economic and social growth all across the globe, Jassar said in a speech to open the conference. Moreover, Jassar noted that AAEA is hard at work to promote the merits of atomic energy use, while it aims to encourage further cooperation amongst Arab nations in that regard. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti minister also added that Kuwait would spare no effort to ensure that the conference would result in success, which would prove beneficial to the use of atomic energy in the Arab world as a whole.

Jassar said in a statement that voting to elect a new AAEA Director General ended in a tie between Tunisian Dr Salem Hamadi and Jordanian Riyadh Al-Bitar, with each clinching six votes. "The AAEA will decide on this issue by next December," he noted.

The Kuwaiti minister said that the AAEA budget for the years 2017-2018 was amongst the primary issues discussed at the conference, adding that the budget remained unchanged to cope with economic challenges. He also added that



**TUNIS:** Kuwait's Minister of Electricity and Water Ahmad Al-Jassar chairs the 28th session of the General Conference of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency. —KUNA

Kuwait is allocating an annual share of \$280 thousand as part of that budget.

Formed in 1989, the AAEA is tasked with promoting safe usage of atomic energy in the Arab world, as it advocates nuclear plants that harvest such energy. The agency has held a plethora of workshops and programs with the aim of spreading word on those aims. —KUNA

## OBAIDI ARRIVES IN GENEVA FOR WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

**GENEVA:** The 69th session of the World Health Assembly will discuss a broad spectrum of highly important public health matters, Kuwait's Minister of Health Dr Ali Saad Al-Obaidi said. The meeting of the supreme decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO), due to take place in Geneva on May 23-28 May, will discuss a specific health agenda prepared by WHO Executive Board to determine the policies of the Organization, supervise financial policies, and review and approve the proposed program budget, he said.

Obaidi made the comments upon his arrival at the Cointrin Airport on Saturday, leading a senior level delegation to the gathering. "We will offer a presentation of the achievements made by Kuwait towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), notably the efforts to bring down the mortality rate of children below five years," he said.

"We will also present Kuwait's plans for comprehensive health coverage, enhancing the preparedness for combating communicable and non-communicable diseases, and reaching higher rates of vac-

nations of children," he went on. "Kuwait has made headway in meeting the MDGs and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," Dr Obaidi said. "The tentative agenda, to be discussed in the second plenary session of the gathering, includes an item on monitoring of the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals," he pointed out. He added that the discussions will include draft global health sector strategies on response to communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola and viral hepatitis; and non-communicable diseases such as polio, childhood obesity, and the safety and accessibility of children's medication.

During the event, Kuwait will grant annual award of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for promotion of health which will be given to a Slovak physician this year. The 69th session of the World Health Assembly will gather 3,500 health ministers from WHO member states, as well as representatives of government and non-government health-related agencies, medical research academies and pharmaceutical companies. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Education Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa checks on a high school student during his tour yesterday. High school students take their finals which started yesterday in Kuwait. — KUNA photos

## MINISTER URGES COOPERATION TO FIGHT CHEATING IN EXAMS

FIRST DAY OF HIGH SCHOOL FINALS GOES SMOOTHLY

**By A Saleh**

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Badr Al-Essa said that the first day of final exams went well in all education areas. Speaking to reporters during a tour of some Capital governorate high schools, Essa wished all students the best of luck and thanked school administrations for their preparations for the exams.

Essa added that cheating technology was constantly developing, adding that schools can

only fight this by extensive inspection of students and banning mobile phones in exam halls for both students and teachers. "Cheating attempts are more common at male adult learning centers, where students use cheating methods advertised in magazines such as magnetic micro earpieces and others placed under the tongue," he explained, noting that exam supervisors had full powers to stop such attempts. Essa added that the Ministry of Education has no power over magazines publishing such ads and urged the Ministry of

Interior and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to fight this phenomenon, in addition to private tuition ads.

Director of Bibi Al-Salem secondary school for girls Asma Al-Yahya said the minister came to the school on a sudden visit, adding her school has 476 students including 154 in grade 12. Yahya explained that exam committee starts work at 7 am by receiving exam papers' boxes and opens them by 7:45 am to hand the papers to students by 8:00 am. The finals' results will be announced on June 5, 2016.



**GENEVA:** Kuwait's Minister of Health Dr Ali Saad Al-Obaidi (left) is pictured with Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim after his arrival to Geneva. — KUNA

## KISR SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH BASRA UNIVERSITY

**KUWAIT:** The Director General of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Dr Sameera Ahmad Al-Sayyed Omar signed yesterday a memorandum of understanding with University of Basra President Dr Thamer Ahmad Hamdan. The five-year memorandum

of understanding focuses on cooperation in the field of scientific research and development. According to the agreement, both sides will exchange expertise and attend specialized scientific research events as well as take part in training courses. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Director General of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research Dr Sameera Ahmad Al-Sayyed Omar (left) and University of Basra's President Dr Thamer Ahmad Hamdan sign the memorandum of understanding. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Douglas Silliman. — KUNA

## INTERIOR MINISTER MEETS US ENVOY

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with US Ambassador to Kuwait Douglas Silliman, discussing with him

issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled stressed the strong relations linking Kuwait and the US, a statement by the General Department of

Relations and Security Media said. Meanwhile, Ambassador Silliman expressed appreciation for Kuwait's role in supporting peace and security in the region. — KUNA

In Brief

PAN CALLS FOR END TO YEMENI WAR

DOHA: UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called on clashing Yemeni parties to show the flexibility and wisdom needed to end the current war. In his speech at the 16th Doha Forum late Saturday, Ki-moon thanked Kuwait and Qatar for hosting the UN-sponsored Yemeni peace talks and for supporting the organization's efforts to end the conflict. Meanwhile, he noted that "130 million people need life-saving humanitarian assistance". "War and persecution have forced 60 million people from their homes", he added. — KUNA



ARAB MEDIA PANEL MEETS

CAIRO: The Arab permanent media committee started its 87th ordinary session yesterday to prepare for the upcoming 47th meeting of the Arab Information Ministers' Council to be held next Wednesday. "The current meeting comes at a critical time where the Arab World is facing multiple regional and international challenges," said Undersecretary of Saudi's Ministry of Culture and Information Abdulmohsen Elias in a speech.



RASHED NOMINATED FOR FAJ VICE-PRESIDENCY

TUNIS: Kuwaiti Journalists Association's (KJA) Secretary Faisal Al-Qenaei announced that Adnan Al-Rashed, head of KJA, was nominated for the post of vice president of Federation of Arab Journalists (FAJ). The association is keen on taking part positively in the conference hosted for the first time in the Tunisian capital, Qenaei said in a statement on the sidelines of the 13th conference of the FAJ held Saturday. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Classic cars lined up inside the Historical, Vintage and Classic Cars Museum in Shuwaikh. — KUNA

# KIB HOLDS 'TRAIN THE TRAINERS' WORKSHOP FOR ITS EMPLOYEES

IN COOPERATION WITH THE INSTITUTE OF BANKING STUDIES

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) organized a series of two days workshops at its headquarters for its staff entitled 'Training The Trainers,' in cooperation with the Institute of Banking Studies to stay updated with the latest banking trends and elevate the performance and efficiency of its employees to go with its leading position as one of the best Islamic banks in Kuwait in terms of performance and growth. The course comes as part of bank's series of regular training courses, in order to keep up with the latest developments in the banking industry from one side and to be in line with its operational strategy that aims at developing the skills and expertise of its human resources to measure up to the responsibility standards in customer service on the other.

Set of tactics

The General Manager of Human Resources Department, Nigel Holmes said: "It is a specialized workshop to train the trainers who hold various functional levels in all departments to provide them with a

full set of tactics and approaches related to banking and then enable them to plan and supervise training courses for their peers to meet the demands of the bank in particular and banking requirements in general. All of this falls in line with the standards of the industry and its latest developments in the local, Arab and international markets, which not only helps them in their daily routine work, but also will upgrade their skills and banking know-how by sharing together experiences and best practices."

Creative talents

Holmes added, "To achieve our goal, we have organized this training course under the supervision of the Institute of Banking Studies, which is a specialized banking institute that has a long track record and outstanding experience in planning and organizing courses that would play a vital role in cultivating the skills and know-how of our staff, as well as keep them updated with the latest trends of finance and commerce." He also stressed on the bank's objective to always employ

qualified coaches and experts to motivate employees and harness their creativity in the workplace. Consequently, KIB stands today at the forefront of the banking industry and as one of the best Islamic banks in Kuwait, which is crowned by winning the Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait for three consecutive years 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Outstanding outcome

Holmes concluded by praising the outstanding cooperation between the bank and the Institute of Banking Studies, where this workshop is not the first between two parties but part of an extended series of courses which have received sound success with results that meet the bank's expectations in accomplishing the set goals. He also thanked the presenter of the workshop, Hamza Taqi, for his motivation contribution in providing valuable banking information to the trainees and keenness to educate and raise their training skills to design and plan their own training courses and specialized workshops in their respective fields.



Kuwait Digest

JOURNALISTS' SAFETY

By Labeed Abdal



local@kuwaittimes.net

UNESCO's call to unite efforts to protect the freedom of the press and the right of access to information is on top of the world's priorities. This especially comes with the relative gap in the margin of press freedom, which is a basic pillar in protecting human rights and dignity worldwide. Ensuring journalists' safety is becoming a very critical issue nowadays, especially when figures show that at least one of them gets killed every five days.

A safe environment must be created to maintain a scale for investigating freedoms in various parts of the international community. NGOs and governments worldwide worked together on International Press Freedom Day on May 3 to prepare safe working environments for all journalists and media staff members through a UN plan, which should be adopted by governments and parliaments worldwide.

The need to access true and trustworthy information is one integral part of basic liberties - it is an integral part of the freedom of expression without which democracy, wise ruling, the rule of law and monitoring principles would all collapse and fall. The international agreement on the 2030 sustainable development plan is meant to dedicate all efforts in the coming 15 years to end poverty, protect the planet, achieve prosperity and eternal peace in the entire world, which are all noble international goals we must race to achieve instead of trying to prepare for them in the nick of time.

Mobilizing all international potentials and setting clear programs and plans to guarantee free access to information for the public and protecting basic freedoms are two basic elements of those needed to achieve sustainable development, especially in countries struck by corruption. The need for information is growing more than ever in view of the vast and rapid disputes and changes rocking many countries in this age of information technology, social media and instant communication in remote corners of the earth.

Providing these major steps, preparing suitable circumstances, setting laws that guarantee peoples' right to information with speed, quality and credibility are some of the means by which countries can join advanced nations in the 21st century.

# MAN HURT IN BOTCHED ROBBERY OF MP'S HOME



By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** A bedoon (stateless) man was seriously injured while attempting to rob MP Abdullah Maayouf's house in Kaifan, said security sources. The lawmaker's son called police to report finding an unidentified person, who had apparently fallen from the third floor of their house. The man had sustained a broken leg and several facial injuries. Police identified the suspect as a 26-year-old bedoon man with a criminal record. The suspect was taken to hospital under police custody.

MP Abdullah Maayouf

**Hajj visas**  
MP Hamdan Al-Azmi urged First Deputy Prime

Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to intervene to lift a ban on granting hajj and umrah visas to bedoons. Azmi added that officials at the Saudi embassy in Kuwait suspended issuing visas to bedoons, promising that the ban would only be temporary, although it has been in effect since January.

### Ministries' performance

The parliament's priorities committee postponed assessing state departments' performance in terms of executing the development plan until it received a report from the Supreme Council of Planning and Development. The

committee rapporteur MP Ahmed Lari said that the committee met Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih and the Supreme Planning Council's Secretary General Dr Khalid Mahdi to discuss the development plan and assess ministries' performance.

Lari stressed that the main problem in the public sector was the lack of teamwork spirit. He added that many government bodies had not been committed to following up development plan projects' execution. "The best proof of this is the presence of 12 bills pending since 2009," he underlined.

Legalese

## VISA AND WORK PERMIT REGULATIONS

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

In the past few months, there have been a lot of new regulations concerning visa and entry requirements for expats in Kuwait. There have been changes in a few issues such as visa fees, transfer of sponsors and contractors for the government. I will focus in today's article on the issuance of work visas and the changes that have been going on.

Disclaimer: I am deliberately using simplified words in my articles (that might necessarily not be legally correct) in order for the general public to understand the concepts I am discussing. If you are confused as an employee, realize that it is normal to be so, as I have been working with multiple companies so far that are confused themselves on how to issue visas for their employees. Everyone needs time to understand the adjustments.

### Things to watch out for

**Question: I am about to come to Kuwait for the first time. I will be working with a big company - is there anything I need to watch out for?**

**Fajer:** Yes, you should be very wary when you come to Kuwait. First of all, and this goes without saying, do not sign anything in Arabic unless there is a translation alongside the document. Make sure your visa/work permit has your right amount of salary and your right job position and academic qualification, otherwise you will have difficulties when you resign or when you want to transfer visas. So please read your visa and work permit carefully (I know they are in Arabic, so get someone to translate). This is also very important when it comes to salary increases as the new decisions put a cap on salary increases for every year or two years, depending on the contract type.

### Sponsor change's fee

**Question: I have been hearing that if I change my sponsor, I will need to pay a fee - is this correct?**

**Fajer:** Yes, according to the newest decision A/57/2016 issued by the minister of social affairs and labor, there are different fees for different visas as follows:

1. KD 200  
\* for transferring from an expired government contract (one that ended), to another government contract with the same employer.
2. KD 300  
\* for transferring from an expired government contract or a valid government contract to another government contract with a different employer.  
\* if an employee comes to Kuwait on a government visa and then transfers to the private sector, and hasn't completed one year since the transfer, he can transfer back to the government with a KD 300 fee.  
\* if an employee comes to Kuwait as a domestic worker and then transfers to the private sector, and hasn't completed three years since the transfer, he can transfer back to the domestic sector for a KD 300 fee.
3. KD 350  
\* for transferring the work permit of an employee under a government contract to the main file of the same employer.

### Abandoning employees

**Question: Are there any changes for abandoning employees with the new ministry regulations? I was working for a company and the work conditions were harsh, so I submitted my resignation and left. Now I have a case against me and therefore I cannot transfer to another employer. What can I do?**

**Fajer:** Yes, there are new ministerial regulations regarding employment issues in general, and have touched up on regulations for those accused of abandoning.

I highly advise that employees who are not receiving their salaries, or are being overworked or are not being treated well to go to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and file a complaint, but not leave their work environment, as an abandoning case will cause more issues. Also, if you submit a resignation, make sure it is accepted!

The new regulations require a department at the ministry to go and check if the employee has really absconded from work by visiting his workplace. This can be a very tricky situation, if the employee have already submitted resignations or left because of harsh work environments.

I hope the above helped and please do not hesitate to email me with any concerns.

For any legal questions or queries, email [ask@fajertlawyer.com](mailto:ask@fajertlawyer.com).



## NO INJURIES IN STRING OF FIRES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Firemen tackled a blaze that broke in a car wash station in Shuwaikh. Firefighters from the Industrial Shuwaikh Fire Station handled the blaze, and no injuries were reported.

Meanwhile, Farwaniya Fire Station fought two fires on Saturday. In the first incident, firemen rescued residents of a building in the area, who were late to report the blaze as they first attempted to extinguish the flames themselves. Firefighters were able to prevent the flames from spreading and save the residents without recording injuries. In the second incident, firemen put out a fire that started by cigarettes thrown in a building's atrium in the area, according to investigations. Separately, a fire broke out in a room inside a house's extension in Omariya. The fire was put out and no injuries were reported.



## COUNCIL MEMBER URGES ACTION AGAINST RECKLESS DRIVERS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Municipal Council member and head of Farwaniya committee Nayef Al-Sour urged the interior ministry to deal with reckless driving outside some schools in Farwaniya. Sour stressed that many parents have expressed concerns about their children's safety and demanded a police patrol to be present outside every school to apprehend violators, especially during the ongoing final exams and after official school hours.

### Sheikh Faisal mourns passenger

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah led mourners who performed funeral prayers for the soul of Kuwaiti citizen Dr Abdul Mohsen Mohammed Al-Suhail, who died onboard an EgyptAir flight that recently crashed en route to Cairo from Paris. Sheikh Faisal extended his condolences to family members and expressed deep sympathy with the families of all the passengers.

## DRUG CONTROL SEIZES 70 KG OF HASHISH, OTHER NARCOTICS

**KUWAIT:** The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) seized 70 kilograms of Hashish, 1 kilogram of crystal methamphetamine and 500 grams of Heroin, the Interior Ministry announced yesterday. The drugs were found in the possession of an illegal resident, who admitted to dealing with narcotics, DCGD said in a press release. DCGD will continue their efforts in protecting the society and preventing this harmful substance from entering the country. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's Land Border Security Department celebrated yesterday the graduation of batches 39 and 40 from a foundation course organized in cooperation with the ministry's training and special forces' departments. Senior ministry officials led by Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad attended the ceremony. A total of 319 officers graduated from courses that included physical combat, weapons' use and fitness training.

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الجريدة

Al-Jarida

## PAMPHLET TRADITIONS

By Ali Mahmoud Khajah

As usual, one or two MPs, and sometimes citizens, demand banning a certain activity like a seminar, a concert, a book or a certain person from entering Kuwait with the excuse of protecting Kuwaiti traditions, and accordingly the government, including the current interior minister who is known for having a strong personality, would immediately yield to any threats using the excuse 'customs and traditions'.

The funny thing is that ban demands usually get the government's quickest response, while other issues are usually left to committees to discuss without even getting any response from the government. For instance, the issue of flying gravel on Kuwaiti streets was referred to a committee; artists' demands for over 30 years to build more theatres are still not responded to; sportsmen have been demanding constructing decent sport facilities for decades; and so many other demands have been falling on deaf ears, except for 'BAN' demands that go way beyond all forms of bureaucracy.

Anyway, the government's yielding to any unconstitutional demand has always been the same, despite changing the people in charge. But what really matters to me is using the excuse 'customs and traditions' by everybody to prevent certain things, as if poetry, music or culture are parts of our traditions because they are against the ideas of those demanding banning them.

Just for their knowledge, Islam does not recognize customs and traditions. It came to cancel them in the first place. Had pro-ban lawmakers lived with the rise of Islam, they would have rejected Islam's message because it was against all norms and traditions at that time. Pre-Islamic traditions are referred to as 'jahiliya' (ignorance) till today, which indicates that norms of a certain society should not necessarily apply or be accepted by another.

I can understand that customs and traditions apply for social matters like marriage norms and ceremonies, extending condolences and in arts like music in each society. What I fail to understand is to use these terms in a larger scope in real life. Moreover, norms and traditions are a quick way to ignorance because none of the Internet, vehicles, TVs, mobile phones or air conditioners belong to our traditions that were mainly based on pearl diving, shepherding and forms of crafts, which means that even recruiting expats does not belong to our norms and traditions. So, why do we accept these demands to protect traditions?

We are supposed to be living in a constitutionally run state that has laws. Customs, norms and traditions should be respected within families and between them without changing these norms and traditions into verbal laws controlled by personal wishes and moods. This would be too ridiculous. So, we should either officially change these norms and traditions into laws clearly set, written and defined on pamphlets or totally discard them when making major decisions.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

## JUVENILE CRIMES INCREASE 156% IN FIRST QUARTER

**KUWAIT:** Statistics by the justice ministry about crimes committed by juveniles during the first quarter of 2016 showed that crimes had increased by 156 percent compared to those committed during the same period of the previous year. Accordingly, well-informed sources warned of the growing danger of youth violence and fights that were mainly started by very trivial causes such as the famous provocative question of "What are you staring at?" or "Why are you staring?", which often leads to bloody or fatal fights.

The sources urged various concerned government bodies to cooperate to fight youth violence and urged schools and families to activate their roles in enhancing compassion and accepting others amongst the youth. Statistically, the sources explained that the total number of juvenile misdemeanors in the first quarter of 2016 was 776 compared to only 303 in 2015. — Al-Qabas

## HOUSING AUTHORITY EXPECTS DEFICITS

**KUWAIT:** State budget deficits apparently reached the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), and accordingly it demanded reconsidering the amount of the monthly installments collected from citizens for the apartments they got in Jaber Al-Ahmed and North West Sulaibikhat areas, from KD 40 to become KD 60 or 10 percent of a citizen's monthly salary.

A memo prepared by the housing authority's financial sector said that the estimated cost of an apartment in North West Sulaibikhat was KD 77,000, while the installments collected from citizens were too low compared to other GCC states that collect at least 25 percent of a citizen's monthly salary, though Kuwait gives the highest housing loan of KD 70,000 among them all.

The housing authority added that its financial assets have been and would continue to be affected in view of the lack of any other investment resources and mainly relying on the state budget in funding the construction of public facilities and providing services in the authority's various projects. The authority also stressed that inflation in construction cost contributed to the growth of financial outflows while installments collected remain too low, and it will take as long as 146 years to collect the entire apartment's value.

The authority explained that the cost of an apartment in Sabah Al-Salem was KD 28,000, which would be collected in 58 years based on collecting a maximum monthly installment of KD 40; while an apartment's cost in Sawaber was KD 48,000, and with the same installment, it would take 100 years to collect the price. "Taking the same pattern of payment with Jaber Al-Ahmed and Northwest Sulaibikhat apartments, it will take 146 years to recoup the price," explained informed sources, noting that citizens only pay a total of KD 70,000 even if prices get higher, leaving the housing authority to pay the difference. — Al-Qabas



النباة

Al-Anbaa

## YOU ARE WRONG, SHEIKH!

By Salah Al-Sayer

After returning from France towards the end of the 19th century, Sheikh Mohammed Abdu made a famous statement, in which he said: "I went to the West and found Islam but no Muslims, and came back to the Orient and found Muslims without Islam." The statement means that Sheikh Mohammed Abdu saw the values and concepts of Islam such as justice, the rule of law, order, progress, science and prosperity applied in France by non-Muslims, while the Muslims failed to achieve such wonderful values that Islam calls for in their own countries.

Well, this very famous statement has been going around amongst people for long, though it includes a huge mistake and injustice, because Egypt and all other Arab countries are not the Orient and because Arab Muslims are not the majority of Muslims. There are mil-

lions of other Muslims on this planet, like those living in Europe, US, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, China and many other countries that do not suffer from ailments our Arab societies suffer from.

Naturally enough, Sheikh Mohammed Abdu's statement reflects his own Arab concept that fancies that Arabs alone are Muslims, an idea that is deep-rooted in Arab minds and cannot differentiate between Arabs and Muslims. It is an unjust idea that ignores millions of non-Arab Muslims who jointly work with fellow human beings to achieve development, progress and peace; who contribute to achieving justice, law and order and sciences; ones who have different ideas and lifestyles than those in the Arab world.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



## ZAIN DELIVERS 'MACHLA BOXES' TO ZAKAT HOUSE

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, delivered essential food supplies (Machla Boxes) to Zakat House to cover the needs of underprivileged families in Kuwait. The initiative comes as part of the company's preparation to welcome the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Zain welcomes the 'month of giving' each year by launching this annual charitable initiative, which comes in line with its Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability strategies and as part of its solid cooperation with Zakat House. The company ensures distributing food essentials to multiple charitable groups to cover all areas of Kuwait before the arrival of Ramadan.

Zain's distribution plan for this year involves various entities, most notably Zakat House, which received the (Machla Boxes) with the presence of the Director of Benefactors Relations Waleed Al-Hammadi. Zakat House will provide the boxes, containing essential food supplies, to underprivileged families who are in need of support during the month of fasting.

It is worth noting that Zain recently won the CSR Award as part of 'The Cause' initiative, organized by Gulf University for Science and Technology, for launching a number of sustainable projects all year round. In addition, Zain received the 'Golden Shield for Excellence in Environmental

Sustainability' from the Arab Organization for Social Responsibility during the year 2015. The award recognized Zain's efforts in launching a series of initiatives and programs conducted throughout the year, which had a deep impact among the community it operates in, especially through the contributions made towards particular institutions and entities in the community.

Zain affirmed that its social and CSR campaign during the upcoming Holy Month of Ramadan will include an extensive array of initiatives and programs that will focus on helping less fortunate people to enjoy Ramadan happily, as well as celebrating the true spirit the Holy month brings.

## SOME OPPOSITIONISTS PLAN TO RUN FOR NEXT PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

**KUWAIT:** The question 'How does the majority of the annulled parliament views taking part in the coming parliamentary elections?' may get different answers when asked in the five electoral constituencies where each bloc responds according to its own wishes and preferences.

Some opposition blocs believe they have the highest probability to return to parliament, others emphasize that they would never take part in the elections under the one-vote electoral system, while a third party prefers waiting until things become clearer, as they believe that the elections are still far away. "We must wait and not to be hastily swinging between taking part or boycotting the elections," many of the majority members confided to reporters.

Informed sources said that the Thawabet Al-Umma (Nation's Principles) Alliance's secretary general Mohammed Hayef expressed intentions to take part in the coming elections and end boycotting it, which created a division in the boycotting opposition majority bloc, whose members demanded an urgent meeting to declare their attitude over taking part in the elections and mem-

bers who intend to do so. The sources also noted that those boycotting the elections were decreasing and that Hayef's declaration of

his intention to take part encouraged many others who had been hesitant in fear of being criticized by other bloc members. — Al-Rai

## GOVT MULLS MERGING STATE DEPARTMENTS

**KUWAIT:** The ministerial committee for economic affairs has made a preliminary roadmap for the first decisions to merge government authorities and government departments of similar authorities and purposes, as part of efforts to rationalize spending and slim down the public administration. The procedures are expected to reduce high-ranking posts in these departments.

The most notable plan is asking the direct investment encouragement authority to coordinate with the partnership projects between public and private sectors authority and the technical department for privatization program to carry out a technical study on the possibility of merging the three departments into one entity. The sources said the committee asked the three departments to prepare a com-

prehensive memo that includes its vision and proposals in this regard, besides a suitable mechanism to carry out this plan within a month from the date of the letter.

Sources said the committee also asked the Civil Service Commission in coordination with the Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ministry and the Environment Public Authority, in addition to the Manpower Public Authority and those who are suitable among departments and specialists to carry out a technical and legal study about the possibility of merging the public authority for the printing of the Holy Quran and Sunnah sciences with the central committee to rehabilitate the environment and the program of restructuring the manpower authority and the state's executive apparatus and related entities. — Al-Rai

## Crime

Report

### Pilot accused of detaining, beating wife for two months

**KUWAIT:** A pilot detained his wife for two months and beat her during this time. A security source said the woman told Hawally police station that her husband detained her and took her jewelry, and prevented her from calling her family. The news report does not specify how the woman was freed. A case was filed for investigations.

### Threat

A citizen sought the help of police when a person who was the cause of her divorce threatened to enter her house in Abu Fateera and attack her sisters. A security source said a citizen went to Mubarak Al-Kabeer police station in a hysterical state and said that a man she knows told her he was waiting in front of her family's house and was about to enter and attack her sisters. Police went to the house and found nothing abnormal. The woman gave police details of the man, and detectives were asked to arrest him.

### Coworkers fight

A citizen handed a male servant and a driver who work for him to police after the two engaged in a fight. The employer told officials that he grew tired of them fighting most of the time.

### Drug traffickers caught

Drugs Control General Department (DGCA) arrested three Arab men and a woman in two separate incidents for possession of Tramadol and shabu (meth) with the intention to trade.

### Robberies

A citizen told Salam police that an unidentified person broke into his store and stole five car batteries with an estimated value of KD 150. Criminal evidence lifted fingerprints at the scene as investigations are underway. Separately, a citizen told Maidan Hawally police that jewelry worth KD 8,000 was stolen from her cupboard, but did not accuse anyone. Police are investigating.

### Bootlegger arrested

Farwaniya police arrested four Indian nationals for running a liquor brewery. Police raided a building in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and found drums filled with liquor and equipment. The raid followed a chase of a person who entered the building and was arrested in a room with three others.

### Brothel raided

Farwaniya police learned about a prostitution ring involving suspects of various nationalities, where the madam sent prostitutes to the flats of customers she made deals with through phone. The brothel was raided and the Sri Lankan madam was arrested along with two other women. A catalogue of women's pictures was also found at the scene. — Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

## News

in brief

### Syrian, Yemeni workers exempted from termination

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs exempted Syrian and Yemeni employees from a recent decision to terminate workers hired under the commissioning article. The exception came out of consideration of the political and security conditions that Syria and Yemen are going through, sources said. — Al-Anbaa

### Diesel price

**KUWAIT:** A government committee assigned to study ways to rationalize subsidies decided to increase diesel and kerosene prices by 12 percent next month, informed sources said. According to the committee's recommendations, the new price would be 90 fils per liter for diesel and 95 fils per liter for kerosene. The increase, the third monthly hike in a row, comes in parallel with the increased international prices and notable rise in Kuwait's oil price, the source said. — Al-Rai

### Subsidies' cut

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry made a decision to freeze steps to reduce subsidies on food supply and construction material for the time being. And while this decision goes in the opposite direction of the government's efforts to rationalize subsidies to prevent falling into budget deficit, sources familiar with the ministry's thinking indicate that a new automated system adopted this year to dispense subsidized products has so far helped indirectly rationalize spending by making sure that subsidized items reach only their deserving targets. — Al-Qabas

### FATAC ultimatum

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Finance plans to request extending the ultimatum to deliver the 'FATCA' documents to the US Department of Treasury from September 30th to December 31, 2016. This would give the ministry enough time to complete all reports including disclosures required by the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS), according to sources. — Al-Qabas

## KUWAITI DENIES TERROR FUNDING ACCUSATIONS

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti man called Abdullah Hadi Al-Enezi said US accusations that he provided financial, material and technological support to Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and the Nusra Front in Syria between late 2013 and late 2015 are untrue and baseless. Enezi was recently placed on the international terror watch list by the US Treasury Department. Enezi asserted he has nothing to do with any terrorist organizations. "I do not agree with those groups that are considered terrorist and I have nothing to do with them," he said. He said he was exonerated by the Kuwaiti judiciary of charges of sending money to groups outside Kuwait, adding he reserves the right to take legal action to clear his name and prove the US accusations wrong. — Al-Rai



**Obama looks to boost economic, security ties in Asia**



**BALUCHISTAN, PAKISTAN: Volunteers standing near the wreckage of the destroyed vehicle, in which Mullah Mohammad Akhtar Mansour was allegedly traveling in the Ahmed Wal area on Saturday.—AP**

## DEATH OF TALEBAN LEADER 'CONFIRMED'

PAKISTAN SAYS US DRONE STRIKE VIOLATED ITS SOVEREIGNTY

**QUETTA, Pakistan:** Taliban supremo Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in a US drone attack in Pakistan, senior militant sources told AFP yesterday, adding that an insurgent assembly was underway to decide on his successor. Saturday's bombing raid, the first known US assault on a top Afghan Taliban leader on Pakistani soil, marks a major blow to the militant movement which saw a new resurgence under Mansour. The elimination of Mansour, who rose to the rank of leader nine months earlier after a bitter internal leadership struggle, could also scupper any immediate prospect of peace talks.

"I can say with good authority that Mullah Mansour is no more," a senior Taliban source told AFP. Mansour's death, which risks igniting new succession battles within the fractious group, was confirmed by two other senior figures who said its top leaders were gathering in Quetta to name their future chief. The Taliban sources said that Sirajuddin Haqqani, leader of the dreaded Haqqani network and one of Mansour's deputies, was among the frontrunners, adding that Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar was also in contention. Both figures are said to be close to the Pakistani military establishment, which has historically nurtured and supported the Taliban. The Taliban have not commented officially on Mansour's death or the leadership succession. US officials had said they had no definitive

proof of his death in multiple drone strikes, authorized by President Barack Obama, in the remote Pakistani town of Ahmad Wal in Balochistan province.

But both Afghanistan's main spy agency, and the country's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, asserted that Mansour had been killed in the attack. "Mansour was being closely monitored for a while... until he was targeted along with other fighters aboard a vehicle," Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security said in a statement.

Pakistan yesterday lambasted the US over the drone attack, calling it a violation of its sovereignty and asserting that information about it was shared with its prime minister and army chief only after the raid. Pakistani security officials said they recovered two bodies charred beyond recognition from a smoldering vehicle at the scene of the attack. The passenger, suspected to have been Mansour, was said to be returning from Iran and was using a Pakistani passport in the name of Muhammad Wali. The driver - who also died in Saturday's attack - was a civilian who worked for a local car rental company, according to the officials, contradicting the US account that he was a "second combatant".

**'Imminent Threat'**

Mansour was formally appointed head of the Taliban in

July last year following the revelation that the group's founder Mullah Omar had been dead for two years. The group saw striking military victories under the firebrand supreme, helping to cement his authority by burnishing his credentials as a commander. The Taliban briefly captured the strategic northern city of Kunduz last September in their most spectacular victory since they were toppled from power in 2001.

The southern opium-rich province of Helmand is also almost entirely under insurgent control. "Mansour posed... an imminent threat to US personnel, Afghan civilians and Afghan security forces," US Secretary of State John Kerry said during a visit to Myanmar yesterday. "He was also directly opposed to peace negotiations."

But Mansour's death was not immediately seen as likely to push the Taliban closer to peace talks. It could press them to show they are still able to wage an aggressive battle, observers say. "The war has been going on for so long, the Taliban has so many leaders and so much ability to function at the local level even without strong central guidance, that we would

be well advised to keep expectations in check," said Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution think-tank.

The drone attack came just days after representatives from the US, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan held another round of negotiations in Islamabad aimed at reviving long-stalled direct peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. However pressure has been building in recent months for the United States to return to direct attacks on the Taliban, particularly via air strikes. NATO ended its combat mission in Afghanistan in Dec 2014, pulling out the bulk of its troops, although a 13,000-strong residual force remains for training and counterterrorism operations. The Taliban, who announced the start of their annual spring offensive last month, have already stepped up their campaign against the Western-backed Kabul government for the season. — AFP

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**EGYPTIAN SUBMARINE JOINS HUNT FOR EGYPTAIR BLACK BOX RECORDERS**

**CAIRO:** Egypt deployed a submarine yesterday to hunt for the black box flight recorders of the EgyptAir plane that crashed in some of the deepest waters of the Mediterranean Sea with 66 people on board, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said. Ships scouring the sea north of Alexandria for three days have found body parts, personal belongings and wreckage from the Airbus 320, but are still trying to locate the recorders which could shed light on the cause of Thursday's crash.

Sisi said that underwater equipment from Egypt's offshore oil industry was being brought in to help the search. "They have a submarine that can reach 3,000 metres under water," he said in a televised speech. "It moved today in the direction of the plane crash site because we are working hard to salvage the black boxes."

French investigators said on Saturday that the plane sent a series of warnings indicating that smoke had been detected on board shortly before it disappeared off radar screens. The signals did not indicate what caused the smoke or fire, and aviation experts have not ruled out either deliberate sabotage or a technical fault, but they offered early clues as to what unfolded in the moments before the crash. "Until now all scenarios are possible," Sisi said in his first public remarks on the crash. "So please, it is very important that we do not talk and say there is a specific scenario."

The crash was the third blow since October to hit Egypt's travel industry, still reeling from political unrest following the 2011 uprising that ousted Hosni Mubarak.

A suspected Islamic State bombing brought down a Russian airliner after it took off from Sharm al-Sheikh airport in late October, killing all 224 people on board, and an EgyptAir plane was hijacked in March by a man wearing a fake suicide belt. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Sharm al-Sheikh bombing within hours but a purported statement from the group's spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, distributed on Saturday, made no mention of the crash. EgyptAir has told relatives of the victims, who were mainly Egyptian and French nationals, that recovering and identifying bodies from the sea could take weeks - adding to the pain and uncertainty of grieving families. Samar Ezzedine, 27 years old and newlywed, was one of the cabin crew on flight 804. Her mother Amal has sat in the lobby of a hotel overlooking Cairo Airport, still waiting for her daughter to come back.—Reuters

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## RUSSIA IN FIRST RAIDS ON SYRIA'S ALEPPO SINCE TRUCE

**BEIRUT:** Russian warplanes hit a key rebel supply route to Aleppo yesterday in Moscow's first strikes on Syria's battleground second city since a February ceasefire, a monitoring group said. "The Russian and Syrian warplanes together carried out at least 40 air strikes on the Castello road," Syrian Observatory for Human Rights chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. "They are the heaviest air strikes there since

February, and they are also the first confirmed Russian strikes since the truce began," Abdel Rahman said.

The violence wracking Aleppo city over the past month has killed some 300 civilians and left world powers scrambling to save the fragile truce brokered by the United States and Russia nearly three months ago.

The northern city-once Syria's commercial powerhouse-is divided

between rebel groups in the east and regime forces in the west. The Castello road is a key supply route for rebels leading north out of Aleppo. Even while the rest of the city witnessed relative calm in the first few weeks of the truce, fierce fighting has raged for the highway.

On Friday, Moscow proposed joint air strikes with Washington against jihadists in Syria from Wednesday, but

its offer was spurned. Russia has been carrying out air strikes in Syria since last September in support of its ally President Bashar al-Assad.

Washington launched its air war against the Islamic State group and other jihadists in Syria in 2014. Pentagon spokesman Navy Captain Jeff Davis said the US military does "not collaborate or coordinate with the Russians on any operations in

Syria." US State Department spokesman John Kirby said nothing had been agreed with Moscow as its ally Damascus was responsible for the "vast majority" of violations of the February ceasefire. Russia's intervention has significantly strengthened the Syrian government in the five-year-old civil war that has killed more than 270,000 people and driven millions from their homes.—AFP

## SYRIA REBELS GIVE TRUCE BROKERS 48 HOURS TO END REGIME ASSAULT

**BEIRUT:** Rebel groups yesterday set a 48-hour deadline for the US and Russian sponsors of a February ceasefire in Syria's conflict to halt a regime offensive in the Damascus region.

"We are giving the sponsors of the ceasefire 48 hours to rescue what remains of the accord and to force the criminal regime of (President Bashar al-) Assad and his allies to completely and immediately halt their brutal offensive against Daraya and Eastern Ghouta," 29 rebel groups said in a statement. "In view of the regime's offensive against all the liberated regions, in particular Daraya... we consider the ceasefire accord to have totally collapsed," the groups said. "Rebel groups will take all possible measures and respond with all means to defend our people and on all fronts until the regime totally halts its offensives against all liberated regions, especially Daraya, and pulls back to its pre-May 14 positions," they said.

Syria's army, backed by Lebanon's Shiite militia Hezbollah, on Thursday recaptured

the town of Deir al-Assafir and nine nearby villages in the Damascus region, taking advantage of clashes in the Eastern Ghouta area between rival rebel groups Jaish al-Islam and Faylaq al-Rahman which were among those listed on the joint statement.

Hundreds of families fled the area, which Islamist rebels had controlled since 2012. The town of Daraya, also near the capital, was one of the first to erupt in demonstrations against the government in 2011. It has been under a strict regime siege since late 2012.

The rebel groups urged the international community and friendly nations "to act to save Daraya from genocide". Anti-regime group the Local Coordinating Committees said Sunday clashes were taking place in suburbs of Daraya, and the pro-regime Al-Masdar website said the army "is preparing a major operation" to capture it within the next few days. The political opposition Coalition said in a statement it backs the decisions of rebel groups and "supports their demands".—AFP

## TOP US COMMANDER MAKES SECRET VISIT TO SYRIA

**NORTHERN SYRIA:** On a secret trip to Syria, the new commander of US forces in the Middle East said Saturday he felt a moral obligation to enter a war zone to check on his troops and make his own assessment of progress in organizing local Arab and Kurd fighters for what has been a slow campaign to push the Islamic State group out of Syria.

"I have responsibility for this mission, and I have responsibility for the people that we put here," Army Gen. Joseph Votel said in an interview as dusk fell on the remote outpost where he had arrived 11 hours earlier. "So it's imperative for me to come and see what they're dealing with - to share the risk they are dealing with."

Votel, who has headed US Central Command for just seven weeks, became the highest-ranking US military officer known to have entered Syria since the US began its campaign to counter the Islamic State group in 2014. The circumstance was exceptional because the US has no combat units in Syria, no diplomatic relations with Syria and for much of the past two years has enveloped much of its Syria military mission in secrecy.

Votel said he brought reporters with him because, "We don't have anything to hide. I don't want people guessing about what we're doing here. The American people should have the right to see what we're doing here." Votel flew into northern Syria from Iraq, where he had conferred on Friday with US and Iraqi military commanders. In Syria he met with US military advisers working with Syrian Arab fighters and consulted with leaders of the Syrian Democratic Forces, an umbrella group of Kurdish and Arab fighters supported by the US. A small group of reporters accompanied Votel under ground rules that, for security reasons, prohibited disclosing his visit until after he had left Syria. After landing at a remote camp where American military advisers are training Syrian Arab troops in basic soldiering skills, Votel split off from the reporters who flew in with him; he then visited several other undisclosed locations in Syria before returning to the camp.

Syria is a raging war zone, torn by multiple conflicts that have created severe human suffering across much of the country. But on Saturday the US advisers camp that Votel visited was quiet. Situated about 50 miles from the nearest fighting, it was remarkably quiet. The sharpest sound was a month-old puppy's yapping as he ran between visitors' legs. A light breeze

nudged several bright-yellow flags of the Syrian Democratic Forces attached to small bushes and atop a post buried in an earthen berm beside a shooting range.

Aides said Votel's flight into Syria was the first made in daylight by US forces, who have about 200 advisers on the ground. Military ground rules for the trip prohibited reporting the kind of aircraft Votel used, the exact location of where he landed and the names and images of the US military advisers, who said they have been operating from the camp since January. An Associated Press reporter and journalists from two other news organizations were the first Western media to visit the secretive operation.

The last known high-level US official to visit Syria was Brett McGurk, Obama's envoy to the coalition fighting Islamic State militants. He spent two days in Syria in late January, including a tour of Kobani, the small town near the Turkish border where Kurdish fighters backed by US airstrikes had expelled an entrenched group of Islamic State fighters a year earlier. In the interview, Votel said his visit had hardened his belief that the US is taking the right approach to developing local forces to fight IS, an acronym for the Islamic State group. "I left with increased confidence in their capabilities and our ability to support them," he said. "I think that model is working and working well."

The US has struggled to find an effective ground force to take on IS in Syria, where President Barack Obama has ruled out a US ground combat role. This presents a different problem than in Iraq, where the US at least has a government to partner with. The problem in Syria is complicated by the fractured nature of the opposition to the government of President Bashar al-Assad. The US is trying to develop credible Arab fighters to retake Raqqa, the Islamic State group's self-declared capital, while Syrian Kurds have retaken territory from IS in other parts of northern Syria.

The US is supporting what it calls the Syrian Democratic Forces, which is predominantly comprised of Syrian Kurds, numbering at least 25,000 fighters, with a smaller element of Syrian Arabs, numbering perhaps 5,000 to 6,000. The US is trying to increase the Arab numbers.

Syrian Arab commanders who were made available for interviews at the US camp Saturday said their forces are gaining battlefield momentum but also need a lot more help. They were quick to say the US-led coalition should pitch in more.—AP



**FALLUJAH, IRAQ:** Iraqi security forces gather on the outskirts of Fallujah as they prepare an operation aimed at retaking the city from the Islamic State (IS) group yesterday.—AFP

## IRAQ GREEN ZONE BREACH MAY SET STAGE FOR MORE VIOLENCE

### SHARPENING POLITICAL DIVISIONS IN IRAQ

**BAGHDAD:** The latest breach of Baghdad's Green Zone by angry protesters may set the stage for further violence between demonstrators and security forces, as well as sharpening political divisions in Iraq.

Supporters of cleric Moqtada al-Sadr broke into the Green Zone—a fortified Baghdad area that is home to Iraq's main government institutions as well as various embassies—and stormed the premier's office on Friday.

Security forces used tear gas, water cannons, sound bombs and a barrage of bullets largely fired into the air to disperse the protesters, harrying them away from the Green Zone and back across the Tigris River. But at least two demonstrators died of bullet wounds, officials said, while dozens more people, including members of the security forces, were injured in the unrest.

The United Nations Iraq mission expressed "deep concern about the escalation of confrontation" during the protest. It "shows how events could take a different turn and escalate, causing casualties," UN representative Jan Kubis said. The security measures—which were much tougher than those protesters faced when entering the Green Zone three weeks earlier—enraged the demonstrators, some of whom threw rocks and other debris toward security forces. After sporadically using tear gas and water cannons against protesters gathered at a gate they had breached, security forces sallied out, firing in the air and shooting tear gas into the crowd of demonstrators, who fled down the street.

#### Tougher security response

Some irate protesters equated Iraqi politicians with the hated Islamic State (IS) jihadist group, which carries out frequent bombings targeting civilians in Baghdad. Security forces had largely stood by during previous demonstrations, including when Sadr supporters broke into the Green Zone and stormed parliament in April. But the period of tolerance of such actions appears to be over, and that, combined with demonstrators angered by the deaths and injuries they sustained Friday, could lead to further violence between the two sides. "The storming of government buildings in Baghdad has been controlled and directed, but rioting can also turn into unconstrained mob violence and looting," said Kimberly Kagan, the president of the Institute for the Study of War.

There is also the danger that rival militias, which have gained significant power during the fight against IS, could clash with the Sadr supporters. "There is high risk of violence between Sadrists and rival militias" as part of their struggle for political preeminence, Kagan said. "They have fought in the past... and they are at odds today," she said. Sadr, a Najaf-based Shiite cleric who commands a powerful force of militiamen, vowed Friday that "peaceful protests" would continue, but also threatened escalation, saying that "the revolution will take another form" if there are attempts to block them. Abadi struck a relatively conciliatory tone following the storming of his office, but did say that attacks on state institutions "cannot be accepted."

#### Little progress on reforms

Sadr supporters have now taken the reins of a protest movement that began last summer with calls for improvements to abysmal services, especially electricity. The demonstrations last year gained the support of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the country's top Shiite cleric, and pushed Abadi to announce reform measures.

But almost a year later, little change has been achieved. "So far, there is not much progress on any front," said Zaid al-Ali, a fellow at Princeton University and the author of "The Struggle For Iraq's Future." "No major legislation has been passed, government is in a mess and parliament is basically not meeting anymore," Ali said.

The protests dwindled over the winter, but were revitalized after Sadr began calling for demonstrations earlier this year and demanding a technocratic government—a measure Abadi had already proposed.

"The Sadrists have given the protesters more clout, but they have also politicised the movement," said Ali. Parliament has still not convened since the first storming of the Green Zone, and actions by Sadr supporters have increased divisions between them and other political groups. "The Sadrists have burned the bridge with other political forces," said Kirk Sowell, a Jordan-based political risk analyst who is the publisher of Inside Iraqi Politics. And parliamentary action will ultimately be required to carry out changes to the cabinet that the demonstrators have demanded.—AFP

## ONE MONTH AWAY, BREXIT PROSPECTS RECEDE AMID GLOBAL WARNINGS

**LONDON:** With one month to go until Britain's EU referendum, the Remain campaign is pulling ahead amid warnings over the international consequences of a Brexit and increasingly outlandish claims at home.

The battle for votes ahead of the June 23 referendum has drawn in US President Barack Obama, EU leaders and the IMF, prompted comparisons between the European Union and Adolf Hitler and sparked a warning about the risk of World War III. Prime Minister David Cameron is leading the campaign to "Remain", backed by leaders such as Obama amid international unease at the prospect of Britain becoming the first EU member ever to leave the bloc. The International Monetary Fund has warned of a potentially severe global market reaction to a vote to a "Leave" vote, while G7 finance ministers this weekend warned of the prospect of a Brexit "shock".

The European Commission said the uncertainty is already affecting growth in the euro zone, while the Bank of England made a similar point regarding the British economy. Opinion polls suggest that, barring a major upset, "Remain" is on course to win. An average of the last six surveys by the What UK Thinks research project gives the campaign a 10-point lead over the "Leave" camp, on 55 percent, excluding undecideds.

Bookmakers have also put their money on Britain staying in, with William Hill and Ladbrokes offering odds that imply a Remain

vote is more than 85 percent likely. Experts caution that turnout will be key, with many of those most supportive of the EU—young people and ethnic minorities—also least likely to vote. But the polls will offer hope to Cameron, who many expect would be forced to resign if he loses, with leading Brexit supporter Boris Johnson, the former London mayor, among those waiting in the wings. They also reduce the likelihood of a second referendum on Scottish independence, after the governing nationalists warned a Brexit could see the broadly pro-European Scots make another bid to leave the UK within two years.

#### From Hitler to Baghdad

Cameron called the referendum in 2013 to placate eurosceptics in his Conservative Party, but senior figures have turned against each other in an increasingly shrill campaign.

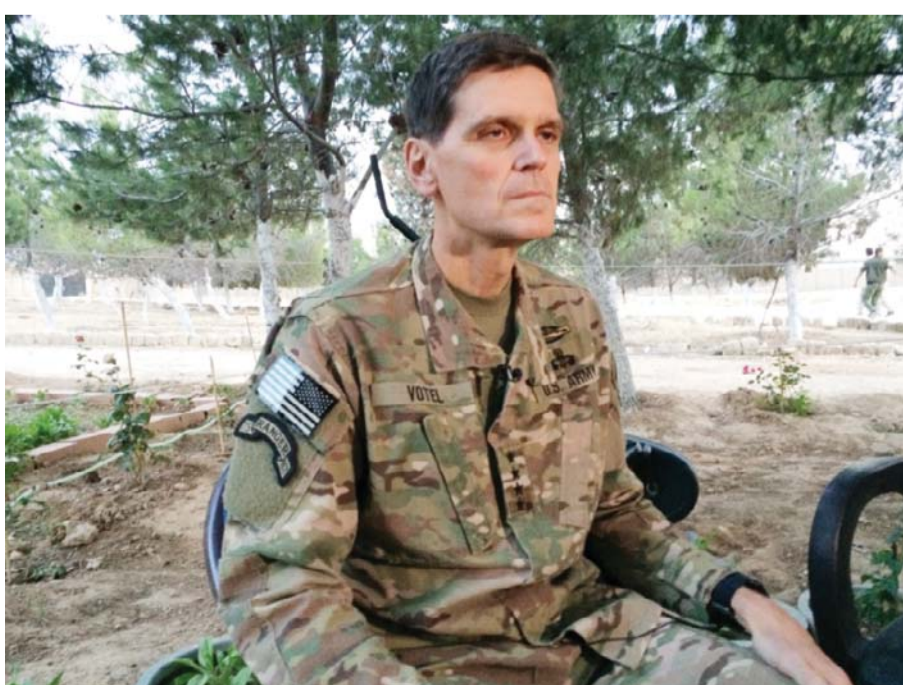
Johnson, tipped as a possible future Conservative leader, has been canvassing in towns across Britain, calling on voters to "take back control" from Brussels. He has been making headline-grabbing, if questionable, claims about the over-reaching power of the EU, including that it bans the sale of large bunches of bananas and does not allow tea bags to be recycled. More seriously, Johnson caused outrage by suggesting in a newspaper interview that the EU had similar ambitions to Hitler in unifying Europe under one authority. Cameron has also been criss-crossing the

country addressing audiences in businesses and factories, giving stark warnings of the risks of going it alone. He was accused of suggesting that a new world war could break out after warning that a Brexit would threaten decades of peace in Europe.

The prime minister also said that the leader of the Islamic State jihadist group, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, would welcome Britain leaving the bloc. Paul Taggart, politics professor at Sussex University, said campaigners were trying to simplify complex issues and "it's about finding mantras that work". But the tone of the debate, which has seen senior Conservatives accuse each other of smears, of being "reckless" and "economically illiterate", has sparked concerns about the unity of the party after June 23.

#### 'Violence' on streets

The first television debate will involve Cameron and UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage on June 7, although they will not go head to head, instead taking questions one after the other from a live studio audience. The anti-immigration UKIP has made the prospect of ending mass EU immigration a central theme of the "Leave" campaign. A new ComRes poll this week put the economy as the top concern of voters, followed closely by immigration. Farage has warned that if people feel they have lost control, including of their borders, "then violence is the next step".—AFP



**NORTHERN SYRIA:** Army Gen. Joseph Votel speaks to reporters Saturday, May 21, 2016 during a secret trip to Syria.—AP





DOHA: Argentinean Foreign Minister Susana Malcorra talks to The Associated Press during a visit to Qatar yesterday. — AP

## INTERVIEW: ARGENTINIAN FM ENVISIONS 'INSPIRATIONAL' UN

DOHA: The latest candidate to enter the race to become the next United Nations secretary general said yesterday that the world body must become more inspirational and geared toward finding ways to tackle emerging new challenges.

She also thinks that finally having a woman at the helm would help drive the change that's needed. "My sense is that women bring to any discussion a much more cross-cutting perspective, a much more integrated perspective. It is in the nature of women," Argentinean Foreign Minister Susana Malcorra said during an interview with The Associated Press two days after she was formally nominated for the job. "So I think that will be helpful in a way to adapt and adjust the UN to this interconnected world," she continued.

Malcorra is the fifth woman to have entered the race to replace Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whose term is up at the end of the year. She is a former UN undersecretary-general and chief of staff to Ban, and was tapped to become Argentina's foreign minister after President Mauricio Macri's election in November. Macri put her name forward for the secretary general post on Friday.

The 193-member UN General Assembly will pick the next secretary general on the recommendation by the 15-member Security Council. That effectively gives the council's five permanent members - the US, Russia, China, Britain and France - veto power over any candidate. The post has always gone to a man and has traditionally cycled among regions, including Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Seven of the 10 candidates who have publicly announced bids hail from Eastern Europe, a region that has never seen one of its own in the post.

Speaking to the AP during a brief visit to the

Gulf nation of Qatar, Malcorra called for an "issue-centric UN" rather than one "driven by its organizational arrangements." "It's a matter of mindset and attitude. The UN has to be inspirational for the world and for its own people, and it has to be driven by the issues. Instead of finding the excuse why this is not possible, finding the way to make it happen," she said.

She pointed to the intractable conflict in Syria as a crisis that illustrates the shortcomings of the UN and the wider international community.

The job of the next secretary general will be to prepare "early warning systems" and "engage early enough" to prevent similar crises from spinning out of control, she said. As for whether Syrian President Bashar Assad must step aside to bring an end to the conflict, she was noncommittal, saying it "should be for the Syrians to decide if there is a transition."

In her role as foreign minister, Malcorra is putting emphasis on attracting foreign investment to Argentina as South America's second-largest economy looks to move beyond the legacy of its 2001 economic crisis and record default on \$100 billion of debt.

The country last month returned to international credit markets with a successful \$16.5 billion bond sale and paid off holdout creditors to end a years-old legal dispute that complicated its dealings with financial markets.

Malcorra held trade and investment talks in China last week. She sat down for similar bilateral discussions with Qatar during her visit, and expressed interest in further investment from the oil-rich Gulf Arab nations. She also welcomed deeper engagement with Britain despite memories of the countries' 1982 war over the Falkland Islands, known in Argentina as the Malvinas, saying "it's not the only issue we can have with the United Kingdom." — AP

# CLINTON, IN 'DEAD HEAT' WITH TRUMP, OFFERS SHARPER CONTRAST 'WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER'

WASHINGTON: Hillary Clinton tried to draw a sharper contrast with Donald Trump yesterday, saying the central message of her campaign was "We're stronger together," even as a new poll showed the two candidates in a statistical tie.

The new Washington Post/ABC News survey found the presidential frontrunners in "a virtual dead heat" among registered voters.

Never in the poll's history, The Post said, had two major party nominees been viewed as harshly, with nearly 6 in 10 voters holding negative impressions of both candidates.

That underscored a growing sense of urgency in the Clinton campaign to define her both more clearly and positively a task made harder by her inability to shake off her tenacious Democratic rival, Bernie Sanders.

Clinton, in an appearance on NBC, challenged Trump's "Make America Great" slogan, suggesting that "he seems to be particularly focused on making himself appear great." The former secretary of state said her campaign would be "demonstrating the hollowness of his rhetoric, and the danger of a lot of what he has said."

### 'We're stronger together'

Asked to sum up her own message, Clinton said, "We're stronger together." She said Americans needed to unify and work together to improve the economy. "We're stronger together when we have a bipartisan, even non-partisan foreign policy that protects our country. And that provides the kind of steady, strong, smart leadership that the rest of the world expects." But the new poll seemed to show that if Americans are united about anything, it is in their dissatisfaction with the two leading candidates.

What is shaping up to be the nastiest American presidential campaign in recent memory is beginning with voters expressing historically deep and practically identical levels of discomfort with both Trump and Clinton.

This has shaken up some in the Democratic camp, who assumed Trump would be an easy target, and it has provided encouragement to Sanders, the Vermont senator who trails Clinton but keeps winning primaries.

Appearing on yesterday's talk shows, Sanders pleaded with the hundreds of the party's so-called super-delegates who support Clinton to reconsider their allegiance ahead of the Democratic nominating convention in late July. A frequent critic of the Democrats' selection process, he said the party was headed for an "anointment" of Clinton.

As the race for the White House grows closer, Clinton supporters and some Democratic Party leaders have made increasingly insistent calls for Sanders to step aside and let Clinton turn her full attention to Trump.

But Sanders vowed yet again yesterday to stay in the race at least until California, the most populous state, stages its primary on June 7. The Post/ABC poll found the two leading candidates are in a statistical dead heat, with 46 percent of registered voters favoring Trump and 44 percent supporting Clinton. That amounted to an 11-point shift in the Republican's favor since March.

Clinton's net negative rating among registered voters was a minus 16, virtually the same as Trump's minus 17, though his negatives were significantly higher among all adults.

### Positive ratings

Voters gave Sanders the most positive ratings of the three, with a net positive of 8 points among registered voters. But Clinton suggested on NBC's "Meet the Press" that the Sanders numbers might be meaningless, because early polls are often unreliable and because Sanders has

not borne the brunt of the intense scrutiny that she has faced for decades.

"I don't think he's ever had a single negative ad against him," she said. "That's fine, but we know what we're going into and understand what it's going to take to win in the fall. Finally, I would say that polls this far out mean nothing. They certainly mean nothing to me." Voters also continued to express positive views of President Obama, to whom Clinton has closely tied her campaign, giving him a 51-percent approval rating.

Clinton has largely aligned herself with Obama-while taking her distance on issues like trade with Asia-but said Sunday that she is her own person. "I'm not running for anybody's third term," she said on NBC. "I'm running for my first term. I also want to do what works. My goal is to produce positive results for the American people." — AFP



FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA: Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks before the third annual Circle of Mothers conference put on by the Trayvon Martin Foundation on Saturday. — AFP

## SANDERS STEPS UP FEUD WITH US DEMOCRATIC ESTABLISHMENT

WASHINGTON: Democrat Bernie Sanders cranked up his fight with his party's leaders yesterday, backing a challenger to the Democratic National Committee's chairwoman and accusing the party establishment of trying to anoint Hillary Clinton as the presidential nominee.

In a series of television interviews, Sanders remained defiant despite what he acknowledged was an uphill fight to overtake front-runner Clinton. He told ABC's "This Week" program that Americans should not have to choose between "the lesser of two evils" in the Nov. 8 election against presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump.

Sanders said that if he wins the White House, he would not reappoint US Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz as DNC chairwoman. He also endorsed law professor Tim Canova, who is challenging the Florida congresswoman in the August Democratic primary. "Do I think she is the kind of chair that the Democratic Party needs? No, I don't," Sanders told CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday.

"Frankly, what the Democratic Party is about is running around to rich people's homes and raising obscene sums of money from wealthy people. What we need to do is to say to working class people - we are on your side," he said.

The defiant tone by Sanders, a US senator from Vermont, has worried some Democrats anxious to see Clinton begin to unify the party and turn her attention to a fall election showdown with Trump.

Trump has gained ground in opinion polls as Republicans begin to rally around his likely candidacy. A Washington Post-ABC News poll released on Sunday showed Trump with a 2-point lead over Clinton, within the margin of error. In early March, Clinton led Trump by 9 percentage points in the same poll.

But Sanders has ignored growing Democratic calls to step aside and repeated his vow to stay in the race until the party's nominating convention in Philadelphia on July 25-28, despite Clinton's nearly insurmountable lead in pledged convention delegates who will choose the nominees.

He said he wanted to do away with super delegates - party leaders who are free to support any candidate. Their rush to back Clinton even before votes had been cast amounted to "an anointment process," Sanders said.

### 'Lesser of two evils'

He promised to influence the party platform and party rules even if he was not the nominee, but said if Clinton does not move toward his views on



NATIONAL CITY, CALIFORNIA: Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders addresses supporters during a rally. — AFP

reining in Wall Street, reducing income equality and other issues, "she's going to have her problems."

"I don't want to see the American people voting for the lesser of two evils. I want the American people to be voting for a vision of economic justice, of social justice, of environmental justice, of racial justice," he said on ABC's "This Week"

Sanders has feuded with the party over a debate schedule he says favored Clinton and warned the party against stacking convention committees with Clinton supporters. After his endorsement of her opponent, Wasserman Schultz said in a statement that she would remain neutral in the presidential Democratic primary. — Reuters

## ONE MONTH AWAY, BREXIT PROSPECTS RECEDE AMID GLOBAL WARNINGS

LONDON: With one month to go until Britain's EU referendum, the Remain campaign is pulling ahead amid warnings over the international consequences of a Brexit and increasingly outlandish claims at home.

The battle for votes ahead of the June 23 referendum has drawn in US President Barack Obama, EU leaders and the IMF, prompted comparisons between the European Union and Adolf Hitler and sparked a warning about the risk of World War III.

Prime Minister David Cameron is leading the campaign to "Remain", backed by leaders such as Obama amid international unease at the prospect of Britain becoming the first EU member ever to leave the bloc.

The International Monetary Fund has warned of a potentially severe global market reaction to a vote to a "Leave" vote, while G7 finance ministers this weekend warned of the prospect of a Brexit "shock".

The European Commission said the uncertainty is already affecting growth in the euro zone, while the Bank of England made a similar point regard-

ing the British economy. Opinion polls suggest that, barring a major upset, "Remain" is on course to win. An average of the last six surveys by the What UK Thinks research project gives the campaign a 10-point lead over the "Leave" camp, on 55 percent, excluding undecideds.

Bookmakers have also put their money on Britain staying in, with William Hill and Ladbrokes offering odds that imply a Remain vote is more than 85 percent likely. Experts caution that turnout will be key, with many of those most supportive of the EU-youth people and ethnic minorities-also least likely to vote.

But the polls will offer hope to Cameron, who many expect would be forced to resign if he loses, with leading Brexit supporter Boris Johnson, the former London mayor, among those waiting in the wings. They also reduce the likelihood of a second referendum on Scottish independence, after the governing nationalists warned a Brexit could see the broadly pro-European Scots make another bid to leave the UK within two years. — AFP

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## UKRAINIAN SOLDIER KILLED IN FRESH CLASHES IN REBEL EAST

**KIEV:** One Ukrainian soldier was killed and another injured in fresh fighting between pro-Russian rebels and government forces in the country's separatist east, the military said yesterday.

A series of truce agreements have helped reduce violence in the region, although sporadic clashes persist. "Over the past 24 hours, one Ukrainian

soldier was killed and another injured as a result of hostilities," Ukrainian military spokesman Oleksandr Motuzyanyk told journalists.

The soldiers came under mortar fire near the city of Avdiivka, located just outside Donetsk, the de facto capital of the pro-Russian rebels, Motuzyanyk said, adding that separatist fighters

had become more active along the frontline.

A spokesperson of the rebel region of Donetsk yesterday accused Ukrainian troops of firing 193 times along the frontline over the past 24 hours, the separatists' news agency reported. "The situation in the Donetsk People's Republic remains

tense," the agency quoted the spokesperson as saying.

Kiev and the West have accused Russia of buttressing the rebels and sending in regular troops across the border, claims Moscow has repeatedly denied.

Ukrainian Defence Minister Stepan Poltorak said last month that it could

take years to end the conflict, which has claimed more than 9,300 lives since it erupted in April 2014. Earlier this month, France and Germany held a round of talks with Kiev and Moscow as part of efforts to try to seek a lasting peace deal but no consensus was reached over elections in the separatist regions of eastern Ukraine.—AFP



**LONDON:** British Prime Minister David Cameron (L) takes a drink as he speaks to an employee on a visit to a supermarket yesterday.—AP

## CAMERON SAYS TRUMP COMMENTS ON MUSLIM BAN 'VERY DANGEROUS'

**LONDON:** British Prime Minister David Cameron said yesterday US presidential candidate Donald Trump's comments on banning Muslims from entering the United States were "very dangerous", adding to his criticism of the presumptive Republican nominee. "It's a very dangerous thing to say ... as well as a divisive and wrong one,"

Cameron told ITV's "Peston on Sunday" show. However, he said he would be prepared to meet Trump if he came to Britain ahead of the US election.

In December, Cameron called Trump "divisive, stupid and wrong" for calling for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States.—Reuters

## BAFFLED, SPAIN'S BRITISH EXPATS ON EDGE AS BREXIT THREATENS

**BENALMADENA:** At the aptly-named "Euro Bar" in Spain's Benalmadena, the outdoor patio is brimming with drinkers basking in the warm afternoon sun, English wafting from the tables in this built-up expatriate haunt on the Costa del Sol.

Among them is Pauline, a pensioner who moved to the southern Spanish coast in 2011 with her husband in search of warmer climes for her arthritis—one of up to one million Britons living in Spain, many eyeing a potential Brexit with trepidation. "We'd go back," says the slim, tanned, 69-year-old from the chilly northern British city of Leeds, sipping a pint of beer as she ponders the consequences of Britain leaving the European Union.

Like countless retired British nationals who have swapped the infamous rain back home for the sun of Spain and the lure of cheaper property, Pauline—who refused to give her last name—is most concerned about healthcare.

Apart from arthritis, she suffers from a thyroid condition for which she needs regular injections and other medication, all of which is covered by Spain's healthcare system under EU mechanisms that allow her to get the same treatment as locals.

### 'Mass exodus'?

What would happen if Britons voted to leave the European Union in a June 23 referendum is anyone's guess, as this would be unprecedented in the history of the 28-member bloc. "One of the most important aspects of the withdrawal negotiations would be determining the acquired rights of the two million or so UK citizens living in other member states," a British parliamentary committee concluded earlier this month. "This would be a complex and daunting task." Would Britain reach bilateral agreements with Spain—and the other remaining EU members—about expatriates' rights, and how long would that take? Or would British pensioners be forced to resort to private healthcare or pay into Spain's social security system—a costly endeavour either way. "We wouldn't be able to afford it... It's all right for the rich, but it won't be any good for the ordinary voters," says Pauline, a former supermarket cashier. It's the same story for Irene Davies, who lives 80 kilometers inland in a gated mobile home park where lovingly-tended avenues lead on one side to a bowl-

ing green, and on the other to a red telephone box. The 64-year-old has just finished breakfast at her local restaurant on the outskirts of the village of Mollina. Nearby, mainly British locals stroll through a weekly market where After Eight mints and Oxo cubes vie for space with old copies of "Take a Break" magazine.

"There are concerns about health if we do come out of the EU, I think they'll find a mass exodus," she says, pointing out that most of the residents in her mobile home park are roughly 60 to 80 years old. "They're of a certain age, and they all take tablets."

### Question marks galore

Officially, just over 283,000 Britons are registered as residing in Spain, but many don't bother to sign up and it is estimated 800,000 to a million live in the country. Of all UK-born residents living in the EU in 2011, the largest number was in Spain, according to Britain's Migration Observatory—and many are retired.

But the uncertainty linked to a possible Brexit has more than pensioners on edge. British lawyer Ralph Smith, who has worked in Madrid for 18 years and is married to a Spaniard, is equally baffled. "Would I have to apply for a resident's permit to live here? Would I have to change my nationality?" the 52-year-old asks, pointing out that under Spanish law, that would mean giving up his British citizenship.

"Would I need to apply for a work permit?" For Stephen Ritson, a presenter for Spain's English-speaking Talk Radio Europe, Britons here are "overwhelmingly" in favor of staying in the European Union. Based on the Costa Blanca in southeastern Spain—another favorite for Brits with well-known resorts such as Benidorm—he says there are the odd exceptions, such as those worried about immigration in the United Kingdom.

"You get the slightly illogical 'all those foreigners going over there, we've got no control over the border'—and you think of the irony of them being foreigners in Spain," he says. By and large, though, Ritson says the main issue at stake is what deal will be negotiated for expats if Brexit happens. "Will it be better than it is now, will it be the same or will it be worse?" he says. "Well I find it inconceivable that it could be better—I can't see why the rest of the EU would give Britain a better deal than it gives to its own members."—AFP



**BENALMADENA, SPAIN:** An elderly couple sit in a British bar.—AFP

## FRENCH PM VISITS ISRAEL TO PUSH FOR PEACE PLAN

IN ORDER TO MOVE ON FROM THE STANDSTILL

**TEL AVIV:** French Prime Minister Manuel Valls visited Israel yesterday to advance his country's plan to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts in the face of opposition from his counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu.

Valls, who arrived on Saturday night, is to meet Netanyahu on Tuesday before holding talks in Ramallah on Tuesday with Palestinian prime minister Rami Hamdallah. Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas has welcomed the French initiative to hold a meeting of foreign ministers from a range of countries on June 3, without the Israelis and Palestinians present.

Another conference would then be held in the autumn, with the Israelis and Palestinians in attendance. The goal is to eventually restart negotiations that would lead to a Palestinian state. Netanyahu has criticized the initiative and called for direct negotiations between the two sides. Negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians have been at a standstill since a US-led initiative collapsed in April 2014.

In an interview with Palestinian newspaper Al-Ayyam published yesterday, Valls called himself a "friend of Israel" but said that Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank must stop. He also reiterated that his government would not automatically recognize a Palestinian state if the peace initiative failed.

A threat to do so was made in January by former foreign minister Laurent Fabius, angering the Israeli government, which argued that it removed any incentive for the Palestinians to negotiate in good faith. His successor Jean-Marc Ayrault has since backed away from the statement. "The objective is to arrive at the creation of a Palestinian state," Valls said in the interview. "It is to allow your national aspirations to finally be realized. To say today when we will recognize the Palestinian state is to determine in advance the failure of our initiative."

### 'Facts on the ground'

Valls said "we must also guarantee" Israel's



**TEL AVIV:** Former Israeli president Shimon Peres (L) welcomes French Prime Minister Manuel Valls before their meeting at the Peres Center for Peace yesterday.—AFP

security, but called for a halt to settlement building, considered a major stumbling block to peace. Settlements in the West Bank are considered illegal under international law and built on land the Palestinians see as part of their future state. "Stopping settlements is an imperative," he said. "Because we cannot both want to discuss peace and be sincere in the negotiations and at the same time continue to create facts on the ground." Seeking to address Israel's concerns, Valls said that France's initiative would not try to impose a solution and that negotiations between the two sides would ultimately resolve

the conflict. Valls's visit comes at a time of political turbulence in Israel, with Netanyahu expected to soon finalize negotiations with the party of hardliner Avigdor Lieberman to join his coalition. Lieberman, who lives in a West Bank settlement and is detested by the Palestinians, is expected to take on the key role of defense minister. Yesterday, Netanyahu sought to ease concerns over the expected entrance of Lieberman's party into his coalition, saying his government would still seek peace with the Palestinians. Valls's visit on Sunday was mainly devoted to economic and cultural issues.—AFP

## TURKEY'S ERDOGAN ASKS LONGTIME ALLY TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT

**ANKARA:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday appointed one of his most trusted allies to form Turkey's new government, in a move seen to help consolidate his hold on power.

Binali Yildirim, the transportation and communications minister and a founding member of the ruling party, was tapped to replace Ahmet Davutoglu who stepped down amid growing differences with Erdogan, including his wish to overhaul the constitution to give the largely ceremonial presidency executive powers. Yildirim has said he would work to legalize the "de facto" presidential system by introducing a new constitution to that effect. The appointment of the 60-year-old politician came hours after the ruling party confirmed him as party chairman, and he immediately expressed allegiance to the Turkish leader, vowing to follow his path. Davutoglu remains caretaker premier until Yildirim forms a new Cabinet. "Our path is the path of the voice and the breath of the people, our party's leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan," Yildirim said in a speech to thank delegates who voted overwhelmingly earlier on Sunday to endorse him as the new chairman of the governing Justice and Development Party, or AKP.

"We have always proudly said that we are Recep Tayyip Erdogan's companion, that we share a common fate and a common passion," Yildirim said. "Mr. President, we promise you that your passion will be our passion, your cause will be our cause, your path will be our path." In a message read at the opening of the convention, Erdogan again stressed his wish for a new constitution, which he said would help correct the current "skewed" system of administration. Delegates and party officials stood up as his message was read. "My legal bond with the AKP may have ended the day I took the (presidential) oath of office, but my bonds of love have never ended and never will," Erdogan said.

Supporters credit Yildirim for his role in developing major infrastructure projects which have helped buoy Turkey's economy and boost the party's popularity. But critics, including the leader of the main opposition party, have accused him of corruption. Yildirim has rejected the accusation.

The change in party leadership comes at a time when NATO member Turkey is facing an array of security threats including renewed conflict with Kurdish rebels in the southeast, a wave of suicide bombings linked to Kurdish and Islamic State militants, as well as growing blowback from the war in neighboring Syria.

The transition also coincides with growing tensions with the European Union over a con-

troversial deal to reduce the flow of illegal migrants from Turkey to Greece, which Davutoglu helped broker.

Davutoglu, a one-time adviser to Erdogan and a former foreign minister, fell out with the president over several issues including the possibility of peace talks with Kurdish rebels, and the pre-trial detention of journalists accused of spying and academics accused of supporting terrorism.

Erdogan is pushing for a broader definition of terrorism, alarming rights groups who say existing laws are already too widely interpreted to crush dissent. His stance is also at odds with EU conditions for Turkish citizens

to benefit from visa-free travel. In his speech, Yildirim said Turkey would press ahead with operations against Kurdish rebels until the group's armed campaign comes to an end, and he called on the EU to end "the confusion" over Turkey's membership bid and the migration deal.

"It is time we know what they think about Turkey," Yildirim said. "Whether Turkey becomes a member or not, it will continue to expand its democracy and development with determination." In his farewell speech, Davutoglu said resigning was not his wish but that he agreed to it to preserve the unity of the party.—AP



**ANKARA:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, right, and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu shake hands as they pose for a photograph during a final farewell on Thursday.—AP

## THOUSANDS HOMELESS IN CYCLONE-HIT BANGLADESH

**CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH:** Thousands of Bangladeshis were left homeless yesterday after Cyclone Roanu battered the impoverished southern coastal region, ripping apart flimsy houses and killing at least 24 people.

The storm on Saturday ploughed through low-lying villages in the Chittagong and Barisal regions, where residents described seeing meters-high walls of water. Many Bangladeshis were returning safely home on Sunday after authorities evacuated more than 500,000 to shelters before the cyclone hit, packing winds of up to 88 kilometers per hour.

But officials said thousands of others along the coast had been left stranded in their homes as seawater barrelled through dykes and flooded dozens of villages. "Before we could realize, the whole village was washed away by a huge wall of water," said Abu Siddique, a councillor from Banshkhal district in Chittagong.

"It came at least six hours early, giving the villagers no time to rush to cyclone shelters. Those who died were caught by a sudden rush of water," he told AFP. "They (authorities) said the storm surge would be four-feet high but in some places the water that hit our shore was as high as 10 feet (three meters)." Bangladesh's disaster management chief said thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed and 24 people had been killed in total. About half of those who died were from the Chittagong region which bore the brunt of the storm, Disaster Management Department head Reaz Ahmed told AFP.

"Some 80,000 tin-and-mud-built homes were damaged by the storm in the coastal regions including 23,000 homes which were completely knocked down," Ahmed said. Authorities were sending relief supplies includ-

ing rice and other dry food to affected areas, where many poor residents already have very little and scratch a living as small fishermen or farmers. Television footage showed villagers sitting helplessly in front of their flattened houses. "In a moment my home was destroyed," an unnamed villager in Bhola island off the Barisal coast told the private Independent Television channel. A week of extreme weather has wreaked havoc across South Asia, with Sri Lanka pounded by the heaviest rains in 25 years triggering severe floods and landslides.

### Regularly battered

More than 80 villages in Bangladesh's Barisal were flooded after a rain-swollen dam burst and forced residents to flee, the Daily Star newspaper said yesterday. Seawater also gushed through shops and warehouses in the commercial hub and main port city of Chittagong, police and industry officials said. "Food supplies worth one billion taka (\$12.5 million) was damaged after seawater entered our warehouses," Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Mahbubul Alam told AFP.

Flights at Chittagong's international airport resumed after two days of shutdown from the storm which weakened after making land. The government said it was deploying a minister and top disaster officials to the worst-hit areas to assess the damage. Bangladesh is regularly battered by cyclones which form in the Bay of Bengal. Cyclone Aila in 2009 killed 300 people while Cyclone Sidra claimed 4,000 lives in 2007.

Earlier this month lightning strikes killed an unprecedented 59 people in Bangladesh in three days as tropical thunderstorms hit the country before the annual monsoon, which runs from June to September. — AFP



HANOI, VIETNAM: US President Barack Obama arrives on Air Force One at Noi Bai International Airport yesterday. — AP

## OBAMA LOOKS TO BOOST ECONOMIC, SECURITY TIES IN ASIA

### CONFRONTING THE LEGACIES OF TWO WARS LONG PAST

**HANOI, VIETNAM:** President Barack Obama's mission in Vietnam and Japan is to build stronger economic and security ties with Asian-Pacific allies anxious about the rise of an increasingly muscular China. That forward-looking message will be delivered even as he confronts the legacies of two wars long past - Vietnam and World War II - that still are fraught with emotion.

Obama's first stop on his weeklong Asia trip was Vietnam, where he is the third sitting president to visit since the end of the war. Four decades after the fall of Saigon, and two decades after President Bill Clinton restored relations with the nation, Obama is eager to upgrade relations with an emerging power whose rapidly expanding middle class beckons as a promising market for US goods and an offset to China's growing strength in the region.

Obama arrived in Hanoi late yesterday. During his three-day stay in Vietnam, he'll make the case for stronger commercial and security ties, including approval of the 12-nation trans-Pacific trade agreement that is stalled in Congress and facing strong opposition from the 2016 presidential candidates. Vietnam also is hoping that Obama will use the visit to erase an irksome vestige of the war by lifting the US partial embargo on selling arms to the country. The idea is under consideration, but concern about Vietnam's human rights record could weigh against it.

### Japan

In Japan, Obama will attend a summit of the

Group of Seven industrialized nations, where the uncertain global economy will be a top concern of the G-7 leaders. They'll also grapple with a full array of world challenges, including the fight against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, the refugee crisis in Europe and Russian aggression. Also on the agenda will be Beijing's assertive claims in the South China Sea that are causing tensions with other countries in the region.

While the summit isn't expected to produce any breakthroughs, it gives leaders a rare opportunity to talk through the intractable difficulties they confront. "Remember that leaders are lonely people," says Michael Green, senior vice president for Asia at the private Center for Strategic and International Studies. "These people don't have much time to sit down with their peers to talk about common challenges."

For all of that, the culminating moment of Obama's trip will be a solemn visit to Hiroshima, where the US dropped the atomic bomb that killed 140,000 people, ushering in the nuclear age seven decades ago. Another bomb killed 70,000 in Nagasaki three days later.

It will be a moment to reflect on the devastating costs of war and to try to give new impetus to the call for a nuclear-free world that Obama issued seven years ago in his first year as president.

Deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes said the Vietnam and Japan visits both reflect Obama's world view "that we can move beyond diffi-

cult and complicated histories" to find areas of common interest. "You could not have had a more violent conflict than we had with the Japanese in World War II, as a visit to Hiroshima will certainly mark, but now they are among our closest friends in the world," Rhodes said. "You could not have a more contested, controversial, costly, tragic war than the Vietnam War, and now (Vietnam) is becoming a partner of the United States, an important partner."

Still, concerns about human and political rights shadow the president's stay in Vietnam. The country did free a Catholic priest who had been one of its longest-serving political prisoners in the lead-up to the president's visit. But the US remains concerned about severe government restrictions on citizens' political rights and limits on civil liberties and free expression.

Yesterday, the country held parliamentary elections controlled by the Communist Party, which chooses who can stand for election. The government's heavy-handed response to recent unrest over mass fish deaths off the coast of Ha Tinh province prompted the advocacy group Human Rights Watch to call on Vietnamese leaders to put a stop to "harassment, intimidation and persecution" of environmental activists. In an unprecedented show of defiance for the communist country, thousands of people have protested publicly in at least seven cities on recent Sundays to demand a transparent government investigation. The protests were forcibly put down by security forces. — AP



DHAKA, BANGLADESH: Bangladeshi people walk through a waterlogged street after heavy rainfall on Saturday. — AP

## 2 INDIAN CLIMBERS MISSING ON MOUNT EVEREST AFTER 2 DIE

**KATHMANDU, NEPAL:** Two Indian climbers have gone missing on Mount Everest, an expedition organizer said yesterday, after two deaths from apparent altitude sickness in recent days highlighted the risks on the world's highest mountain.

Paresh Nath and Goutam Ghosh have been missing since Saturday, said Wangchu Sherpa of the Trekking Camp Nepal agency in Kathmandu. They were last seen near the Everest summit.

Two of their companions who fell sick were being helped down the mountain, Sherpa said. About 30 climbers have developed frostbite or become sick near the summit in recent days. Most of the sick climbers suffered frostbite while attempting to reach the summit or on their descent, Mountaineering Department official Gyanendra Shrestha said. Favorable weather has allowed nearly 400 climbers to reach the summit from Nepal since May 11, but the altitude, weather and harsh terrain can cause problems at any time.

Several Sherpa guides carried one sick climber from the highest camp, at nearly 8,000 meters (26,240 feet), to Camp 2, at 6,400 meters (21,000 feet), where attempts were being made to pick her up with a helicopter, said Pemba Sherpa of the Seven Summit Treks agency in Kathmandu. Seema Goshwami of India had frostbite to her hands and feet at the South Col camp and was unable to move.

"It took a big and risky effort, but we were able to save her," Pemba Sherpa said, adding that an Iranian climber

identified only as S. Hadi had been brought to Kathmandu and was recovering in a hospital.

A Norwegian woman, 45-year-old Siv Harstad, suffered snow blindness and was helped down from the summit on Saturday, the Norwegian news agency NTB said.

The two climbers who died were on the same expedition team. It was undecided when and if their bodies will be brought down from the high altitude and it will depend on the team and family members, Pasang Phurba of the Seven Summits agency said. Carrying bodies down Everest takes at least eight Sherpa guides, since they become frozen and heavier than normal.

More details were not available because of communication difficulties on the 8,850-meter (29,035-foot) mountain. The two deaths were the first confirmed this year on Everest, during a busy climbing season that follows two years in which the peak was virtually empty due to two fatal avalanches.

Dutch climber Eric Arnold, 35, had enough bottled oxygen with him, as well as climbing partners, but he complained of getting weak and died Friday night near South Col before he was able to get to a lower altitude, Phurba said.

Just hours after Arnold died, Australian climber Maria Strydom also showed signs of altitude sickness Saturday afternoon before she died, Phurba said.

Strydom was a finance lecturer at Monash University's business school in Melbourne. The school posted on Facebook that the community was deeply

saddened by her death. Arnold was from the Dutch city of Rotterdam, according to his Twitter account, which was updated on Friday with a post that he had reached the summit on his fifth try.

In an interview earlier this year with RTV Rijnmond, Arnold noted that the risks of climbing the world's highest peak did not end at the summit. "Two-thirds of the accidents happen on the way down," he said. "If you get euphoric and think 'I have reached my goal,' the most dangerous part is still ahead of you."

Strydom and her husband were attempting to climb the seven summits, the highest peaks on the seven continents, according to the Monash Business School's website.

She had already climbed Denali in Alaska, Aconcagua in Argentina, Mount Ararat in Turkey and Kilimanjaro in Kenya, the website said. Strydom said she felt well-prepared for her attempt to climb Everest, and that depending on whether she reached the summit, her mind would likely turn to her next adventure.

Thousands of people have summited Mount Everest since it was first conquered by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay in 1953. But more than 250 people have died in the attempt.

Trekking companies were anxious to see foreign climbers return after two years of disasters. Nepal's devastating earthquake last year caused the season to be canceled, and climbing attempts were largely abandoned in 2014 after an avalanche above the base camp killed 16 Sherpa guides. — AP



NEPAL: International trekkers pass through a glacier at the Mount Everest base camp. — AP

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## REBELS KILL 6 INDIAN SOLDIERS NEAR BORDER WITH MYANMAR

**GAUHATI, India:** Heavily armed rebels ambushed and killed six Indian paramilitary soldiers, including one officer, yesterday in the latest attack in India's insurgency-ravaged northeastern region bordering Myanmar.

The soldiers were on their way for rescue work after a rain-triggered mudslide hit Chandel district in Manipur state, a police officer said. The insurgents ambushed and

fired at a three-vehicle convoy of paramilitary Assam Rifles soldiers in the forest area, said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

All six occupants of the front jeep were killed. The soldiers in the other two vehicles sped away and escaped the attack, the officer said. The region is infested with

active militant groups that operate from both sides of the India-Myanmar border. The attack occurred on the Indian side, about 15 kilometers (10 miles) from the border. In June last year, the rebels used rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons to ambush an Indian military convoy, killing 18 soldiers in the same area. Separatist groups accuse India's government of exploit-

ing the region's rich natural resources while neglecting local development.

Most of the main rebel groups in Manipur state are not engaged in cease-fire talks with the Indian government, unlike those in other remote northeastern states. The mountainous region, known for its natural beauty, has been battling insurgencies for decades. — AP



**ZHENGZHOU, CHINA:** A child sits on a man's shoulder holding a paper reads "fair education" as they hold a protest in Erqi Square yesterday. — AP

## HUNDREDS IN CHINA PROTEST LACK OF COLLEGE PLACEMENTS

**ZHENGZHOU, CHINA:** Some 500 people yesterday protested what they say is a lack of university student placements in their central China province, in the latest protest over education reform. Parents holding banners that read "Fair education" rallied in Zhengzhou city against what they say is a serious shortage of college placements in Henan province. The protest in Zhengzhou's Erqi Square ended peacefully.

The Ministry of Education says Henan has more than 207,000 college placements, and almost 300,000 students from the province were enrolled in undergraduate courses in the country last year.

This year, the ministry says at least an additional 16,800 Henan students will be able to study in other provinces. But 820,000 Henan students have applied to take the university entrance exam this year, and the protesters say more placements are needed. Protests over reform to college enrollment quotas also took place last weekend in nearby provinces, Hubei and Jiangsu. However, those parents were against cuts in the numbers of college placements for locals in their areas to enable more students from poorer provinces, like Henan, to have more access to universities. — AP

## SOUTH KOREAN MISSIONARY BEATEN TO DEATH IN PHILIPPINE HOME

**MANILA:** A South Korean missionary was beaten to death in his home in a shocking attack southeast of the Philippine capital, police said yesterday.

Sim Jae-jok had returned from an early morning jog when he discovered an intruder in his kitchen in the town of Taytay on Friday, said Superintendent Samuel Delorino. The intruder knocked the 57-year-old Korean down with a shovel then battered him with a cooking gas canister before fleeing, said Delorino.

Neighbors who witnessed the attack called for help and rushed Sim to the hospital but he was dead on arrival, the police officer said. Robbery is believed to be the motive of the crime as the Korean's laptop and wallet were missing. The missionary, believed to be a Jehovah's Witness, had been living in a neighborhood bordering

a slum area for about a decade and had no enemies, Delorino said. "He was robbed before. This was the second or third time but he forgave them before," the policeman told AFP. His home doubled as his church, with the second floor used for services. "People could just go in and out of the house at all times," said Delorino. The assailant wore a hood but police believe they have identified a suspect. South Korean embassy spokesmen could not be contacted for comment.

There are more 88,000 South Koreans who have moved to the Philippines, attracted by the widespread use of English, the warm weather and low costs. But some have been targeted by crime with at least 11 South Koreans murdered in the Philippines last year, authorities said. — AFP



**PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA:** North Korea's foreign policy specialist Kang Sok Ju, lies in state during funeral services at the Sojang Club yesterday. — AP

## N KOREAN DIPLOMAT MOURNED AS SERIOUS LOSS FOR COUNTRY

**PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA:** The North Korean diplomat who negotiated a 1994 deal to freeze the country's nuclear programs in exchange for aid was mourned at his state funeral Sunday as a serious loss for the country.

Senior military and ruling party officials attended the ceremony for Kang Sok Ju, a longtime foreign policy specialist for the North, at the Sojang Club in Pyongyang. Several officials bowed before the open casket, which was later driven to Patriotic Martyrs' Cemetery where he was buried.

State media reported died of esophageal cancer at age 76 on Friday. "The demise of a sincere revolutionary and a capable political activist like Comrade Kang Sok Ju is a serious loss for our party and our people," said Workers' Party member Choe Ryong Hae, who headed his funeral committee. "It comes as the whole country is celebrating the historical 7th Party Congress, as a Congress of victors,

and a glorious Congress. And it comes as the whole country is rushing towards a great new victory of our revolution."

Kang was Pyongyang's chief negotiator when it reached the landmark agreement with Washington in 1994 to freeze and eventually dismantle its nuclear facilities in exchange for international aid to build two electricity-producing nuclear reactors.

The deal fell apart in 2002 after revelations that the North had operated a secret nuclear weapons program in violation of the agreement, which was disclosed shortly after a meeting between Kang and then-US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly.

From 1984, Kang served as Vice Foreign Minister and then First Vice Foreign Minister. In 2010 he was promoted to Vice Premier and from 2014 he was also the Director of the International Affairs Department of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea. He was a member of the party's politburo from 2010 until early May 2016. — AP

## US SECRETARY OF STATE KERRY URGES FURTHER REFORMS IN MYANMAR CALLS TO COMPLETE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

**NAYPYIDAW, MYANMAR:** US Secretary of State John Kerry yesterday urged Myanmar's new civilian-led government to complete the Southeast Asian nation's transition to democracy by implementing further reforms to enshrine free markets, development and human rights.

Speaking with Myanmar's foreign minister and de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, after talks in the capital of Naypyidaw, Kerry pledged continuing US support for the country and hailed progress it has made since Suu Kyi's political party took office in late March after winning historic elections that ended decades of military control.

"We strongly support the democratic transition that is taking place here," Kerry said. His visit came less than a week after the Obama administration lifted sanctions against 10 state-run companies and banks in a sweeping modification of penalties imposed while Myanmar was under military rule. The administration, however, left in place restrictions on trade and investment with the nation's still-powerful military. The changes are intended to spur more US investment and support economic growth under the new government, but also to encourage more reforms.

### Wiving the bans

The US waived its longstanding bans on investment and trade in 2012 after Myanmar began political and economic reforms, but retained restrictions on dozens of companies and individuals designated by the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control because they oppose reform, or are implicated in human rights abuses and military trade with North Korea. In addition, the US continues to ban the import of jade and rubies from Myanmar.

"The key to the lifting of the (remaining) sanctions is really the progress that is made within Myanmar in continuing to move down the road of democratization," Kerry said, adding, "It is very difficult to complete that journey, in fact impossible to complete that journey, with the current constitution."

He called for the charter to be revised to fully respect civilian authority and clearly spell out a separation of powers among various branches of government as well as protect minority rights and promote inclusivity. He said he raised those issues yesterday with the commander in chief of Myanmar's military before departing later to join President Barack Obama on a visit to Vietnam.

Suu Kyi said she did not believe the remaining sanctions would stay in place for long, but did not look at them as a punishment. "We're not afraid of sanctions, we're not afraid of scrutiny," she said. "The time will come soon that the United States will know that this is no longer the time for sanctions." Under the current, junta-era constitution, Myanmar's military controls the



**NAYPYIDAW, MYANMAR:** US Secretary of State John Kerry, left, poses with Myanmar's Foreign Minister and de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi for a photo during a meeting yesterday. — AP

ministries for defense, home affairs and border affairs, and 25 percent of parliamentary seats. Rights groups say stateless Rohingya Muslims and other minorities still face repression.

The treatment of the Rohingya remains a major sticking point in US-Myanmar ties, with the government complaining that even US officials use the term to refer to the group, which many Buddhists inside Myanmar call "Bengalis." They say the 1 million or so members of the minority are mostly illegal immigrants and not a native ethnic group. In fact, the families of many Rohingya have lived in Myanmar for generations.

### Not recognizing the Rohingya as an ethnic group

Because Myanmar does not officially recognize the Rohingya as an ethnic group, it denies most of them citizenship and basic rights. Conflict over land and resources in the western state of Rakhine, where most of them live, caused deadly violence between Buddhists and Muslims that later spread to other parts of the country. More than 100,000 Rohingya were forced to flee their homes and now live in poor conditions in decrepit camps.

Suu Kyi, who won international admiration

and a Nobel Peace Prize for her nonviolent struggle for democracy during Myanmar's years of military rule, has in recent years disappointed many former fans by failing to speak on behalf of the Rohingya. Despite international expressions of concern, Myanmar's previous military-backed government did nothing to ease the Rohingya's plight.

She called on Myanmar's "well-wishers," like the United States, to give the authorities time and space to deal with what she acknowledged was a problem. But she also warned against using the term "Rohingya," saying it is a sensitive matter that complicates efforts to resolve the situation. "Emotive terms make it very difficult for us to find a peaceful and sensible solution," she said. "People should be aware of the difficulties that we are facing and give us a safe distance. ... What we are saying is that there are more important things to deal with than issues of nomenclature."

Kerry agreed that the matter was a sensitive one, but said it is key to ease the crisis in Rakhine state. "The name issue is obviously very sensitive, it is divisive and I know that it arouses strong passions here," he said, adding, however, that the matter could not be ignored. "What is critical to focus on is solving the problems." — AP

## AUSTRALIAN FIRM NAMES RUSSIA, PUTIN IN MH17 COMPENSATION

**MELBOURNE:** An Australian law firm has filed a compensation claim against Russia and President Vladimir Putin in the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of families of victims of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17, shot down in 2014, media reported.

The jetliner crashed in Ukraine in pro-Russian rebel-held territory on July 17, 2014, killing all 298 people on board, including 28 Australians. The aircraft, which was en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was shot down by a Russian-made surface-to-air missile, the Dutch Safety Board concluded in its final report late last year.

Fighting was raging in eastern Ukraine between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian government forces when the aircraft was downed and many Western experts and governments blamed the rebels.

Australia's Fairfax media reported on Saturday that 33 next of kin were of victims named in an application by Sydney law firm LHD Lawyers, representing people from Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia. Reuters could not immediately reach LHD Lawyers for comment. The application was filed on May 9 and names the Russian Federation and Putin as respondents and seeks

\$10 million in compensation per passenger, the report said. The Dutch Safety Board, which was not empowered to address questions of responsibility, did not point the finger at any group or party for launching the missile. "So far we don't have (such information)" Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Interfax news agency when asked to comment on reports of the compensation claim. Malaysia, the Netherlands, Australia, Belgium and Ukraine have been exploring alternative options, including trials in international and national courts, after Russia vetoed a United Nations bid in July 2015 to form a tribunal. — Reuters

## PROTESTERS MARCH TO MARK 2ND ANNIVERSARY OF THAILAND COUP

**BANGKOK:** More than 200 people marched in Thailand's capital yesterday to protest military rule on the second anniversary of the coup that toppled the country's elected government.

The march in Bangkok was one of the biggest anti-junta protests since the takeover and was treated with unusual tolerance by the authorities, who usually take a heavy-handed approach to dissent, both on the streets and online.

The protest was spearheaded by a small group of students who have been involved in a string of spirited smaller demonstrations that represent the most significant public opposition to military rule. "I think they should give the people democracy, return power to the people," said protester Bangorn Saeling. "It's been two years already!"

The army took power on May 22, 2014, after several months of militant and sometimes violent protests against the government of then-Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. Her brother, Thaksin Shinawatra, was ousted as prime minister in a 2006 coup, and his supporters and opponents have been engaged in a political power struggle since then. Yesterday's march came less than three months before a referendum on a new, contentious, military-directed constitution. Critics say the charter would weaken political parties and force future governments to stick to policies preordained by the junta. A new law threatens heavy punishment for anyone campaigning for a "no" vote, but marchers took the chance to make their views known. Some protesters wore T-shirts that said in English "Vote No," and in Thai "No to a future that we have not chosen." They called for the draft

charter's rejection and staged a mock ballot in which they cast votes against it. The march covered historic ground, from Thammasat University, known for its political activism, to nearby

Democracy Monument, a popular venue for mass protests. It was peaceful except for some minor disruptions by a handful of counter-demonstrators whom police isolated from the marchers. — AP



**BANGKOK:** Police stand watch as anti-coup demonstrators protest on the steps of Democracy Monument to mark the second anniversary of the military takeover of government yesterday. — AP



An Indian tiger cools off in a pond in its enclosure at Chhat Bir Zoo on the outskirts of Chandigarh yesterday. Temperatures have soared to a scorching 51 degrees Celsius in one Indian city, meteorologists said, with the ferocious heat setting a new national record. Northern Phalodi wilted as the mercury reached a new high on May 20, beating a 60-year-old record. — AFP

## YEMEN GOVT TO END PEACE TALKS BOYCOTT

Continued from Page 1

has been crucial in ensuring much-needed aid can make its way to areas affected by the fighting. "The cessation of hostilities is holding around 80 to 90 percent," he said, even as he acknowledged that pockets of violence continue. "The people of Yemen feel there is a cessation of hostilities."

The peace talks are aimed at ending the conflict based on a UN Security Council resolution that calls for militias to withdraw from all cities, hand over weapons,

and release political detainees. The UN envoy expressed hope that most of the thorniest issues in the conflict have been discussed during the Kuwait talks. "We are not at square zero ... We are in fact making incredible progress," Ahmed said when asked during the forum about the slow pace of the negotiations. He expressed hope that a resolution to the conflict is "very close," though he was quick to add a note of caution. "I cannot guarantee you an outcome. You can be very close, but then because of the position of the parties they may fail," he said. — Agencies

## EDUCATION MINISTER HALTS PRIVATE SCHOOL...

Continued from Page 1

The National Democratic Movement described the proposed government law as a "dangerous conspiracy" against the independence of the judiciary, while the Kuwait Democratic Forum described it as an attempt to marginalize the judiciary.

The two groups said Justice Minister Yaqoub Al-Sane is planning to submit a draft law to the National Assembly soon that takes away key powers from the judiciary and undermines its independence, therefore threatening the principle of the separation of powers. KDF said in a statement that any draft law that does not guarantee the complete and full independence of the judiciary away from the government is totally rejected and would lead to restricting the judiciary.

The group said that transferring part of the powers enjoyed by the judiciary to the government is an attempt to marginalize the judiciary and make it a department following the government, which eventually undermines the structure of constitutional institutions and the democratic system. It also charged the government of trying to control the judiciary, adding that despite certain reservations, the judiciary in its current form is far better from the situation under the proposed bill.

NDM said the government's attempt to reduce the independence of the judiciary is a government coup against the justice system. The group called on the judges to shoulder their national responsibility and

stand against these attempts which threaten the foundations of the judiciary. The government has not yet submitted the draft law, but officials and MPs have been talking about it for a very long time.

The Assembly's health committee meanwhile will review today a key draft law on amending the rules of the health insurance scheme for expatriates and proposals to impose charges on some services. The committee will also discuss to set up a Kuwaiti company for health insurance. The panel plans to discuss these issues with the ministers of health and social affairs and labor.

Also yesterday, MP Faisal Al-Duwaisan yesterday asked the interior minister about a report published in a local Arabic newspaper about a plot by Hezbollah and Iraqi militias to carry out bombings in Kuwait during the holy month of Ramadan. The lawmaker said that publishing such reports, even if they are true, will have serious sectarian impacts on the Kuwaiti society. He called on authorities to stop such reports. Duwaisan asked the interior minister if the report was true and how such sensitive reports can reach newspapers before the ministry issues a statement.

He also asked the minister if security officials are allowed to leak such reports to the press and if the ministry was aware of the serious consequences of publishing such news on the society. But the interior ministry categorically denied the report, urging the press to exercise extreme caution while dealing with such sensitive news.

## ABU DHABI SACKS STAFF AMID AUSTERITY

Continued from Page 1

rather than locals, because governments want to limit unemployment among their citizens. Nevertheless, the job losses are contributing to an economic slowdown in the region. The International Monetary Fund has predicted Abu Dhabi's gross domestic product growth will fall to 1.7 percent this year from 4.4 percent in 2015.

In neighboring Dubai, where the economy is not directly reliant on oil and state-linked firms are vigorously pushing tourism and real estate projects, growth is forecast to accelerate marginally, to 3.7 percent from 3.6 percent. Companies cutting staff in Abu Dhabi include Abu Dhabi National Energy Co, which has reduced its workforce by a quarter since 2014. It has cut around a third of oil and gas jobs and 55 percent of staff at its headquarters, it said this month after reporting a first-quarter loss.

Earlier this year, Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Rail, the federal gov-

ernment-owned entity building a UAE rail network, said it cut 30 percent of its staff in a restructuring. Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority laid off scores of people, mostly expatriates, sources said. Spokespeople for the authority did not return calls seeking comment. National Petroleum Construction Co, owned by Abu Dhabi's state-owned industrial conglomerate Senaat and one of the largest oilfield contractors in Abu Dhabi, is reviewing its manpower levels, chief executive Aqeel Madhi told Reuters.

Construction firm Arabtec, in which Abu Dhabi state fund Aabar Investments is the biggest shareholder, may include job cuts in its cost reduction program, chairman Mohamed Al-Rumaithi said last month, adding: "There's some fat to be taken out." Some firms are axing expatriates to create jobs for UAE nationals. Medical center operator Cleveland Clinic, owned by Abu Dhabi state fund Mubadala, is creating over 100 positions for locals, having told some expatriate staff they have to leave by yearend, sources said. — Reuters

## CALL TO RAISE MINIMUM WAGE FOR DEPENDENT...

Continued from Page 1

A report summarizing the results of the study, prepared by the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD), is expected to be discussed during today's Cabinet session, Al-Anbaa reported yesterday, quoting 'high ranking ministerial sources', who added that the Cabinet "supports SCPD's efforts to resolve the demographic imbalance" in Kuwait.

Kuwait has taken several steps in recent months that

observers believe aim at reducing the country's expatriate population of nearly three million, which makes up around 70 percent of the country's total population. These steps include increasing electricity and water tariffs solely for expatriate consumers, which will go into effect next year, and sharply raising fees paid to labor authorities for residency issuance and renewal. The government is also said to be nearing a decision to increase petrol prices, while reports indicate that it is currently mulling a formula with lawmakers to limit the impact of this decision on Kuwaiti consumers.

## LOACH WINS CANNES GOLD WITH TALE...

Continued from Page 1

after suffering a heart attack and being told by doctors he can no longer work. He finds himself in a Catch-22 when an invisible and oft-cited "decision-maker" rules he is too healthy for benefits. Blake befriends a young single mother of two who is sanctioned for being late to the benefits center, leaving her with no money for food.

"The most vulnerable people are told their poverty is their own fault," Loach told reporters during the festival. US trade magazine Variety called it one of Loach's finest films, "a drama

of tender devastation... and scalding and moving relevance." "It's about something so much larger than bureaucratic cruelty (although it is very much about that). It captures a world - our world - in which the opportunity to thrive, or even just survive, is shrinking by the minute."

Twenty-one films were vying for the Palme d'Or, which can give a film a powerful boost on international cinema markets. It was the second year in a row for a big surprise on awards night at the festival, after French filmmaker Jacques Audiard's migrant thriller "Dheepan" muscled past favorites to take the trophy. — AFP

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## Washington Watch

NYC SUBWAY  
ON THE BRINK

By Thomas Urbain

The New York subway is the seventh busiest in the world and has its highest ridership in 70 years, increasing delays and forcing management to formulate a plan of salvation. The morning commuter crush in Brooklyn, the city's most populated borough, can be overwhelming. Tempers can fray. Sometimes commuters have to wait for at least one, if not two trains to go by before they can board. "I saw two women pulling each other's hair because they had bumped into each other," said commuter Ana Fernandez, although such behavior is rare.

Kevin Ortiz, spokesman for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) that operates the subway, said: "We are a victim of our own success." In 2015, New Yorkers clocked up 1.76 billion journeys on the subway, the highest number since 1948 and an increase of 61 percent in 20 years. The city's population has grown by nearly a million since 1994 and crime in the subway, at an all-time high in the early 1990s, has drastically fallen.

Since 1981, \$115 billion has been invested in what is one of the oldest subway networks in the world, which Ortiz described as having been in a "state of decay and disrepair" in the early 1980s. Today, it is considered the quickest and cheapest mode of transport around the city and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

David King, assistant professor of urban planning at Columbia University, said the transit system is largely in good repair. "Crowding issues are likely a larger source of troubles," he said. "The trains are safe and clean, and breakdowns are rare." A looming closure of the tunnel that connects the ultra-hip Brooklyn neighborhood of Williamsburg to Manhattan, for possibly 18 months of repair work, is likely to make overcrowding even worse.

## Technology to the Rescue

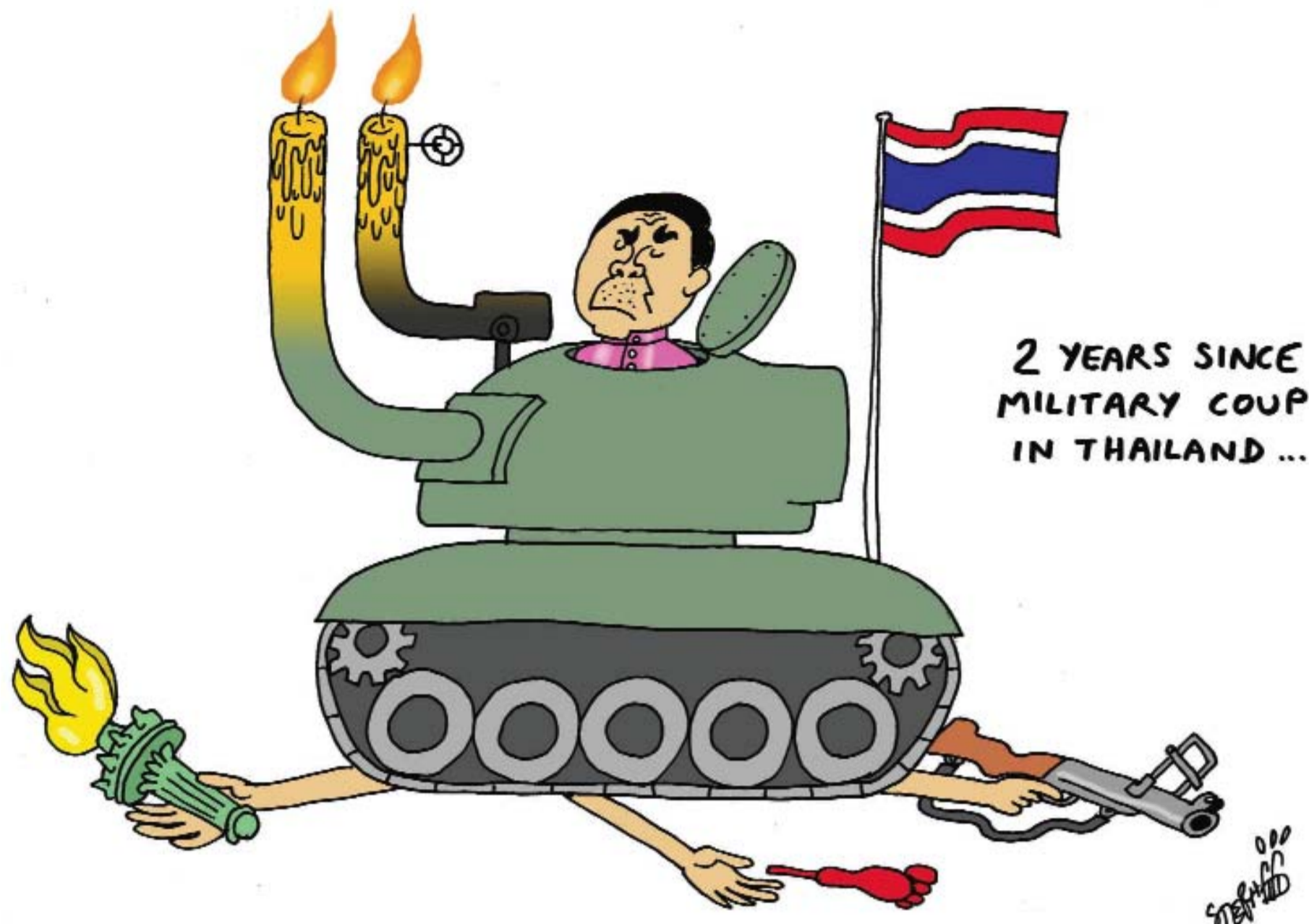
The 4, 5 and 6 lines that ply much of the same route from Brooklyn, up the eastern side of Manhattan to the Bronx have more passengers than the entire subway systems in Boston, Chicago and Washington put together. "I go early, before the rush," said Fernandez, who commutes on the 6 line. A recent report from the New York state comptroller has highlighted an increase in delays, which the MTA attributes largely to the need to do maintenance work while ensuring that the subway operates 24 hours a day.

"It is certainly a challenge to meet that increased demand," said Ortiz, who outlined various steps that the MTA is taking in the short and long-term. All trains are currently being used but the plan is to upgrade existing equipment. The MTA has ordered a new type of train that has no separation between carriages and would increase capacity. MTA is also rolling out advanced signaling, the Communications-Based Train Control, which pinpoints the precise location of each train, allowing operators to run trains closer together to provide more service.

In the longer term, New York plans to extend the Q line to help relieve pressure on the 4, 5 and 6 lines, billed as the first major expansion of the subway system in more than 50 years. Beyond the scope of the MTA, some blame exponential growth of parts of Brooklyn, where high-rise towers are being built in the place of older, smaller buildings. "They're overdeveloping when it comes to real estate with absolutely no plans for infrastructure - transportation, schools, everything," said David Dobosz, a retired teacher from Brooklyn. "There needs to be a thorough and robust conversation with the city as they move forward with development plans," recognized Ortiz. "There needs to be more of a robust collaboration between us and the city."

But the situation is not unique to New York. Chicago, San Francisco and Washington have also all launched large-scale projects to upgrade their subways. — AFP

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## BOKO HARAM HEAPS MISERY ON NIGER

By Kieran Guilbert

When Boko Haram attacked Falmaya Baba Gama's village last year in northeast Nigeria, executing a dozen men and burning down the market, thousands of people fled across the border into Niger, with some forced to leave behind their children amid the chaos. The 30-year-old and her seven children arrived safely in the region of Diffa, but almost one year on, they are hungry, scared of further violence and haunted by the bloodshed they witnessed.

"Even now, the children dream about Boko Haram and cry," she said outside a thatched hut, held together with sticks and plastic sheets, in Assaga - a ramshackle site for the displaced located just a few miles from Niger's border with Nigeria. Gama is one of some 240,000 uprooted people living in Diffa, a sweeping tract of desert in southeast Niger sparsely populated with isolated villages and dotted with shrubs and trees.

Many of the displaced live in makeshift huts alongside the country's main highway, having been driven from their homes in northeast Nigeria and southeast Niger by Boko Haram violence. The militant group has killed more than 15,000 people and displaced some 2 million in the West African states of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria during a seven-year campaign to carve out an Islamist caliphate.

Military offensives mounted by a regional taskforce and Nigerian and Cameroonian troops have pushed Boko Haram further back into the northeast corner of Nigeria, prompting the militants to scatter and ramp up attacks across the border in Diffa. The violence has traumatized many of the Nigerian refugees and displaced Nigeriens residing in Diffa, and left them with

scarce food or water, little opportunity to work or trade, and vulnerable to disease and malnutrition, aid agencies say.

Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou said Boko Haram had not only caused significant upheaval in Diffa and destroyed schools and health clinics, but also paralysed the region's economy. Niger, one of the world's least developed countries, has also been hit by plummeting global oil prices and a soaring number of migrants passing through the vast, landlocked nation, crossing the Sahara Desert on their way to the Mediterranean coast. "We are facing a catastrophic humanitarian situation," Issoufou told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in Niger's capital, Niamey, before preparing to attend a panel on the Lake Chad Basin at this week's World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.

## Nothing to Do

In Assaga, teenage boys slouch against tree trunks, seeking shade from the dry, midday sun as they play on their phones, while their fathers and grandfathers roam back and forth across Niger's east-west highway, swapping gossip and sharing stories. While the road divides the site into Assaga Niger and Assaga Nigeria, there is little tension between the two communities, said Nigerian refugee and father-of-six Kyani Bukai.

Assaga is one of 135 informal camps in Diffa, a region hosting 160,000 uprooted Nigeriens and 80,000 Nigerian refugees. "We are the same people, us, our uncles, our grandparents - here, we are together," said Bukai, formerly a headmaster. The road running through Assaga has afforded aid agencies easy access to the camp, allowing them to provide food aid, and build health clinics, schools and sanitation facilities.

Yet many people fear this makes the camp

an easy target for Boko Haram, following a recent spike in violence in Diffa. There have been some 30 attacks by Boko Haram in the region this year, with half of them since April, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The militants have carried out raids, suicide bombings and looted a health center, according to several aid agencies, and the government last month extended Diffa's state of emergency, which was first declared in February 2015, by three months.

"When cars drive by, you sometimes see many people running away because they are afraid of bombings," said Mustapha, a Nigerian farmer who fled his village in Diffa and sought refuge in Assaga when he heard that Boko Haram were nearing the border. Many of Diffa's markets, and several in Nigeria, have been destroyed by Boko Haram or closed due to insecurity, leaving the young men in Assaga with little opportunity to work or trade.

Some men said they had resorted to picking grass or chopping wood in the hope of selling it in order to feed their families. "Living here, we have fallen through the cracks, there is no market or business ... we have nothing to do," said 25-year-old Adam Alhaji Bukai, who used to work as a farmer in Nigeria.

## Fears for the Future

While the security situation worries many of the displaced, a lack of food aid is the most pressing concern ahead of the upcoming lean season and holy fasting month of Ramadan. "When we arrived in Assaga (last year), we received maize, millet, oil and tomatoes ... now we haven't received any food for five months," said 18-year-old Ataha Balai, a mother of two. Some 450,000 people in Diffa, more than half

of the region's population, lack enough to eat, and a humanitarian funding shortfall is hindering efforts to ensure food aid reaches those who need it the most, said the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

"This is worrying when you consider the threat that more people may be displaced in the coming months by the insecurity," said Fode Ndiaye, UN humanitarian coordinator for Niger. There could also be pockets of displaced people in Diffa who have not yet been found, as the insecurity restricts the reach and access of aid agencies, said Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF). UN aid chief Stephen O'Brien said Diffa posed a unique humanitarian challenge, where a combination of various factors could drive more displacement and make it harder to deliver aid. "These vulnerable communities are facing climate related challenges such as desertification, booming population growth, poverty, a lack of food and of course, Boko Haram violence."

O'Brien will speak at the World Humanitarian Summit, hoping to raise awareness and funds for Niger's UN aid plan, which has only received a quarter of its \$316 million target for 2016. A world away from dignitaries and diplomats, girls on the Nigerian side of the Assaga camp giggle as they swing up and down on a water pump like a seesaw, singing and making fun of each other as they fill up bright yellow and orange jerrycans.

For Assaga's older residents, such joy and positivity is unfathomable as they ponder the future for their families. "We don't know when we'll be able to return home, but not until things are right, the situation is normal, and there are no problems left," said 50-year-old Bukai, choking back tears. "There are still many Boko Harams ... we can't go back." — Reuters

## IS KENYA BLUFFING OVER CLOSURE OF DADAAB?

By Nicolas Delaunay

Kenya's plan to close the world's largest refugee camp could be a bid to trigger more international aid as well as a "cynical" political move ahead of presidential elections, according to analysts and NGOs. The sprawling Dadaab camp, located on the Kenya-Somalia border, hosts almost 350,000 refugees, the vast majority of whom are Somalis fleeing conflict. The government announced on May 6 it would refuse new refugee arrivals and close down Dadaab, citing national security fears.

But analysts say this is unlikely from a legal and logistical standpoint. "I don't think they will close the camp," said Anne Hammerstad of the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent in England and an expert on refugee issues. "It would cause a huge humanitarian crisis, plus sending Somali refugees back would mean violating international conventions," she told AFP.

Kenya has already twice threatened to shut down Dadaab, and Britain's UN ambassador Matthew Rycroft on Friday said Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta assured him that Nairobi would abide by its "international obligations". In announcing the plan, Interior Minister Joseph Ole Nkaisery repeated claims that attacks on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall in 2013, at the Garissa university in 2015 and elsewhere, "were planned and deployed from Dadaab refugee camp by transnational terrorists". However, no credible evidence has yet been provided to support the allegations.

Nairobi has also bemoaned the high cost of maintaining Dadaab, even though the international community, via the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) covers most of the amount. The UNHCR has voiced "profound concern" over the planned move, while hailing Kenya's "extraordinary role over the years in hosting refugees." The country is currently home to some 600,000 refugees. Victor Nyamori, Amnesty International's refugee affairs officer in Kenya, said he was "totally opposed" to the closure but agreed that "in a sense, we agree with Kenya, the international community does not do its part."

## 'Timing is Significant'

But a Western diplomat in Nairobi noted that "the timing of

the announcement is significant". The plan was revealed ahead of an international humanitarian summit in Istanbul, of the upcoming visit to Kenya by the head of the UN refugee agency and the expiry in September of a 2013 deal on Somali refugees between Nairobi, Mogadishu and the UNHCR. Analysts say it a way for Kenya to put the issue back on the international agenda at a time when the world's attention is focused on the migrant crisis in Europe, and as Nairobi is unhappy with the slow pace of voluntary repatriations to Somalia envisaged under the 2013 accord.

"Kenya wants more money, as a host country for refugees, to build schools and roads in northeast Kenya, to reinforce security around the camps," said Ben Lawrence, author of the book "City of Thorns" which recounts the lives of refugees in Dadaab. He noted that the last time that Kenya threatened to close Dadaab, in April 2015, the United States promised the country \$45 million.

## The Example of Turkey

"Kenya certainly takes Turkey as an example," Lawrence said, referring to the March deal under which Ankara agreed to take back migrants landing on Greek islands in exchange for incentives, including billions of euros in aid and visa-free European travel for its citizens. "The EU-Turkey deal has set a dangerous precedent of welcoming refugees not because it's right, but because people will pay you for it," said Hammerstad.

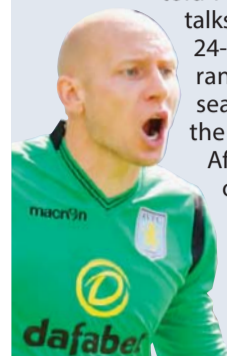
Also behind the Kenyan decision is "a more cynical political objective", warned Cedric Barnes, an expert on the Horn of Africa for the non-governmental organization the International Crisis Group. Ahead of presidential elections in August 2017, the government "wants to show that it is in charge of security, one of the weakest aspects of Kenyatta's presidency." Lawrence agreed that "this is a well-known pattern in Kenyan politics - pick one community, blame it for the worst things and unite everyone else around this." — AFP



In this Aug 4, 2011 file photo, refugees walk amongst huts at a refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya. — AFP

## BRAD GUZAN IN GOAL FOR US IN COPA AMERICA

**NEW YORK:** Goalkeeper Brad Guzan is set to start ahead of veteran Tim Howard for the US national team in the Copa America tournament. Coach Jurgen Klinsmann announced the 23-man roster Saturday during halftime of the MLS rivalry game between New York City FC and the New York Red Bulls. The roster features 15 players from the 2014 World Cup team. "We will go with Brad Guzan as the No 1 at the Copa America. That's the decision that we made," Klinsmann told FOX Sports for the halftime announcement. "We had good talks with both goalkeepers. Tim Howard is there to support Brad 24-7. But it's important that both goalkeepers know what is the ranking right now." Howard, who played for Everton for nine seasons until signing with the Colorado Rapids in March, was the national team's starter in goal for the World Cup in Brazil. Afterward, he took time off from the US team and Guzan took over as starter. Upon Howard's return, the two keepers rotated. Perhaps the biggest surprise on the roster itself was the exclusion of Seattle Sounders forward Jordan Morris. Klinsmann named Clint Dempsey, Chris Wondolowski, Bobby Wood and Gyasi Zardes at forward.—AP



## EFIMOVA BAN LIFTED, BUT CASE NOT CLOSED: FINA

**LAUSANNE:** World swimming's governing body FINA confirmed yesterday that the provisional suspension of Russian swimmer Yulia Efimova had been lifted, but warned that her case was "not closed". The ban, after Efimova tested positive for meldonium in March, was lifted on Friday following "a new recommendation from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on this case", FINA said.

"WADA is to undertake further scientific research on meldonium and have therefore recommended to FINA that the suspension of the swimmer should be lifted," FINA said in mid-April, based on the scientific evidence made available by WADA at that time, a decision had been made to maintain the suspension.

"This was mainly due to the sequence of testing results of Ms Efimova," the body said. "All these developments confirm the extreme complexity and sensitivity related to the inclusion of meldonium in the list of prohibited substances. Considering all of the above, FINA clarifies that this case is not closed.—AFP

## VARANE AN INJURY DOUBT FOR MADRID FINAL, EUROS

**MADRID:** Real Madrid defender Raphael Varane is a serious doubt for next weekend's Champions League final against Atletico Madrid and the start of France's Euro 2016 campaign after suffering a hamstring injury, Real confirmed yesterday. "After tests carried out today Raphael Varane has been diagnosed with a grade two injury in his left hamstring," Madrid said in a statement. "His recovery will continue to be assessed." Madrid sports dailies Marca and AS reported Varane will miss Saturday's final in Milan. Varane was unlikely to start against Atletico in any case with captain Sergio Ramos and Pepe coach Zinedine Zidane's preferred central defensive partnership. However, the injury could be a severe blow to France's hopes of landing Euro 2016 on home soil. AS reported Varane could be out for up to three weeks, which would see the 23-year-old miss the opening game of the Euros against Romania on June 10. France coach Didier Deschamps is already without a key defender as Liverpool's Mamadou Sakho was left out of his 23-man squad for the tournament due to a provisional doping ban.—AFP



## CAIN ENDS WIN DROUGHT AS GIANTS BEAT CUBS 5-3

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Matt Cain pitched six strong innings and helped himself with his bat, Buster Posey added a two-run homer and the San Francisco Giants beat the Chicago Cubs 5-3 on Saturday night. Cain (1-5) got his first victory since July 22, 2015, against San Diego, snapping a streak of 15 consecutive winless starts. Cain also had a two-run double in the second inning.

The Giants won for the ninth time in 10 games and the Cubs fell to 2-3 on their nine-game road trip. Jon Lester (4-3) allowed five runs on six hits and three walks in his worst outing of the season. Dexter Fowler homered leading off the ninth against closer Santiago Casilla, who got the next three outs for his 11th save. Kris Bryant hit his ninth homer for the Cubs.

## PADRES 3, DODGERS 2

Yangervis Solarte, fresh off the disabled list, drew a bases-loaded walk with two outs in the 11th inning to give the San Diego Padres their second straight walkoff victory against the Los Angeles Dodgers. Solarte drew four straight balls from Chin-Hui Tsao (0-1) to bring in Wil Myers for the winning run. Solarte was activated earlier Saturday after being out since April 10 with a hamstring injury. Melvin Upton Jr came close to hitting a winning, two-run homer for the second night in a row in the 11th, but Trayce Thompson made a catch at the wall for the second out. Upton's two-run homer in the ninth inning Friday night gave the Padres a 7-6 win. Brad Hand (1-0) pitched the 10th and 11th innings for the victory, allowing just a walk.

## MARLINS 3, WASHINGTON 2

Jose Fernandez pitched six innings and then led the dugout celebration as Miami made him a winner again at Marlins Park by beating Washington. Fernandez (6-2) allowed one run, struck out nine and improved to 21-1 in 31 starts at home. When Justin Bour put Miami ahead to stay with a two-run homer in the sixth, Fernandez leaped onto the dugout ledge, pounded the railing and hopped happily as he screamed. AJ Ramos gave up a run in the ninth but escaped a bases-loaded, none-out jam without further damage for his 13th save. Joe Ross (3-4), pitching on his 23rd birthday, lost to Fernandez for the second start in a row.

## ROYALS 2, WHITE SOX 1

Lorenzo Cain hit a solo home run and five Kansas City pitchers combined to allow seven hits in the Royals' victory over slumping Chicago. Danny Duffy and Peter Moylan combined for six scoreless innings. Joakim Soria (2-1) worked out of a seventh-inning jam and Wade Davis pitched a hitless ninth for his 11th save in Kansas City's second straight win over the AL Central leaders. Chicago has lost eight of 10. Cain's leadoff shot to center in the sixth off Miguel Gonzalez (0-1) made it 2-0 after Eric Hosmer's first-inning sacrifice fly.

## RANGERS 2, ASTROS 1

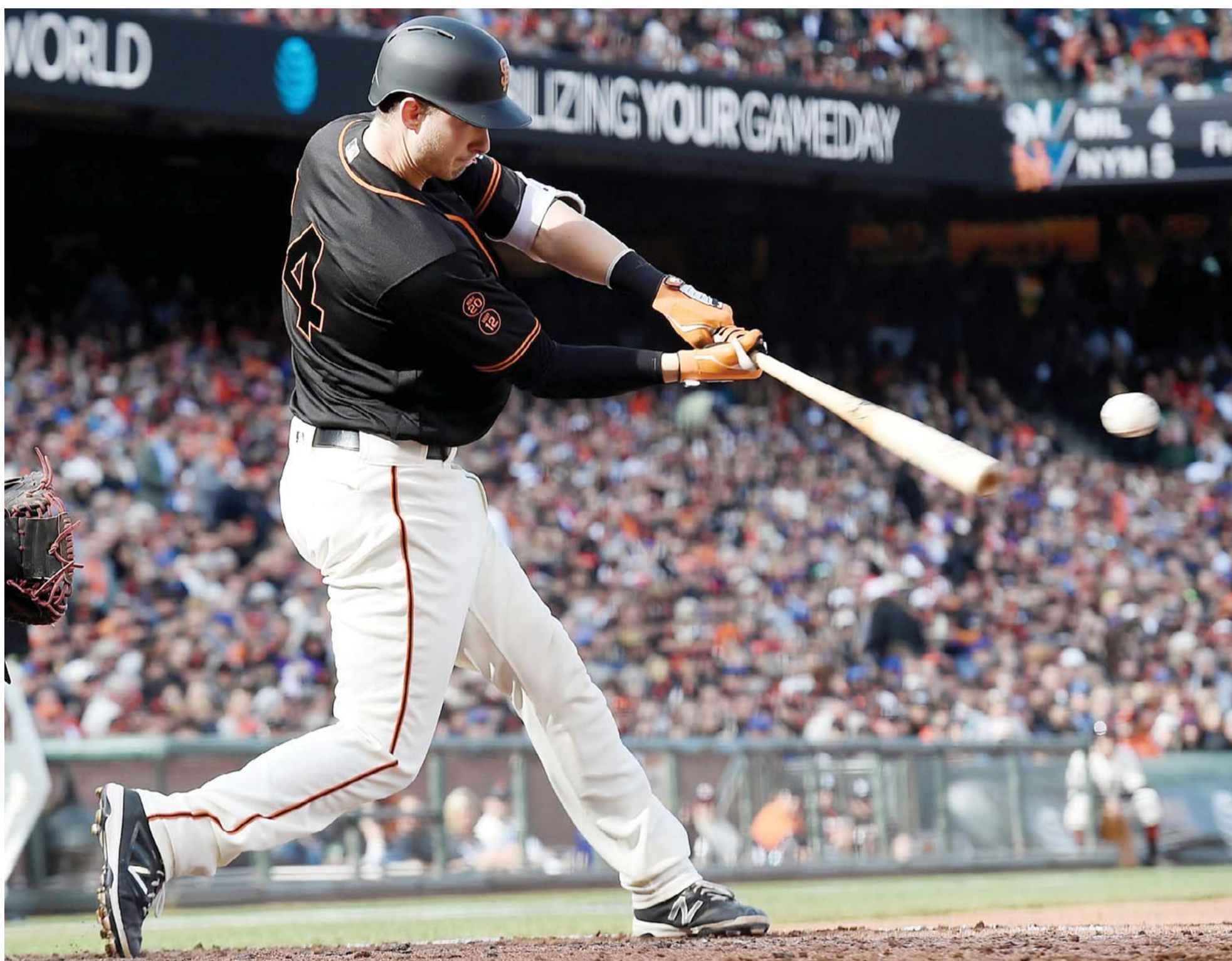
Elvis Andrus hit his first home run of the season, Cesar Ramos pitched six solid innings and Texas edged Houston. The homer by Andrus, which landed in the left-field seats, came with two outs and a full count to put Texas up 1-0 in the second inning. Rougned Odor made it 2-0 with an RBI single in the third. Ramos (1-2) yielded two hits and one run while fanning four in six innings for his first win this year in his third start and fifth appearance. Sam Dyson pitched a perfect ninth for his fourth save. Marwin Gonzalez hit a solo homer in the third for Houston. Houston starter Mike Fiers (3-2) allowed six hits and two runs in seven innings in the loss.

## RED SOX 9, INDIANS 1

Joe Kelly pitched no-hit ball for 6 2/3 innings, Mookie Betts had a grand slam and a solo homer, and Boston beat Cleveland. Jackie Bradley Jr extended his majors' best hitting streak to 26 games with an infield single. Dom DiMaggio owns the Red Sox record with a 34-game string in 1949. Kelly (2-0) came off the 15-day disabled list earlier in the day after being out with a right shoulder impingement since April 20. He shut down the Indians until Juan Uribe broke up the no-hit bid with a double to the right-center gap with two outs in the seventh. Manager John Farrell immediately pulled Kelly at 104 pitches. Carlos Santana homered for the Indians, who managed just two hits. Trevor Bauer (3-2) gave up four runs in five-plus innings.

## YANKEES 5, ATHLETICS 1

Starlin Castro broke out of a slump with three hits, Carlos Beltran singled twice to keep up his recent tear and New York won



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Trevor Brown #14 of the San Francisco Giants hits an rbi single scoring Matt Duffy #5 against the Chicago Cubs in the bottom of the third inning at AT&T Park.—AFP

its season-high fourth straight game. Masahiro Tanaka pitched seven innings to win Joe Girardi's 1,500th game as a manager. Tanaka (2-0) allowed one run on five hits and had four strikeouts for his first victory since April 12. Beltran had an RBI single in the fourth to stay hot. He is batting .391 (9 for 23) with eight RBIs over the past six games. All the runs came off rookie starter Sean Manaea (1-2).

## METS 5, BREWERS 4

David Wright singled home the winning run on a 3-0 pitch with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth inning, and New York rallied past Milwaukee. Curtis

five innings. Jeury's Familia (1-0) pitched a scoreless inning for the win. Wright singled off Michael Blazek (1-1) for his first game-ending hit since July 5, 2012. Ramon Flores hit his first major league homer and knocked in three runs for Milwaukee.

## TIGERS 5, RAYS 4

Michael Fulmer struck out 11 over seven sparkling innings and Cameron Maybin, James McCann and J.D. Martinez all homered to lift the Detroit Tigers to a 5-4 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays on Saturday. Making only his fifth major league start, Fulmer (3-1) allowed a run on four hits and a walk. Drew Smyly (2-5) allowed a tiebreak-

## CARDINALS 6, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Jedd Gyorko, Matt Adams and Yadier Molina homered and Mike Leake pitched seven scoreless innings for St. Louis. Leake (3-3) retired eight straight between the second and fourth innings and battled back from a 3-0 count to strike out Chris Owings in the fifth to help thwart the Diamondbacks' best scoring opportunity against him. Leake even showed off at the plate with a double to left in the sixth. The righty also made a nice barehanded play to throw out Rickie Weeks Jr at first in the seventh. Diamondbacks starter Robbie Ray (2-3) battled through five innings but took the loss.

Michael Saunders homered in the ninth off Kevin Jepsen, who got his third save.

## MARINERS 4, REDS 0

Franklin Gutierrez hit a three-run homer that landed high in the upper deck, and Felix Hernandez allowed only four singles in six innings, leading Seattle over Cincinnati Reds on a day when they honored their shared star. The Reds gave away Ken Griffey Jr. bobbleheads depicting him in both uniforms, and they played a message from him on the video board. Junior became a star in Seattle and was later traded to his hometown team. The Reds had him in mind when they designed Great American Ball Park with a short distance in right field. Gutierrez sent his decisive homer 473 feet the other way in the fourth inning off John Lamb (0-2). Leony's Martin also had a solo shot off the left-hander. Hernandez (4-3) walked three, struck out five and twice retired Joey Votto with the bases loaded for the final out of an inning.

## BRAVES 2, PHILLIES 0

Williams Perez took a two-hitter into the seventh, helping Atlanta beat Philadelphia for just its second series win this season. On a cold, rainy afternoon, Perez (2-1) celebrated his 25th birthday with another dominant performance against the Phillies. He gave up two hits, walked one and struck out in 6 1/3 innings. Three relievers finished off the two-hitter. Arody's Vizcaino earned his fifth save in six tries. Philadelphia lefty Adam Morgan (1-2) allowed two runs and four hits in six innings.

Ender Inciarte lined an RBI double to left-center to give the Braves a 1-0 lead in the fourth. Erick Aybar's sacrifice fly made it 2-0.

## ORIOLES 3, ANGELS 1

Matt Wieters hit a three-run homer with two outs in the top of the ninth inning to lift the Baltimore Orioles over the Los Angeles Angels. Wieters, who ended Matt Shoemaker's perfect game bid with a double in the fifth, lifted a 1-0 sinker from Joe Smith (1-3) over the wall in put the Orioles ahead after they were down to their final out. Brad Brach (4-0) pitched 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief for the win, and Zach Britton worked the ninth for his 12th save.—AP

## MLB Results/Standings

Kansas City 2, Chicago White Sox 1; Minnesota 5, Toronto 3; Atlanta 2, Philadelphia 0; Boston 9, Cleveland 1; Colorado 5, Pittsburgh 1; NY Yankees 5, Oakland 1; St. Louis 6, Arizona 2; Detroit 5, Tampa Bay 4; NY Mets 5, Milwaukee 4; Seattle 4, Cincinnati 0; San Francisco 5, Chicago Cubs 3; Texas 2, Houston 1; Miami 3, Washington 2; Baltimore 3, LA Angels 1; San Diego 3, LA Dodgers 2 (11 innings).

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Baltimore	26	15	.634	-	Washington	26	17	.605	-
Boston	26	17	.605	1	NY Mets	24	18	.571	1.5
Tampa Bay	20	20	.500	5.5	Philadelphia	24	19	.558	2
NY Yankees	20	22	.476	6.5	Miami	22	20	.524	3.5
Toronto	21	24	.467	7	Atlanta	12	30	.286	13.5
Central Division					Central Division				
Chicago White Sox	25	18	.581	-	Chicago Cubs	29	12	.707	-
Cleveland	22	18	.550	1.5	Pittsburgh	23	19	.548	6.5
Kansas City	22	20	.524	2.5	St. Louis	23	20	.535	7
Detroit	20	22	.476	4.5	Milwaukee	18	25	.419	12
Minnesota	11	31	.262	13.5	Cincinnati	15	28	.349	15
Western Division					Western Division				
Seattle	25	17	.595	-	San Francisco	26	19	.578	-
Texas	24	19	.558	1.5	Colorado	21	21	.500	3.5
LA Angels	19	24	.442	6.5	LA Dodgers	21	23	.477	4.5
Oakland	19	25	.432	7	Arizona	20	25	.444	6
Houston	17	27	.386	9	San Diego	19	25	.432	6.5

Granderson hit his latest leadoff homer for the Mets, and Yoanis Cespedes tied the score in the sixth with a two-run shot that chased rookie starter Zach Davies. That got Jacob deGrom off the hook after the right-hander left trailing 4-1. The 2014 NL Rookie of the Year, winless in four starts since winning his first three, struck out seven and walked three while throwing 100 pitches in

ing two-run homer by McCann in the seventh, and Martinez hit a two-run shot of his own off reliever Steven Gestin later that inning. Up 5-1, Detroit's Justin Wilson gave up three runs in the eighth, but Francisco Rodriguez pitched a hitless ninth for his 12th save in 13 chances. Tampa Bay's Kevin Kiermaier left the game in the fifth with a broken left hand.





## JUTANUGARN TAKES LEAD IN KINGSMILL CHAMPIONSHIP

**WILLIAMSBURG:** Ariya Jutanugarn moved into position for her second straight LPGA Tour victory Saturday, shooting a bogey-free 6-under 65 to take the third-round lead in the rain-soaked Kingsmill Championship.

The 20-year-old Jutanugarn had three birdies in a four-hole stretch on the front nine on the soggy River Course and birdied three of the last six. She's coming off a victory two weeks ago in Alabama that made her the first Thai winner in LPGA Tour history. "Normally, if I'm tied for the lead or one shot behind, I get a little bit excited," Jutanugarn said. "But today I'm not. I just keep playing my game and have fun and enjoy it with every shot." Jutanugarn had a 10-under 203 total.

"I think tomorrow is going to be so much fun because rain, play with the weather, and tough conditions," Jutanugarn said. "Just have fun, enjoy, because I just want to do my best. Like whatever happens, I really want to have fun because right now, everything is good for me. Second-round leader So Yeon Ryu bogeyed the final hole for a 69 to drop a stroke back along with fellow South Korean player In Gee Chun and Thailand's Pornanong Phatlum.

"I was almost going to play a bogey-free round and I made a bogey at the last hole," said Ryu, ranked 11th in the world but sixth in the race for the four spots on South Korea's Olympic team. "I was pretty disappointed. But yeah, I hit a bad tee shot. The left side is really, really stiff. ... But the rest of the day my playing was pretty great. I'm happy with that.

### 'Swing and concentrate'

Chun birdied her final six holes for a 62 to tie the course record set by Jiayi Shin in 2012. The US Women's Open champion is eighth in the world and fourth in the South Korean Olympic race. "I just focused on my shots," Chun said. "I did not feel well this morning because of the weather and because I have allergies. It's really bad. I did not feel good. And it was a lot of windy today, so I did not play with high expectations." Phatlum shot a 65.

"This week I tried to like focus on my swing and concentrate on putting," Phatlum said. "So, make me more confident and don't think about the result, just play my game." Defending champion Minjee Lee was 8 under after a 68. The 19-year-old Australian won last year at Kingsmill in a Monday finish and added her second tour title last month in Hawaii.

Laetitia Beck (66) and sixth-ranked Amy Yang (69) also were 8 under. Beck is the first Israeli player to qualify for the LPGA Tour. Fourth-ranked Stacy Lewis, a stroke behind Ryu after a second-round 66, had a 70 to fall into a tie for eighth at 8 under. Lewis tied for second two weeks ago in Alabama for her 10th runner-up finish in a 49-event drought. The 11-time tour winner has 23 career second-place finishes.

Third-ranked Lexi Thompson had a 67 to move into a tie for 18th at 5 under. She's coming off a victory two weeks ago on the Japan LPGA. Top-ranked Lydia Ko was tied for 24th at 4 under after a 68. The 19-year-old New Zealander won the Kia Classic and major ANA Inspiration in consecutive weeks in Southern California. —AP



**SAN JOSE:** Brenden Dillon #4 of the San Jose Sharks fights with Carl Gunnarsson #4 of the St Louis Blues in game four of the Western Conference Finals during the 2016 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at SAP Center. — AFP

## BLUES BEAT SHARKS 6-3 TO EVEN SERIES AT TWO GAMES APIECE

**SAN JOSE:** Changing goaltenders gave the St Louis Blues a spark. Changing their style of play helped them even up the Western Conference final at two games apiece. Troy Brouwer and Kyle Brodziak each scored twice, Jake Allen stopped 31 shots in his first start of the postseason and the Blues bounced back from consecutive shutout losses to beat the San Jose Sharks 6-3 in Game 4 on Saturday night.

"I thought we went back to our roots, what made us successful all throughout the regular season the first two rounds of the playoffs," Brouwer said. "We were able to get pucks deep, we were able to create chances from below the goal line rather than trying to create stuff off the rush." Coach Ken Hitchcock hoped the change in goalie from Brian Elliott would help his dormant offense and the move paid off as the Blues controlled the play from the start of Game 4. Brouwer and Jori Lehtera scored in the first period and the Blues rolled after getting dominated the previous two games when they were outscored 7-0. Alex Pietrangolo added an empty-netter to seal it.

### More passion

"He gave us exactly what we needed," Hitchcock said about Allen. "He's a competitive son of a gun. We needed a battler in there. We needed somebody to really help us play better defense. We played with more passion in front of him in our own zone because I made the goalie

change. I had to make that decision." Now it will be up to San Jose to reverse the momentum in Game 5 on Monday night in St Louis. Martin Jones, who became the first Sharks goalie with consecutive playoff shutouts, was pulled midway through the second period after allowing four goals on 19 shots. James Reimer allowed one goal on seven shots in his first action of the playoffs. Joe Pavelski set a San Jose franchise record with his 10th goal of the postseason. Chris Tierney and Melker Karlsson also scored in the third for the Sharks, but it wasn't enough as San Jose went 0 for 5 on the power play and allowed a short-handed goal. "We weren't as sharp as we could have been early," Sharks captain Joe Pavelski said. "We created a few chances, but we don't get enough off it. We just really need to be sharp." St Louis took control early in the second period after it seemed like San Jose had gained momentum from killing a two-man advantage and then drawing a penalty from the Blues. But the power play that looked so lethal for most of the playoffs was not clicking this game. The Sharks struggled to set up in the offensive zone and gave up a pair of two-on-one chances the other way. The second of those came after an errant pass from Joe Thornton and St Louis capitalized when Brodziak took a pass from Jaden Schwartz and beat Jones to make it 3-0.

### Big saves

Brodziak struck again a few minutes later off a

pass from Dmitrij Jaskin to end Jones' night. "We hung him out to dry tonight," Sharks forward Tommy Wingels said. "He made some big saves there and he gave us a chance. But we kept giving them more opportunities. Odd-man rushes and open guys around the net and that's certainly not on Jonesy at all. It's on every guy in front of him."

The Blues then cruised to the win that has them the closest they have been to the Stanley Cup final since losing a seven-game conference final to Calgary in 1986. The Sharks played with a series lead in the conference final for the first time ever but now find themselves tied after four games, just as they were in their first trip in 2004 when they lost to Calgary in six.

Along with giving Allen the start, Hitchcock put the struggling Robby Fabbri and Vladimir Tarasenko on the same line with Lehtera and put defenseman Joel Edmundson back in the lineup after benching him in Game 3.

The changes paid dividends as the Blues got off to a fast start. They hemmed the Sharks in their own zone with a strong forecheck and took a 2-0 lead after one, ending a scoreless drought of 156:59 dating back to the second period of Game 1. "He's got combinations in his head for a long time and the beauty of our team is that we can go a number of different ways with it," defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk said. "I think that's why we're able to adjust on the fly and handle it." — AP



**STRAFFAN:** Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy watches the flight of his tee shot on the 11th hole during day four of the Irish Open at The K Club. — AP

## MCILROY IN POLE HEADING INTO FINAL ROUND OF IRISH OPEN

**DUBLIN:** Rory McIlroy will take a three-shot lead into the final round as he seeks to not only end a six-month winless drought but also capture a first Irish Open title. The current World No 3 returned to the course at 7.30am local time yesterday to complete the last three holes in his third round after two lengthy weather-related stoppages late on Saturday at the K Club course.

McIlroy had been nine under par at the time and then proceeded to par the 16th, 17th and final holes in a bogey-free round of a two-under-par 70 for a nine-under-par tally. "I'm a little disappointed with how I finished today," McIlroy said. "I felt like I had two good opportunities there on 16 and 18 to make birdies and didn't birdie either of them." After shooting his first bogey-free round since a third round 68 at the WGC-Cadillac Championship at Doral in March, he added: "I am going to have to go out and shoot a solid round of golf this afternoon and hopefully that will be good enough. That's one of my first bogey free

rounds in a while so if I can continue that, not make any mistakes and just throw in a few birdies, that will be the game plan and hopefully it works out.

"To be leading going into the final day - I'm standing here a little disappointed it isn't more - is good. So I will just rest up to try and get myself mentally rested to go out and play another good round." The four-time Major winner is hosting the event and looking to capture a first victory anywhere since his triumph last November in the European Tour season-ending DP World Tour Championship. Augusta National champion Danny Willett, who is looking to become only the second player after Seve Ballesteros in 1993 to win both the Masters and an Irish Open in the same season, signed for a two over par 73 to be in second place at six under par. Scotland's Russell Knox has bounced back from needing to borrow a driver, after the cracking the face of his own driver on day one, to be in third place with a round of 70 for a five under par tally. — AP

## XEROX CORPORATE GOLF CHALLENGE'S 4TH QUALIFIER WON BY MAPETLA AND FUESTE

**DUBAI:** The 18th edition of the Xerox Corporate Golf Challenge held its fourth qualifying round at the Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club on Thursday, May 12, 2016. Over 70 golfers participated in the qualifier which saw Robert Mapetla and Mick Fueste from team Habshan Hackers, take the honors with a score of 43.

Runners-up were John Moore and Patrick Morrow of Team RGS, with a score of 42. After a count back third place went to Edoardo Galeppini and Michael Nielsen from Team Cigisppeed Rickmers, fourth place to Paul Abouchakra and Hisham Shammam from Team Under Par, and fifth to Alan Salem and Soumaya Salem from Team Al Jeyad - all who carded 39.

Chrysler's Nearest the Pin on Hole 5 was won by Dave Storey, Select Property Group's Hole 8 Nearest the Pin by Jehangir Makhdum, while deVere Acuma's Nearest

the Pin on Hole 16 was won by Aniket Chitnis.

The 'King of Pars' competition, sponsored by deVere Acuma, recognizes and rewards teams that perform best on Par 3's, Par 4's and Par 5's. Winners of the King of Pars in the fourth qualifier are:

- King of the Par 3: Philip Lynagh and Martin Lambert
- King of the Par 4: George Akhras and Adonis Nasr
- King of the Par 5: Anish Bhatia and Swati Singh

Teams that score the best on the various hole types win a prize as well as enter the 'Golden Ticket' draw, which will see the lucky entrant win a place in the 2016 Grand Final. Partners of the tournament this year include Ajman Tourism (2016 Host City - Grand Final), deVereAcuma, Chrysler, and Select Property.



## JOEY LOGANO BEATS LARSON IN UNUSUAL ALL-STAR RACE

**CONCORD:** A new format to NASCAR's annual All-Star race left half the field confused to almost comical levels but did produce an aggressive race that ended with a thrilling victory for Joey Logano on Saturday. Logano snatched the lead away from Kyle Larson with two laps remaining to win the \$1 million exhibition event.

Although he didn't win, Larson was the star of the day. He had to race his way into the main event earlier Saturday, and earned his spot in the 20-driver field by beating Chase Elliott in a stirring last-lap door-to-door battle to the checkered flag. "Larson is a hard racer. I watched him in the Showdown earlier today and I knew what I was up against, I knew he was going to run hard," Logano said. "What a crazy battle for a million dollars at the end."

Larson was competitive during the 113-lap main event and won the second segment. He had to pit for four tires, restarted in third for the final 13-lap dash-for-cash and rocketed his way to the lead. He seemed to have it in control until Logano eventually caught him. Larson tried several times to hold him off, but as the two raced side-by-side, Larson smacked the wall and the damage took him out of contention.

"I'm super disappointed. I hate that I keep letting my team down," Larson said. "They did everything right. They worked their tails off after I got all the damage in the Showdown. I'm having fun but this will be hard to get over."

### Driver confusion

Once Logano cleared Larson, he cruised to the win ahead of Team Penske teammate Brad Keselowski, who suggested much of the race format. Keselowski defended the format, which cut the race into three segments and included a blind draw before the final shootout that ordered a random number of cars to make a mandatory four-tire pit stop. But it also created some apparent sandbagging and a lot of confusion among the drivers.

"There was a next to last lap pass for the lead. There were several passes for the lead," Keselowski said. "The last four (All-Star) races, there hasn't been a pass for the lead in the last 20 or 30 laps. Our fans deserve a better format than that, and they got that. I don't know how you can get much more compelling racing than what we saw today, so they need to get unconfused and enjoy the racing."

Third-place finisher Dale Earnhardt Jr. admitted to being confused until the final segment. "The intent was really positive and the ideas

were great, but the simpler we make it, the easier it would be to follow," Earnhardt said. "I was pretty confused right until it was 13 to go and it was all the normal rules. Gimmicks and all that stuff is going down the wrong path."

The format came in part from the driver council, which Keselowski was elected to this

season. He was largely credited for the finished product, and panel members Denny Hamlin and Kyle Busch were not fans of it after the race. "It didn't work, did it?" Busch asked. On Twitter, Hamlin distanced the driver council from the format. "It came from 1 (driver)," Hamlin posted. "Nobody liked it." — AP



**CHARLOTTE:** Joey Logano, driver of the #22 Shell Pennzoil Ford, celebrates in Victory Lane after winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Sprint All-Star Race at Charlotte Motor Speedway. — AFP

## BRITAIN'S MEEKE SEALS PORTUGAL RALLY WIN

**MATOSINHOS:** Britain's Kris Meeke returned from a two-rally absence to win the Rally of Portugal yesterday. The Briton, who missed the previous two WRC rounds in the Americas, led for all but the first of the 19 speed tests to win the four-day rough road event in northern Portugal by 29.7sec in Citroen's DS 3.

It was his second world success after triumphing in Argentina last year. "An almost perfect weekend - huge thanks to my team. We made the most of the position we were in and I couldn't have done any more," said Meeke. "It shows the DS 3 is still a great car. For me too it's another step. I'm

really, really excited about 2017!" Norway's Andreas Mikkelsen outpaced team-mate and championship leader Sebastien Ogier on the final day to take second in a Volkswagen Polo R, relegating the Frenchman to the last step of the podium by 4.8sec. "I had another puncture, so two and only one spare. Luckily it was a slow puncture and I was able to get enough air in for the stage," bemoaned Ogier. Three-time defending world champion Ogier still holds a 47-point lead over Mikkelsen in the drivers' standings, after finishing on the podium in all five of the rallies so far this season. —AFP

## A LOOK AT THE RETESTS OF OLYMPIC DRUG SAMPLES

**GENEVA:** Inside a non-descript concrete building in a Swiss parking lot lies evidence that could take down dozens of Olympic athletes. The anti-doping laboratory in Lausanne holds the stored urine and blood samples from the 2008 and 2012 Olympics that are being retested with improved techniques to catch drug cheats who escaped detection at the time and to keep them out of this summer's games in Rio de Janeiro. So far, 31 unidentified athletes in six sports from 12 countries have been caught during retests of samples from the 2008 Beijing Games. Results on tests of 250 samples from the 2012 London Olympics will be known soon. Some things to know about the retesting program:

### The Lausanne lab

It's officially called the Swiss Laboratory for Doping Analyses, or by its French acronym LAD. It's one of 34 labs around the globe accredited by the World Anti-Doping Agency and is affiliated with the University Hospital of Lausanne. The lab is located in a drab building near a small Coop supermarket, beside a main road and at the end of the M2 metro line. Visitors have to be buzzed in to take the elevator up the three-story building.

The lab director is Martial Saugy, a Swiss scientist with long hair and a soul patch above his chin that gives him the look of a jazz musician. Saugy and his lab have often been caught up in major doping cases. Lawyers for Lance Armstrong tried to undermine Saugy's evidence about the cyclist's suspect samples from the 2001 Tour de Suisse. Saugy also met with Armstrong's entourage ahead of the 2002 Tour de France when he was a witness for anti-doping authorities in their case against the American rider.

### The Russian connection

Links between Russia and the Lausanne lab were questioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency inquiry team that detailed state-sponsored cheating in a report last November. Panel chairman Dick Pound said the lab did not have a convincing explanation for destroying 67 samples that were sent from Moscow in 2013.

An inquiry witness in Russia implicated Moscow lab director Grigory Rodchenkov in a plot to retain clean samples for 67 athletes ahead of the London Olympics. If any

of the athletes later produced a positive sample, it would be replaced by their clean sample and the athlete would pay Rodchenkov.

In late 2012, WADA asked for all 67 samples to be retested in Lausanne. One tested positive for low levels of a banned substance, 54 were clean and 12 had too little volume for proper testing. The Lausanne lab destroyed the samples after a standard three-month storage period despite a request from WADA to keep them.

An investigation by the Lausanne hospital, opened within days of the Pound report, cleared the lab of wrongdoing. Rodchenkov is now at the center of a scandal over Russian doping at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. He says he helped Russian athletes dope before Sochi and switched their tainted samples for clean ones during the games. Sochi samples are also stored at the Lausanne lab and the International Olympic Committee says it plans to retest those as well.

### Sample process

By the end of any Olympics, IOC testers are in control of as many as 5,000 urine samples. Samples are divided into "A" and "B" bottles, and the "B" samples are available in case they're needed to corroborate a positive result in the "A" bottle.

The initial tests take place in the lab located in the Olympic city. Because of the huge number of samples and tests that need to be conducted in a short period of time, not every sample is tested for every drug. Experts take educated guesses on which set of athletes are more likely to use certain drugs and run the according tests.

After those tests, the leftover urine is placed into a cargo container that's refrigerated, then loaded on an airplane that goes to Geneva. From there, the samples are transported to the lab in Lausanne and stored in a large vault, where they can be stored in a locked freezer at one of two temperatures - minus 20 or minus 80 Celsius, depending on the type of freezers the lab buys.

"Chain of command" is a critical part of the anti-doping process, and every time the bottles change hands, or locations, forms must be filled out to acknowledge who has been in contact with the bottles. A missing link in that process can invalidate a positive test.—AP



PARIS: Australia's Nick Kyrgios returns the ball to Italy's Marco Cecchinato during their first round match at the Roland Garros 2016 French Tennis Open. — AFP

## ANGRY KYRGIOS, KVITOVA PASS CHILLY ROLAND GARROS TESTS

**PARIS:** Controversial Australian Nick Kyrgios and two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova reached the French Open second round on Sunday as Roland Garros got off to a soggy, chilly start. Kyrgios overcame a first-set code violation to defeat Italy's Marco Cecchinato 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (8/6), 6-4.

The 17th seed picked up the warning for screaming at a ball boy on a shivering Court One where the temperature refused to budge above 15 degrees. Kyrgios insisted he only screamed at the youngster during the first-set tiebreak because he wanted his towel. He then accused umpire Carlos Ramos of "unbelievable bias" for dishing out the violation.

That was a reference to world number one Novak Djokovic escaping any sanction for showing the arm of umpire Carlos Bernardes at the Rome Masters last week. "All of us in this room know that if that was me, it would have been a circus. The fact that nothing happened (to Djokovic) speaks for itself," said Kyrgios who ranted on court that Ramos's decision was "f\*\*\*ing bulls\*\*\*". The code violation out on Court One was handed down when Kyrgios screamed "towel" at the ballboy. "When I get my towel I always say thank-you to the ballboys but sometimes you get mad at them," added Kyrgios.

Despite the controversy, Kyrgios recovered

his composure to see off world number 124 Cecchinato and set up a second-round clash against Dutch lucky loser Igor Sijsling. The 21-year-old Australian fired 16 aces and 50 winners on his way to victory as he attempts to go beyond his best performance in Paris—a third-round exit to Andy Murray 12 months ago. Kyrgios's latest brush with the authorities came on a day when heavy rain brought a suspension of action after just four hours of play. In that time, only nine of the scheduled 32 singles matches had been completed.

### Kvitova survives

Czech 10th seed Kvitova survived a scare to beat Danka Kovinic of Montenegro 6-2, 4-6, 7-5. The two-time Wimbledon champion was two points away from defeat when she trailed the world number 57 at 4-5 in the decider. But she claimed the next three games and goes on to face Taiwan's Su-Wei Hsieh for a place in the last 32.

Kvitova, a semi-finalist in Paris in 2012, committed 10 double faults in a typically rollercoaster display against an opponent who made the Istanbul final on clay this season. Hsieh made the second round by beating Spain's Lara Arruabarrena 7-6 (8/6), 6-3. There were also wins for Russian 24th seed Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova and Swiss qualifier Viktorija Golubic.

Benoit Paire, the French 19th seed, gave the hosts a winning start with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-4, 1-6, 6-4 victory over Moldovan qualifier Radu Albot. Meanwhile, defending men's champion Stan Wawrinka insisted Sunday that last year's stunning triumph over Djokovic would have little bearing on his chances this time round. The 31-year-old Swiss, seeded three this year, only arrived in Paris on Saturday night after clinching his hometown Geneva clay-court title.

"I watched some highlights of the final. I never watched it completely," said Wawrinka, who starts his campaign on Monday against Lukas Rosol, the Czech player he defeated in the Geneva semi-finals on Friday. "But it was one year ago. It's a completely different story. "I'm playing good tennis. It was good to win the trophy yesterday. It gives me a lot of confidence and happiness. I'm excited to start tomorrow."

When rain halted play Sunday, Japanese fifth seed Kei Nishikori, a quarter-finalist in 2015, was looking to secure his 50th Grand Slam triumph against Italy's Simone Bolelli. He was comfortably placed at 6-1, 5-4 ahead. Lucie Safarova, the Czech 11th seed who was runner-up to Serena Williams last year, was cruising against Vitalia Diatchenko, 6-0, 1-0. Russian world number 223 Diatchenko is playing her first match since injuring her left foot at the US Open last year. — AFP

## LORENZO BEATS MARQUEZ IN ITALIAN MOTO GP

**LUCO DI MUGELLO:** Jorge Lorenzo overtook Marc Marquez at the line to win the Italian MotoGP yesterday, as home favorite Valentino Rossi retired with a mechanical problem. Spaniard Lorenzo took the lead from pole-sitter Rossi at the first corner, but nine-time world champion Rossi bowed out early after his bike failed him when he was looking primed to make a pass. Instead it was down to Marquez to pressure world champion Lorenzo, and he took the lead from his compatriot on the final lap, only to see the Yamaha man steal the victory meters from the finish.

After a week in which riders have been swapping teams for next season, outgoing Ducati rider Andrea Iannone had a horrific start for the home team. He and team-mate Andrea Dovizioso had only finished two races each going into this week, and neither ever looked like challenging for the lead at the Mugello Circuit. That meant that the home crowd had their hopes pinned on 37-year-old Rossi, but those went up in smoke with 13 of 23 laps still to go. Championship leader Lorenzo made the most of the opportunity to claim his third win of the season and second in a row, to extend his advantage in the riders' standings over Honda's Marquez to 10 points. "The pace was not very fast, so I couldn't escape like I wanted to," Lorenzo said. "I used up a lot of energy to stay in

the lead during the race and I thought that Marquez had more energy when he passed me, so I just wanted to stay in second place and take the points. "I tried a crazy move, and my bike was quite fast, so I could take the win off Marquez and I won this unexpected victory."

Iannone, who confirmed that he will be join-

ing Suzuki next year after Ducati chose Dovizioso to partner the incoming Lorenzo for next season, battled back well to take a podium finish from what had been a very encouraging week. "I am a bit disappointed. The clutch slipped and the bike started with a big wheeler," Iannone said. — AFP



MUGELLO: Moto GP Spanish rider Marc Marquez steers his Honda during the Moto Grand Prix at the racetrack. — AFP



BEIJING: In this Monday, June 30, 2008 file photo, urine samples from Chinese athletes are recorded upon arriving at China Anti-Doping Agency. — AP

## SCOTS PROBE CUP FINAL VIOLENCE

**GLASGOW:** A full investigation will be carried out into the violence that followed Hibernian's historic Scottish Cup win after goalposts were destroyed, the Hampden pitch ripped up and Rangers received their losers medals in the dressing room.

The Easter Road side claimed a famous 3-2 victory thanks to a stoppage time winner to claim the Scottish Cup for the first time since 1902. Thousands of Hibs supporters flooded on to the pitch at full-time to celebrate and were followed by some Rangers fans. A number of pitch battles between rival fans then broke out and mounted police were deployed to keep supporters apart. Police horses were last needed at the 1980 Scottish Cup final between Celtic and Rangers. As Hibs fans returned to the stands, parts of the national stadium's pitch were ripped up and goalposts broken. The invasion sig-

nificantly delayed the presentation of the trophy and there was no lap of honor by the Hibs players.

SFA Chief Executive Regan said he was appalled by the scenes of disorder and condemned the "contemptible behavior" of supporters. "The damage that has been caused and the disruption to what has been a fantastic football match has taken the gloss off what should have been a memorable occasion for Hibernian," Regan said.

"The Scottish FA, along with Police Scotland and the stadium management have initiated a full investigation into the scenes that unfolded to understand how such a volume of supporters were able to enter the field." Police Scotland said a dedicated investigation team was being set up to identify those involved in acts of disorder and violence.

Chief Superintendent Kenny MacDonald of Police Scotland added:

"Officers, including the force's mounted branch, responded and brought the matter under control as quickly as possible. "We understand that feelings run high at these events and fans want to celebrate their team's win, however the reckless behavior of fans entering the pitch is totally unacceptable and inexcusable.

### Safety issue

"This created a significant safety issue. This action led to an outbreak of disorder between rival fans on the pitch." A spokesman for Rangers said the club's players and staff were forced to receive their runners-up medals in the dressing room due to fears for their safety after a number were assaulted on the pitch. "Rangers Football Club is shocked at the disgraceful behavior of Hibs fans at full-time," the spokesman said. "Rangers players and staff were

assaulted by these fans who invaded the pitch and in the interests of their own safety could not return to the pitch for the medal presentation. "There can be no place for the violent behavior witnessed at the end of the final and Rangers fully expect the Scottish Football Association and Police Scotland to launch an investigation to find out where security measures failed and why. "The club would like to commend Rangers fans for the restraint they showed under severe provocation." Hibs manager Alan Stubbs condemned the scenes but said he wouldn't allow it to take the shine off his side's victory.

Anthony Stokes grabbed a double and captain David Gray scored a stoppage time winner as Hibs made up for the disappointment of missing out on promotion to the Scottish Premiership by claiming the cup and a place in the Europa League qualifiers. "It's not going

to take away the satisfaction of what we've just achieved.

I can understand it but I can't condone it," Stubbs said. "It's disappointing and we don't want to see it, but from our point of view it was a fantastic game and we managed to do it and show a little bit of bottle. "I said to them before the game 'Don't be part of history; make it.' They certainly did that today and I'm so proud of them. "Whatever happens we will have to take it on the chin and rightly so. "It is unfortunate but from my point of view we have to protect the image of the football club. We don't want to see anything like that or cause trouble but it was just over-exuberance and relief." Hibs chairman Rod Petrie added: "It is deeply disappointing that this happened. It shouldn't have happened. "The images should have been about the club celebrating the win as opposed to any other aspect of it." — AFP

## RUNNING RIOT OF THE BULLS AS NEW YORK CITY THRASHED 7-0

**NEW YORK:** New York City FC crashed to a humiliating 7-0 defeat against the New York Red Bulls on Saturday, equaling the record for the heaviest loss in Major League Soccer history. City, an affiliate of English Premier League side Manchester City, have invested heavily in a squad featuring several veteran European stars including Andrea Pirlo, David Villa and Frank Lampard.

Pirlo and Villa—who last week, with Lampard, were revealed to be among the top 10 highest paid players in the league—were anonymous as the Red

Bulls ran riot before City's home fans at Yankee Stadium. "The match in general was a disaster," shell shocked City manager Patrick Vieira said. "I think we didn't play at all. I'm really frustrated of course. Losing the game, and losing the way we did, against the Red Bulls is never easy," the former France international star said.

The Red Bulls seized the initiative after only three minutes with a goal from Dax McCarty. Veteran English striker Bradley Wright-Phillips made it 2-0 three minutes before half-time, heading

home at close range after superb work on the left flank by Mike Grella. Wright-Phillips then grabbed an opportunistic second in first-half stoppage time, scoring with an overhead kick from eight yards out after City failed to clear a Grella cross.

### It got worse

The second half continued in similar vein, McCarty making it 4-0 after 51 minutes, punishing slack marking in the City area to head home. It got worse for City five minutes later when Alex

Muyl blasted home from just inside the area after a deft layoff from Wright-Phillips. Not even the introduction of former Chelsea and England star Lampard from the City bench could stem the tide.

Gonzalo Veron headed in number six on 83 minutes before more poor marking allowed Gideon Baah to scramble home a seventh in the 89th minute. The Red Bulls win equals the record for the biggest margin in MLS history. The Los Angeles Galaxy beat the Dallas Burn 8-1 in 1998 while Chicago Fire beat the

Kansas City Wizards 7-0 in 2001.

Vieira said New York's recent grueling schedule—an away game last Sunday on the west coast against Portland followed by a midweek game in Toronto—had taken its toll. "We have to bounce back from it," Vieira said. "The message I want to send to the players and to the fans is don't forget what you've been doing. It will be really difficult to wake up tomorrow morning but we have to face our responsibility and analyze the game and see which part of the game we have to improve." — AFP

## POGBA FRONTRUNNER AS BOOK OPENS ON ALLEGRI'S DAUGHTER

**MILAN:** With a second successive league and Cup double in the bag, Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri was handed a fresh challenge yesterday—as bookmakers jokingly speculated on which player would next date his daughter. Valentina Allegri, a 21-year-old student with model looks, has become a social media phenomenon thanks to a series of videos and clips in which she sings about and celebrates the club's achievements.

Now bookmakers have playfully speculated on which Italian league player could next date Allegri's prized possession. She has previously dated former footballer Francesco Lopapa, but France and Juventus star Paul Pogba is now odds-on. Juventus striker Simone Zaza, a friend of Lopapa, is available at 6/4 while punters can get 3/1 for Domenico Berardi and Andrea Belotti.

Sassuolo striker Berardi is expected to move to Juventus this summer while Belotti currently plays for Juve's cross-town rivals Torino. Paulo Dybala finished Juve's top scorer in the league with 19 goals and the 22-year-old Argentinian is at 6/1. Given their fiery reputations and coach Allegri's no-nonsense approach, two other Argentinians, Boca Juniors striker Pablo Dani Osvaldo and Inter striker Mauro Icardi, are at 14/1.

Osvaldo is a reputed playboy who was last week criticised by club bosses for publishing nearly nude photos of himself on social media. Icardi is married to Wanda Nara, the ex-wife of Torino striker Maxi Lopez. Lopez and Icardi were close friends at Sampdoria but when Lopez's marriage to Nara fell apart, Icardi nipped

in and eventually married Nara in 2015.

Taking things to the extreme, bookmakers slapped odds of 19/1 on Uruguayan midfielder Martin Caceres, whose tender relations with Allegri were strained last year after he crashed his car for a second time. Former Juve frontman and notorious playboy Christian Vieri, meanwhile, closed the book at 24/1.

### Dybala disappointed

In related news, Juventus striker Paulo Dybala has admitted his disappointment after the Serie A giants ended his hopes of playing for Argentina in the Olympics this summer. With 19 league goals, Dybala finished second only to Napoli's record-setting 36-goal star Gonzalo Higuain in the Serie A scoring charts in what was his first season in Turin last season. The 22-year-old striker had been hoping to shine at the Olympics in Brazil or the Copa America, the 100th edition of which will be held across 10 cities in the US this summer. But after being left out of Argentina's Copa squad by coach Gerardo Martino, who has selected Lionel Messi, Ezequiel Lavezzi, Sergio Aguero and Higuain, Juventus then put the brakes on Dybala's Olympic plans. "It's disappointing, but Juventus won't give me permission to go to Rio," Dybala told media after Saturday's 1-0 Cup final win over AC Milan at Rome's Stadio Olimpico. Dybala will now spend the summer training with the Turin giants and preparing for the new season. Speaking of Martino, he added: "I have to respect the coach's decision. It's not easy to assemble a squad with so many phenomenal strikers."



ROME: AC Milan's Jose Mauri touches his face as Juventus players celebrate at the end of the Italian Cup soccer final between AC Milan and Juventus, at Rome's Olympic Stadium. — AP

## MYANMAR FANS GET A FLEETING GLIMPSE OF LEICESTER'S FOXES

**YANGON:** Myanmar football fans flocked yesterday to see newly-crowned English Premier League champions Leicester City as they made a whirlwind visit to Yangon and took in the city's stunning Shwedagon Pagoda. The Foxes, who have spent a week soaking up the adulation of a growing Thai fanbase, were greeted with a cascade of selfies at Yangon airport before they were whisked away for a brief tour of the Shwedagon, which contains relics from the Buddha.

His hands clasped in respect, Italian manager Claudio Ranieri knelt alongside Leicester's Thai owner, billionaire Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, and several players in front of the glittering pagoda which soars over Yangon's skyline. Duty-free magnate Vichai is a devout Buddhist renowned for his deeply superstitious approach to club affairs.

During Leicester's odds-defying title-winning season Vichai repeatedly flew Thai monks to the British city to bless the team and stadium. The club has attracted new fans across Asia since their 5,000-1 outsider title win, even winning over some supporters from traditional regional favorites Manchester United.

"All football fans like Leicester because they tried very hard and gave the best they had," Chan Myae Ko Ko Lwin, who is organizing a fans' welcoming party, told

AFP. For 11-year-old Ye Yin Htet, among the scores waiting patiently at the pagoda, his new loyalty to the once unheralded side stemmed from their name. "Foxes follow their prey in group. Likewise, Leicester play in group," he said.

### Soccer powerhouse

Like much of Southeast Asia Myanmar is football-mad. It was once a regional soccer powerhouse but football struggled for a time, like all other sports, under military rule. The domestic league was however rebooted under General Than Shwe, who was head of state from 1992-2011. He is believed to have ordered mega-rich businessmen who made fortunes under the junta to stump up millions of dollars for new teams.

Those teams now play in an increasingly competitive Myanmar National League. Elections last November ushered in the first civilian government for almost half a century. But the football federation is still led by a media-friendly army "crony" called Zaw Zaw, who forged a mining, banking and hotel empire under the former junta. In Thailand Leicester held several promotional events, capped by an open-top bus parade—complete with the Premier League trophy—through central Bangkok on Thursday that drew thousands of curious bystanders. —AFP



YANGON: English Premier League champions Leicester City team members pose for a photo during a visit to Yangon city's landmark Shwedagon pagoda. —AFP

## BROCCHI AT RISK AS AC MILAN MISS OUT ON EUROPE AGAIN

**MILAN:** AC Milan coach Cristian Brocchi admits his job is on the line after an Italian Cup final defeat by Juventus ended the Serie A giants' hopes of European football next season. An inspired Milan dominated the Stadio Olimpico clash in Rome but fell to an extra-time winner by late substitute Alvaro Morata, who beat 'keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma from 10 yards from Juan Cuadrado's chipped pass to secure a 1-0 victory.

It meant Juventus became the first team in Italy to win the double twice in succession, and the Europa League spot that normally goes to the Cup winner was handed to sixth-placed Sassuolo. Milan, who had finished two points behind in seventh, will focus on domestic duties next season. Amid reports the club are set for a takeover by a Chinese consortium, Brocchi says his future, too, is unclear.

"What will be, will be," Brocchi said. "I haven't had the chance to speak to the president. I imagine he'll be disappointed with the defeat, but not with the performance. "We gave it everything and I am sorry we couldn't win." Reports suggest former Roma coach Rudi Garcia and ex-Empoli handler Marco Giampaolo are in line to succeed Brocchi, the club's former youth team coach who replaced Sinisa Mihajlovic with six games to play. Probed by media as he left the stadium, Berlusconi gave little away.

"We'll see," said Berlusconi, although a complete overhaul could be in the reckoning if Berlusconi sells a majority stake in the club he bought in 1986 and helped steer to five of their seven Champions League titles during their 1990s heyday. Ironically, it was following the sacking of current Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri in January 2014 that Milan's fortunes began slipping.

Allegri, who steered the Rossoneri to their last league title in 2011, has since led Juventus to two successive doubles and a Champions League final, while Milan have appointed no less than four coaches—Clarence Seedorf, Filippo Inzaghi, Sinisa Mihajlovic and now Brocchi—as they bid to stop the rot.

After another forgettable season, fans of the seven-time European champions will be hoping fresh investment can transform the club. A Chinese consortium is studying the club's financial records and statements with a view to purchasing a majority stake, having signed exclusive negotiating rights with Berlusconi's holding company Fininvest earlier this month.

"Fininvest has reached an agreement with a group of Chinese investors in establishing exclusive negotiating rights for the sale of shares of AC Milan," said a club statement on May 10. "A memorandum of understanding has also been signed which will act as a starting point for more in depth negotiations to take place. "The exclusive negotiating rights have been established to be compatible with the complexities of the talks, the needs of the club and the appointments scheduled in the footballing calendar." — AFP

## 21 TITLES IN SEVEN YEARS ISN'T BAD, SAYS GUARDIOLA

**BERLIN:** Pep Guardiola says his 21st title as a coach is not a bad way to sign off at Bayern Munich after his tearful farewell in the German Cup final. Bayern won Guardiola's final game in charge on Saturday night at Berlin's Olympic Stadium by beating Borussia Dortmund 4-3 on penalties after neither side could score in 120 minutes. Dortmund missed two penalties in the shootout before Douglas Costa nailed the final spot kick to seal Bayern's league and cup double and give Guardiola his 21st title.

"21 titles in seven years, three titles per year, that's not bad," said Guardiola who won 14 titles in four years with Barcelona. "But I had some luck in being able to coach Barcelona and Bayern Munich, both clubs are exceptional. "They have players who help you do your best, but my time here in Germany hasn't just been about titles: it was also my life here, the Bundesliga and the stadiums which were always full."

Guardiola will coach Manchester City next season, but the Spaniard, so often accused of being too emotionless during his time in Munich, broke down in tears as Bayern celebrated. He revealed that he has struggled to deal with criticism from the German media since it was announced at the start of the year

that he would leave to coach City next season.

"The last five months haven't been easy," he said. "What people said to me, before I decided to join Manchester, was completely different to what they said after it was announced. "I can't understand that. "But I am Pep, I always focus on the next game and that is what I will always do. "Titles are titles, they make people happy, but it was a huge experience for me to be able to work with these players every day." Guardiola will be replaced by Carlo Ancelotti as Bayern's head coach next season and says he leaves the Bavarian giants in rude health. "Bayern Munich, with these players, is in good hands, they have the enthusiasm and the character," said the Spaniard.

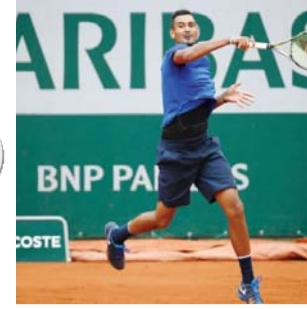
"Both teams were tired in extra time and you can't control each penalty in the shootout, but they did well." A regret from Guardiola's Bavarian sojourn is his three consecutive Champions League exits at the semi-final stage after losing to Barcelona (2014), Real Madrid (2015) and Atletico Madrid in this season's last four. "Actually we had deserved to be in Milan next Saturday," insisted Bayern's chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge after Bayern lost at the start of May to Atletico, who will play Real Madrid in the European final in Milan on Saturday. — AFP



BERLIN: Bayern Munich's defender Jerome Boateng (R) comforts Bayern Munich's Spanish head coach Pep Guardiola who cries taken by emotion after the German Cup (DFB Pokal) final football match Bayern Munich vs Borussia Dortmund at the Olympic stadium. —AFP

# Sports

Angry Kyrgios,  
Kvitova pass  
chilly Roland  
Garros tests



Brocchi at risk  
as AC Milan  
miss out on  
Europe again



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NEW BCCI BOSS SAYS HE'S NOT RUNNING AWAY FROM REFORMS Page 16



TORONTO: Kyle Lowry #7 of the Toronto Raptors shoots the ball as he falls during the second half against the Cleveland Cavaliers in game three of the Eastern Conference Finals during the 2016 NBA Playoffs at Air Canada Centre. — AFP

## DEROZAN, RAPTORS END CAVALIERS' STREAK

### TORONTO SET PLAYOFF RECORD WITH 26 REBOUNDS

**TORONTO:** Cleveland's perfect playoff run went south in the north. DeMar DeRozan scored 32 points, Bismack Biyombo set a Toronto playoff record with 26 rebounds and the Raptors beat Cleveland 99-84 in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference Finals on Saturday night, handing the Cavaliers their first loss this postseason. Kyle Lowry scored 20 points, Cory Joseph added 14, and Patrick Patterson and DeMarre Carroll each had 10 for the Raptors. They rebounded after losing the first two games in Cleveland by a combined 50 points.

#### 'We The North'

In Toronto, where "We The North" is a rallying cry, a sell-out crowd dressed in red and white T-shirts cheered the Raptors to their seventh victory in nine home playoff games. Game 4 is Monday night at Air Canada Centre. "It's a long series," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. "It's not over with yet, but everybody thought we were going to get swept. I think that fuels us and if that's what it takes, so be it."

LeBron James scored 24 points, and J.R. Smith had 22 for the Cavaliers. They won their first 10 playoff games and

were trying to match the Los Angeles Lakers' record of 11 straight victories to begin a postseason. The Lakers did it in 1989 and again in 2001. "We didn't play our game and they made us pay for it," James said. "We didn't start the game as physical as we should have at the point of attack."

Biyombo had four blocks, helping Toronto limit the Cavaliers to 20 points in the paint. The Cavs had 106 points in the paint in the first two games. "It was amazing, honestly," DeRozan said about Biyombo's performance. "He was big time tonight. Without him, we probably wouldn't get this win."

Kyrie Irving scored 13 points, and Channing Frye had 11 for Cleveland. The Cavaliers were held below 100 points for the first time in these playoffs. "They came out and they beat us," Cleveland coach Tyrone Lue said. "They were more aggressive. They were more physical. They were more active. They were faster. They beat us to the ball." James had five assists, moving past Jason Kidd and into third place on the NBA's career playoff list. It was a rough night for Cavaliers forward Kevin Love, who scored three points and made just one of nine field goal attempts. Irving also struggled with his shooting, missing 16 of 19.

"Those guys will be better," James pledged. Irving checked out at 1:38 of the fourth quarter and had to be helped to the locker room following a collision with Joseph. "I just got the wind knocked out of me," Irving said. With his team ahead by eight, Biyombo scored six straight points in the fourth to put the Raptors up 91-77 at 3:38. "He was huge," Casey said. "I thought he played a big-time game in the paint."

DeRozan scored 12 points in the first but saw a buzzer-beating 3 waved off after video review. Lowry scored eight points despite picking up his second foul at 5:40 as Toronto led 30-24 after one. It was the first time in nine quarters this series that the Raptors had outscored the Cavaliers. Carroll, Joseph and Patterson each made 3-pointers during a 16-2 Toronto run midway through the second as the Raptors overcame Lowry's third foul to take a 54-37 lead.

James went down clutching his face after being accidentally elbowed by Thompson during a scuffle at center court late in the second. Thompson and Joseph were given technicals on the play. James recovered to make a 3 in the final seconds, but Cleveland trailed 60-47 at halftime.

"Our second quarter lineup didn't do a great job of paying attention to detail," James said. "They were able to bust the game open."

#### Wagging war

Biyombo went down in pain at the end of the game after taking a knock below the belt. "I got hit in an area I probably wasn't supposed to get hit in," Biyombo said. "Whenever the league has a chance they should take a look." Lue said he had no problem with Biyombo wagging his finger, Dikembe Mutombo-style, after blocked shots. "They were kicking our butts, so he should have the right to wave his finger until we do something about it," Lue said. For his part, Biyombo said he'd get a "licence" from Mutombo to copy Hall of Famer's celebration.

Irving and Love combined to shoot 0 for 9 in the first. ... Matthew Dellavedova played after suffering a sprained left ankle in Game 2. Raptors: Biyombo set a Toronto playoff record with 16 rebounds in the first half. He broke Jonas Valanciunas' record of 15, set against Indiana in Game 1 of the first round. Biyombo had 10 rebounds in the first quarter alone. — AP

## 'IT'S OVER' SAYS VAN GAAL AMID MOURINHO REPORTS

**LONDON:** Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal left the squad's hotel yesterday saying "it's over" amid reports he was about to be replaced by Jose Mourinho. Dutch boss van Gaal was greeted by waiting Red Devils fans following United's FA Cup final win over Crystal Palace at Wembley on Saturday.

When asked by a Sky Sports reporter if he had time to talk, van Gaal replied: "It's over." Whether that meant he had been sacked by United was not immediately clear. But the 64-year-old former Netherlands manager's brief remark will fuel speculation he is on his way out of Old Trafford. No sooner had United lifted the FA Cup then reports in the British media emerged that former Chelsea boss Mourinho would be replacing one-time mentor van Gaal. For all that they ended this season with a trophy, United didn't make a sustained challenge for the Premier League title and failed to qualify for the Champions League.

United fans were also unhappy with the brand of football their team played under van Gaal, which many felt ran counter to the club's traditional attacking style. Mourinho saw his second spell as Chelsea manager end with the sack in December after last season's champions made a miserable start to the defense of their Premier League title.

The Portuguese manager may have won trophies in several European leagues but has never stayed at one club longer than three years and three months he racked up in

his first spell with Chelsea. But former United defender Phil Neville said even if Mourinho was only at Old Trafford for a brief time, he would bring trophies to the club.

#### Falling out rumors

"I can't see him staying too long at Man United, maybe two or three years, that seems to be his shelf life at a football club," Neville told BBC Radio yesterday. "When Jose finishes at a club it tends to be a pattern where he falls out with a few players, he gets disgruntled and the team dips. It happened at Chelsea, it certainly happened at Real Madrid where there were rumors he fell out with a few players. It's a pattern with Jose, he comes into a club, he gets success but he doesn't stay for too long."

United have now failed to finish higher than fourth in the Premier League in any of the three seasons since legendary manager Alex Ferguson retired. For a club of United's stature that represents an embarrassing record but Neville believes Mourinho, who won three Premier League titles with Chelsea, can transform their fortunes. "He's a proven winner, a proven champion," Neville said.

"United fans want a team that will challenge for the league title, not a team that finishes seventh or fifth, and Jose is probably the man for the job. "Knowing Jose as I do, I think he will have done his homework and he's meticulous in his planning. "He knows who he wants and at the start he will demand United sign those players for United to become championship challengers again." — AFP



LONDON: Manchester United's Dutch manager Louis van Gaal (R) speaks with Manchester United's English striker Wayne Rooney before the start of the FA Cup trophy following the English FA Cup final football match between Crystal Palace and Manchester United at Wembley stadium. — AFP



20 legendary models over 112 years

## DOLLAR SURGES ON HOPES OF JUNE HIKE



BANGALORE: The Lamborghini Huracan 610-4 Spyder is seen at a showroom during its launch in Bangalore. Lamborghini rolled out its new \$580,000 supercar onto the streets of India this month, but local millionaires tempted to buy the flashy convertible could hit a bump in the road thanks to the taxman. — AFP

## INDIA'S SUPERRICH TAX EVADERS FACE CRACKDOWN

AT LEAST 500 INDIAN CELEBRITIES, TYCOONS FIGURE IN PANAMA PAPERS SCANDAL

**NEW DELHI:** Lamborghini rolled out its new \$580,000 supercar onto the streets of India this month, but local millionaires tempted to buy the flashy convertible could hit a bump in the road thanks to the taxman. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to crack down on tax avoidance-notorious in India especially among the superrich-to tackle yawning inequality in the world's second-most populous nation.

Figures published last month for the first time since 2000 showed just how few of India's top earners pay tax. Only six people earning over 500 million rupees (\$7.4 million) filed returns in 2012-13. The numbers are hard to square with the estimated 2,100 ultra-wealthy Indians whose net worth exceeds \$50 million, according to the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report, or a Forbes list that found 84 billionaires. New Delhi's glitziest hotels host week-long, multi-million dollar weddings, drawing thousands of guests, with parties awash with

Veuve Clicquot and DJs flown in from Ibiza. But now the government's top taxman is looking to join the dots, by cross-checking income declarations with data from luxury car dealerships-as well as property registers, fixed bank deposits and stock market transactions.

"The people in the higher bracket are not paying the correct amount of taxes. This is a fact," revenue secretary Hasmukh Adhia told AFP of the new initiative. "We need to do something about it. We are taking a lot of enforcement action."

Billions of dollars in unpaid taxes deprive the Indian government of revenues that could be spent on changing lives in a country where 270 million people survive on less than \$2 a day, according to the World Bank. But rounding up tax is difficult when dodging it is practically a national sport, from small-time landlords who request rent in cash to large-scale money laundering via state lotteries.

Andrea Baldi, head of Asia Pacific for

Lamborghini, said tracking its sales is unlikely to net the government many avoiders. "The people in India who are not declaring their tax are not the kind of people that will buy a very flashy car and drive in front of the entire city displaying their wealth."

### Black money

Across all levels of society, India's taxpayers are startlingly few, with only around 2.5 percent of its 1.2 billion population filing returns-largely because the so-called unorganised sector employs so many people. "We've always had the sense that the tax base is really, really poor, that we need to build up taxation, but it does come as a bit of a shock," said Sonu Iyer, a partner at EY, of the recent data.

"The numbers get progressively poorer as you move up the ladder." At least 500 Indians including Bollywood celebrities, business tycoons and an ex-cricketer were named in the recent Panama Papers investigation as

using tax havens-a practice not, in itself, illegal. But the revelations prompted Modi, who has made tackling "black money" a tenet of his two years in office, to order an investigation. Rules introduced this year make it mandatory to declare a unique taxpayer number when purchasing goods over 200,000 rupees and to pay one percent in tax when buying cars over one million rupees.

And this month the government closed a major loophole in Mauritius, where a decades-old treaty enabled people to route cash via the island without paying capital gains tax. Yet some of India's wealthy are not obliged to pay income tax at all. Agricultural income is not taxed, which has long been a sensitive issue because of an oppressive colonial practice of taxing farmers heavily. "Some states like Punjab have some very wealthy farmers, but because there is no tax on agricultural income they are outside the purview (of tax authorities)," said Suresh Surana, an accountant in Mumbai.

### 'Talk of the town'

New Delhi was nudged into releasing income tax data after celebrated economist Thomas Piketty, known for his work on inequality, publicly chastised the government for withholding it. Although an interesting snapshot, Piketty told AFP it falls short of what is needed to gauge the full picture. "At this stage the data that was released is insufficient for a proper analysis," he said, adding that "one cannot draw any conclusion about inequality". The government says it is a start-and that greater transparency will kickstart a culture of shame, rather than begrudging admiration, for those who keep their money out of the taxman's hands.

"By putting this data in the public domain the public discussion has started," Adhia, the revenue secretary, said. "You are saying, 'it is very bizarre that in a big country with so many wealthy people and palaces, you are having only so many people paying tax.' That will be the talk of the town." — AFP

## GULF MARKETS FALL AS INVESTORS TAKE PROFITS

### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Stock markets in the Gulf fell yesterday as investors took profits, taking their cue from a dip in Brent oil futures at the end of last week, while concerns over security risks put pressure on Egyptian shares. Riyadh's stock index dropped 1.0 percent, weighed down by the two largest sectors, banks and petrochemicals. Samba Financial Group and Saudi Basic Industries, the largest listed stock by market value, fell 2.0 and 1.2 percent respectively.

But some retail industry shares, which had largely been weak since reporting quarterly results last month, outperformed the market with Fawaz Alhokair, which owns Saudi rights to clothing brands such as Mango and Banana Republic, surging 9.6 percent. The stock has rebounded 25.5 percent since last week. An HSBC research note said the company was trading at a discount to its peers on a forward valuation basis, even after pricing in some risks to its earnings from a structural slowdown in the Saudi retail sector.

Dubai's index fell 0.7 percent to 3,209 points in thin trade as investors sold across the board. Emaar Properties and DAMAC Properties dropped 1.1 and 1.8 per-

cent. The index confirmed a break below technical support on the late March and early May lows of 3,248-3,256 points. That triggered a bearish head & shoulders pattern formed by the highs and lows since March and pointing down to the 2,800-point area. Dana Gas and Etisalat were the main drags on Abu Dhabi's index, which lost 1.1 percent. Shares in the natural gas explorer and the telecoms operator dropped 1.9 and 2.6 percent.

Blue chips also weighed on Qatar's stock market with telecoms group Ooredoo down 3.6 percent. The main index dropped 1.8 percent. Cairo's main index erased early gains and edged down 0.1 percent in low volume as international funds sold, bourse data showed.

"The geopolitical risk, after the disappearance of the EgyptAir flight, is back on high and has quelled some of the market's recent gains," a Cairo-based trader said. The cause of the EgyptAir crash has not yet been established.

Tourism-related shares were hit yesterday with Porto Group Holding, a resort operator, slumping 3.3 percent. But Global Telecom Holding bucked the trend and added 1.0 percent in its fourth straight session of gains. — Reuters

## GREECE TO ADOPT MORE CUTS, TAX HIKES FOR BAILOUT CASH

**ATHENS:** Greece yesterday was set to adopt fresh cuts and tax hikes ahead of a Eurogroup meeting that is expected to unlock desperately-needed bailout funds for the debt-ridden nation.

After waves of protests over a string of unpopular reforms, lawmakers from the ruling leftist party were poised to approve late night a bill of over 7,000 pages that raises the sales tax cap and introduces a mechanism to further slash spending in case of budget overruns.

The contingency mechanism in the new legislation-labelled "the cutter" by Greek media-is designed to cut state spending if the country fails to meet fiscal targets, is of chief interest to Greece's international creditors. Greece has pledged under its latest EU bailout to bring its primary budget surplus, which excludes debt payments, to 3.5 percent of gross domestic product by 2018.

Should Athens fail to reach its fiscal targets, it must resort to the new mechanism to save up to two percent of output in a fiscal year.

### 'It's raining taxes'

People on all sides of Greece's political divide have criticised the sweeping reforms, the latest in a string in recent years. Earlier this month, tens of thousands took to the streets to protest against an equally unpopular pension reform and tax hike.

Fresh demonstrations are planned for yesterday afternoon, while all public transport has been at a standstill all weekend due to a strike called by the main unions. The country's main business owners on Friday meanwhile warned the latest measures will "dampen" investor interest in Greece and its chances for a recovery. Greek newspapers yesterday voiced criticism over the fact that the new taxes and cuts, which also include a maximum VAT hike from 23 to 24 percent, don't come with a promise from the country's international creditors of debt relief.

"It's raining taxes, with the future of debt uncer-



ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (right) speaks with Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos (left) as they attend a parliamentary session in Athens yesterday. — AFP

tain," read the headline of Kathimerini newspaper's top story. Greece and its European creditors are locked in talks on how to reduce the country's debt burden, which the International Monetary Fund said must happen if it is to contribute any more of its own funds.

The IMF said Thursday that Greece would need a lengthy period free from debt payments to achieve sustainable finances if the European Union does not agree to cutting the debt up front.

"It is possible to restore debt sustainability without upfront haircuts, although this would involve providing very concessional loan terms including

long grace and maturity periods and very low interest rates," IMF spokesman Gerry Rice told reporters.

As for the IMF's participation in the rescue, Rice said the global emergency lender is still assessing the reforms Athens is undertaking to strengthen its finances. "We don't want more austerity for Greece and we certainly don't want more of the burden to fall on the poor and the most vulnerable," he said. The Greek government, at loggerheads with its creditors as it seeks to obtain some relief, appears confident. But EU economic powerhouse Germany has been deeply opposed to alleviating any of Athens' debt. — AFP



## KQIC ADDS KNET PAYMENT MODE FOR ITS PERSONAL INSURANCES

**KUWAIT:** KQIC Insured, a premier insurer in Kuwait yesterday announced the launch of a new electronic payment service for purchasing personal insurances online; customers can now log onto [www.qic-insured.com](http://www.qic-insured.com), select the insurance cover and pay via KNET.

Speaking on the launch on this added service, Hassan Al-Jaidah, CEO of KQIC stated, "As part of our ongoing improvements and adaptations to our customers' expectations and market demands, we are pleased to introduce the option of paying for personal insurances online via KNET"

He further explained, "According to a BCG report, 75percent of insurance purchases are expected to be via online channels by 2020; and by adding KNET as a payment option for our online portal [www.qic-insured.com](http://www.qic-insured.com), we have made our personal insurance products more accessible and payment options easier"

Commenting on the strategy behind this added feature, Frederik Bisbjerg, Executive Vice President MENA Retail remarked, "Adding KNET as a payment option is part of a natural progression and

we're happy to offer this additional convenience to our customers; we constantly strive to make being a customer with KQIC Insured as easy and hassle-free as possible, from quote to claim, and this is yet another milestone in our journey."

Last year KQIC Insured revolutionized its personal insurance offerings with the launch of a new, user friendly and interactive online insurance platform; customers can buy their personal insurances in a very easy way; there's no need for visiting a KQIC Insured branch to get a policy - all can be done online and in minutes.

Established in 2004, Kuwait Qatar Insurance Company (KQIC) is a subsidiary of Qatar Insurance Group. KQIC offers both conventional insurance and Takaful products and believes in delivering innovative retail solutions for Home, Travel and Car insurances to every segment of its customer base. KQIC serves as a conduit in providing insurance services across the GCC and helps connect overseas insurance interests through its global network. KQIC is a subsidiary of Qatar Insurance Group, which has a global underwriting footprint spread across all continents.



Hassan Al-Jaidah, CEO, KQIC.



## TAITRA LEADS TAIWAN TRADE MISSION TO SAUDI, BAHRAIN, KUWAIT AND UAE

**KUWAIT:** Commissioned by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) led a trade delegation of 30 well-established Taiwanese suppliers representing various industries to visit Riyadh, Dammam, and Jubail in Saudi Arabia, Manama in Bahrain, Kuwait City in Kuwait and Dubai in UAE from May 6 to May 20, 2016. The purpose of this visit was to facilitate business cooperation between the 30 Taiwanese delegates and their counterparts in the Middle East. This trip aimed at furthering trade relations between Taiwan and the four countries mentioned above.

Having made great strides in strengthening its major industries, Taiwan is now considered a technologically advanced manufacturing powerhouse. The nation is home to key manufacturers and suppliers of various products, including IT components, industrial machinery, electronic products, textile products, steel products, medical devices, healthcare products, auto parts and equipment and housewares.

For this event, TAITRA arranged a series of trade meetings in each of the above mentioned countries to give the local buyers a valuable platform to discuss business with the participating Taiwanese companies. Taiwanese suppliers brought the latest products information as well as the most innovative samples with them, including a variety of baby-related products, hardware and building materials, machinery, steel and tinplate, sewage pumps, seafood, information services etc. The range of products presented is as follows:

1. Baby and Children Products: Baby & Maternity Care Products, Feeding Bottles, Nipples, Gum Soothers, Training Cups, Toys, Gifts, Strollers, Footwear, Grooming & Cleaning Items, Strollers & Carriage items, a Series of Mom & Baby Care Products, Baby Stroller, Baby Playpen, Baby Rocker, Baby Walker.
2. Medical Products: Orthodontic-Bracket/Implant; Mask-Face/Foot.
3. Textile Products: All Kinds of Materials for Wearing Clothes.
4. Health Equipment: Magic Caring Pillow & Cushion.
5. Metal Products: Stainless Steel Handrail Accessories.
6. Electrical Products: Power Bank- Cell phone/Automotive.
7. Machinery: PET PP PE Recycling Machine, PET PP PE Film Ext-Ruder Machine, TPR, PP and PE Coating Carpet Machine.
8. Seafood: Tilapia Fish, Milkfish, Catfish, Koral, Kingfish (Seerfish), Squids Items, Seasoned Products.
9. Metal Ball Pens.
10. ICT Products: Digital Signage Players, Digital Signage Servers, Managing Software, Memory products-Memory card/USB.
11. Food: Biscuit, Candy, Snack, Noodle, Frozen Food, Tea.



12. Different types of LED lighting: LED Plant Grow Lights, LED Poultry Lights, LED Commercial & Industrial Lights, LED Dimensional Character, LED Slim Light Box, LED Lighting Fixture.
13. Blender/Home Appliances: Citrus Juicer, Hand Mixer, Blender & Vacuum Accessory, Robot Cleaner.
14. Solar Power Products: Solar Power System, Solar Applications, LED Saving Lamps.
15. Cosmetics and Fashion Products: Anti-Wrinkle/Anti-Aging/Collagen - Face and Eyes MASKS, Fashion Accessories (Necklaces/Bracelets, Rings...), Hair Ornaments (Hair clips, Hair Elastics...), Artistic Eyes Deco, Tattoo Stickers).
16. Sporting Goods: Scuba Diving Equipment, Technical Diving, Snorkeling, Wetsuits, Spear Fishing.
17. Kitchenware & Homeware: Kitchen Gadgets, Cleaning Tools, BBQ Tools, Bakeware.
18. Hardware: Shop-Fittings & Commercial Display Products, Brass Valves & Plumbing Products, Wire Shelf Rack, Supermarket Display Rack.
19. Construction Materials: Deluxe Entrance Door, Balance Door, Fire Rated Door, Door Hardware.
20. Security System: Intercom, Home Automation, Alarm & Access Control, Video Surveillance, LED Dimmer.
21. Auto, Motorcycle and Bike Parts: Automotive parts, Motorcycle Parts, LED Lights.
22. Seals: O-ring, Washer, Bonded Seal, Hydraulic & pneumatic Seal, Molded Gasket.
23. Barcode Scanner: With user's APP that may enrich the mobile device to become data collector or a portable terminal.
24. Water Treatment: R.O. Water Systems, Water Filters, Shower Filters.
25. Communication: Wireless communication antenna for WLAN/WiFi, Cellular & 2-way radios, VHF/UHF Rubber Duck antennas, RF coaxial connectors, RF coaxial cable assembly, SWR POWER METER, Microphones/ Speakers Mic & Mic. Holder, FWT (Fixed Wireless Terminal) WIFI.
26. 3D Printer.
27. Drone (unmanned flying vehicles).



## MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS OPENS 152ND OUTLET IN SHARJAH

**SHARJAH:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the leading jewelry retailer has launched its 152nd outlet globally at Rolla Street, Sharjah. This new outlet also boasts of being the first outlet of Malabar Gold & Diamonds functioning in its own property of Malabar Group's International Operations. The outlet was inaugurated on 20th May, 2016 by Dr Rashid Al Leem, Founder & Executive Chairman, Al-Leem Corporation in the valued presence of Dr PA Ibrahim Haji- Co Chairman, Malabar Group; Shamal Ahamed, Managing Director- International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; KP Abdul Salam, Group Executive Director, other well-wishers, invited media and guests.

Being one of the largest of its kind in the Emirate, the showroom is located in the ground floor of their own property named Malabar Plaza, while the other two levels are given out for rent to other organizations. Malabar Gold & Diamonds started their International Operations with a showroom in Rolla, which is located exactly opposite to the new showroom now has 71 showrooms across GCC & Far East. Malabar Gold & Diamonds dedicates this success to their customers and being the 'preferred choice' for gold and diamonds jewellery purchases among them.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds intends to provide a unique shopping experience to all customers. The jewelry chain offers a significantly large collection of traditional as well as contemporary designer jewelry. Like all their other outlets, this outlet exhibits a wide range of diverse and trendy designs in gold

(18K & 22K), IGI certified diamonds and precious gem jewelry from Italy, Singapore, Bahrain and India.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds' customer friendly policies and exceptional customer service has made buying, selling and exchanging jewelry convenient and less time consuming. This gives enough reason for customers to come back to their stores. The jewelry group also gives their customers the advantage of using their 0 percent Easy Payment Plan with selected banks through which they can pay the total amount in installments up to 12 months without any interest.

The leap from a single store to more than 152 outlets internationally did not happen overnight. It was achieved through hard work and persistence on setting exceptionally high standards to meet the aspiration of customers. Their dedicated and highly skilled employees invest heart and soul in striving to achieve maximum perfection. Excellence in customer satisfaction is the overriding promise in everything they do.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds' has always been at the forefront in gold jewelry manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing and plans on being the 'most-desired' jewelry retailer in the market. Malabar gold & Diamonds' currently operates five showrooms in Sharjah including outlets at Mega Mall, Sharjah International Airport, Rolla -1 and inside Lulu Hypermarket at Al- Nahda, Sharjah. With 152 stores across the world, the group strives to continue embarking on its journey by further expanding in the near future.

## BIC BOSS NOT DISPOSABLE AFTER ALL

**CLICHY, France:** Bruno Bich stepped down from the helm of France's ballpoint pen and disposable razor maker, BIC, a decade ago. But at the age of nearly 70, Bich is back as BIC recycles his wealth of experience to ensure a smooth transition at the top.

Shareholders last week backed his return as chairman and chief executive officer for two years from June 1 due to CEO Mario Guevara retiring earlier than planned. The stop gap will give Bich time to "finish preparing" the eldest of his three sons, 37-year-old Gonzalve, to potentially take over. He was also elevated to become one of two new executive vice-presidents last week.

Founded by Bruno Bich's father, Marcel, who started out with a partner in 1945, BIC boasts that 1,000 of its pens, razors and lighters are now sold somewhere in the world every four seconds.

The group rung up sales of some 2.2 billion euros (\$2.5 billion) last year. "At BIC we have a saying, 'honouring the past to invent the future,'" Bich told AFP during an interview at the company's offices in Clichy, a northwestern Paris suburb. For him, honouring the past means staying true to the spirit of the values his father held dear—an ethical approach, taking a long-term view and a sense of "measured risk", all while crossing swords with rivals like Gillette.



**PARIS:** The chairman of the French BIC company, Bruno Bich, poses at the company headquarters in Paris. At nearly 70 Bruno Bich will be re-nominated for two years as the chairman of the company funded by his father. — AFP

### Incognito

After starting out in the world of New York finance, Bich joined the family firm aged 28, taking charge of its US branch which in time grew into one of the most profitable and dynamic of the group.

He rose through the ranks to become chairman and chief executive officer in 1993 until 2006, striving to bolster the BIC brand internationally. Since then he has taken more of a backseat formally as non-executive chairman—but "without ever having been far from the job", he stressed with a smile.

Every month he scrutinises the sales figures, comparing them with competitors. And he visits, he says, at least 20 shops a month throughout the world, slipping in to observe business being done without giving away who he is. In supermarkets and at newsagents, Bich checks out the prices of BIC products as well as their availability on the shelves.

"I also take time to see people doing their shopping, especially at the start of a new school year", a key period for buying stationery supplies, he said.

### 'Ink in the blood'

The French market makes up about eight percent of BIC's sales, but about half of its production is in France where it employs 1,300 staff. Despite having been floated on the Paris stock market in 1972, 43 percent of the company's shares are still in the hands of the Bich family.

They "have BIC ink in the blood", said Pierre Vareille, head of Constellium which produces aluminium products and who has also been made BIC vice chairman and lead director.

"He is a good mix of boldness and caution," added Frederic Rostand, one of the company's independent directors and general manager of French dairy cooperative, Sodiaal. BIC this past week changed its statutes to push the retirement age for management back to 72 in order to allow Bich to again pick up the reins for another two-year term.

Looking ahead, BIC will continue to try to increase its market share, with the focus on its basic consumer products in developing countries and, often more personalised, value-added ones in mature markets.

Launching into something new that also meets BIC's fundamental criteria—fulfilling a basic function while ensuring the best possible price and quality—is also currently a challenge. — AFP

### Announcement to Pre-Qualify Companies For Kuwait Public Transport Company Public Transport Buses

Kuwait Public Transport Company wishes to pre-qualify companies with the following activity (supply of buses).

Companies wishing to do the same, should purchase the pre-qualification manual for the value of (KD 25) per manual (only twenty five Kuwaiti dinars) from the Tenders and Contracts Department at the KPTC headquarters building (Al-Murgab) on the third floor. The requests and annexes thereof should be presented to the Tenders and Contracts Department no later than Monday 13.06.2016.

**Remark:** Companies requesting the pre-qualification documents should pay the amount of KD (25) if two years shall pass from the date of their qualification in the records of Kuwait Public Transport Company and they shall abide by the new conditions, if any. If the Company was qualified within the past two years, it is sufficient to update the Company information without paying any fees.

For more information, kindly contact the following telephone numbers: KPTC Tenders and Contracts Department

Direct: 22328454  
22328465

Fax: 22328870

email: [tenders&auctions@kptc.com.kw](mailto:tenders&auctions@kptc.com.kw)











## IN RWANDA, A PHONE TEXT CAN SAVE A BABY

**NYARUKOMBE, Rwanda:** Using an old mobile phone, health worker Floride Uwinkesha logs the latest local pregnancy, part of efforts in Rwanda to boost maternal health through a monitoring program in isolated rural areas. The scheme has already helped slash infant and maternal mortality rates. Marceline Mwubahamana, three months pregnant at 31, doesn't even have to leave home to have her details logged into a national database at the health ministry.

Uwinkesha, the community officer in charge of maternal health in the rural Nyarukombe district of eastern Rwanda, sends through simple codes on a basic mobile phone. The database known as RapidSMS, was set up in 2009 with the backing of the UN children's agency Unicef and underpins a medical monitoring program for pregnancies and babies aged up to two years. Uwinkesha is one of 45,000 community volunteers helping track health across the remotest parts of the rolling hills of Rwanda. They are elected by the people of their village and given basic training by the government.

"PRE," she taps, giving a code that means that the pregnancy was confirmed by a health center. "NP," she adds, meaning "no problem". Once Mwubahamana's details are recorded in the database, the software automatically generates a date for her next prenatal visit.

### 'Red Alert'

"I also send basic information, such as their identity number, if this is her first pregnancy or not and if there are any problems," Uwinkesha said. She will

receive a reminder text message ahead of the next appointment. This pregnancy is going well, but should there be health concerns or an emergency, the health worker can notify the nearest medical facility via a "red alert" text message.

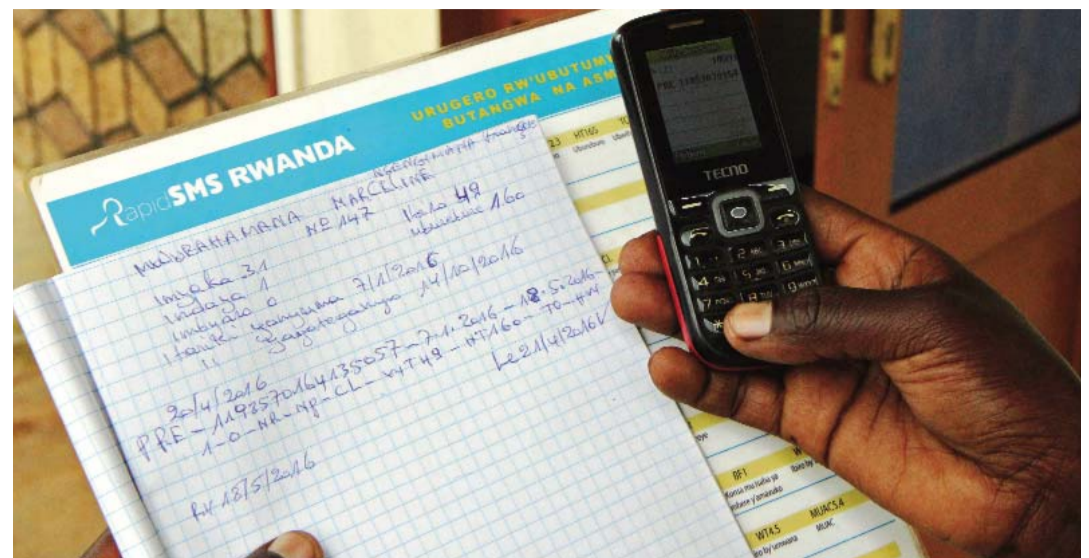
Once logged into the system, alerts help to flag up women who may be in danger. "We can easily find the names of women who have high-risk pregnancies, like those who have had repeated miscarriages or have had gynaecological surgery," said Francois Hakizimana, who runs the Murambi medical centre, a short drive outside the capital Kigali.

Typing on his computer, Hakizimana demonstrates how the system works, scrolling down the screen to show dozens of names of pregnant women living in villages. "We can tell them to go to the nearest health facility as soon as we see that there is any problem," Hakizimana said. Those involved in the text message program say it has helped save many lives since its launch, but no exact figures are available since measuring the precise impact is tough.

In any event, Rwanda has registered huge progress in maternal health, according to World Bank data. The infant mortality ratio for babies aged under one year was 31 deaths per thousand births in 2015, just below the world average of 31.7 - a significant advance from 2009, when the rate stood at 47 per thousand.

### Death Rates Cut

Over the same period, the maternal mortality rate was cut by almost a third, from 411 to 290



**NYARUKOMBE, Rwanda:** A pregnant woman records her information by SMS on the country's "RapidSMS" health system on April 27, 2016. — AFP

deaths per 100,000 births. Uwinkesha will keep checking on Mwubahamana and her baby for up to 28 days after birth. After that, a health worker specialized in infant care will take over. Two carers are trained per village, often one man and a woman, who will perform at least three home visits in two years to verify the health of the child and record data such as its weight and normal breathing rate.

"The main risks at birth are infections, malnutri-

tion, diarrhoea and respiratory diseases," said Joseph Nkinzingabo, who coordinates 1,422 health workers spread over an area comprising 14 health centers. Nkinzingabo just received a "red alert": a woman who is about to give birth at home. Calling the mobile phone of her health worker, he checks that all is well. The mother was able to reach a health center and delivered safely. "No need to send an ambulance," he said. — AFP



## CANON SIGNS 100TH MPS DEAL IN UAE

**DUBAI:** Canon Emirates (CE), a subsidiary of Canon Middle East, celebrated the signing of its 100th Managed Print Service (MPS) contract in the UAE. A gala event was held at Palazzo Versace to mark the occasion and to launch Canon Business Services, a consulting arm of Canon that will offer a wide range of value-driven solutions for continuous process improvements across various sectors.

With more than 500 customers and 3,000 employees across 18 countries in EMEA, Canon Business Services aims to build long-term relationships in the UAE. This is led by a focus on innovation and enhancing document efficiencies from managing print to mail room and print room services. The division also aims to provide services that enhance the use of information and document handling to transform the way enterprises engage with their customers and manage business processes.

The signing of its 100th MPS cus-

tomers illustrates Canon's market strength and on-going commitment to support its customers while embedding sustainability into its business DNA. Shadi Bakhour, General Manager, Canon Emirates, said: "We are committed to our customers and thank them for their trust and support. We also believe that MPS is more than just print outsourcing, it is a journey. By working and consulting with our customers we have a positive impact on reducing energy and paper consumption. "Moreover, signing our 100th MPS customer is a milestone for us and by celebrating it with our partners we are strengthening our relationships and leveraging our offerings. We are also highlighting new business solutions that will help our customers to achieve transformational growth through content management and workflow practices." The event was attended by around 250 current Canon Emirates MPS customers' across the UAE.

## EHDF ENHANCES ONLINE SELF-SERVICE CLOUD PORTAL

**DUBAI:** eHosting DataFort (eHDF), the region's leading managed hosting and cloud infrastructure services provider, announced that they have further enhanced their Public Cloud portal to include advanced features and customizable packages, and improve the overall cloud experience of their customers.

eHDF's unique Public Cloud platform consists of an easy-to-use, fully automated self-service online provisioning portal, which provides scalability options for customers' dynamic IT infrastructure needs. The offering includes an online store that allows users to customize and purchase Public Cloud servers based on their requirements in less than 15 minutes. The new portal offers a user friendly control panel, making it easier for users to control their virtual machines and other related configurations. Furthermore, the feature-rich portal allows users to set firewall rules, load balancing, thresholds, auto-scale, notifications and schedule automatic snapshots, etc.

The platform is highly flexible and comes with the convenience of choosing payment plans based on various types of

configurations. This includes monthly, half yearly as well as annual plans with the additional advantage of the introductory reduced rates. Besides, the technological advancements support a wide range of the latest available operating system (OS) templates and deploys servers much quicker.

The eHDF public cloud enables small and medium businesses to buy locally-hosted cloud infrastructure services which are ideal for hosting websites and other web-based business applications. The payment plans for the cloud packages start at AED 116 per month and users can easily scale the virtual machines with the option to increase memory, CPU, storage etc.

Yasser Zeineldin, CEO, eHosting DataFort, said, "Public Cloud has gained worldwide momentum and we have seen an increased uptake of Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS). By helping firms shift their capital expenses into operational, pay-as-you-go costs, Public Cloud offers reliable and elastic IT infrastructure and superior utilization of hardware and software resources.



**Yasser Zeineldin, CEO - eHosting DataFort**

# APPLE, GOOGLE LOCKED IN BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY

**SAN FRANCISCO:** At the top of the corporate world, Apple and Google are in a back-and-forth battle to be number one. It's not clear which of the two Silicon Valley giants will emerge on top in a contest which highlights the contrast of very different business models. For a brief time early this year, Google parent Alphabet overtook Apple as the world's largest company by market value. Apple then regained, lost and recovered the leader position in May in a battle that appears set to continue for some time. At the close Friday, Apple was worth some \$522 billion, to \$496 billion for Alphabet.

The two companies have both been hugely profitable in recent years, for different reasons. Apple has delivered a line of must-have iPhones and other gadgets that have set trends around the world but now "appears to be a little bit immobile," says Roger Kay, analyst at Endpoint Technologies Associates. Apple shares have slumped some 30 percent over the past 12 months over concerns that its stunning growth pace is slowing and that the iPhone won't be able to rake in profits as it has up to now.

### Finding Next Thing

Kay said Apple may be losing the position of innovation leader it achieved after the iPhone, with no new major hit products coming. "They haven't really changed the nature of the game," Kay said. "The (Apple) Watch came in, it was kind of interesting, people liked it...but developers

are still searching for exactly how to use it." Google, meanwhile, been evolving from a pure search engine to a leader in mobile with its Android operating system.

And it has at the same time been investing in "moonshots" - grand ventures that may have potential such as self-driving cars, fiber networks and Internet balloons. Google "has positioned itself well, through organic investments and acquisitions, for most of the major trends in consumer Internet: mobile, video, local," said RBC Capital Markets analyst Mark Mahaney in a research note.

Kay said the Android system which powers some 80 percent of mobile handsets is a valuable franchise that helps Google's mobile advertising efforts. "The narrative that has boosted Google is the one about technology innovation and being at the wellhead of various important technologies," Kay said. "That may or may not finally pay off. But they're looking. They're using their money to try to find innovative things to make the next big thing, whatever it is."

For Apple, a key moment will come later this year with the expected unveiling of its iPhone 7, a test on whether it can keep up its innovation and entice consumers to trade up. The two companies have a virtual duopoly on the smartphone market, but Apple makes its own hardware and software while Google provides only the free Android software for handsets, including many made by low-cost manufacturers.

### Showing Intelligence

Google has been taking pains to show off its software and artificial intelligence. At its just-concluded developer conference, Google unveiled a virtual home assistant as well as an upgraded messaging platform. Google claims it is ahead of its rivals in artificial intelligence, and cites as proof its victory in the ancient game of Go by its supercomputer AlphaGo. And Google also has shown its interest in virtual reality, adapting its upcoming version of Android to deliver more lifelike images, which could help in its battle against Apple.

But few are ready to count out Apple, which is known for keeping its research efforts secret, and which has a massive cash stockpile of some \$233 billion. Apple is widely believed to be working on some automobile project, and recently announced a \$1 billion investment in Chinese ride hailing app Didi Chuxing, the bitter rival of US-based Uber.

Apple also moved to expand its global footprint by announcing plans for a development office in Hyderabad, India and a new app design center in Bangalore. Even with Apple's share price in a slump, billionaire Warren Buffett disclosed he had taken a \$1 billion stake, suggesting the shrewd investor sees Apple as undervalued. The research firm Trefis said the latest Apple investment in Didi "signals that the company could get more creative" in using its vast financial resources. — AFP



**DAYTON, Ohio:** Swiss founders and pilots Bertrand Picard (left) and Andre Borschberg are seen with the experimental Solar Impulse 2 solar-powered aircraft after landing on Saturday. — AFP

## SOLAR IMPULSE 2 PLANE LANDS IN DAYTON

**WASHINGTON:** A solar-powered plane landed in Dayton, Ohio Saturday on the latest leg of a record-breaking trip to circle the globe without consuming a drop of fuel. Solar Impulse 2, piloted by Swiss businessman Andre Borschberg, arrived at 9:56 pm (0156 GMT Sunday) at Dayton International Airport after a flight from Tulsa, Oklahoma that lasted a 16 hours and 34 minutes, a live video feed showed. "Amazing to have landed in #Dayton after being in the sky for 17 hours!" Borschberg tweeted.

The slow-moving, single-seat plane with the wingspan of a Boeing 747 cuts a flimsy figure, but it has traversed much of the globe in stages since taking off March 9, 2015 from Abu Dhabi. The project aims to promote renewable energy. The aircraft - clad in thousands of solar cells, the sole source of energy for the flight - reached its destination more than an hour ahead of schedule.

Still, traveling at average speeds of only 48 km per hour, it took Solar Impulse 2 longer to reach Dayton than a car - the typical road trip from Tulsa is around 12 hours. The flight to Dayton was the 12th leg of Solar Impulse's projected 16-leg east-west circumnavigation, with

Borschberg and Bertrand Picard alternating as pilots. Piccard, a Swiss psychiatrist and balloonist, initiated the project.

"The flight is part of the attempt to achieve the first ever Round-The-World Solar Flight, the goal of which is to demonstrate how modern clean technologies can achieve the impossible," Piccard and Borschberg said in a statement. Dayton is significant to aviation buffs because it is the home of Orville and Wilbur Wright, brothers who developed the world's first successful powered aircraft heavier than air.

Solar Impulse 2 departed from Tulsa International Airport at 4:22 am (0922 GMT). It may next fly to Pennsylvania as early as tomorrow, the team said. Its final destination in the United States is New York. Thanks to an inflatable mobile hangar, which can be packed up quickly and transported, the plane can be sheltered at a variety of locations. The aircraft was grounded in July when its batteries were damaged halfway through its 35,000-km circumnavigation of the globe.

The crew took several months to repair the damage caused by high tropical temperatures during a 4,000-mile flight between Nagoya,

Japan and Hawaii. The plane was flown on that stage by Borschberg, whose 118-hour journey smashed the previous record of 76 hours and 45 minutes set by US adventurer Steve Fossett in 2006. He took 20-minute catnaps to maintain control of the pioneering plane during the flight from Japan, in what his team described as "difficult" conditions.

### How it Works

The Solar Impulse 2, which weighs roughly the same as a family car, contains 17,000 solar cells that power the aircraft's propellers and charge batteries. At night, it runs on stored energy. The plane's typical flight speed can increase to double that when exposed to full sunlight. After crossing the United States, the pilots are set to make a transatlantic flight to Europe, from where they plan to make their way back to their point of departure in Abu Dhabi. Piccard, a doctor by training, completed the first non-stop balloon flight around the world in 1999. His teammate Borschberg is no stranger to adventure - 15 years ago he narrowly escaped an avalanche, and in 2013 he survived a helicopter crash with just minor injuries. — AFP

## WATCH THAT TEMPER! AMERICANS TURN TO PROS TO CURB ANGER

**LOS ANGELES:** Bernard Minor spent 26 years behind bars for murdering a drug dealer who owed him \$400. Now, the ex-con spends his days teaching others to keep their rage in check, one of the swelling ranks of America's anger therapists. "I was a very angry person," the 58-year-old told AFP. "I'd been living a violent life. Living in the streets since I was 11 years old. Now I want to help people." Minor specializes in tackling domestic abuse-working with "batterers," in his own words-in Los Angeles, a city seen by many as a hotbed of short-fused behavior and where the rage management industry is booming. "Our referrals grow by 20 percent per year," said George Anderson, a 78-year-old therapist, who says he has treated 17,000 people throughout his long career.

Famously tempestuous stars include Sean Penn and Kanye West, known for lashing out at paparazzi, or Justin Bieber, who egged his neighbor's house after receiving complaints about loud parties and fast cars. Supermodel Naomi Campbell famously threw her cell phone at a housekeeper. But in the City of Angels, where residents rage at the time wasted in traffic jams and homicide rates are among the highest nationwide, anger therapy is by no means limited to the rich and famous.

### Blew up

The financial crisis and pressures of an increasingly fast-paced life, as well as constant connection to the outside world via mobile devices-exacerbating stress levels-are all seen as driving the anger therapy trend. Truckers and gang members both make up large constituencies of clients, but they rub shoulders with surgeons or top executives sent by their employers to quiet their tempers. About 70 percent of course attendees are men. Around half are here by choice-though often nudged into action by a long-suffering spouse or relative. The rest are here on the orders of a judge.

Eric, a 40-year-old stunt performer who did not want to be identified by his last name, opted in after finding himself in a bar fight, a clash with his brother, and an argument with his girlfriend that landed him in a jail cell. Rick, an eye surgeon, signed up at the urging of his employer after he lost his temper at work. He blew up after a nurse overfilled a syringe, which could have caused severe damage had he injected it in his patient's eye.

"You rely on a lot of people, but you're ultimately responsible," he recalled, and the pressure on occasion became too much. With regular therapy sessions,

"I've learned to better communicate with my team," he said. "I tell them their work is very important, and that I rely on them."

### Identifying triggers

Nearly one in every 10 Americans have both a history of impulsive, angry behavior and access to guns, according to research by Harvard, Columbia and Duke Universities. Another Harvard study found that two-thirds of American teenagers suffer from bursts of irrepresible anger. Concerns about rage are by no means an American-only problem: in Britain, for instance, one in 10 people admit to having trouble controlling their anger. But in California, the demand for therapy is also rising because of the "very low tolerance" for violence, said therapist Anita Avedian, founder of the local chapter of the National Anger Management Association.

"You give a tap on the hand of your child-that's abuse. You're an angry person," Avedian said. "You do anything to your pet; you're in jail." Both in group and individual sessions, clients learn how to identify their triggers. Many students cite trouble with their spouses, but others point to issues like feeling disrespected

or harassed by a superior. Everyone gauges their anger levels on a scale of one to 10, with the goal of never letting the temperature rise above seven.

It's a lucrative business: a group session starts at just \$20, but an individual meeting can set you back up to \$350 per hour. With the help of discussion and visualization techniques, clients learn how to stop reacting defensively and feeling under attack, how to stay rational and understand the viewpoints of others. Expressing emotions calmly is a top goal, as well as how to set boundaries before the anger bubbles over. Many anger issues, in their experience, are linked to childhood trauma, such as growing up with a particularly critical father or feeling abandoned by a parent.

There are relapses, but both Anderson and Avedian estimate their success rate at between 70 and 80 percent. Arnold, a 51-year-old trucker and ex-convict with a history of gang membership, suffered from abuse throughout his youth. When he feels disrespected, his blood still boils, but he's learned to rein it in. "If I touch anybody, I go to jail," Arnold said. "I'm not gonna give you that satisfaction. I'm not getting handcuffed." — AFP



**NIMBIN, New South Wales, Australia:** This photo shows people attending the Mardi Grass festival in the picturesque town of Nimbin near Australia's east coast. — AFP photos

## GREEN HOPES AS AUSTRALIA LEGALIZES MEDICAL CANNABIS

'DO I END HIS LIFE AND MINE? OR DO I RISK HELPING HIM'

**NIMBIN, Australia:** Jai Whitelaw was 10 when he first took medical cannabis, given to him by his mother in a bid to treat the debilitating epilepsy that saw him endure up to 500 seizures a day. Faced with the stark choice of breaking the law in the hope of soothing his chronic pain, or denying him possible relief, Michelle Whitelaw reached breaking point. "I literally sat on (the) couch for two days, thinking 'Do I end his life and mine? Or do I risk helping him,'" she told AFP.

She picked the latter, risking criminal charges. Now, almost two years on, things are set to change as Australia brings in new laws allowing the drug to be used for medical purposes. "If it didn't work, I wouldn't be here and Jai wouldn't be here," Whitelaw said at the Mardi Grass festival, an annual celebration of marijuana in Nimbin in Australia's east. At his lowest point Jai had to be resuscitated, was unable to write or read at school or even play outdoors as he struggled with fits and the side-effects of pharmaceutical medications. In the 15 months since he began medicinal cannabis, which he takes in liquid form, he has had only four seizures. In Nimbin, he seemed like any other youngster enjoying the annual party.

### Dope or medicine?

While recreational cannabis is drawn from the whole plant, therapeutic forms are derived from extracting particular types of cannabinoids-molecules that are found in cannabis-from the plant. "What we are starting to understand now is that different types of cannabinoids work differently for different kinds of health problems," Nicholas Lintzeris, the clinical director at the University of Sydney's Lambert Initiative, told AFP.

"You extract the cannabinoids from the plants and then you put them together again according to the specific profile you want," he added. Therapeutic use is legal in several US states and other nations including Canada, Israel and the Netherlands. Support for the practice has grown in Australia in recent years, with 91 percent in favor of legalizing it for the seriously ill, according to a 2015 Roy Morgan poll. The national government has lis-



**NIMBIN, New South Wales, Australia:** Aboriginal Australian Tony Bower talking to AFP at his stall during the Mardi Grass festival in the picturesque town of Nimbin near Australia's east coast.

tened. While recreational use remains illegal, laws were passed in February permitting it for medical purposes, in a move Health Minister Sussan Ley said meant "genuine patients are no longer treated as criminals". In response, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria states are changing their regulations and trialling the drug on severely ill patients, with two states setting up cannabis farms.

### 'Employment' ahead

The legislative shift is a vindication for people such as Aboriginal Australian Tony Bower, who has long given cannabis in oil and alcohol forms for free to parents of ill children after working out how to develop non-psychoactive medication from the plant. "You can't refuse people. I'm an indigenous Australian, it's not in our culture," Bower told AFP of why he continued to supply families despite the

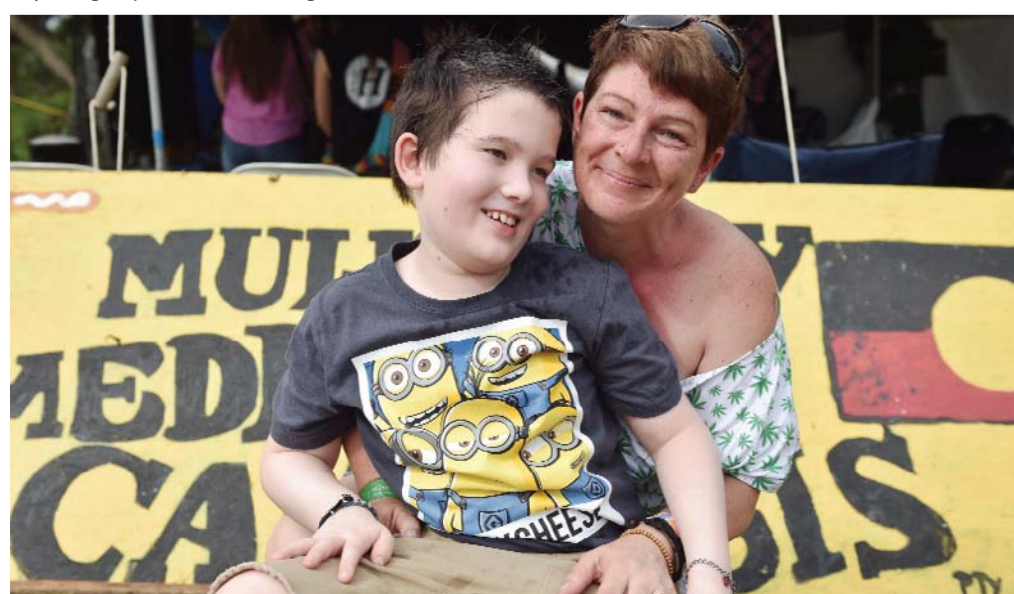
legal risks, which once saw him spend six weeks in jail.

Some 150 children are regular patients of Bower, and his drug is set to reach more people after Anthony Coffey's Australian Organic Therapeutic firm obtained rights to it. Coffey plans to sell the medicine at Aus\$60 (US\$44) per patient per month. The budding industry has benefits beyond the medicinal, with hopes it could fuel "employment" in rural regions where jobless rates are higher, Nimbin-based HEMP (Help End Marijuana Prohibition) Party president Michael Balderstone said.

Coffey said his company has already attracted investment from China and the Middle East. Others are also looking to cash in on legal crops, with the University of Sydney estimating initial demand in Australia at more than Aus\$100 million annually. High-profile physician and drug reform advocate Alex Wodak told AFP there is growing evidence medicinal cannabis use can relieve symptoms in some severe cases such as the side-effects of cancer chemotherapy and chronic nerve damage pain.

A key factor slowing the pace of the so-called "green rush" is minimal trial data and the medical profession's limited experience with a banned drug. As such, side-effects and the long-term impact of therapeutic use are not fully known, with some doctors cautioning against making the herb legally available without completed trials and high quality control standards. Many caregivers fear a legalized drug may arrive too late for their sick family members.

Cheri O'Connell, whose epileptic daughter and son are experiencing a new lease on life since taking medicinal cannabis, is calling for an amnesty from prosecution for all current users. She is also worried government trials are being limited to certain types of cannabinoids that leave other products-such as the one her children use-outside the law. "We've got something that works," O'Connell told AFP. "Just because it's cannabis doesn't mean it's all the same, there's huge differences." — AFP



**NIMBIN, New South Wales, Australia:** An 11-year-old Jai Whitelaw (left) with his mother Michelle at the Mardi Grass festival in the picturesque town of Nimbin near Australia's east coast.

## BRAZIL-TYPE ZIKA CONFIRMED IN AFRICA FOR FIRST TIME

**NEW YORK:** Tests show an outbreak of Zika virus on the African island chain of Cape Verde is of the same strain as the one blamed for birth abnormalities in Brazil, the World Health Organization said on Friday. "The findings are of concern because it is further proof that the outbreak is spreading beyond South America and is on the doorstep of Africa," said WHO's Africa director Matshidiso Moeti. "This information will help African countries to re-evaluate their level of risk and adapt and increase their levels of preparedness," she said.

Zika was first discovered in Africa in 1947 and until the past year it was thought to cause only mild symptoms with no known link with brain or birth disorders. Researchers identified two distinct lineages in 2012, African and Asian. As of May 8, there had been 7,557 suspected cases in Cape Verde, an Atlantic archipelago around 570 km (350 miles) west of Senegal, which has historic ties to Brazil.

Until the virus was sequenced by the Institut Pasteur in Senegal, it was not certain if the outbreak was caused by the African or Asian type, which has hit Brazil and other Latin American countries. Moeti said she would not recommend strict travel restrictions to try to

stop the spread of the disease further into Africa, but advocated efforts to control mosquito numbers and stop people being bitten. Bruce Aylward, head of outbreaks and health emergencies at WHO, said it remained to be seen if African populations would have some immunity to the virus which could mitigate the impact of a Zika outbreak on the continent.

US health officials have concluded that Zika infections in pregnant women can cause microcephaly, a birth defect marked by small head size that can lead to severe developmental problems in babies. The WHO has said there is strong scientific consensus that Zika can also cause Guillain-Barre, a rare neurological syndrome that causes temporary paralysis in adults. The connection between Zika and microcephaly first came to light last year in Brazil, which has now confirmed more than 1,300 cases of microcephaly that it considers to be related to Zika infections in the mothers. Cape Verde has reported three cases of microcephaly, and a mother thought to have caught Zika their later delivered a microcephalic baby in the United States. Cape Verde has not reported any cases of Guillain-Barre, WHO said. — Reuters

## BIOTECH FIRM TO PAY \$3.5MLN FINE TO SETTLE ANIMAL-ABUSE CASE

**SANTA CRUZ, California:** One of the world's largest suppliers of antibodies used in research has agreed to pay a \$3.5 million fine and cancel its research registration in order to settle government allegations that it mistreated goats and rabbits at its Santa Cruz, California, facility. The settlement between Santa Cruz Biotechnology Inc and the US Department of Agriculture also revokes the company's license to sell, buy, trade or import animals. The settlement announced Friday requires the Dallas-based company to pay the fine and cancel its research registration by May 31.

The USDA filed several complaints that listed violations ranging from failing to provide veterinary care to goats with wounds from coyote and snake bites or massive tumors and housing rabbits in cruel conditions, including

putting them in elevated cages with open doors or in small, crowded cages. Santa Cruz Biotechnology contested the government complaints, and the agreement says that the company "neither admits nor denies" the USDA's assertions that it violated federal animal-welfare regulations.

The company did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The Animal Welfare Institute, an advocacy group, praised the settlement, saying the \$3.5 million fine is historic. "Previously, the highest penalties paid to the USDA were less than \$300,000, demonstrating the monumental nature of this settlement," said Cathy Liss, president of the institute. "It should serve as a loud and clear message to all research facilities, animal dealers, exhibitors and airlines regulated under this law." — AP

## NEW US FOOD LABEL RULES TO REQUIRE ADDED SUGARS TO BE DETAILED

**NEW YORK:** The United States plans a major overhaul of the way packaged foods are labeled, the Food and Drug Administration announced on Friday. Serving sizes will be adjusted to reflect how much people actually eat, and for the first time labels will list added sugars. These are the first significant changes since the Nutrition Facts label was introduced more than 20 years ago. They come as an increasing number of Americans battle obesity, diabetes and heart disease and will affect roughly 800,000 products from Coca-Cola and ice-cream to soup and spaghetti sauce.

Speaking at a health summit in Washington, first lady Michelle Obama said she was "thrilled" about the new label and said she believes it is going to make "a real difference in providing families across the country the information they need to make healthy choices." Her "Let's Move!" initiative aims to increase the health of young people.

Manufacturers have until July 2018 to comply with the new rule. Small businesses with fewer than \$10 million in annual sales have an additional year to comply. The FDA, which first proposed the rule in 2014, estimated at the time that the cost to industry of updating the labels would be about \$2 billion. The Grocery Manufacturers Association, which represents the world's biggest food and drink companies, said the changes were "timely," as diets and eating patterns have changed dramatically over the past two decades.

"Food and beverage manufacturers have responded by creating more than 30,000 healthier product choices since 2002," Dr Leon Bruner, GMA's chief science officer, said in a statement. Under the new rules, companies will have to provide details on the amount of added sugar such as corn syrup and white and brown sugar. The Sugar Association, which represents US sugar cane farmers, refiners, sugar beet farmers and processors, said it was "disap-

pointed" at the requirement to list added sugars on the label and said the FDA had not demonstrated a scientific link between sugar and disease.

### Related coverage

Major change in US food labels is likely to help healthiest the most Information about calories from fat will be removed because research shows the type of fat is more important than the amount, the FDA said. The new rules require serving sizes on the label to reflect what, on average, consumers actually eat. About 20 percent of all package labels will be adjusted, the FDA said. Some, such as ice-cream will be adjusted upwards, while others, such as yogurt, will be adjusted downwards. "What and how much people eat and drink has changed since the last serving size requirements were published in 1993," the agency said.

### How will consumers react?

It was unclear how much the new label will actually impact consumer behavior. Professor Jeremy Kees, a nutrition label expert at Villanova University School of Business who has consulted for both the FDA and industry, said he believes the impact will be "relatively small" because the information is on the back of the package. "I think front of pack labeling has more potential to have a bigger impact on consumers," he said.

Some changes have already been made, analysts say. "Carbonated soft drinks have been on the decline before any of this happened," said Darren Seifer, an analyst at The NPD Group, a market research company. "It might not make it exponentially greater, but it may help sustain it." The largest US chocolate maker, The Hershey Company (HSY.N), said it "will work diligently to make the necessary updates to our Nutrition Facts labels as requested by the FDA." — Reuters

## A 'SIXTH SENSE' MAY PROTECT DRIVERS, EXCEPT WHILE TEXTING

**WASHINGTON:** A coping mechanism that keeps part of the brain's attention on the road and the steering wheel lets experienced drivers tolerate many mental stresses and distractions, researchers say, but texting breaks that built-in auto-pilot. In experiments using a driving simulator, drivers distracted by complex or emotional questions constantly compensated for erroneous steering reactions. But the same adaptability did not kick in for drivers distracted by texting, the study found.

"Our working hypothesis was that pure emotional and cognitive distractions were about the same with pure physical (i.e., sensorimotor) distractions," but according to these results, they are not, said lead author Ioannis Pavlidis of the Computational Physiology Laboratory at the University of Houston in Texas. The researchers studied 59 subjects who completed several test drives in the simulator. For the first few, participants focused on relaxing and getting familiar with the machine while sensors recorded perspira-

tion levels on their faces as a measure of the state of their sympathetic nervous system, which governs the unconscious "fight or flight" response.

### Sensorimotor stress

The simulator measured steering angle and lane departures to the left or right while the subjects were driving the course. The subjects drove the course four times under stress: once with cognitive stress coming from a researcher posing the driver challenging questions, and another under emotional stress, where the questions were emotionally charged. One simulated drive had the driver sending text messages, representing "sensorimotor stress," and a fourth time there were mixed stressors.

Steering became more jittery than normal in all four conditions, but lane deviations only became "unsafe" while drivers were texting. In the mentally and emotionally challenging conditions where drivers still had their eyes forward, their driving trajectories were actu-

ally straighter than under normal conditions, hinting at a kind of coping mechanism that pays extra attention to the task of driving when the brain is busy, the study team speculates in Scientific Reports.

"The driver's sympathetic system is already loaded, as driving itself is a task that needs psychophysiological resources," Pavlidis told Reuters Health by email. "Atop of that, if you add another stressor (cognitive, emotional, or physical), it arouses the sympathetic system even further, as it antagonizes for some of the same resources needed for the driving task." "Jittery" steering may come from latent fight-or-flight energy, he said.

### Cognitive stressors

These distractions are "potentially dangerous, if they are instantly corrected, which is the case with the pure emotional and cognitive stressors," Pavlidis said. "They are immediately dangerous if they are left occasionally uncorrected (as is the case with texting), because they lead to significant left or right lane devia-

tions." Texting undoes the "auto-pilot" mechanism we have to deal with driving and other routine tasks, he said, because to text you must look away from the road and disrupt the eye-hand feedback loop. "Vehicle control requires hands on the wheel so a distraction such as holding a phone could impact stabilization and make it a bit more 'jittery,'" said Despina Stavrinou of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, who was not part of the new study. "When driver's eyes are off the road they may also overcorrect in steering when they shift attention to driving."

Drivers can drift into emotional or mental distraction without realizing it, Pavlidis said. "The best thing to do is to not drive at all when angry or upset - take a few moments to settle down before returning to the road," Stavrinou told Reuters Health by email. "In the case of texting it is hard because smartphones are addictive and this is the case not only in driving but in all aspects of life, as we sadly see all around us every day," Pavlidis said. — Reuters

## BONE CEMENT COMPANY ACCUSED OF EXPERIMENTING ON HUMANS

**SEATTLE:** Reba Golden hurt her back after falling two floors while building an addition to her house in Honduras. But when she returned to Seattle for a routine spinal surgery, she suffered blood clots, severe bleeding and died in 2007 on the operating table. Joan Bryant's back had bothered her since a 1990 car accident, so in 2009 she sought help from a Seattle spinal surgeon, but she bled out on the operating table and could not be revived. Like at least three spinal-surgery patients before them, Golden and Bryant died after their doctor injected bone cement into their spine and some of the material leaked into their blood stream, causing clotting.

The patients were never told Norian bone cement wasn't approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Instead, Norian and parent company Synthes used surgeons in what one doctor called "human experimentation." Federal prosecutors say the aim was to skirt a long, costly regulatory process. The Golden and Bryant families have filed lawsuits



**SEATTLE:** In this Aug 16, 2007, photo provided by Cynthia Wilson, Reba Golden stands outside Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. — AP

against Dr Jens Chapman, the companies, the University of Washington, Harborview Medical Center and Washington state. The lawsuits say Chapman knew the cement caused lethal clotting, and that the university and hospital knew or should have known the product had been prohibited for such use. The first trial is scheduled for June in Seattle.

### Criminal enterprise

The Golden lawsuit, filed by her daughter Cynthia Wilson, also accuses Chapman, Synthes President Hansjorg Wyss and the university of running a criminal enterprise under Washington's Criminal Profiteering Act. Synthes and Norian, along with four top executives, were indicted in 2009 on charges of conducting unauthorized clinical trials despite warnings that the bone cement caused deadly blood clots. Norian

agreed to pay a \$22.5 million penalty, Synthes paid a \$669,800 fine, and the executives went to prison.

Tina Mankowski, a spokeswoman for Chapman, the university and the medical center, said they "vigorously deny any wrongdoing." Jodie Wertheim, a spokeswoman for Synthes said the company can't comment on pending litigation. In 2000, spinal surgeons had few options if they wanted to use a cement-type product to treat vertebral-compression fractures to reduce pain. Synthes bought the California-based Norian Corporation, which had developed bone cements used in skull and arm-bone surgeries. Synthes planned to alter Norian's product so it could be used in spinal surgeries, but that meant a long FDA-approval process.

Synthes opted to take another route, according to court records. Wyss directed a few sites to perform 60 to 80 procedures in spinal surgeries using the Norian bone cement and to publish clinical results. He recruited Chapman and other surgeons to test-market the product on patients, court records show. Chapman and a colleague at UW conducted an experiment in 2002 using bone cement on pigs. The material caused clotting, killing the animals. The doctors also tested it on human blood in test tubes. Again, it caused clotting. Chapman reported his findings to Synthes.

### Spinal surgeries

A Synthes employee in its regulatory division warned company officials the FDA had said it couldn't use Norian bone cement in spinal surgeries without approval. A Synthes medical consultant warned company officials in 2002 that unauthorized clinical trials amounted to "human experimentation." The company pushed forward with its plan to "test market" the product in spinal surgeries, court records show. In 2003, a patient died on a Texas operating table after a spinal surgeon injected Synthes bone cement into her vertebrae. Another patient died seven months later in California, and another died four months after that.

By 2006, the FDA had cleared Synthes to market a bone cement called Norian CRS but said its label must state it's not to be used on the spine. Synthes sent a 2007 letter to surgeons announcing that restriction. Chapman performed more using Norian after the letter was sent, according to court records. He also held the Hansjorg Wyss endowed chair, which secured millions for the university. When Golden fell at home in 2007, she suffered compression fractures in her spine. Months later, Wilson said her mother was feeling better, but she decided to go ahead with surgery. — AP



**AUSTRALIA:** A Tasmanian devil eats wallaby in a zoo at Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania state, Australia. — AP

## SAVING DEVILS, IN A SINGLE DISEASE-FREE CORNER OF TASMANIA

**TASMAN PENINSULA, Australia:** Drive over one narrow isthmus in Tasmania, and then another, and you'll reach the last place on Earth where wild Tasmanian devils live apart from a contagious cancer that threatens the fearsome marsupials' existence. Conservationists are doing everything they can to keep it that way. Devil-proof barriers, flashing roadside alarms and infrared cameras are protecting the species from their two greatest threats: cancer and cars. There are even plans for a sort of trap door that would keep diseased devils from crossing a bridge to reach the Tasman Peninsula, on the east coast of the Australian island-state.

"Saving the wild devils on the Tasman Peninsula is the Holy Grail of the whole thing - can we save a natural, wild population of devils and isolate them?" said John Hamilton, a major partner in the Peninsula Devil Conservation Project. "And pretty much we have so far." The muscle-bound, lumbering, bear-like predator-scavenger with a ferocious growl - the inspiration for the Warner Bros. cartoon character Taz - is endangered because of a mysterious disease that has slashed its numbers in Tasmania's wilderness by as much as 90 percent since it was discovered two decades ago.

### Grotesque tumors

The cancer cells are transferred by the devil's powerful bite. And the aggressive marsupials do a lot of biting, whether squabbling over a wallaby carcass or even mating. Their facial wounds develop grotesque tumors that eventually prevent the infected devils from eating.

While disease-free devils bred in captivity live on nearby Maria Island and in 2005, the wild population is threatened across Tasmania, the species' only home. The disease started in the northeast and is spreading west and south; the Tasman Peninsula offers the only feasible geographic bulwark. The size of the population there is unknown: "We've got dozens, but maybe not hundreds," Hamilton said. Isolation has been the key to the Tasman population's survival.

The peninsula is attached by a narrow stretch of sand called Eaglehawk Neck to Forester Peninsula. A lack of animal tracks on Eaglehawk Neck Beach suggests it forms a natural - although not impenetrable - barrier for the shy devils, who avoid open spaces. Forester Peninsula is attached to the Tasmanian mainland by another narrow tract of land near the town of Dunally called East Bay Neck, which forms another buffer for disease-free devils.

The cancer reached Forester Peninsula in 2012. Conservationists responded by capturing and removing every devil on Forester. After a two-year quarantine, the first 39 devils bred in captivity were reintroduced in November last year. A dozen quickly became roadkill. Hamilton said the captive-born devils were "a bit naive," and zoologists agree that captive breeding is a setback for young devils' development of hunting and survival skills.

### Regular intervals

An efficient hunter that prefers the easier option of scavenging, the devils feed on wallabies, pademelons and possums killed by cars, and don't think to

move the carcasses off the road. Devils devour entire carcasses, including fur, bones and teeth. The road connecting the mainland with Forester and Tasman is busy because of one of Tasmania's biggest tourist attractions: the sandstone ruins of a 19th-century British prison at Port Arthur, a small Tasman town.

The isolation that has protected the devils from disease also made the peninsula an ideal place to contain convicts. During the convict era, Eaglehawk Neck was better known as the Dog Line, where nine savage dogs tethered at regular intervals were enough to ensure that few convicts escaped. Efforts to keep devils on the right side of the isthmus, and away from cars, are decidedly more humane and high-tech.

East Bay Neck is largely isolated by a devil-proof fence, and cameras monitor any potentially diseased devils that might pass. In some areas, roadside electronic posts sound an alarm and flash blue and yellow strobe lights when they detect headlights, frightening wildlife away. The virtual fences, known locally as Night Owls, were initially developed by Austrian company iPTE Traffic Solutions to keep deer out of traffic, but also protect Australian native fauna.

The government and charity-funded Save the Tasmanian Devil Program, which oversees the Tasman project, is devising a devil-proof barrier on the road bridge over a canal at East Bay Neck. Hamilton said a team is testing a road grid set on rollers designed for the bridge. If a devil steps on the unstable grid, it would be tipped into a pit and could only exit through a tunnel to the side of the bridge it came from. — AP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
مؤيد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال  
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## NBK SPONSORS LOYAC'S TRAINING PROGRAM 'BRIDGE'

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsors Loyac's Training Program 'Bridge'. This sponsorship comes in line with NBK's commitment to its Corporate Social Responsibility as well as the vital role it plays in supporting students, youths and self-building initiatives in Kuwait. "Bridge" Training Program aims at training Loyac interns on best customer service practices. NBK offers training material and trainers during the program that runs from May till December. The Bridge Program is made up of four different sessions. The Bridge Program features a mixture of theoretical and practical training dedicated to provide the interns with invaluable knowledge on a variety of subjects related to service quality and customer service, in addition to helping them to have greater exposure to different work procedures. "This sponsorship goes with NBK's continuous support to Loyac's activities and events," said Manal Al Mattar, NBK Executive Manager, Public relations.

"NBK always strives to empower Kuwaiti youth to realize their potentials, providing career and training opportunities. Also, NBK develops the professional skills of young Kuwaitis as part of its strategy to develop national human resources," Al

Mattar added. Commenting on the aims of setting up special activities for the youth, Fetouh Aldalaly, Loyac Board member said: "Training programs are great opportunities for the youth to show their capabilities and talents, to strengthen their self-esteem and to develop their skills."

"We are proud to be part of NBK's social support. Through years we have been working together on launching educational, social and awareness programs for youth. This program is first of a kind dedicated to raise youth's expertise in the domain of customer service and quality," Aldalaly added.

NBK continues to promote a range of philanthropic missions and social welfare programs as part of its corporate social responsibility to assert its leadership in supporting Kuwait's social development standing as a model in serving all aspects of the community.

LOYAC is a nonprofit organization that runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.

## ASSE HOLDS PRESTIGIOUS SAFETY PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR (SPY) AWARD 2016

Mr CH Rama Krushna Chary, President Elect 2016-2017, American Society of Safety Engineers Kuwait Chapter was honored with "ASSE Kuwait Chapter's Safety Professional of the Year (SPY) Award 2016" during 8th ASSE HSE Excellence Award 2016 Ceremony at Hilton Resort, Kuwait on 2nd May 2016. This annual award was instituted by ASSE Kuwait Chapter in 2011 in line with ASSE USA guidelines to recognize the outstanding contributions in advancing the health, safety and environmental profession through exemplary volunteer service to the Chapter and at professional life. ASSE Kuwait Chapter is the first and the largest International Chapter outside USA and driven by HSE Professional on volunteer basis.

Chary has become ASSE member in 2009 from Kuwait Chapter and he has been providing volunteer services to Kuwait Chapter at various positions since he joined. He is also providing voluntary services to Environmental Practice Specialty, ASSE USA since 2011.

He is holding a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) in Chemical Engineering from National Institute of Technology (NIT), Warangal, India and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Oil & Gas from the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), India. He has more than 15 years of experience in various organizations like Oil & Gas, Refinery, Consultancy, etc., His experience involved in the field of waste & air quality management, compliance, permit applications and establishment & implementation of Environmental Management Systems (EMS). Present he is working as Senior Environment Engineer, Drilling & Technology Directorate, Kuwait Oil Company, Kuwait.

Chary has provided a volunteer services as an organizing committee member of Chapter International HSE & Loss Prevention Professional Development Conference and Exhibitions, GCC HSE Excellence Award



Programs, Chapter Secretary, Committee Head, etc., He is also providing volunteer services as an Executive Secretary, Environmental Practice Specialty (EPS), ASSE USA. He published many HSE articles in National and International magazines and presented technical papers in National and International conferences.

During the ceremony, Jignesh Shah, Secretary ASSE Kuwait Chapter briefed about the award and its evaluation criteria followed in selecting the 'Safety Professional of the Year Award 2016'. Fadhel Al Ali, Chairman ASSE Kuwait Chapter along with Executive Committee members presented this prestigious award to CH Rama Krushna Chary and appreciated his diligent efforts and contribution to the chapter and HSE Profession.

Chary in his thanking message thanked the

ASSE Kuwait Chapter members, its Advisory & Executive Committees for the honor, besides thanking the Management of Kuwait Oil Company, Kuwait where he is employed, for providing support in delivering various initiatives by showing strong commitment towards HSE. He dedicated this award to all those HSE professionals who worked with him over the years for the cause of protecting people, property and the environment.

ASSE Kuwait Chapter Executive Committee takes this opportunity in congratulating Chary for his achievement. ASSE Kuwait Chapter wishes him the successful journey through-out his life in promoting safety, health and environment practices in the region.

## SOORYA FEST: A DELIGHTFUL PERFORMANCE

Soorya Kuwait Chapter staged a distinct cultural performance at the Indian Community School Senior School auditorium, Salmiya that enthralled the audience. Jiji Jose Philip inaugurated the festival by lighting the lamp along with B S Pillai, General Secretary, Soorya Kuwait Chapter. A duet performance "Krishnamayam" staged by Pallippuram Sunil in Kathakali and Paris Laxmi in Bharatanatyam was a special treat to all art lovers present there.

Usually Kathakali and Bharatanatyam are performed simultaneously on stage due to its different styles, theatrical expressions and costumes. But Sunil and Laxmi decided to challenge themselves with the creation of an unexpected duet, which mesmerized the audience. In Krishnamayam, Pallipuram was Krishna and Paris Laxmi was Radha, Draupadi, Kuchela, the Gopis and Arjuna and they excellently demonstrated each character.

Soorya India, led by versatile mastermind Soorya Krishnamurthy, is present in more than

36 countries. It has been propagating the art of India outside the country for the last 18 years with active support of its chief patron Dr B R

Shetty, Managing Director, NMC Group of companies.



## 'STEAKHOUSE' OPENS THEIR FIRST BRANCH IN SAMA MALL AL AQLAH



"Chef Istanbul Steakhouse" on the occasion of the opening of their first branch in Kuwait they invite the media to celebrate an extraordinary distinctive day and to taste their delicious authentic Turkish dishes, the audience tasted many dishes from Turkish cuisine, with the highest

standards of hospitality services in an upscale atmosphere. Welcomed by the owner and the chef of the restaurant who expressed their happiness for the media attendance and welcomed them to experience the taste of a unique and innovative dining in "Chef Istanbul Steakhouse".

The invitees praised the menu which varied between different types of main dishes, salads, appetizers and unique beverage of its kind and especially Ottoman delicious drink, as well as Italian desserts made with the famous Turkish baklava.

"Chef Istanbul Steakhouse" will give the

gourmet of the Kuwaiti society, a chance to enjoy a delicious Turkish cuisine, especially meat lovers, where the restaurant offers different varieties of steak, unconventional consisting of high-quality imported from Turkey and cooked characteristically meat "Chef Istanbul Steakhouse" launches a new concept to the

Turkish dishes in Kuwait. The restaurant is full of luxurious touches of the ancient Ottoman style, where harmony and elegant ambiance and nice decoration to assure every guest will enjoy their visit.





Dr Rajaa at the SebaMed Stand



Bayan Health Center held an open health awareness day in preparation for the holy month of Ramadan.



Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) the national campaign for the awareness of cancer held its fourth soccer tournament under the slogan "Sports is prevention." Deputy Chairman of CAN Dr Khalid Al-Saleh was on hand at the event.

**3 YEARS ANNIVERSARY**  
Celebrate with us on the occasion of Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa's 3rd Anniversary with a 50% discount in all of our restaurants until May 31st

**50% DISCOUNT**  
In all our restaurants  
Terms & conditions apply

Celebrate with us on the occasion of Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa's 3rd Anniversary with a 50% discount in all of our restaurants until May 31st



**ANNUAL TREASURE OF TALENTS GALA CONCERT 2016**



SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BY **HAI WEI LI** (PIANO, VIOLIN AND VOCAL)

DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 27TH 2016 AT 7:00 P.M. (STUDENT CONCERTS STARTS AT 11:00 A.M.)

VENUE: AL SHAHEED PARK, THE VISITORS CENTER



INNA ABIGALOVA (PIANO)



KINGA MASTERNAK (VOCAL)



TEJI WANG (PIANO & VIOLIN)



- AMC: 04:10 Fear The Walking Dead, 05:10 Island Of The Lost, 06:40 Follow That Dream...

- ANIMAL PLANET HD: 03:25 Untamed China With Nigel Marven, 04:15 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall...

- BBC FIRST: 03:25 Orphan Black, 04:10 Doctors, 04:40 Eastenders...

- CI: 03:00 Crime Stories, 04:00 The Haunting Of..., 05:00 Monster In My Family...

- Discovery Channel: 03:40 Lost And Sold, 04:05 Storage Wars Canada, 04:30 Property Wars...

- Discovery Family: 03:00 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman, 03:50 You Have Been Warned...

- ID. INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY: 03:00 Web Of Lies, 03:48 I'd Kill For You, 04:36 I'd Kill For You...

- Discovery Science: 03:29 Prototype This, 05:03 Food Factory USA, 07:23 Mythbusters...

- Disney Channel: 03:15 The Hive, 03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch, 04:10 Hank Zipper...

- Disney Junior: 03:10 Henry Hugglemonster, 03:20 Calimero, 03:35 Zou, 03:45 Loopdidoo...

- Disney XD: 06:00 Booster, 06:10 Super Matrak, 06:35 Super Matrak, 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil...

- EHD: 03:00 Botched, 06:00 Fashion Bloggers, 06:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians...

- food network: 03:00 Man Finds Food, 03:30 Man Finds Food, 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives...

- OSN FIRST HD COMEDY: 03:00 The Muppets, 03:30 The Goldbergs, 04:00 Living With Fran...

- OSN FIRST HD MORE: 03:15 Banshee, 04:15 An Apology To Elephants, 05:00 Too Big To Fail...



- OSN MOVIES HD ACTION: 04:00 Jack The Giant Killer, 06:00 X-Men Origins: Wolverine, 08:00 The Malay Chronicles...



- OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY: 03:00 D2: The Mighty Ducks, 05:00 Flubber, 07:00 Bolt...

- OSN MOVIES HD DRAMA+2: 03:00 The Melancholy Fantastic, 04:30 The Reluctant Fundamentalist, 06:45 Jack Strong...

- STAR MOVIES HD: 04:00 Real Steel, 06:15 Mrs. Miracle, 07:45 Agora...

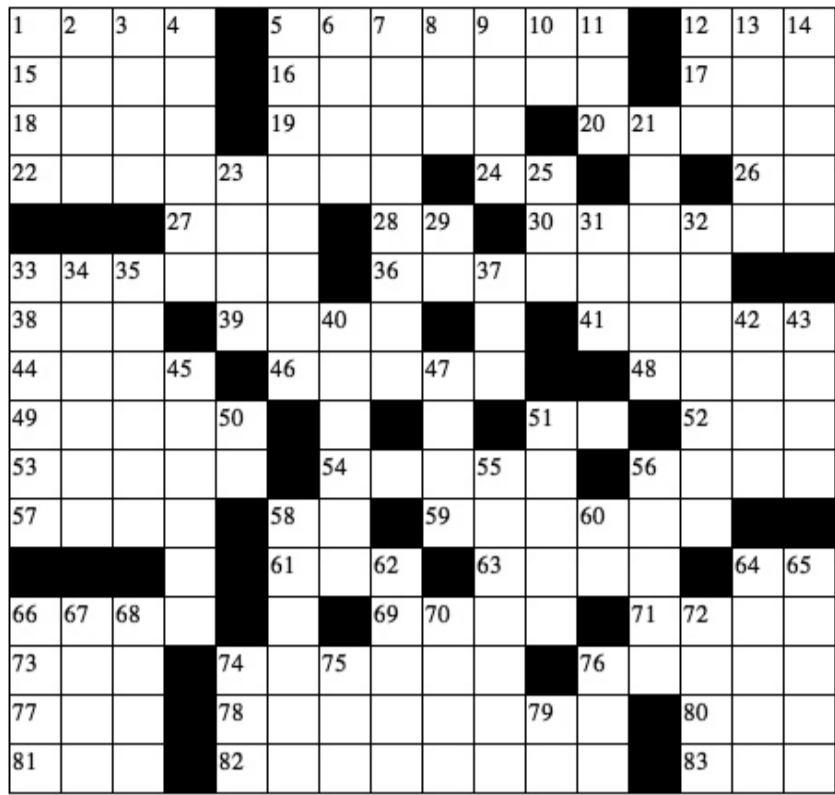
- STAR WORLD HD: 03:00 Castle, 04:00 House Of DVF, 05:00 According To Jim...

TAKEN 3 ON OSN MOVIES PREMIERE HD





CROSSWORD 1262



ACROSS

- 1. At a previous time.
5. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
12. A transuranic element that has not been found in nature.
15. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
16. Aromatic Eurasian perennial.
17. A fixed charge for a privilege or for professional services.
18. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
19. A prisoner serving a term of life imprisonment.
20. An ancient city in northern Portugal.
22. Someone who pays taxes.
24. A bivalent and trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
26. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
27. 30 to 300 gigahertz.
28. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
30. A member of the North American Indian people formerly living in the Colorado river valley in Arizona and Nevada and California.
33. Type genus of the Tetraonidae.
36. A member of the Mayan people of the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico.
38. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
39. A small cake leavened with yeast.
41. Genus of large deciduous nut-bearing trees.
44. Having nine hinged bands of bony plates.
46. Any of numerous fruits of the gourd family having a hard rind and sweet juicy flesh.
48. Having a toe or toes of a specified kind.
49. Any of various edible decapod crustaceans.
52. The cry made by sheep.
53. Open to or abounding in fresh air.
54. Fleshy spore-bearing inner mass of e.g. a puffball or stinkhorn.
57. A quantity of no importance.
59. A hard ferromagnetic silver-white bivalent or trivalent metallic element.
61. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
63. Type genus of the Majidae.
66. A carriage consisting of two wheels and calash top.
69. Title for the former hereditary monarch of Iran.
71. A brace that extends from the rear of the keel to support the rudderpost.
73. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
77. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
78. European weed widely naturalized in North America having yellow flower heads and leaves resembling a cat's ears.
80. A member of a Mayan people of southwestern Guatemala.
81. A young woman making her debut into society.
82. A chronic drinker.
83. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- 1. Expel, as of gases and odors.
2. Avatar of Vishnu.
3. The second largest city in Tunisia.
4. A tool for tamping (e.g., for tamping tobacco into a pipe bowl or a charge into a drill hole etc.).
5. A foam made by adding water to polyurethane plastics.
6. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
7. The act of paying money.
8. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
9. The work of caring for or attending to someone or something.
10. An associate degree in nursing.
11. A former monetary unit in Great Britain.
12. A city in the European part of Russia.
13. A desert in southern Israel.
14. The state prevailing during the absence of war.
21. Heat again.
23. According to the Old Testament was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
25. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
29. A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.
31. (of securities) Not quoted on a stock exchange.
32. An athlete who performs acts requiring skill and agility and coordination.
34. Small genus of dioecious tropical aquatic plants.
35. A short sleeveless outer tunic emblazoned with a coat of arms.
37. An argument opposed to a proposal.
40. A pauper who lives by begging.
42. Not only so, but.
43. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
45. Physically and mentally fatigued.
47. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
50. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
51. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
55. Large genus of tropical American vines having showy often spotted umbellate flowers.
56. Bottle that has a narrow neck.
58. Hear or try a court case anew.
60. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
62. Made of wood of the aspen tree n.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
67. Swift timid long-eared mammal larger than a rabbit having a divided upper lip and long hind legs.
68. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
70. Diurnal bird of prey typically having short rounded wings and a long tail.
72. God of love and erotic desire.
74. An honorary degree in science.
75. (computer science) The part of a computer (a microprocessor chip) that does most of the data processing.
76. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
79. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

The art of patience and the ability to control the tendency to exaggerate are very important today as misunderstandings could be the cause of some difficulty. If you take a particular situation too seriously you could miss a lighter and more imaginative approach to a solution. Open up your mind to new ideas and fill your life with the possibilities of new opportunities by attending educational pursuits, traveling, trying your hand at writing or learning new ways of interacting. Your confidence and optimism are strong, even though you will be faced with the need to direct your efforts in ways that will increase your effectiveness. You are in an excellent cycle to learn or teach. You will enjoy a little work in the garden before evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

There could be a personal issue that has you stumped but change will come eventually and simple answers will be available soon. Ambition is a powerful motivation and can lead you into conflict if you let it get out of control; relax. With your focus properly channeled you will find achievement and recognition. Some plumbing or technical event could delay your activities at this time. You may find yourself able to put your schedule on hold with little or no problem. You are particularly gregarious and your social life should blossom this coming week. Avoid extravagance and self-indulgence that also accompanies this time. This evening is a good time for letter writing, talking to friends and visiting with young people. Smile; it is contagious.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The urge to create a clean and peaceful environment may have you placing flowers throughout the house or apartment and straightening the messy areas. You may even decide to get a group together and plant flowers along the street. Perhaps this is a time for preparing your clothes and sprucing up around your living area. You may enjoy the company of friends off and on all day. A parent figure may also be sharing time with you today, by phone or in person. A positive attitude toward the future may find you communicating energetically to all you come to visit. Good news comes to you this evening regarding a new way to add to your monetary funds. You are honored and others express love for you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Everyone seems to be getting outside or going somewhere today. You may just want to rest and hibernate with a good book. Sometimes your desire for knowledge is in so many different directions that you lose focus and become scattered. Think about creating a new habit that will help you create a little balance in your life. You like to work with words and ideas and have a natural appreciation for anything that is literary or artistic. Your sense of discernment when it comes to matters of literary and intellectual taste is very refined. You may decide to create some poetry or prose. There could be an opportunity to attend a concert.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your good taste in colors and wonderful accents carries through to your ability to arrange flowers and decorate a room. Today you have the house all ready for a friendly gathering... Perhaps a shower for a young couple that are looking forward to a marriage or a new child. All the plans are made and food is ready for your company to enjoy. You can make the duller spot seem pleasant. The same is true, when it comes to matters of literary taste; you are sophisticated. A born coach or teacher, you may find yourself guiding and teaching a group of young people later this afternoon. Your own growth and success may be linked to questions of security-home and family.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You create pleasant surroundings in the home. Public activities that take place today should be well received. The need for emotional security is emphasized, though you should not pressure a partner into doing things just to please or satisfy you. Your tendency to partake in group activities is strong just now. Mental stimulation from others is key for you and it is a good idea to make every effort to cooperate and compromise with others. Have fun today! Take your loved ones to a movie, play, zoo or perhaps a picnic in the park with a little fun exercise as well. Take pictures for posterity. Passions, handicaps and negative attitudes are cast aside. An understanding is formed and a positive day is for your taking.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

New information is coming to your attention now. The mind and all that is mental will be the source of continued change and adjustment. Letters, writing and speaking assume a great deal of importance. You will often be asked to guide others. Your mind tends to be engrossed with thoughts, ideas and concepts, and remains in almost constant flux. Mental learning is an area of preoccupation and may involve hours of involved conversations with highly educated people. Perhaps a professor or an educated friend wants to talk computers this afternoon. You have very clear insight, even genius, when it comes to discovering or inventing things. You seem to have been born with this talent-fully operational. Your timing should be perfect.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have much eagerness today. This is a time where some project may come under scrutiny from people in your vicinity. You should enjoy your hobby and not worry about what others think; the involvement with your hobby helps you to relax and it is not taking your time away from the family. Enjoy the art of creating. Who knows; you could make some interesting discoveries or some fun handmade gifts. This could mean that you have an adventure-learning the art of dance, magic, sewing or some other creative activity. You teach young people to make good use of their talents and not be afraid to try new things. There are positive thinking, mental stability, good feelings, relaxation and opportunity. It is a pleasant time.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Habits are in a cycle of change; variety satisfies a deep inner need. Being on the go and keeping a finger to the winds of change make you feel in touch. Learning and communicating what you have learned satisfy an instinctive itch. You may find yourself at a home show or a computer exhibit; whatever is new and creates the ability to have comfort and fun while working is something you investigate today. There are many sensual and personal pleasures awaiting you as well. The urge for good food, lovely clothes and more beautiful surroundings is strong. You somehow work thriftiness into the picture and find yourself calculating prices that will fit in your budget.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are charming, kind and popular but this morning you look for ways to enjoy some time to yourself, to just take pleasure in a little solitude. A walk or a coffee taken out-of-doors this morning may be just what is needed. A friend or relative becomes more of a fascinating individual today as you discover some hidden skill. Fun conversations and pictures may be enjoyed. Some project started long ago is about to become completed. Let's face it, you need help with this project and an unexpected helpful hand becomes a blessing this afternoon. The ability to be flexible is important. Young people learn by watching the way you handle difficult situations.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You may enjoy the group gatherings that happen when one attends a religious service. A gathering of young people in some sports or picnic activity may give you opportunities for long discussions and fun opportunities to meet and enjoy new people. You are warm and genuine and attracted to art, music, singing and dancing. Perhaps you will be coordinating some event or organizing and administering people today. It would not be unusual to find you in the middle of some sort of charity project. Your inner resources and emotions are accentuated. Expect a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. Perhaps you feel this day was made for you; all is good.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are in a great mood today. You enjoy visiting with friends and driving around and just feeling in touch. Learning and communicating creates awareness. You may find yourself teaching, taking a class or attending a lecture. You can really communicate and convey your ideas to others quite easily. You have a lot of drive and come across as assertive at times. This is a great day that should just flow along. In particular, you will do well in activities that include family members this evening. You may find that board games teach and encourage the young people in your family. You could feel real support and harmony for circumstances and those around you. You enjoy close relationships and you have noticed more emotional depth recently.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

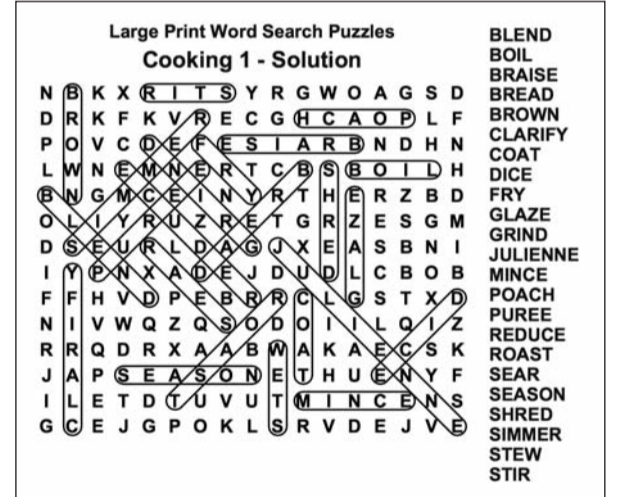
Air Flight - Word Search

Find the words hidden in the grid of letters.

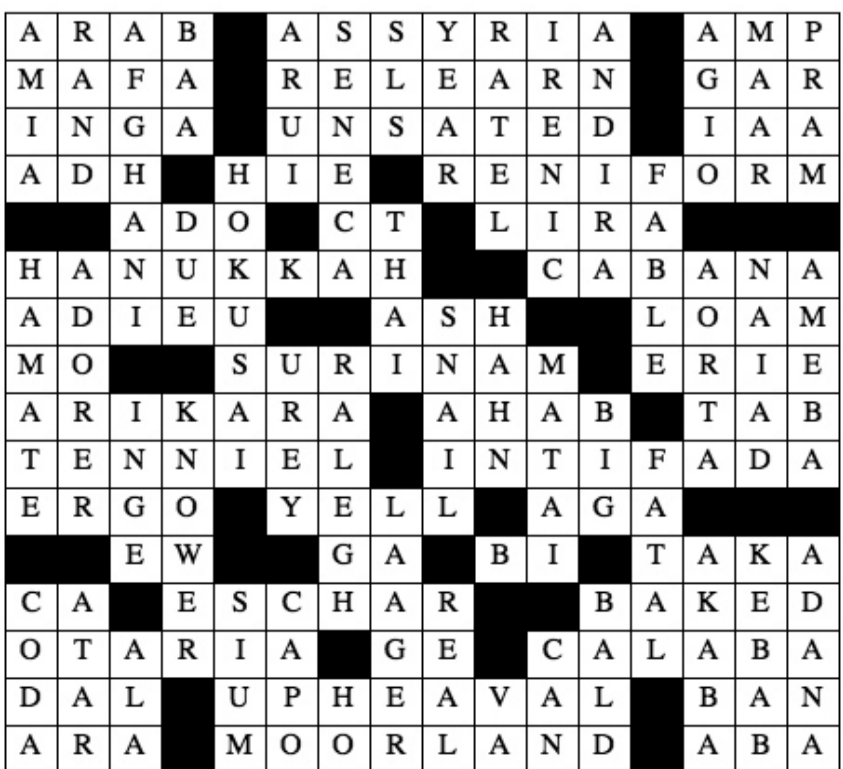


- AILERONS
AIRPLANE
AIRSPEED
ALTIMETER
ALTITUDE
COCKPIT
CONTROLS
FLYING
FUSELAGE
INSTRUMENTS
LANDING
PEDALS
PILOT
PRESSURE
PROPELLER
RUDDER
SPOILERS
STRUTS
TAIL FLAPS
TAKEOFF
TRIM TABS
TURBULENCE
WINGS

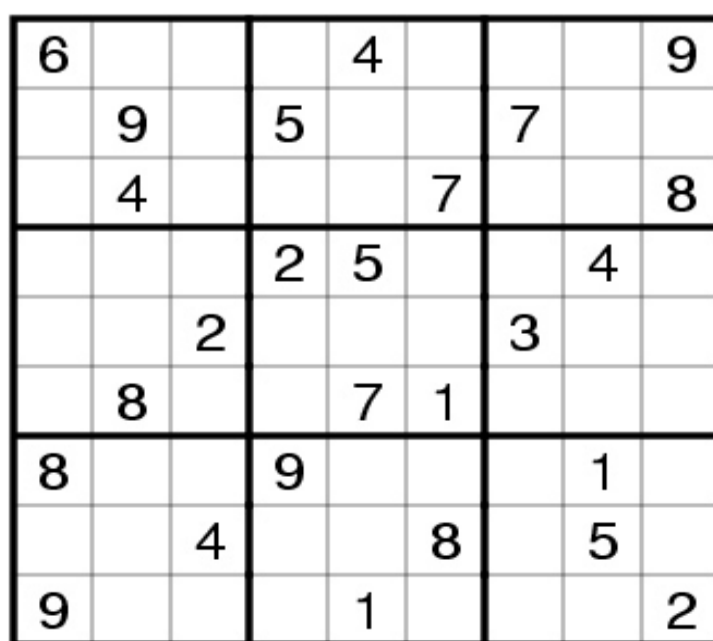
Yesterday's Solution



Yesterday's Solution

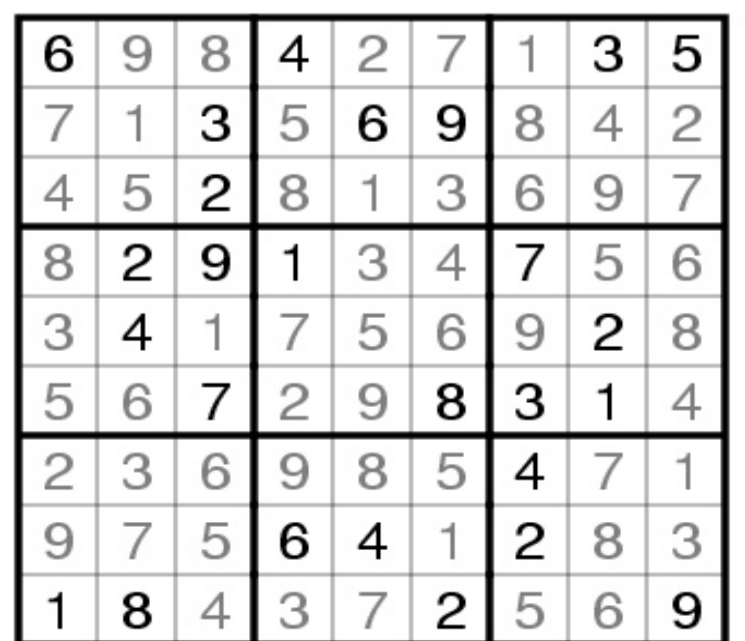


Daily SuDoku



very hard

Yesterday's Solution



medium



Color me!



Tie Collection



What You Need:

- Cardboard/Construction Paper
- Markers
- Scissors
- String

Instructions:

1. Cut out a piece of cardboard or construction paper in the shape of a tie (about 10 inches long).
2. Decorate the tie with markers, glitter, or anything else you like.
3. Sign your name and put the date on the back.
4. Punch two holes through the top of the tie, and tie a piece of string large enough to fit over your Dad's or brother's head through them. This will allow him to wear it on his special day!
5. Now give one of these to Dad or brother each year so he can collect them!
6. You can also write special messages on them.

WORD SEARCH

Ice Hockey

Find and circle all of the Hockey words that are hidden in the grid. The words may be hidden in any direction.

S S A K E D I S F F O E S  
 E R O C S T S F E F K I L  
 G K N I R K O K F K D E A  
 E E E T C R C O A S E E N  
 F E O S W I E U P T F K A  
 C N R A A C N A P G E E F  
 O R R E A T H G Y O N S O  
 S D O F F E S T T A S P S  
 S M E W L E A I L L E U S  
 S S A M D N R N A I M C P  
 F F E E E A O A N E E R A  
 A T R R T I R H E D N F S  
 K N A S S I S T P C T T S

- |            |         |         |
|------------|---------|---------|
| ARENA      | HELMET  | REFEREE |
| ASSIST     | ICING   | RINK    |
| CROWD      | OFFSIDE | SCORE   |
| DEFENSEMEN | PASS    | SKATES  |
| FACE-OFF   | PENALTY | STICK   |
| FORWARDS   | PUCK    | TEAMS   |
| GOALIE     |         |         |



# The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, is the only one whose location has not been definitively established.

The Hanging Gardens were a distinctive feature of ancient Babylon. They were a great source of pride to the people. Possibly built by King Nebuchadnezzar II in 600 BC, the gardens are believed to have been a remarkable feat of engineering: An ascending series of tiered gardens containing all manner of trees, shrubs, and vines. The gardens were said to have looked like a large green mountain constructed of mud bricks.

Traditionally they were said to have been built in the ancient city of Babylon, near present-day Hillah, Babil province, in Iraq. The Babylonian priest Berossus, writing in about 290 BC and quoted later by Josephus, attributed the gardens to the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II, who ruled between 605 and 562 BC. There are no extant Babylonian texts which mention the gardens, and no definitive archaeological evidence has been found in Babylon. According to one legend, Nebuchadnezzar II built the Hanging Gardens for his Median wife, Queen Amytis, because she missed the green hills and valleys of her homeland. He also built a grand palace that came to be known as "The Marvel of the Mankind".

Because of the lack of evidence it has been suggested that the Hanging Gardens are purely mythical, and the descriptions found in ancient Greek and Roman writers including Strabo, Diodorus Siculus and Quintus Curtius Rufus represent a romantic ideal of an eastern garden. If it did indeed exist, it was destroyed sometime after the first century AD.

Alternatively, the original garden may have been a well-documented one that the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704-681 BC) built in his capital city of Nineveh on the River Tigris, near the modern city of Mosul.

Where was it mentioned?

In ancient writings the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were first described by Berossus, a Babylonian priest of Marduk who wrote around 290

BC, although his books are known only from quotations by later authors (e.g., Flavius Josephus). There are five principal writers (including Berossus) whose descriptions of Babylon are extant in some form today. These writers concern themselves with the size of the Hanging Gardens, why and how they were built, and how the gardens were irrigated.

Did it really exist?

There is some controversy as to whether the Hanging Gardens were an actual construction or a poetic creation, owing to the lack of documentation in contemporaneous Babylonian sources. There is also no mention of Nebuchadnezzar's wife Amytis (or any other wives), although a political marriage to a Median or Persian would not have been unusual. Herodotus, writing about Babylon closest in time to Nebuchadnezzar II, does not mention the Hanging Gardens in his Histories.

To date, no archaeological evidence has been found at Babylon for the Hanging Gardens. It is possible that evidence exists beneath the Euphrates, which cannot be excavated safely at present. The river flowed east of its current position during the time of Nebuchadnezzar II, and little is known about the western portion of Babylon. Rollinger has suggested that Berossus attributed the Gardens to Nebuchadnezzar for political reasons, and that he had adopted the legend from elsewhere.

A recent theory proposes that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were actually constructed by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (reigned 704 - 681 BC) for his palace at Nineveh. Stephanie Dalley posits that during the intervening centuries the two sites became confused, and the extensive gardens at Sennacherib's palace were attributed to Nebuchadnezzar II's Babylon. Recently discovered evidence includes excavation of a vast system of aqueducts inscribed to Sennacherib, which Dalley proposes were part of a 50-mile (80 km) series of canals, dams, aqueducts, used to carry water to Nineveh with water-raising screws used to raise it to the upper levels of the gardens.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Night butterflies have ears on their wings so they can avoid bats.
- Monarch caterpillars shed their skin four times before they become a chrysalis, growing over 2700 times their original size.
- There may be as many as 3,000 different kinds of insects - more than all the other animal and plant species combined.
- Of the huge numbers of insects, only a tiny amount, one percent, are harmful to humans. Most insects are harmless or actually beneficial. For example, without bees to pollinate flowers, plants would not have a way of reproducing and we wouldn't have anything to eat!
- Locusts can eat their own weight in food in a day. A person eats his own body weight in about half a year.
- The earliest fossil cockroach is about 280 million years old, 80 million years older than the first dinosaurs!
- The desert locust is the world's most destructive insect. It can eat its own weight in food every day. Large swarms can gobble up to 20,000 tons of grain and plants in a day.
- The honeybee has to travel an average of 43,000 miles to collect enough nectar to make a pound of honey!

KIDS RECIPES



Pita Pizza

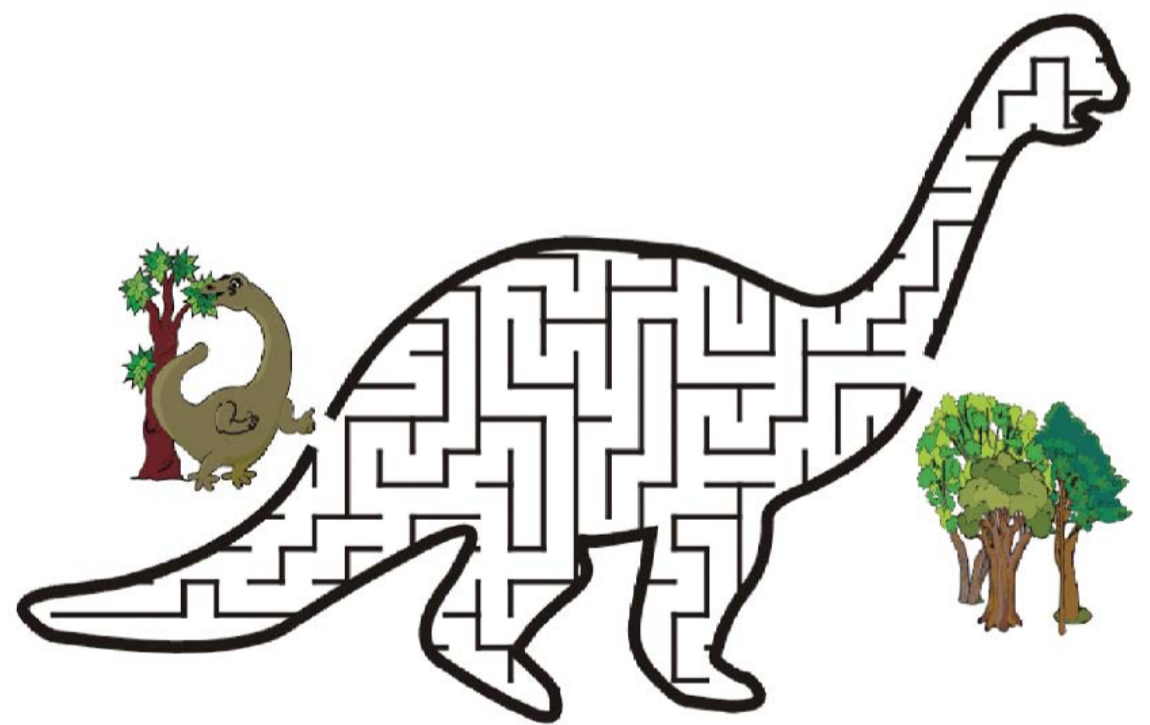
What You Need:

- Pita bread
- Spaghetti sauce
- Any flavor of shredded cheese
- Choice of Toppings

Instructions:

1. Place the pita bread on a baking sheet.
2. Take about 3 teaspoons of spaghetti sauce and spread it on the top of the pita bread.
3. Take one handful of cheese and sprinkle it on top of the sauce along with your toppings.
4. Put it in the oven on broil for about one minute, or until the cheese melts.

Help the dinosaur through the dinosaur maze to find more trees to eat.



SUDOKU

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

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

RIDDLE ME THIS

Q: When is a baseball player like a spider?  
 A: When he catches a fly!

Q: What letter can hurt you if it gets too close?  
 A: B (bee)

Q: Why wouldn't they let the butterfly into the dance?  
 A: Because it was a mothball.

Q: Why did the fly never land on the computer?  
 A: He was afraid of the world wide web.

Q: Who comes to a picnic but is never invited?  
 A: Ants.

Q: Why are A's like flowers?  
 A: Because bee's come after them!





In this image released by Disney, Anthony Mackie, from left, Paul Rudd, Jeremy Renner, Chris Evans, Elizabeth Olsen and Sebastian Stan appear in a scene from "Captain America: Civil War." — AP

## Box Office: 'Angry Birds' soars in US debut, 'Captain America' stays powerful

"The Angry Birds Movie" has flown to victory at the US box office with a \$39 million opening weekend at 3,932 locations, handily topping "Captain America: Civil War" and "Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising." The launch for Sony's animated avian tale performed in line with forecasts as did the third weekend of "Captain America" with \$33.1 million at 4,266 sites for a 54% decline. Universal's "Neighbors 2" finished in third with a solid \$21.8 million at 3,384 screens-although the sequel was off 55% from the 2014 launch of the original "Neighbors."

Warner Bros' opening of action-comedy "The Nice Guys" reeled in a moderate \$11.3 million at 2,865 screens, or about half the "Neighbors 2" number as both battled for the attention of comedy fans. Related Film Review: "The Angry Birds Movie" based on Rovio's popular video game app, generated an A+ CinemaScore among the core under 25 audience. Josh Greenstein, Sony's president of worldwide marketing and distribution, pointed to a strong international performance with a \$94 million weekend worldwide with 47 first-place finishes.

"Rovio and Sony Imageworks were able to translate video game characters into a globally branded film, which was a major challenge," he added. The massive marketing campaign featured tie-ins with more than 100 partners. Greenstein noted that "Angry Birds" should be able to hold well in coming weeks, with no other major competition in the family market until Disney opens "Finding Dory" on June 17. The



This image released by Sony Pictures shows the character Red, voiced by Jason Sudeikis, in a scene from "The Angry Birds Movie." — AP

film, directed by Fergal Reilly and Clay Kaytis, is set on an island populated entirely by happy, flightless birds - except for Red (voiced by Jason Sudeikis), speedy Chuck (Josh Gad) and Bomb (Danny McBride). Its worldwide total has hit \$150 million with a launch last weekend in most foreign markets.

"Captain America" held impressively from its second weekend, which saw the eighth-highest

of all time at \$72.6 million. Should the \$33.1 million estimate hold, "Captain America" will wind up tied with 2012's "The Hunger Games" as the 17th highest-grosser in its third weekend. "Captain America" crossed the \$1 billion mark on Friday to become the 25th film to hit the milestone. Its domestic total has reached \$347.4 million in 17 days, good enough for 35th on the all-time list. — Reuters

## Billboard Awards to be an emotional night with performances



In this file photo, US singer Madonna performs during the Rebel Heart World Tour in Macau, China. — AP

The Billboard Music Awards will feature a mix of emotional and explosive performances. Madonna will pay tribute to Prince, who died last month; Kesha will now sing live after her performance was initially canceled by her former mentor; and Celine Dion - who recently lost her husband and brother - will perform Queen's "The Show Must Go On." The show, airing live on ABC from the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, will open with a 7-minute medley from Britney Spears, and other high energy performances from Justin Bieber, Pink and Rihanna will take place during the three-hour event.

"It's going to be a big, huge show and it's got something in there for everybody. It's going to have a lot of fun, but it's going to have a lot of emotion and heart this year," executive producer Mark Bracco said. Madonna was met with criticism online after Billboard and Dick Clark Productions announced she would pay homage to Prince, who died on April 21 at age 57. The icons collaborated on "Love Song" in 1989. Kesha was also in the heat of drama after Dr Luke rescinded his decision to let her perform at the show. The hitmaking producer and his record label reversed the decision after Kesha said she would not use the stage to discuss their ongoing lawsuit.

Kesha will sing a cover of Bob Dylan's "It Ain't Me Babe." Other performers include Blake Shelton, Gwen Stefani, Ariana Grande, Meghan Trainor, the Go-Go's, Nick Jonas, Demi Lovato, Tove Lo, Troye Sivan and Lukas Graham. The Weeknd, who is



File photo shows Celine Dion poses at the Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas. — AP

attending the show, is the top nominee. He's nominated for the night's big prize - top artist - and his competition includes Adele, Taylor Swift, Bieber and Drake. Swift and Adele - who is premiering her new music video for "Send My Love (To Your New Lover)" at the awards show - won't attend. It was unclear if Drake would attend.

Adele, Swift, Bieber and the Weeknd are also nominated for top Billboard 200 album, along with Ed Sheeran's "x." The Weeknd is a double nominee for top 100 song with "Can't Feel My Face" and "The Hills." His competition includes Adele's "Hello," Fetty Wap's "Trap Queen" and Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth's "See You Again." Ciara and Ludacris will host the 2016 Billboard Music Awards. — AP

## Penn fears his Cannes flop will never be seen in US

Hollywood star Sean Penn fears his new movie may never be released in the United States after its critical mauling at the Cannes film festival, French media said yesterday. "I proudly defend my film. If people don't get it, I won't force them," the actor-director told the Nice Matin daily about his aid worker love story, "The Last Face", which one reviewer trashed as a "stunningly self-important but numbingly empty cocktail of romance and insulting refugee porn." The romance starring Javier Bardem and Penn's former partner Charlize Theron is set jarringly against a backdrop of various African bloodbaths. It was booed and jeered at its Cannes press screenings and got just 0.2 in an international critics' poll organized by the trade magazine Screen—the worst score in the survey's 13-year history. "We don't have a distributor and the welcome in Cannes hasn't helped matters," Penn



US actor and director Sean Penn (center) poses with his children US actor Hopper Jack Penn (left) and US actress Dylan Penn before leaving the Festival Palace after the screening of the film "The Last Face" at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

added, in comments published in French. To add to Penn's discomfort, he and Theron were clearly far from at ease in each other's company, making their press conference and red carpet premiere at Cannes all the more excruciating.

"For me life continues... but I am really worried for those with money in the project," the director of "The Pledge" and "Into The Wind" told the daily. "It doesn't change anything for me to cry about it." — AFP

## Elvis guitar fetches \$334,000 at New York auction

A guitar given to Elvis Presley by his father in 1969 went under the hammer for \$334,000 in New York during an auction that also saw a Michael Jackson vest fetch \$256,000. Vernon Presley is said to have changed the finish of the Gibson Dove acoustic guitar to ebony after his son earned his black belt in karate. It beat auction house Julien's estimate of \$200,000 to \$300,000 for Saturday's sale. During a 1975 concert in Asheville, North Carolina, Presley had given the guitar to fan Mike Harris, who had kept it until now.

Another highlight of the auction was a red neoprene vinyl jacket created by Dennis Tompkins and Michael Bush for Michael Jackson to wear during the 1996-1997 HIStory world tour. It scored more than four times the auctioneers' estimate of \$40,000 to \$60,000. The highest bid reached \$354,400, for John Lennon's handwritten lyrics to Beatles song "Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite!" Julien's had expected it would fetch between \$300,000 and \$500,000. Overall, the sale produced lukewarm results. Lady Gaga's first piano, estimated to be worth \$100,000 to \$200,000, did not find a buyer. Neither did Stevie Ray Vaughan's Fender Broadcaster electric guitar, valued at \$400,000 to \$600,000. Elvis's first piano sold for \$140,025, less than the \$200,000-300,000 estimate. — AFP



Elvis Presley's custom 1969 Gibson Dove guitar, made for him by his father, is displayed at the Hard Rock Cafe in New York. — AFP

## German comedy favorite to win top Cannes prize for woman director

The Cannes film festival ended yesterday with a German comedy, a movie about a bus driver poet and a Romanian meditation on morality the favorites to lift its top prize, the Palme d'Or. After nearly two weeks of stars, scandals and some stirring films at the world's most important cinema showcase, it is now up to the nine-member celebrity jury led by "Mad Max" creator George Miller to decide which picture will triumph.

If Berlin-based Maren Ade wins with "Toni Erdmann" about an uptight executive trying to deal with her off-the-wall prankster father, she will become only the second woman to lift the prize. She would also be the first German to win since Wim Wenders in 1984 for "Paris, Texas". American indie legend Jim Jarmusch's "Paterson" also has the vote of many critics, with "Star Wars" actor Adam Driver swapping his Imperial Tie fighter for a New Jersey public bus.

Romanian director Cristian Mungiu—who took the Palme in 2007 — won over many too with "Graduation", about a father's dilemma over how to educate his daughter to deal with a corrupt world. But an incendiary closing film from 77-year-old Dutch-born "Basic Instinct" director Paul Verhoeven could yet overturn the predictions. His "Elle"—a twisted rape thriller about a powerful woman's strange relationship with her attacker—brought the main competition to a highly contentious end Saturday.

### 'Electrifying'

While French actress Isabelle Huppert's performance as the woman was hailed as the best of her four-decade-long career, some were queasy about its "unacceptable... lasciviously dark" premise. "One can already hear screams of bloody murder about the unacceptable link between rape and pleasure," the French website L'Express wrote. Up until Huppert and Verhoeven's electrifying jolt, some leading critics were overwhelmed by the main competition, complaining of a lack of masterpieces. "This has been by a very disappointing Cannes overall," said Todd McCarthy, of trade magazine The Hollywood Reporter. "Only two or three films in the competition of the 15 I've seen were really worth the trip," he said, picking out "Toni Erdmann" and "Graduation". The German comedy "hits so many unusual notes," he said in an online video post. "It's funny, it's witty and it has strange odd moments you can never expect so it keeps you on your toes."

### Lots of comedy

The Guardian's Peter Bradshaw was much more upbeat. "I have seen wonderful films by Cristian Mungiu, Olivier Assayas ("Personal Shopper"), and Ken Loach ("I, Daniel Blake") and I am delighted by the way it has gone," he said. He said seeing so many comedies was a particular pleasure.

"It's been the year of comedy, a genre traditionally neglected at Cannes. 'Toni

Erdmann" showed that Germany can do broad comedy which travels outside its borders and (French director) Bruno Dumont's 'Slack Bay' delivered big, goofy laughs," he added.

While the quality of films does appear to be higher than last year when Jacques Audiard's migrant thriller "Dheepan" was a surprise winner-Cannes was not without its turkeys. Hollywood actor and director Sean Penn's catastrophic "The Last Face", an aid worker love story set jarringly against a backdrop of various African bloodbaths, got just 0.2 in an international critics' poll organized by the trade magazine Screen—the worst score in the survey's 13-year history.

While it was far from the only film booed at the festival, few have ever had critics laughing for all the wrong reasons from its



German director Maren Ade (left) and German actress Sandra Hüller pose during a photocall for the film "Toni Erdmann" at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

very first frame. "Sean Penn is a great director, who has made 'The Pledge' and the magnificent 'Into the Wild,'" French critic Bruno Cras of Europe 1 radio told AFP. But even he could not defend "The Last Face." "It was just too much," he said. However, in an upset which may even give Penn a sliver of hope, the first of the festival's lesser awards, the Ecumenical Prize, went to Canadian director Xavier Dolan's "It's Only the End of the World", which suffered something of a critical mauling by his standards. It also commended Andrea Arnold's "American Honey", which had a very mixed reception, alongside "I, Daniel Blake". — AFP

## Prince may have died hours before he was found

Prince may have died at least six hours before his body was found, and was given fluids intravenously the day before he died, The Minneapolis Star Tribune reported, as new details emerged about the singer's final hours. Autopsy and toxicology results have yet to be released, but the Star Tribune on Saturday cited sources as saying that Prince grew increasingly agitated following his emergency for an opioid overdose on April 15, despite putting on a calm appearance.

Citing sources with knowledge of the investigation, the newspaper said a responding paramedic told staff, law enforcement officers and others at the scene that Prince may have been dead for at least six hours before he was found

unresponsive in an elevator at his Paisley Park complex on April 21. Authorities have said that the pop star was alone at the time of his death, and that they don't believe suicide or foul play was involved.

Prince's agitated state led one of his staff members to call someone in New York who had recently worked with the musician, seeking advice, on April 20, according to the Star Tribune. Later that day, Prince was given an intravenous treatment at a local hospital, the report said, citing a source with knowledge of the investigation. The newspaper said it was unclear whether Prince was given the intravenous treatment before or after a doctor treating him for withdrawal symptoms made a house call on the evening of April 20. — AFP



# Omani

## Women's Fashion



Models present creations by Omani fashion designers Hala Al-Maamari and Salha Al-Farsi during the Omani Women's Fashion Trends event in the capital Muscat. — AFP photos

## Florence exhibits examine the art-fashion dynamic



A 1937 suede wedge shoe from the Salvatore Ferragamo archives that is worn in another version by Peggy Guggenheim in the background photograph.

Italy's Renaissance capital, Florence, is reclaiming its centuries-old role as an incubator of the interplay between fashion and art. The new director of the Uffizi gallery has announced plans to transform the Costume Gallery at Pitti Palace, which is also under his control, into a full-fledged fashion museum, while the Ferragamo Foundation this week opens a city-wide exhibit exploring the links between art and fashion.

Under the banner "Across Art and Fashion," the exhibits opened Thursday at the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum with linked events at four other venues. The complementary exhibits are the first in Italy to comprehensively explore the relationships between two of the nation's most significant cultural contributions, according to Ferragamo museum director Stefania Ricci, who served as the driving force behind the ambitious exhibition project.

In Florence's Renaissance heyday, the connection between art and fashion was even tighter than it is today. "In the 15th century, there was no difference between artisan and artist," Ricci said, citing Raphael's designs for hand fans and Pollaiuolo's textile designs. "Then slowly the two worlds separated, because fashion was functional, the reality. Art became always more conceptual."

But what is interesting is they always kept an eye one on the other. Artists were demonstrably inspired by fashion in the 1800s, as is evident in the linked event at the Modern Art Gallery of Pitti Palace. Ricci said featuring fashion

of the day was a way for artists to convey modernity in their works, and curators have paired garments from the Costume Gallery with paintings that feature similar, if not identical, looks. At the Ferragamo Museum, the connections are even more entwined. The shoemaker modeled his atelier after a Renaissance craftsman's studio, and the shoe molds on display alongside original footwear emphasize their artistic nature.

More than a dozen brands are represented in the museum, including a Schiaparelli skirt suit with buttons made for her by friend Alberto Giacometti and a Vionnet silken tunic dress from 1922 featuring geometric motifs, on a rare loan from the Louvre. The itinerary continues at the National Central Library and the Marino Marini Museum, both in Florence, and the Textile Museum in nearby Prato.

The art and fashion exhibits, more than a year in the making, highlight a budding synergy in Florence. The city's role as the genius loci of modern fashion also caught the attention of Uffizi director Eike Schmidt, a German who last year became the first foreigner to run the highly prized state museum system in Florence including the Pitti Palace collections.

Schmidt is quietly expanding the costume collection and intends to make it a fashion museum in its own right, focusing on fashion from anywhere on the globe, not just Italy. At the moment, the collection is strongest in the 19th and early 20th Century, with a smattering of 1960s and 1970s pieces. — AP



In this photo an Italian-made linen garden dress with hooded cape, made in 1865, is shown alongside a 19th Century painting from the Uffizi Gallery's Galleria di Arte Moderna collection depicting a similar style for a collateral show at Pitti Palace in Florence, Italy, organized as part of the "Across Art and Fashion" series of exhibits at locations throughout Florence. — AP photos



This file photo shows churchyard visitors at the grave of Swedish actress Greta Garbo in Stockholm, on September 25, 1999. — AFP photos

## Swedes' long journey to their final resting place

"You don't leave a chicken in the fridge for several weeks, yet that's exactly what we do with our dead, it's terrible!" Lotte Moller, a culture critic and author who wrote a book about Swedish funerals, gets charged up every time she thinks about the fact that Swedes take almost a month to lay their dearly departed to rest. Despite authorities' efforts to get Swedes to say their final farewells faster, the dead continue to linger in the morgue. Recent statistics published by the Swedish Association of Funeral Directors show that Swedes wait 20 days on average before burying their dead, which the association claims is a world record.

However Muslims and Jews in Sweden are by custom required to hold burials within one to five days. For Swedes, once the body "is taken care of, the deceased is no longer the family's problem. He or she doesn't matter anymore," says Moller. Agnes Hansson, a 21-year-old student, lost her father Ake suddenly on February 8 in the Swedish town of Harnosand, 400 kilometers (250 miles) north of Stockholm where she studies. The funeral was held on March 4, 24 days after his death. "It was too soon. I had a ton of things to do and I wasn't able to take part in the preparations. Others didn't have time to get time off work or find someone to watch their children," she tells AFP. "Think of the time it takes to prepare a christening or a wedding, between sending out the invitations and organizing the ceremony itself," she says.

### Swedish pragmatism

Sweden is one of the most secular countries in the world, where only eight percent of people profess to attend church regularly. Compared to the elaborate and grandiose Roman Catholic Church, Sweden's Protestant Lutheran Church professes rigour and austerity. Experts note the Swedes' delay in burying their dead is not, as one might think, about trying to prolong the loved ones' time on Earth. No, Swedes are just... practical. Think of death like an Ikea flatpack do-it-yourself piece of furniture: Swedes are known for their "lack of sentimentality and imagination, and their strong pragmatism," says Moller.

The trend of funeral delays dates back to the 1970s, when Sweden was opening up to the outside world. The deadline to bury one's dead then was two months. "Swedes who had moved abroad and the pioneers of mass tourism had to be given time to make it back to the country" after the death of a loved one, explains Swedish Lutheran Church historian Anders Jarlet. Now, "we prioritize other things, like a holiday or an important work engagement, and the funeral of your old mother can wait a bit," laments Eva Brunne, the bishop of Stockholm.

### Too busy to bury

The head of the Swedish Association of Funeral Directors, Ulf Lerneus, agrees. "People focus on their nuclear family and their kids' activities and their schedules are full. And they don't put everything on hold to organize a funeral," he adds. Ake Daun, a professor emeritus of ethnology

at Stockholm University, is however less critical and suggests the time lapse should be attributed to a different aspect of Swedish pragmatism. "Normally, death comes at a moment that is unpredictable. In Sweden we think you should hold off on the ceremony as long as possible to make sure that all the family and friends who want to make it can attend," he said.

Jarlet also suggests the reason could originate from the harsh winter climate. In the 19th century, when someone died in winter and the ground was frozen solid, coffins were buried in a communal pit before being placed in their final resting spot in summer once the soil thawed. But Moller dismisses that as the explanation for today's funeral delays. "In Norway they have the same winters as we do and yet they hold their funerals more quickly." By law, Norwegians have 10 working days after a death to bury their dead, while Danes have eight days. — AFP



This file photo shows a woman looking at lit candles at Skogskyrkogarden (Woodland Cemetery) on All Saints Day in Stockholm, Sweden.



Photo shows the green tea fields in Bandung, Indonesia. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

# Indonesia open for environment lovers

By Joseph Shagra

Indonesia is an oasis of extraordinary beauty and a nation rising quickly like a rocket to achieve tangible development and considerable progress in a few decades. In short, it is a country that shortened time and raced against the clock with comprehensive development in all industrial, agricultural, commercial, scientific and touristic fields.

Tourism in Indonesia deserves a dekho in view of the touristic elements and attractions that the country includes, with its natural beauty, strategic location in the heart of Asia, diverse variety of islands, beaches, green hillsides and countryside, charming ambiances and bright cities that include whatever a tourists seeks in the quest for pleasure, comfort and recreation. Indonesia invited a Kuwaiti press delegation to explore its beauty and the basis of giving it a variety of names like "Light Inhabited Islands", "The Rocket-Speed Rising Asian Tiger" and the "Country of Green Life", that was reborn three times - the first when it won its independence from Netherlands in 1945, the second when it set the foundations of democracy and the state of law and the third when it commenced construction and set up industries building planes, ships and heavy and light weapons, in addition to clothes, foodstuff, electrical appliances and household utensils.

### 'Welcome to Indonesia'

We left for Jakarta on a ten-hour flight before we landed at Sukarno Airport, where everything was very comfortable and well-organized, and the procedures were easy without any long queues or bureaucracy that made us all forget about the long flight. The airport staff was very friendly and received us with a smile. The same applies for the people



The Surabaya shipbuilding factory.

who greet everybody with a smile as if they are saying "Welcome to Indonesia", the land of the Non-Alignment Movement since the 1940s and the land of peace and love for all peoples around the world.

Despite its vast area of 5,193,000 sq km and its 270-million strong population, traffic is well-disciplined on Indonesia's clean, calm and well-organized streets. Moving from the air-

port to downtown Jakarta was easy and smooth, not because the distance was short, but rather because we were eager to explore everything on the way.

### Independence Mosque

The tour of Jakarta was fascinating with its charming high towers and shopping malls full of stores of international fashion, accessories,

mobile phones, electronic appliances and folkloric costumes. We were invited to dinner by the Indonesian ambassador to Kuwait Tatang Razak at a 56-storey restaurant where he welcomed the Kuwaiti delegation with a heartening speech in which he emphasized the historic Kuwaiti-Indonesian relations.

On the way back, we visited one of the largest South East Asian mosques, the

Independence Mosque. We then took an 180-km-long drive through the mountains to Bandung, and on the way, we stopped over at the wildlife Safari Park with its tall trees and fascinating plants. It is an open game park and it was very thrilling to watch lions and tigers walk past our vehicle and ride elephants during the tour inside.

### International companies

Monkeys, zebras and deer kept approaching our vehicle windows, taking food from our hands. The park includes some of the world's rarest animals and instructions in many languages including Arabic to prevent endangering any visitors. The park also includes some international and Arab restaurants. On the way to Bandung, we drove past endless magnificently green tea fields that are considered a major source of income for a vast majority of Indonesian farmers. In an interview with the manager of product and service business development at the aerospace factory Krisnan Y Ardjakoesoema, he told us that the factory started production in 1977 and that Indonesia has manufactured 369 planes so far in collaboration with international companies. It also manufactures some Boeing parts. He added that Indonesia managed to completely manufacture a one hundred percent Indonesian plane, in addition to small commercial planes used for domestic flights and fighter choppers.

During a two-hour domestic flight, we went to Surabaya, 1,800 km from Jakarta. It is the area of trade and services. We visited the Surabaya mayor's office where we met Tri Rismaharin, the first woman ever elected to run a vast area inhabited by thousands of people. We also visited the Surabaya shipbuilding factory where large vessels, gigantic cargo ships and battleships are manufactured.



A mall in Jakarta.



People buying old books on the street.



A factory manufacturing a one hundred percent Indonesian planes.

Bromo Mountain, Malang.



On our way to Malang.





Students are seen studying in the garden outside their classrooms.



Photo shows a deer approaching a tourist's car in order to eat at the Safari Park.



Manager of Product and Service Business Development at the aerospace factory Krisnan Y Ardjakoeseoma, giving a lecture about the planes to the Kuwaiti press delegation.

**Bedugul Botanical Garden**

Our next stop was Malang, to which we went by bus, and on the way visited apple and alligator farms. Malang is the clear embodiment of Indonesian educational progress and includes two major universities - the University of Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM), a private university with classes surrounded by vast gardens, and Malang State Islamic University, where thousands of students graduate from Islamic sharia, medicine, technology, sciences and engineering departments.

Our final stop was Bromo mountain, to which we took SUVs at 3:00 am, then rode mules and finally walked up 320 steps to reach a most fascinating spot with a clear, fresh and cool breeze. We all had to buy hats and woolen gloves to wear while waiting to watch the sunrise at 3,600 m above sea level with many other Arab and Western tourists, before we returned to the hotel overlooking the Bedugul Botanical Garden.

This fascinating spot is actually a manifestation of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, where we found a mosque, a church and a Hindu temple side by side. On our way back, we drove by vast rice fields.



Photo shows the Indonesian ambassador to Kuwait Tatang Razak with the Kuwaiti press delegation.



Students are seen at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM).



Rice fields in Indonesia.



Photo shows the Terima Kasih Ats Kujungannya temple.



Photo shows tourists enjoying the water in Bali.



Photo shows a beautiful beach in Bali.



Photo shows a Rhino with her baby at the wildlife Safari Park.



Photo shows tourists at the Safari Park.



Photo shows the skyscrapers in Indonesia.



Photo shows tigers taking a nap at the wildlife Safari Park.



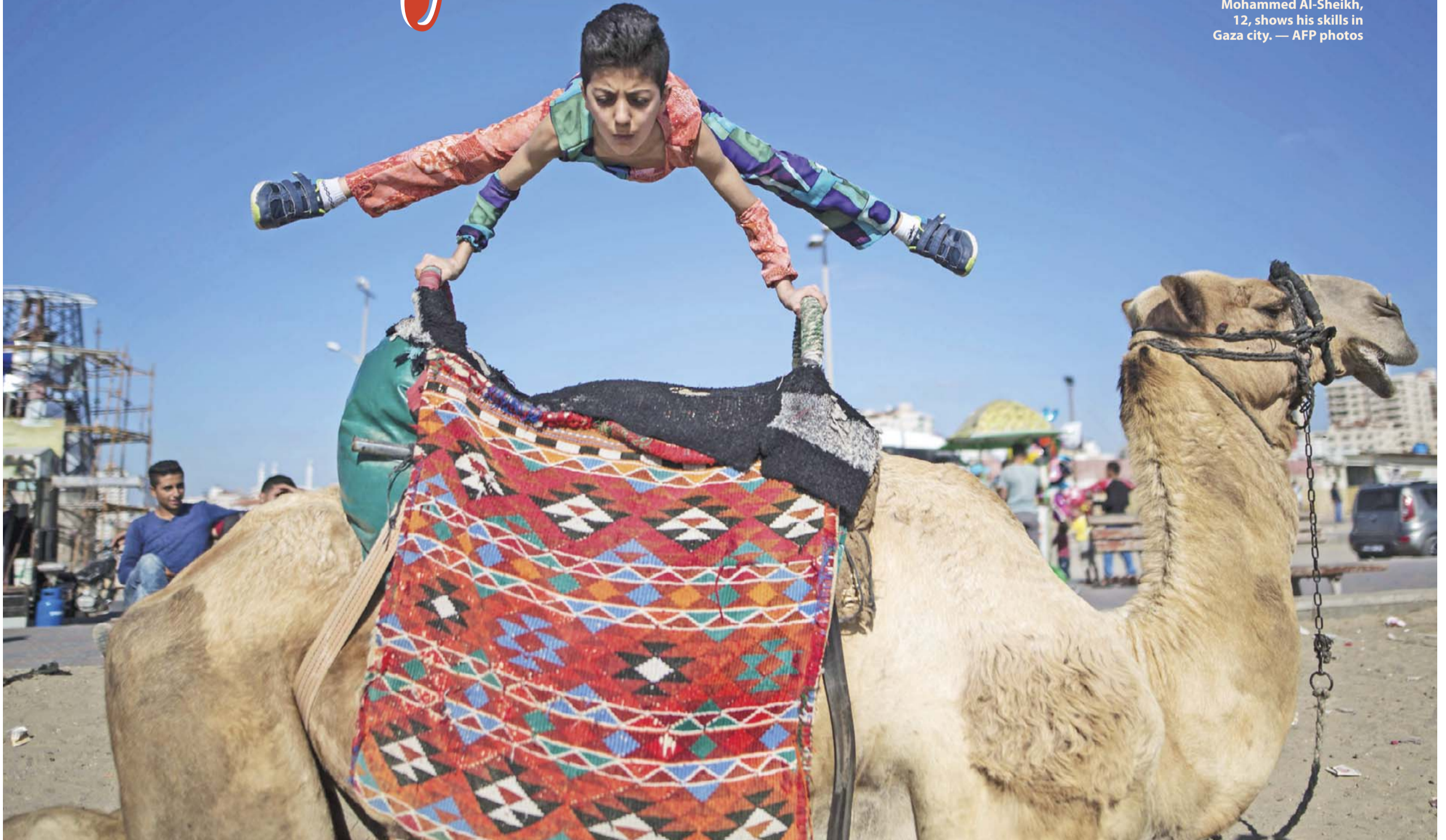
Photo shows laborer carrying bags of tea in the green tea fields.



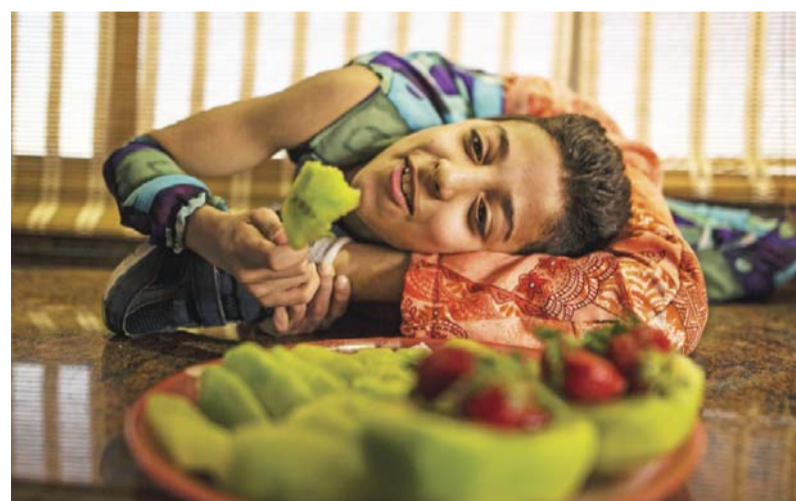
Photo shows tourists at the Terima Kasih Ats Kujungannya temple.



Palestinian teenager Mohammed Al-Sheikh, 12, shows his skills in Gaza city. — AFP photos



## Gaza 'Spiderboy' seeks to storm Guinness world records



Mohammed Al-Sheikh is only 12 and feels trapped in Gaza but he dreams of a Guinness world record for a series of stunning backflips and his almost unbelievable body contortions. Mohammed, just 1.37 meters (four foot, six inches) tall and weighing 29 kilograms (64 pounds), can bend his body in seemingly impossible ways, throwing his feet over his shoulders with reckless abandon or jumping into a spider-like pose. His antics earned this young Palestinian from the Gaza Strip the nickname of "Spiderman," a mantle which fills him with pride.

Mohammed found fame just after a devastating war in Gaza with Israel that left over 2,000 Palestinians dead in 2014. Despite the 50-day conflict interrupting his training, he appeared on the TV show "Arabs Got Talent" in Lebanon, where his body-bending act won 14 million votes. Though he didn't win, he now hopes to write his way into the Guinness Book of Records from his home in the Tel Al-Hawa area of southern Gaza City. Mohammed can perform four acrobatic moves better than anyone else on earth, his coach Mohammed Lubbad, 26, insists.

In an email seen by AFP, Guinness accepted his bid for a record entitled: "Most full body revolutions maintaining a chest stand in one minute." In the video submitted as evidence, Mohammed lies on the floor with his chest pressed into the ground. His legs then spin around at 360 degrees-his feet touching the ground at every angle in a feat of amazing dexterity.

### An 'extraordinary gift'

He achieves it 33 times in a minute, four more than the current record of 29, raising hopes he will be crowned in the coming weeks. For his mother Hanan, he is already a "world champion," but now he must "show his extraordinary gift and exceptional strength in world competitions". At these words, Mohammed, perched on the coffee table, drags his back legs over his shoulders, picks up a glass with his toes and drinks from it.

But for Mohammed, even more than records he dreams of wriggling out of Gaza. The hardest thing, he says, is not contorting his body into unbelievable shapes-though Israel's 10-year blockade of the strip means he

can only learn via YouTube videos. The hardest challenge for a boy who wants to travel the globe is to "get out of Gaza when all the borders are locked".

### Locked in Gaza

"Many Arabs and people across the world support me by clicking 'Like' on my videos on Facebook, and it makes me sad not being able to meet and interact with the world because of the blockade," Mohammed said. His coach tried to channel the talents of young Gazans by opening a training center for unusual sports including parkour, the urban acrobatics in vogue in Gaza.

But after a year, he ran out of money and had to close-to the devastation of the young boys and girls who practiced there. "By leaving Mohammed in Gaza we bury a unique talent," said Lubbad. After the final of "Arabs Got Talent", he was offered a training contract abroad including support for 10 years, with coaching to help him qualify for Arab and international competitions.

But his family refused, saying Mohammed was too young to live abroad without them.

Today, even if he impresses his classmates, his mother, 48, insists it should not undermine the education of the youngest of her eight children. So he is left with escapism-braving danger carrying out stunts on the back of a camel or a horse galloping on a Gaza beach, to the amazement of flabbergasted onlookers. There, he said, he feels "free". "I'm in the air and there is no blockade." — AFP

