

Assembly panel
refers labor
amendments
for voting



India and Iran
agree port
deal, reviving
trade ties



GE announces
\$1.4 billion
investments in
Saudi Arabia



Van Gaal on
his way out
as Mourinho
waits in wings



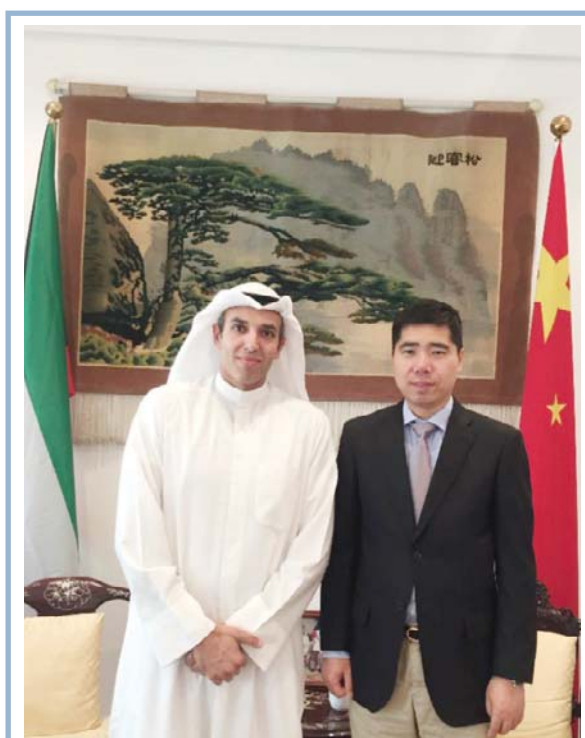
150 FILS
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40 PAGES

WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT VITAL TO END SUFFERING: AMIR

LEADERS MEET TO FIX 'BROKEN' AID SYSTEM



Min 27°
Max 45°
High Tide
02:08 & 12:35
Low Tide
07:16 & 20:10



KUWAIT: Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Dr Ziad Al-Alyan met the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Wang Di recently. The two sides discussed various topics including the many collaborations between China and Kuwait in both the public and private sectors.

ISTANBUL: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah stressed on the importance of holding the first World Humanitarian Summit in the Turkish capital amid growing threats to human lives posed by wars, conflicts and terrorism. "Conflicts and natural disasters have left many people homeless and doubled the numbers of refugees around the world," Sheikh Sabah said in his opening speech yesterday.

According to recent international statistics, there are currently 60 million refugees and displaced people, while there are also over 2.2 billion living below the poverty line, he added. This summit is an opportunity for the international community to unite in easing the suffering of these people, through ending conflicts and providing financial aid for better life conditions, HH the Amir noted.

In this context, he touched on Kuwait's prominent humanitarian role, saying that his country has contributed over \$2 billion for the cause in the past five years. He added that "according to international statistics, Kuwait's contributions were two times above the GDP rate agreed upon internationally". Sheikh Sabah said that Kuwait also played a huge role in supporting Syrians living in severe conditions due to the ongoing war in their country. Kuwait has held three donor conferences for Syria and also co-headed the fourth one in London. The country has pledged around \$1.6 billion for Syrian refugees.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the burden of handling the world's crises should be better shared, as leaders and aid groups sought to defy sceptics at the unprecedented aid summit.

Continued on Page 13



ISTANBUL: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (right), Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (center) and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (second right) pose with leaders and representatives of participant countries yesterday during the World Humanitarian Summit. — AFP



ADEN: People gather at the scene after a pair of suicide bombings in this southern Yemeni city yesterday. — AP

IS BLASTS IN SYRIA KILL NEARLY 150

MINISTER: INDIAN WOMEN IN GULF JAILS NEED HELP

CHENNAI: Women domestic workers from India's southern Andhra Pradesh are languishing in jails in Gulf states after attempting to flee abusive employers or overstaying their visas, said an Indian state minister, urging the national government to help them. In a letter to India's foreign minister, Sushma Swaraj, Andhra Pradesh's minister for non-resident Indian welfare, Palle Raghunatha Reddy, called for action to bring back the women.

"Necessary steps should be initiated to bring them to their native areas safely by providing free travel and necessary visa documents at the earliest possible (opportunity)," he wrote. "Instructions should be issued to Indian embassy officials in Gulf countries to interfere in the matter and provide necessary help in terms of food, clothing and shelter."

There are an estimated six million Indian migrants in the six Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Oman. These include women who leave their villages to take up jobs overseas paying up to three times more than in India, putting their fate in the hands of recruitment agents, who often dupe them. There is no official data on the exact count of the migrants stranded in Gulf countries but experts put the numbers in tens of thousands, many of them in jail.

Some of the migrants overstay on tourist visas and are unable to pay the fines required to return home. In some cases, they do not have exit visas. Many others have been jailed on petty offences waiting for their case to be heard, according to the Andhra Pradesh state government.

Continued on Page 13

DAMASCUS: More than 148 people were killed yesterday in bombings claimed by the Islamic State group in northwestern Syria, the deadliest attacks yet in the regime's coastal heartland. Seven near-simultaneous explosions targeted bus stations, hospitals and other civilian sites in the seaside cities of Jableh and Tartous, which until now had been relatively insulated from Syria's five-year civil war.

The unprecedented attacks on strongholds of President Bashar Al-Assad's regime came as IS faces mounting pressure in both Syria and Iraq, where Baghdad's forces yesterday launched a major offensive to retake the jihadist-held city of Fallujah. A hundred people were killed in Jableh and another 48 in Tartous to the south, at least eight of them children, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group.

Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said they were "without a doubt the deadliest attacks" on the two cities since the

start of the war. IS claimed the blasts via its Amaq news agency, saying its fighters had attacked "Alawite gatherings" in Jableh and Tartous, referring to the minority sect from which Assad hails. IS is not known to have a presence in Syria's coastal provinces, where its jihadist rival and Al-Qaeda's local branch Al-Nusra Front is much more prominent. But IS is notorious for using deadly sleeper cells to attack its enemies. "I'm shocked, this is the first time I hear sounds like this," said Mohsen Zayyoud, a 22-year-old university student in Jableh. "I thought the war was over and that I could walk safely. But I was surprised to see that we're still in the heart of the battle," he said.

In Tartus a 42-year-old bank employee was just as stunned. "It's the first time we hear explosions in Tartus, and the first time we see dead people or body parts here," Shady Osman said. Jableh lies in Latakia province, while Tartous is the capital of the

Continued on Page 13

YEMEN FOES HOLD DIRECT TALKS AFTER LONG PAUSE

41 KILLED IN ADEN BOMBINGS

KUWAIT: Yemen's warring parties held their first face-to-face meeting in nearly a week yesterday after the government delegation ended a boycott, the UN envoy said. "A joint meeting between the two delegations to the Yemen peace talks has started in the morning," Ismail Ould Cheikh

Ahmed said on Twitter. The troubled negotiations which began on April 21 broke off on Tuesday when the government delegation suspended its participation accusing Iran-backed rebels who control the capital of failing to keep their word.

Continued on Page 13

POPE, AZHAR IMAM EMBRACE IN HISTORIC MEETING

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis embraced the grand imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar Mosque at the Vatican yesterday in a historic encounter both sides hope will lead to greater understanding and dialogue between the two faiths. The first Vatican meeting between the leader of the world's Catholics and the highest authority in Sunni Islam marks the culmination of a significant improvement in relations between the two faiths since Francis took office in 2013.

"Our meeting is the message," Francis said in a brief comment at the start of his meeting with Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, shortly after he had hugged and kissed his guest, Vatican officials told a small pool of reporters covering the event. In a statement on the trip, Al-Azhar, an institution that also comprises a prestigious seat of learning, said the two sides had agreed to convene a "peace conference".

A statement quoted Tayeb as telling Francis: "We need to take a joint stance, hand in hand, to bring happiness to humanity. Divine religions were revealed to make people happy, not to cause them hardship." The imam's deputy, Abbas Shuman, told Egyptian TV channel CBC that the two leaders had agreed to resume dialogue and that the proposed conference would cover the issues of poverty, extremism and terrorism.

Continued on Page 13



VATICAN CITY: Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Mosque, talks with Pope Francis during a private audience in the Apostolic Palace yesterday. — AP

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ISTANBUL: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bids farewell Turkey's Ataturk International Airport as he prepares to leave back home.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah back home. —Amiri Diwan photos

AMIR ARRIVES BACK FROM ISTANBUL

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation have returned to Kuwait yesterday, coming from Turkey where he headed the Kuwaiti delegation at the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul.

His Highness the Amir was received at the airport by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Meshaal 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 senior sheikhs officials of the army, police and KNG.

His Highness the Amir's accompanying delegation included 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 Al-Jarallah, KFAED Director-General

Abdulwahab Al-Bader, head of media and cultural affairs at the Amiri Diwan Yousif Al-Roumi, head of the Amiri Diwan's political and economic affairs Sheikh Fawaz Saud Nasser Saud Al-Sabah, and senior officials at the Amiri Diwan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

His Highness the Amir was seen off at Turkey's Ataturk International Airport by Turkey's Minister of EU Affairs Volkan Bozkir, Istanbul Deputy Governor Ismail Gultekin, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Turkey Abdullah Abdulaziz Al-Thwaikh, Kuwaiti Consul General Mohammad Al-Fahad and the embassy's staff.

In other news, His Highness the Amir is set to attend and sponsor the opening of the new Sabah Al-Ahmad building at the National Assembly today morning. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Kuwait.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Ambassador of Algeria to Kuwait.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Ambassador of Albania to Kuwait.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chief of Kuwait's National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. —KUNA photos

CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES NEWLY APPOINTED DIPLOMATS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday the newly appointed Ambassadors of Azerbaijan, Algeria, and Albania to the state of Kuwait.

The diplomats handed their credentials during the reception with His Highness Sheikh Nawaf. The meeting was attended by head of protocols at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh

Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. Also yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince received Chief of Kuwait's National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA

FM JOINS ROUNDTABLE PRESS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN FINANCE



ISTANBUL: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attends the roundtable press conference. — KUNA

ISTANBUL: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah joined a roundtable press conference yesterday, over issues pertinent to human finance and investment.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled co-chaired the conference on the sidelines of the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, alongside Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud, United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, UN Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Stephen O'Brien, President of the World Bank Dr Jim Yong, and European Commissioner for the Budget and Human Resources Kristalina Georgieva.

Kuwait attaches great significance to international cooperation, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said, adding that "obstacles we are faced with today cannot be overcome on an individual basis." Moreover, the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister noted that Kuwait has topped "international statistics on countries most willing to offer humanitarian aid all across the globe." Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled pointed out that Kuwait has announced that it would provide a sum of \$15 billion for the next 15 years, to assist needy and underdeveloped nations. He also added that the country contributes to financing human development programs all over the world. —KUNA

INFO MINISTER: REVAMPED TV STUDIO NOW ON PAR WITH INT'L STANDARDS

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Information has revamped one of its key television studios to bring it on par with international standards, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said yesterday. In a statement to journalists during the opening of Studio 800, Sheikh Salman touted the studio as the biggest in the country, having produced a litany of Kuwaiti theatrical works over the years, saying the studio has been renovated to prop up the media sector in the country.

Moreover, Sheikh Salman noted that human growth and development are integral parts of the country's strategy, which the Ministry of Information is hard at work to implement. Sheikh

Salman also added that the development of media in the country is heading in the right direction, saying it is the result of maximal efforts exerted by employees at the Ministry of Information.

Meanwhile, legendary Kuwaiti thespian Hayat Al-Fahad said that the studio has produced some of the most unforgettable works of drama in the history of the Arab world, adding that she is elated it has been restored to optimal condition.

Kuwaiti actor Abdulrahman Al-Aqal made similar remarks, as he described the studio as something "all Kuwaitis should be proud of." Studio 800 produces television productions that run the gamut from programs to shows, interviews and dramas. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah is seen during the tour. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem received yesterday Kuwait's Ambassador to Sweden Nabil Rashed Al-Dakheel. — KUNA



GENEVA: Kuwait's Minister of Health Dr Ali Saad Al-Obaidi attends the meeting. —KUNA

HEALTH MINISTER AFFIRMS ARAB UNITY AT WHO MEETING

GENEVA: Kuwait's Minister of Health Dr Ali Saad Al-Obaidi said yesterday that Arab health ministers are firm and united in supporting the World Health Organization's (WHO) work and agenda. The minister made his remarks on the sidelines of the 69th session of the World Health Assembly.

He added that Kuwait headed this morning's session of the Arab executive council meeting which came out with an agreement to have Palestine deliver a speech on part of the group at the WHO's General Assembly.

Obaidi said that the reason behind such decision was to show the Arab stance and clear vision regarding health

issues connected with Palestine. He also affirmed that the Arab group will highlight the suffering of the Syrian refugees displaced within their country and neighboring nations.

The minister mentioned that the Arab group will hold daily meetings to follow up on topics presented during WHO General Assembly session, namely WHO sustainable development goals for 2030. The World Health Assembly session 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: Kuwaiti Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Khalid Al-Sahlawi honors Saudi Sharifa Al-Haqbani. — KUNA



Kuwaiti Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Khalid Al-Sahlawi honors Kuwaiti Shouq Al-Juwaihel.

HOPE, OPTIMISM DEFEAT ILLNESS: CANCER PATIENTS

KUWAIT: Strong belief in God, hope, and optimism are the weapons to defeat cancer, said two young girls afflicted with leukemia (blood cancer). Saudi Sharifa Al-Haqbani, 12, and Kuwaiti Shouq Al-Juwaihel, 18, agreed that it was a hard blow when each knew she had the malignant disease, which they considered 'death,' but with support from their doctors, families and friends, their view of the disease, and life, utterly changed.

Haqbani, dubbed ambassador of cancer fighters in Saudi Arabia, said she soon came to think of having cancer a "start of new life. "I soon began to cope with life as a cancer patient," she said. Earlier to this, she was a child among millions, but later she launched an account on social media and came to have so many friends. Even she began offering people advice on how "to survive with cancer."

Haqbani highly appreciated psychological support by her family, friends, social workers and doctors at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center (KFSHRC) that she did not give in. Thanks to Haqbani's willpower and determination, the young girl managed to stand firm and steadfast in the face of the disease. She did not give in to pain and suffering, but altered them into positive power.

Seeing death

Juwaihel, who defeated the disease, recalled the moment she knew she had

cancer. "I almost saw death," she said. But the tears in the eyes of her family members, seemed to create determination to face it. She had her worst hours when she received chemicals treatment, and lost her hair but she "endured pain and had determination to survive."

The young girl's mother, Lolwa Al-Hasawi, said that her daughter was diagnosed with cancer in 2013, and was cured two years later "thanks to God, then her will and proper treatment by doctors in Kuwait." At first, doctors only thought she just had anemia but after tests at the Amiri Hospital, she was found to suffer leukemia.

Mohammad Al-Haqbani, said that his daughter Sharifa had been diagnosed with cancer almost two years and a half before. She is still receiving treatment at the KFHSRC. She once felt hopeless, especially when she lost her hair, and the father and her brothers had their hair cut to give her some encouragement, and it had a positive effect.

Sharifa is visiting Kuwait upon invitation by the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who had earlier received her at the embassy. Sheikh Thamer then offered the young 'ambassador' a souvenir placard. During Sharifa's five-day visit, she will meet with many children who are suffering from cancer, and will seek to give them support and encouragement to defeat the disease. — KUNA

CABINET DISCUSSES FLAWS IN COUNTRY'S DEMOGRAPHICS

MINISTERS TOUT KIA RESPONSE TO SALE OF PARTIALLY OWNED COMPANIES

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih yesterday briefed the Cabinet on a report issued by a committee tasked with remedying some flaws in the country's demographics. Subaih noted that progress has been made on the issue and work is underway to implement some suggestions made by the Cabinet to fix this issue.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet listened to an explanation by Subaih, in which she elaborated on the country's 2015/2016 development plan. Subaih explained that the plan aims to transform goals and ideologies into feasible development plans, revealing that a total of 55 projects have already come to fruition, while 204 of them have yet to be carried out.

Companies' sale

The Cabinet meanwhile lauded Kuwait Investment Authority's (KIA) response to a suggestion made by a National Assembly committee to halt the sale of companies in which more than half of their capital is state-owned. This occurred at the Cabinet's weekly meeting at Seif Palace, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The Cabinet asserted that it stands by the KIA, saying that it has acted in a clear and transparent manner.

Moreover, as it relates to the development of economic reforms, the Cabinet reviewed a suggestion of merging government institutions and bodies. The Cabinet called on the private and public sectors to collaborate with one another to conduct a study on the prospect of merging certain government entities.

The Cabinet also discussed a suggestion made by an educational, cultural, social and health committee concerning a law that relates to public universities. The Cabinet has decided to okay the law and refer it to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who would then send it to the National Assembly.

Egyptian flight

The cabinet also offered heartfelt condolences to Egyptian President Abdul-Fattah Al-Sisi, government and people over the victims of the recent crash of the Egyptian flight. During the meeting, the cabinet voiced much sadness and sorrow over the crash of the



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

EgyptAir plane over the Mediterranean Sea early on Thursday.

Egyptian and French civil aviation officials had confirmed that the EgyptAir flight MS804 with 69 passengers on board had crashed more than 200 kilometers off the Egyptian coast. The Egyptian flight flew from Paris to Cairo when it suddenly went off radar.

Letters

At the onset of the meeting, the Cabinet was briefed on a message received by His Highness the Amir from Ecuador's President Rafael Correa, inviting His Highness the Amir to participate in the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development due in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, next October. The ministers were also apprised of a message received by His Highness the Amir from Somalia's Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Shamarke on bilateral relations and means of promoting them in all fields.

Moreover, the Cabinet reviewed the outcomes of Tajikistan President Imam Ali Rahman's visit to Kuwait and the talks held with His Highness the Amir that focused on cementing bilateral relations and means of enhancing them in all fields to serve interests of the two sides.

During the visit, Kuwait and Tajikistan signed about six memoranda of understanding and agreements on promoting coopera-

tion in the fields of security, politics, agriculture, economy, education, scientific research and air transport.

Asian tour

Furthermore, the ministers listened to a presentation made by His Highness the Premier on results of his tour to a number of Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Vietnam, South Korea and Japan. His Highness the Prime Minister briefed the Cabinet on the outcomes of his fruitful talks with leaders and senior officials of these friendly countries on all aspects of distinguished relations between Kuwait and these countries.

His Highness the Premier noted that all talks met aspirations towards enhancing cooperation and supporting bonds of friendly relations between Kuwait and these countries so as to serve common interests, mainly the areas of economy, trade, investment, infrastructure, energy and technology. The cabinet lauded the positive results of this tour, expressing its confidence that it would to the promotion of relations.

Finally, the cabinet approved recommendations of the legal affairs committee's report on a draft decree ratifying an air transport agreement between Kuwaiti and Qatari governments, and sent it to His Highness the Amir. — KUNA

PANEL REFERS LABOR AMENDMENTS FOR VOTING

BUDGETS COMMITTEE WANTS PROPOSED SPENDING CUT BY 15%

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's health and labor committee yesterday gave its final approval to amend five articles in the 2010 labor law in the private sector to mainly stiffen penalties against visa traders, rapporteur of the panel said. MP Saadoun Hammad said the amendments will be sent to the National Assembly for debate during today's session.

The committee however postponed discussing proposals to amend the health insurance scheme on expatriates and imposing certain charges on some medical services, he said. The foreign ministry requested the delay until it has revised the position of foreign diplomats and official guests.

Regarding the labor amendments, the panel agreed to amend article 138 to increase the fine against employers who recruit workers from outside the country or hire them locally and fail to provide them with the prescribed jobs.

The original article penalizes such employers for up to three years in jail and a fine of between KD 1,000 and 5,000. The amendment raises the fine to between KD 2,000 and 10,000 per worker. The



MP Saadoun Hammad

fine also applies to employers who employ foreign workers not on their residency.

The committee also agreed to amend article 140 which deals with violations against ministry inspectors who make sure the private sector businesses comply with the law. It raised the fine on the violation from the current maximum of KD 1,000 and made it at least KD 500 and up to KD 1,000.

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



MP Adnan Abdulsamad

or total closure. The new penalty is a jail term of between one month and six months and a fine of between KD 5,000 and KD 2,000.

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

Spending

In the meantime, the Finance Ministry told the assembly budgets

committee yesterday that it was difficult to cut proposed spending in the 2016/2017 fiscal year by 20 percent, head of the committee said. MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the ministry informed the committee that 70 percent of the proposed spending is allocated for wages which is difficult to reduce.

Also, the fourth chapter in the budget cannot be cut because it is for development projects, Abdulsamad said. The ministry said that it is possible to discuss reducing public expenditures by 15 percent, the lawmaker said. Abdulsamad said that the committee asked the ministry to respond in writing about the causes that prevent it from cutting spending by 20 percent. Separately, MP Faisal Al-Duwaisan yesterday asked the information minister why he has not applied the law against a local newspaper that published a report claiming that Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi militia groups were plotting bombings in Kuwait in the holy fasting month in Ramadan, a report that was denied by the interior ministry. The lawmaker asked the minister about the legal measures that the ministry has taken against the newspaper for violating the law.

HEALTH MINISTRY RECEIVES JABER HOSPITAL IN SEPTEMBER

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Jaber Hospital is set to be delivered to the Ministry of Health next September after the project's construction is concluded, said Awtef Al-Ghunaim, the Ministry of Public Works' Undersecretary. The Health Ministry had earlier estimated the date to receive the project on December 2015, which means that the September delivery would be ahead of schedule. Jaber Hospital, located in South Surra, is considered one of the largest hospitals in the Middle East with a bed capacity of 1,168.

Weather forecast

Today's weather is expected to be sandy with strong winds, while the temperature may reach 45 C degrees, said the Kuwait Meteorological Center at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Scattered clouds may appear at night and the sand may dissipate, it added.



KUWAIT: This file photo shows ongoing construction works at the Jaber Hospital's project.

In Brief

GCC SECURITY OFFICIALS MEET

RIYADH: GCC Assistant Secretary-General for Security Affairs Hazza'a Al-Hajri said yesterday that undersecretaries of the GCC interior ministries will come together for an extraordinary meeting in Riyadh today. Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud's vision will feature on the meeting's agenda, which was approved during the 36th summit in Riyadh by GCC leaders, said Hajri in a press statement. Hajri added that the meeting will address ways to enhance joint security cooperation. — KUNA



KUNA CHIEF ATTENDS NAWC MEETING

BAKU: Director General and Chairman of the Board of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Sheikh Mubarak Duaij Al-Sabah took part yesterday in a meeting for the News Agencies World Congress (NAWC) which is held in the Azeri capital. The meeting focused on the preparations for the NAWC's fifth conference which will be held in Baku on November 15-16. Some 120 world news agencies are expected to attend the upcoming conference aimed at boosting cooperation amongst NAWC members. — KUNA



ANTI-TERROR MEDIA EFFORTS

CAIRO: Egypt called for concreted efforts by Arab media to counter the phenomena of terrorism, violence and extremism that hinder development and threaten stability in several countries of the country. Safaa Hegazy, head of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union, made the statement yesterday in a speech during the meeting of the Executive Council of Arab Information Ministers at the Arab League headquarters. A Kuwaiti delegation headed by Undersecretary of Ministry of Information Tareq Al-Mezrem is taking part in the meeting. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: An aerial view of the Salmiya beach, as Kuwait City's skyline can be seen in the background. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

AL-SADU HOUSE TO REMAIN PLATFORM FOR CREATIVE PEOPLE

KUWAIT: Al-Sadu Weaving Cooperative Society (Beit Al Sadu or as commonly known Sadu House) will forever remain a platform that encourages creative people in the art of weaving, Honorary President Sheikhha Altarf Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah said yesterday.

Sheikha Altarf made the statement after opening the 17th Annual Exhibition of the Kuwait Textile Arts Association (KTAA). Patronizing the two-day event, Sheikha Altarf said it is the outcome of the hard work by talented people who need to be appreciated. She urged people to visit the exhibition, lauding the tableau that won first place prize.

The exhibition displays art works by competitors and trainees of the KTAA, which lies under the umbrella of Al-Sadu House, she said. The House will always back their talents and forever be proud of them, Sheikha Altarf said. In addition, she stressed the significance of the cultural heritage, referring to it as "an identity and a root." Haifaa Al-Mughni, who won first prize, said that it took her a whole month of intensive work, using 3,400 tiny pieces of 14 different materials. She highly appreciated honoring her and the artistic piece.

The Al-Sadu Weaving Cooperative Society, also known as 'Beit Al-Sadu' or more commonly as

'Sadu House,' was launched in 1978, as a private initiative, by a group of concerned Kuwaitis who wished to preserve a fast disappearing, yet intrinsic, cultural identity. Thus, the Al-Sadu Project was founded.

In 1991, soon after the Liberation of Kuwait, the Sadu Project was transformed into Al-Sadu Weaving Co-operative Society, a venture owned and run by the weavers and artisans themselves, with all profits going to shareholders. The Society is managed by members of a board of shareholders and an advisory committee headed by the Patron and Honorary President Sheikhha Altarf. — KUNA



Honorary President Sheikhha Altarf Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah



KUWAIT: The opening ceremony of the 17th Annual Exhibition of the Kuwait Textile Arts Association. — KUNA



A scene from the exhibition.



First prize winner Haifaa Al-Mughni (right).



SEOUL: Kuwait Ambassador to South Korea Jassim Al-Bedaiwi participates in the inauguration of a propylene production factory. — KUNA

ENVOY PARTAKES IN PROPYLENE FACTORY OPENING IN SOUTH KOREA

SEOUL: Kuwait Ambassador to South Korea Jassim Al-Bedaiwi participated yesterday in the inauguration of a propylene production factory, established in cooperation among Korea's SK Gas Company, Saudi Advanced Petroleum Company (APCO), and Kuwait's Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), a subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).

During the opening ceremony, the ambassador delivered a speech praising the historic moment and joint cooperation, hailing Kuwait's PIC for being the first Kuwaiti company to directly invest in the Korean republic. Bedaiwi expressed hopes that such investment project would become the gateway for Kuwaiti investment companies to engage in big and profitable projects.

Established in 1963, PIC was the first chemical fertilizer complex of its kind in the region. Today, PIC is a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and is a petrochemical industry leader in Kuwait and throughout the Middle East, and a

growing leader worldwide. In addition to manufacturing and marketing fertilizers, olefins and aromatics in Kuwait, we participate in multiple joint ventures that also produce and market chemicals both locally and internationally. — KUNA



Kuwait Ambassador to South Korea Jassim Al-Bedaiwi speaks during the ceremony.

SIERRA LEONE AMBASSADOR TO KUWAIT IBRAHIM KAMARA CLARIFIES MAIDS ISSUE

By M B Jalloh, Press Attache
Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States

The issue of maltreatment of Sierra Leonean housemaids in the State of Kuwait is a subject that has been circulating over the social media for some time now and the conditions reported by the housemaids themselves have been a source of serious concern not only to their relatives and friends at home and abroad but more so to the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the State of Kuwait.

There is a lot of misconception and perhaps misunderstanding of the maid issue to the extent that blame and aspersions are being cast on the Government for not doing anything to rescue their nationals in spite of the ill treatment and poor conditions purported to be prevailing in the facilities provided by the authorities in Kuwait which some Sierra Leonean residents in Kuwait have been described as "untrue and unfair" to the Kuwaitis.

The Sierra Leone Embassy in the Gulf State of Kuwait headed by Ambassador Ibrahim Bakarr Kamara has deemed it necessary to clear the air again - an action that had been done by the Embassy several times - to make his Mission's position clear in relation to what some people believe is a "smearing campaign" going on by exponents or individuals with some dastardly ulterior motives.

Speaking on the telephone line from Kuwait City last night, the soft-spoken Ambassador said the Government of Kuwait needs to be commended for the tremendous effort they have been making over the past several months by creating facilities to handle the many problems and reports that have been pouring into the media of abuse and mistreatment.

"In addition to some of the facilities, there is a shelter that has been created with 700 beds that is fully supported by the Government of Kuwait. This facility was created to temporarily accommodate absconded housemaids of all nationalities that had problems with their sponsors until arrangements were completed for their repatriation back home," envoy Kamara said on the phone.

At the shelter, he added, provision was made for feeding, lodging and medical services. "Recreation and Counseling services were also provided in collaboration with other partners."

He further said that: "It was more or less a means of keeping them out of the streets from engaging in immoral acts and for easy access by

the resident Missions, government authorities, and international partners, to help provide support services to those that were victims of human trafficking."

The move by the Kuwaiti Government, the Ambassador said, further helped to save many of the absconded house maids with an illegal status in the country from being arrested by the police in raids that were conducted on a daily basis to keep in check security threats in the country.

In spite of all this support, Ambassador Kamara observed that the gullible public is unaware that the Government of Kuwait has been working with the Embassies concerned, international organizations including the International Migration Office (IOM) and other charitable organizations to support their efforts and improve on some of the appalling conditions the maids have reported to be facing in the homes of their sponsors and at the various centers.

"They are also often unaware of the systems and procedures that have been put in place in the State of Kuwait which are so structured that every case involving a housemaid has to be dealt with according to laid down rules and procedures with specific time lines involved in the processing of documents required before they could make their final exit whether by repatriation or deportation depending on the type of case in the file," the Ambassador pointed out.

In view of these constant reports that have been coming in through various voice messages posted on the social media by some of these housemaids, the Head of Mission said it became a source of serious concern not only among their parents but even government officials and the international community at large. He furthered that a number of positive actions have been taken by the Government back home and the Embassy in collaboration with the Government of Kuwait and other international partners. These include:

1. Imposition of a moratorium by the Government of Sierra Leone on the recruitment of housemaids to the Gulf region until a proper agreement has been signed on migrant labor;
2. Repatriation of over seventy (70) of the Sierra Leonean Housemaids through the Embassy in Kuwait;
3. Regular Consular visits and Provision of Consular documents to housemaids detained at various detention centers and coordina-

tion with the Government of Kuwait in the deportation process;

4. Approval and provision of funds by President Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for the urgent repatriation of the 19 housemaids that opted to be repatriated.
5. Proposed delegation being put in place in Freetown to visit the state of Kuwait to discuss and sign an agreement on migrant labor in a bid to develop a comprehensive policy on migrant workers.
6. Provision of psycho-social services by international organizations to help victims of trafficking in the shelter;
7. Sensitization of the Housemaids by the Sierra Leone Community in Kuwait and encouraging them to register with the embassy to return home;
8. Provision of air tickets by the Government of Kuwait and other charitable organizations to repatriate home those that do not have resident missions;

With the above background and measures being taken by the Government of Kuwait and the relevant partners including the UN and other charitable organizations, Ambassador Kamara said, the problems and challenges being posed will soon become a thing of the past and the Mission will have more time to concentrate and focus on developmental issues for the benefit of the governments and peoples of both nations.

In conclusion, the Mission in Kuwait is therefore advising that there is a lot to gain in the relationship between Sierra Leone and the State of Kuwait and therefore the media must endeavor to get the facts of what is obtaining on the ground before publishing stories that are negative and may be harmful to the relations with our partners.

On his part, the newly arrived Minister Counselor/Head of Chancery, Duwai Lungay said the doors of the Embassy and the Foreign Ministries of both countries are always open for accurate information to be given on the issue of the housemaids.

Meanwhile, the Embassy in collaboration with the Government of Kuwait, further repatriated 20 Sierra Leonean house maids in batches of three on 14th March, 12th May and 18th May 2016 to Freetown. They all arrived safely on Royal Air Maroc and have reunited with their families.

MAN BUSTED WITH 240,000 DRUG PILLS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Acting Director of Drugs Control General Department Colonel Waleed Al-Duraiee said the department received information about an Egyptian man who had drugs. When the information was confirmed, an undercover agent was asked to make an agreement with the suspect to buy 10,000 tablets for KD 8,000. The suspect was arrested inside his car with the pills. He confessed to the charges and told officers the rest of the quantity was in a desert area, where they found 240,000 Captagon tablets. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Couple arrested

Criminal detectives sent a Saudi man and a Kuwaiti girl to the prosecution with charges related to drunkenness and running an apartment for immoral activities. The two were arrested after video footage circulated on social media, showing a man chasing a girl and snatching her purse. A security source said the event took place

on Baghdad Street in Salmiya, and police found the two were together in an apartment, and the man was the one who attacked and beat the girl and stole her purse. The two were drunk on the day of the incident. The man did not like a photo the girl had taken and refused to delete it from her phone, so he got angry. The girl escaped from the apartment, so the man chased her and took her purse. She then returned with him to the apartment.

No injuries in fires

Firefighters responded to an emergency call made at 2:30 am yesterday morning reporting that a vehicle caught flames at the parking lot of Al-Qairawan police station. The blaze was tackled and no injuries were reported. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire. Separately, a fire broke out in a Gharnata house, prompting response of firefighters from the Sulaibkhat fire station. The blaze was tackled and no injuries were reported. An investigation was opened to reveal the circumstances which led to the fire.



KUWAIT: This handout photo provided by the Interior Ministry shows the suspect with the drugs.



Interior Ministry officials inspect the confiscated pills.



Flames come out of a vehicle outside the Qairawan police station yesterday.



A firefighter puts out the car's blaze.



Damage left by a fire reported at a Gharnata house yesterday.



KFH PATRONIZES 3RD CULTURAL LEAGUE AT KUWAIT UNIVERSITY

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) patronized the activities of the third cultural league at Kuwait University as part of its social responsibility and keenness to support the students and participate in their activities.

The event convened under the sponsorship of the University's head Dr Hussain Al-Ansari in presence of Dean of Student Affairs Dr Abdullaheem Dhiyab, the Deans of colleges and a huge number of educational institutions' representatives.

Participants and attendees applauded

KFH in recognition of its support to the students, indicating that this reflects the bank's commitment towards the students and the educational process.

It is worth noting that the cultural league included several activities and debates among students of different colleges. It witnessed huge student's participation. This league is held annually for the sake of improving the dialogue and debate skills among students, yet to contribute in increasing their engagement and educational level.



DUBAI: Director of the Kuwait Business Council in Dubai Saad Al-Rubaian attends the meeting. — KUNA

DIPLOMAT: DUBAI BUSINESS COUNCIL SET TO BOOST COMMERCIAL TIES

DUBAI: The establishment of the Kuwait Business Council in Dubai will serve to bolster commercial ties with the UAE, Kuwait's Consul General in Dubai Theyab Al-Rashidi said yesterday. He said that the council would cater to Kuwaiti businessmen in Dubai, describing it as the product of joint work between the country's consulate and the Dubai Chamber of Commerce. "Kuwaiti businessmen aim to contribute to the exponential economic and commercial growth of Dubai," Kuwait's Consul General said.

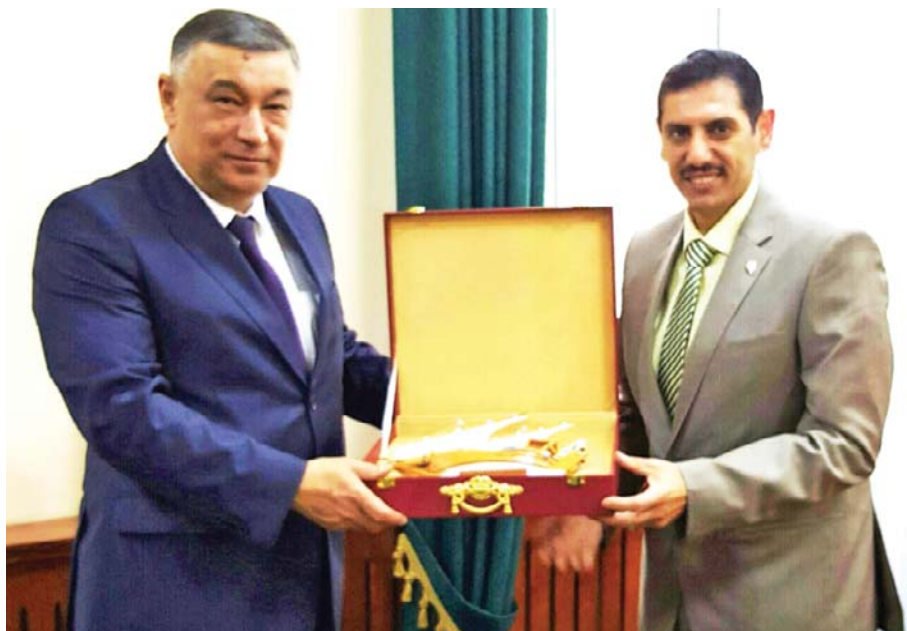
Meanwhile, Director of the Kuwait Business Council in Dubai Saad Al-Rubaian said that the formation of this council is a monumental step taken by Kuwait's private sector, adding that the council is the brainchild of businessmen from a vast array of Kuwaiti companies.

Moreover, Rubaian also noted that the council would routinely hold economic events in Dubai, designed to cement commercial ties between Kuwait and the UAE.



Kuwait's Consul General in Dubai Theyab Al-Rashidi

The Kuwait Business Council works in affiliation with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce, as a private non-profit entity that strives to maximize commercial cooperation between the two Gulf nations. — KUNA



TASHKENT: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Uzbekistan Ahmad Al-Jeeran (right) is pictured with director general of Uzbekistan's agency for media affairs. — KUNA

KUWAIT, UZBEKISTAN DISCUSS BOOSTING MEDIA TIES

TASHKENT: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Uzbekistan Ahmad Al-Jeeran yesterday met with director general of Uzbekistan's agency for media affairs, discussing with him ways to boost bilateral ties mainly in the media field. The Uzbek official stressed on the role of media in fighting terrorism

and religious extremism. He also admired Kuwait's media laws that counter thoughts promoting violence. Meanwhile, he noted the importance of cooperation between international media bodies to bring awareness towards the negative impact of terrorism. — KUNA

MS 804
FIRE THEORY

By Sami Al-Nisf

A few hours after the EgyptAir MS 804 crash, I was interviewed by Sky News Arabia along with Egyptian aviation safety expert Ali Shokri, who said informed sources at EgyptAir told him that a fire broke out in the plane's pantry area, then extended to the cockpit. This was later denied and replaced by a theory about the plane being bombed by a terrorist group. The denial was enhanced by Shokri's talk about the pilot reporting the fire to the carrier, which is very illogical because the pilot is supposed to first notify the nearest flight control because cockpit fires previously caused the crash of a Swissair flight in 1998 on US' east coast.

CNN interviewed several aviation experts, who all said that the ACARS device mounted onboard to send

A fire in the cockpit might cause all gauges, lights and controls to malfunction

messages about the plane's technical data had sent warnings about a fire in the pantry, lavatory and the aviator area below the cockpit or the pilot window defrost system, which if proven right by the black box, will explain the lost contact with the flight control tower and the sudden dive to 10,000 feet to open the doors as recommended by technical instructions to fight fire. A fire in the cockpit might cause all gauges, lights and controls to malfunction and make it impossible for the pilot to fly in the dark.

What makes everybody tend to believe the blast assumption is the plane's sudden disappearance, the fact that the pilot did not talk to flight control and not knowing about ACARS messages about a fire earlier and holding the news that the plane descended from 37,000 feet to 10,000 feet after it swerved 90 degrees off course, which is the standard procedure a pilot does to get away from other flights at the same altitude and route.

All possibilities remain worthy of consideration and only the black box will either confirm or deny them.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Jarida

7.5 PERCENT ANNUAL RAISE TO OIL WORKERS

KUWAIT: Following threats and statements vowing that the government would never yield to oil sector pressure and demands made through threats to go on strike, it seems that oil unions have actually won the battle. The ministerial committee entrusted to negotiate under the chairmanship of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah made an agreement with the Oil and Petrochemical Industries Workers Confederation (OPIWC) and heads of oil unions to meet one of the most important demands made by those who went on strike - getting the annual raise according to the same regulations followed last year.

During a meeting that lasted till the very early hours of morning, both sides agreed to the 7.5 percent annual raise and offering retirees the option to choose between getting healthcare at KOC hospital or having private health insurance. Though the committee also agreed to set the annual raise at 5 percent for new recruits, OPIWC said that the remaining demands were still being considered by the committee and that they would be discussed in a further meeting. Notably, OPIWC's demands include the continuation of providing workers with vehicles and maintaining the same airfare rates. — Al-Jarida

OFFICER ADMITS PLANTING DRUGS IN CITIZEN'S CAR

KUWAIT: A high-ranking criminal investigation officer was arrested for receiving bribes and planting drugs in a citizen's vehicle to get rid of him in order to make way for a business tycoon who admired his wife, said security sources. Case papers indicate that a citizen and his wife, who works in one of the ministries, reported that a businessman they know had been harassing them and trying to ruin their marriage.

Accordingly, the high-ranking police officer was assigned to investigate the matter, but he ended up befriending the suspect and they both exchanged visits. Security sources said that the officer received valuable gifts including a speedboat, a vehicle and several touristic trips abroad, in addition to a monthly 'allowance', until the day came when the businessman asked him to return the favor. "I am fed up with the couple who filed a complaint against me," he told the policeman, who suggested placing drugs in the husband's vehicle and arresting him at a routine checkpoint.

The sources added that after being tipped off about what happened, the manager of the financial crimes department Lt Col Senaitan Al-Mutairi examined the husband's record and found it clear of any drug-related cases, and also subjected him to drug tests which proved he had never used them. Accordingly, Mutairi informed the Ministry of Interior's Undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd, who ordered a wider investigation that resulted in arresting the officer.

During interrogations, the officer admitted to receiving gifts and money but denied they were bribes, insisting they were loans he intended to pay back. However, the officer admitted to planting the drugs in the husband's vehicle, and he was arrested along with the businessman. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

tles ready for sale, said security sources. Case papers indicate that a police patrol suspected a car that was in a very bad condition, and on stopping and searching it, they found the liquor bottles. A case was filed. Meanwhile, a citizen was arrested in Farwaniya with drugs, said security sources, noting that on being stopped by a police patrol, the man tried to flee on foot. Chasing and arresting him, policemen found that he had a criminal record, and on searching him, they found drugs in his pockets. A case was filed and the suspect was referred to relevant authorities.

Brothel busted

A Farwaniya brothel was stormed by vice police, who arrested three Ethiopian women and three Bangladeshi men who ran the place. The suspects confessed to charging KD 5 per client.

Drunken men arrested

A citizen was arrested when he went to Maidan Hawally police station to mediate for another man who had been arrested while heavily drunk along with a female citizen, said security sources. They noted that the suspect himself was heavily drunk when he went to the police station.

Illegal affair

Following up a case filed by a female citizen in her thirties accusing a citizen in his forties of assaulting her, detectives found that the couple had been having an illegal affair, said security sources. Interrogating the man, he told the police that he was married and that he had been having an affair with the woman for over a year. He added that she recently asked him to marry her and said she did not mind being his second wife. "She dragged me into having the affair," said the man, justifying why he assaulted her.

Physical assault

An Egyptian woman accused two men, also Egyptian, of beating her and attempting to force her to sign a promissory note. The woman gave Salmiya police a medical report about her injuries, saying that they beat her, and when she refused to sign the note, they resumed the beating, causing the injuries stated in the report. Detectives are working on the case.

Firearm

Jahra detectives arrested a citizen with a firearm and he was found to be an ex-convict. A security source said detectives received information about the suspect in Farwaniya governorate, so a team went and arrested him. The source said the suspect took out a pistol he was keeping under the seat of his car and gave it to detectives. He was charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm, among other things.

— Al-Rai, Al-Qabas, Al-Anbaa

Passports forgery
Following up the case in which two Egyptians working for the passports department, a Tanzanian, a Yemeni and a citizen were accused of forging passports, driving licenses and civil IDs, public prosecution investigations showed that the suspects sold Kuwaiti passports for KD 400, driving licenses for KD 200 and civil IDs for KD 100.

'Selfie' threat

A female citizen filed a complaint against someone she knows, noting that he was threatening to post a selfie they took together on Instagram unless she accompanied him to a 'mixed' party in a Salmiya apartment. Security sources noted that the girl provided the police with the suspect's information. A case was filed and the suspect is being summoned for further investigations.

Bootlegger arrested

A Bangladeshi man was arrested in Mahboula with 90 homebrewed liquor bot-

FEE INCREASES MULLED FOR CITIZENS, EXPATS

KUWAIT: High-ranking legal sources said that the government is currently studying the legality of increasing the fees it collects for public services and using public facilities from both citizens and expats, including a bill defining the facilities and services to be included in the suggested increases.

"We are currently working on verifying the legality of a government's bill including a table with all services and

facilities it believes it is high time to increase the fees collected for them," explained the sources, noting that these fees had been frozen for years.

The sources also expressed hopes that the parliament would understand the significance of finding a legal solution to create a balance between the cost of such services and the fees collected, considering this a major step towards achieving economic reform. — Al-Anbaa



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait organized a lecture recently on thyroid cancer in cooperation with the Cancer Awareness National Campaign (CAN).

2017 ELECTIONS ON JUNE 10: LARI ICM TO ANNOUNCE RUNNING FOR ELECTIONS

KUWAIT: Rapporteur of the parliament's priorities committee MP Ahmad Lari said that the 2017 parliamentary elections would be held on June 10, 2017 - after the end of next year's Ramadan and after the parliament calls for it before concluding its tenure on June 4. In a related development, informed sources said consultations had already started to name tribes' nominees to run for the elections and that former MP Khaled Al-Shulaimi won the Thafeer tribe by-elections to represent the tribe in the elections.

The sources added that consultations were also made in Jahra, adding that holding them so early would force the opposition that had been boycotting parliamentary elections to take part, as well as to avoid losing their chances in tribal voting. Fourth electoral constituency diwanis have been busy with visitors and a record num-

ber of tribesmen who have already declared their nomination for the elections, including those who had boycotted parliamentary elections in rejection and protest of the one-vote electoral system.

Following the same lead, the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) is expected to meet today to discuss taking part in the coming elections, added the sources, noting that the meeting is expected to regulate and give ICM's decision the approval of its supporters. The sources added that for some time now, ICM had been sending messages to probe possible reactions of other political powers and public opinion towards taking part in the elections and stop the boycott it had declared



MP Ahmad Lari

along with some other political blocs. ICM member and former MP Jamaan Al-Harbash had posted a tweet in March urging ICM to be up to its responsibilities in reacting to what he described as 'the government's social destruction project', referring to the government's economic reform plan. Observers considered this tweet as a clear indication that ICM intends to run for the elections. In addition, ICM's recent meeting referred the final decision to take part in the elec-

tions to the new secretariat general, which will start consultations with other powers and political figures. ICM has distributed invitations to its meeting to be held at 7:00 pm today at Al-Falah diwaniya in Khalidiya. — Al-Rai

UK TO HAND OVER UNWELCOME BEDOONS: JARRAH

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior's (Mol) Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Residency Affairs Major General Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah left yesterday for London with a security and diplomatic delegation to represent Kuwait at the Kuwaiti-British Friendship Council meetings.

Speaking to reporters before his departure, Jarrah explained that various security topics would be discussed during the visit, including security coordination at airports, flights and e-passport security, in addition to resuming cooperation on bedoons (stateless) issues. Jarrah added it had been

agreed with British officials to take back bedoons who are unwelcome in the UK provided they are registered with Kuwait's central apparatus for illegal residents and hold article 17 Kuwaiti passports. "Those will be the only ones we will receive," he underlined. — Al-Rai



Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah

NBK, MASTERCARD REWARD CUSTOMERS WITH TRAVEL PACKAGE TO CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), in partnership with MasterCard, has brought the excitement of the UEFA Champions League 2016 to Kuwait by rewarding one NBK MasterCard(r) credit cardholder with a complimentary travel package courtesy of MasterCard, an official sponsor of UEFA Champions League.

Bassam Mohammad Al-Qallaf will fly to Milan to watch the UEFA Champions League Finals between Real Madrid and Atletico de Madrid, live on 28th May, 2016. The travel package includes two round-trip airline tickets, hotel accommodation, transfer service and match tickets for both the winner and a guest.

"The UEFA Champions League is one of the world's most popular sporting events, and NBK is offering its MasterCard(r) credit cardholders a chance to win fully paid travel package to see the UEFA Champions

League 2016 Finals in Milan," said NBK's Deputy General Manager, Consumer Banking Group,

Mohammed Al Othman. Raghav Prasad, General Manager - Gulf Countries, MasterCard, said:



The winner receives his prize.

"Rewarding our customers is just as much a priority for MasterCard as is providing them with safe and secure payment solutions. We would like to congratulate the winner of the travel package on winning a complimentary trip to watch the concluding match of one of the most awaited international sporting fixtures and we are pleased to be giving one of our customers the opportunity to create this priceless memory of a lifetime."

NBK's leadership in the credit card market in Kuwait has been established by consistently delivering superior value to our customers. NBK credit cards are accepted worldwide and are the safest, most convenient and rewarding way to pay. For more information, log onto nbk.com or contact NBK Call Center on 1801801, or follow NBK on Twitter @NBKPage, and on Instagram @NBKPage.



Netanyahu rejects French peace initiative, offers to meet Abbas

IRAN DENIES KILLED TALIBAN LEADER WAS IN THE COUNTRY



HANOI, VIETNAM: US President Barack Obama, left, and Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang walk to a meeting after shaking hands at the Presidential Palace yesterday. — AP

OBAMA LIFTS DECADES-OLD ARMS BAN ON VIETNAM
US SEEKS TO BOLSTER A GOVERNMENT SEEN AS A CRUCIAL PARTNER

HANOI, VIETNAM: US President Barack Obama yesterday lifted a half-century-old ban on selling arms to Vietnam, looking to bolster a government seen as a crucial, though flawed partner in a region that he has tried to place at the center of his foreign policy legacy.

Obama announced the full removal of the embargo at a news conference where he vowed to leave behind the troubled history between the former war enemies and embrace a new era with a young, increasingly prosperous nation. Obama steered clear of harsh condemnation of what critics see as Vietnam's abysmal treatment of dissidents, describing instead modest progress on rights in the one-party state. Activists said his decision to lift the embargo destroyed the best US leverage for pushing Vietnam on abuse.

"At this stage, both sides have established a level of trust and cooperation, including between our militaries, that is reflective of common interests and mutual respect," Obama said. "This change will ensure that Vietnam has access to the equipment it needs to defend itself and removes a lingering vestige of the Cold War."

Obama also has more current motivations. His move was the latest step in a years long and uneven effort to counter China's influence in Asia. Obama's push to deepen defense ties with a neighbor was certain to be eyed with suspicion in Beijing, which has bristled at US engagement in the region and warned officials not to take sides in the heated territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Obama claimed the move had nothing to do with China, but made clear the US was aligned with the smaller nations like Vietnam. The United States and Vietnam have mutual concerns about maritime issues and the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, he said. While Washington doesn't take sides, he said, it does support a diplomatic resolution based on "international norms" and "not based on who's the bigger party and can throw around their weight a little bit more," a reference to China.

China's reaction

China outwardly lauded the lifting of a US arms embargo, saying it hoped "normal and

friendly" relations between the US and Vietnam are conducive to regional stability. A spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said bans are a product of the Cold War and shouldn't have existed.

China itself remains under a weapons embargo imposed by the US and European Union following 1989's bloody military crack-down on pro-democracy demonstrations centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

For Vietnam, lifting the arms embargo was a psychological boost for its leaders. The United States partially lifted the ban in 2014, but Vietnam has pushed for full access as it tries to deal with China's land reclamation and military construction in nearby seas.

It was unclear whether striking the ban would quickly result in a boost in arms sales. Obama said that each deal would be reviewed case by case and evaluated based on the equipment's potential use. But there would no longer be a ban based on "ideological division," he said. "There's been modest progress on some of the areas that we've identified as a concern," Obama said, adding that the US "will continue to speak out on behalf of human rights we believe are universal."

Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang embraced the chance to enter a new era in U.S-Vietnamese relations. He praised the expansion in security and trade ties between "former enemies turned friends" and, standing next to Obama before reporters, called for more US investment.

Obama's arrival

Ahead of the visit, in what was seen as a goodwill gesture, Vietnam granted early release from prison to a prominent dissident Catholic priest. Some US lawmakers and activists had urged the president to press the communist leadership for greater freedoms before lifting the arms sale embargo. Vietnam holds about 100 political prisoners and there have been more detentions this year. In March, seven bloggers and activists were sentenced for "abusing democratic freedoms" and "spreading anti-state propaganda." Hanoi says that only lawbreakers are punished.

"In one fell swoop, President Obama has jettisoned what remained of US leverage to

improve human rights in Vietnam - and (has) basically gotten nothing for it," Phil Robertson, with Human Rights Watch, said.

Obama's arrival in Hanoi late Sunday made him the third sitting president to visit the country since the end of the war. The trip comes four decades after the fall of Saigon, now called Ho Chi Minh City, and two decades after President Bill Clinton restored relations with the nation.

Obama also made the case for stronger commercial and economic ties, including approval of the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement that is stalled in Congress and facing strong opposition from the 2016 presidential candidates. The deal, which includes Vietnam, would tear down trade barriers and encourage investment between the countries that signed it.

Critics worry it would cost jobs by exposing American workers to low-wage competition from countries such as Vietnam. Obama and Quang earlier attended a signing ceremony touting a series of new commercial deals between US and Vietnamese companies valued at more than \$16 billion. The deals included US engine manufacturer Pratt & Whitney's plans to sell 135 advanced engines to Vietnamese air carrier Vietjet, and Boeing's plans to sell 100 aircraft to the airline.

Obama's agenda also included separate meetings with Vietnam's prime minister, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, and with the Communist Party general secretary, Nguyen Phu Trong. At a luncheon for officials, the president offered thanks for all who came before to "help our nations reconcile." He singled out US Secretary of State John Kerry, who served in the Vietnam War, for special mention. He said veterans on both sides had showed "hearts can change and peace is possible."

Later Monday, Obama had dinner with CNN personality Anthony Bourdain, whose "Parts Unknown" food travelogue is one of the network's most popular nonfiction series. Bourdain was to discuss the purpose of Obama's trip to Asia and his interest in the people, food and culture of Vietnam. A huge crowd gathered outside the restaurant and cheered when Obama came out. — AP

FOR ALLAH, CHINA AND MARX: THEOLOGICAL MIX FOR YOUNG IMAMS

YINCHUAN, CHINA: Every morning on his way to class at one of China's largest Islamic institutes, Wang Yue is reminded that the state comes before Allah.

Emblazoned in gold etching on a white marble slab at the main entrance and repeated all over campus-is the slogan: "Love the nation, love religion". The contrast is even more striking than the hierarchy: in China patriotism is synonymous with supporting the ruling Communist Party, which is officially atheist.

But the students see little contradiction between the teachings of Marx and those of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). "Part of being a good person, and a good Muslim, is loving your own country," said Wang, who is in the last of his four years of studies at the institute in the northern region of Ningxia. "Marxism and religion don't contradict each other, and understanding other religions or theories can help us better understand our own faith," he insisted.

While China's constitution enshrines freedom of religion, authorities keep strict limits on it, recognising only five belief systems, approving houses of worship, and seeking to control their messages.

The country has two main Muslim groups, the Hui, who are concentrated in Ningxia and aside from their religion share many similarities with the Han majority, and the Uighurs, a Turkic-speaking people who have more in common with Central Asia. Both are Sunni, but while the Hui are largely integrated into mainstream society, officials frequently blame religious extremism-along with terrorism and separatism-for violence in the Uighur homeland of Xinjiang.

China, which shares borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan, has strict national security laws, regularly detaining people for watching jihadist videos, although little evidence of any links to groups such as Islamic State has been made public. — AFP



YINCHUAN, CHINA: A Chinese Hui Muslim student attending a class at the Ningxia Islamic Institute. —AFP

IRAN DENIES KILLED TALEBAN LEADER WAS IN THE COUNTRY

TEHRAN: Iran on yesterday denied reports that Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour entered Pakistan from the Islamic republic before being killed in a US drone strike, state media reported. Pakistani security officials told AFP on Sunday that the man killed on Saturday in the southwestern province of Balochistan, believed at the time to be

Mansour, had just returned from Iran when his vehicle was attacked. Senior Taliban sources have also confirmed the killing to AFP, adding that a shura (council) was under way to select a new leader. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari was quoted by the official IRNA news agency on Monday as denying Mansour had

been in the country before the attack. "The competent authorities of the Islamic republic deny that this person on this date crossed Iran's border and into Pakistan," he said. "Iran welcomes any positive action leading to peace and stability in Afghanistan," he added, without elaborating. Pakistani identity documents found on the body of the man now

known to be Mansour named him as Muhammad Wali, and showed he had left for Iran on March 28 and returned the day he was killed. Iran supports the Afghan government in its fight against the Taliban group. President Ashraf Ghani meanwhile arrived in Tehran yesterday for the signing of a tripartite agreement between Iran, India and Afghanistan to

turn Iran's southeastern port of Chabahar into a transit hub between the three countries, bypassing Pakistan. Islamabad, which says it hosts many of the Afghan Taliban's top leadership to exert influence over them and bring them back to peace talks with Kabul, called the US drone attack a violation of its sovereignty.—AFP

EGYPT PARLIAMENT SPEAKER WARNS MPs NOT TO CRITICIZE MONETARY POLICY

CAIRO: The speaker of Egypt's parliament has threatened to take disciplinary action against members who publicly criticize the government's monetary policy, raising further questions about the legislature's independence. Ali Abdel-Al told MPs on Sunday that the country faces foreign "conspiracies", and "constructive criticism is accepted, but not when it is in the context of destruction", according to parliament's website. The speaker was referring to "a systematic campaign abroad to destroy the country's constitutional institutions", the report said. Abdel-Al's comments were the latest in a parliament seen largely by analysts as a rubber-stamp assembly designed to pass laws for President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi with little debate. Sisi and the Central Bank, which manages monetary policy, have come under rising criticism amid an acute dollar crunch which has led to a rise in prices including of medicines, with hundreds of products becoming unavailable or hard to find.

Some local firms have also scaled back their business activity as they struggle to find dollars to import raw materials. In March, the central bank devalued the Egyptian pound by 14.3 percent to 8.95 to the US dollar amid a shortage which has worsened over the past few months, with black markets offering the dollar at much higher rates. "Some have been keen to appear on television shows to discuss the

state's monetary policy, an issue which leads to harmful consequences," Abdel-Al told MPs. "Therefore all parliament members must refrain from speaking about the state's monetary policy as it could expose it (the country) to harmful ramifications." Those who violate these instructions will be referred to the ethics committee," he warned. MP Ahmed al-Tantawi criticised the speaker's comments, telling AFP: "We are dealing with members of parliament, not high school students." Other lawmakers backed Abdel-Al, however. "He said it in the form of advice, not as a threat, and this is very acceptable," said New Wafd party member Magdy Bayoumi. Ashraf Iskander, also of the New Wafd party, said that "truthfully, this falls under the topic of national security", adding that guidelines were needed on how to discuss the topic. "I read that one organisation held more than one workshop for some members at which they discussed this topic. There seems to be some suspicion of incitement against the state," Iskander said.

The current parliament was elected last year with a low turnout of 28.3 percent two years after the army overthrew Islamist president Mohamed Morsi and unleashed a bloody crackdown on his followers. Live broadcasts from parliament stopped after its first two chaotic sessions that featured Abdel-Al shouting at lawmakers for not following procedure.—AFP



IN THE AIR: A French soldier aboard an aircraft looking out a window during searches for debris from the crashed EgyptAir flight MS804, over the Mediterranean Sea yesterday.—AFP

SLOW RESPONSE TO PAST CRASHES COULD HINDER EGYPTAIR SEARCH, EXPERTS SAY

‘THE BATTERY SITUATION IS PRETTY SCANDALOUS’

PARIS/CAIRO: Searching for the black box flight recorders of a missing EgyptAir jet that crashed with 66 people aboard face technical constraints that aviation experts increasingly blame on a slow regulatory response to earlier disasters.

As a three-year deep-sea search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 draws towards a close in the Indian Ocean without finding the airplane, another is starting in the Mediterranean Sea where the lessons of previous crashes have yet to be applied.

Rescuers have barely 30 days until the batteries die on two underwater beacons designed to guide them to the black box flight recorders as they scour 17,000 square kilometers of sea north of the Egyptian port city of Alexandria.

After previous crashes at sea, regulators agreed to increase the transmission time and range of such beacons to increase the chances of finding evidence and preventing future accidents. The changes, trebling the life of the 'pingers' to 90 days, were first recommended by French investigators in late 2009, six months after the crash of an Air France plane in the Atlantic. But they were only adopted in response to the disappearance over four years later of Malaysia's missing MH370 and do not come into effect until 2018: too late to help find EgyptAir 804. French investigators say the Egyptian jet sent warnings indicating that smoke was detected on board. The signals did not indicate what caused the smoke, and aviation experts have not ruled out deliberate sabotage or a technical fault. Egypt has sent a robot submarine to join the hunt. It is the second time in little more than a year that sea search operations have been forced to rely on decades-old black-box technology after an AirAsia plane crashed into the Java Sea. Delays in implementing the changes to the beacons to extend their battery life and improve the chances of finding the black boxes have been criticized by a number of experts including the former head of the French BEA agency, which is helping the search for Egyptair.

French ship to join hunt for EgyptAir jet's black boxes The French navy said yesterday that one of its ships has arrived in the search area to help look for traces of EgyptAir Flight 804 that crashed in the Mediterranean and especially for its flight recorders. The vessel is equipped with sonar that can pick up the underwater "pings" emitted by the recorders. It is specialized in maritime surveillance, and rescue and marine police missions. The 80-meter (262-foot) ship left its Mediterranean home port of Toulon Friday with a crew of 90, including two judicial investigators. The search area is roughly halfway between Egypt's coastal city of Alexandria and the Greek island of Crete, where water is 8,000 to 10,000 feet (2,440 to 3,050 meters) deep.

“Pretty scandalous”

"The battery situation is pretty scandalous," Jean-Paul Troadec, who headed the French government BEA air accident investigative agency during much of the Air France probe, told Reuters. "It hardly costs anything to install new batteries. There was no reason to wait until 2018." In the first days after a crash at sea, the priority is to use passive devices capable of listening for the pinger's clicking pulse. Once these die, searchers must use sonar devices and robots, which are costly and time-consuming. It took two years to find Air France 447 in the Atlantic this way. "You can imagine the pressure this 30-day deadline creates," Troadec said.

Manufacturers say that implementing the recommendations to extend the life of a beacon is not just a simple switch. "Industry does not

develop technology overnight and for the aircraft manufacturers to be ready, two years seems reasonable," a spokesman for the European Aviation Safety Agency said.

The search for EgyptAir's Airbus A320 is especially challenging because its wreckage lies in one of the deepest parts of the Mediterranean, at a depth of 2,000-3,000 meters which is on the edge of the range for hearing pinger signals.

That may mean towing hydrophones more than a mile below the surface, using specialist devices that are in short supply. This task could have been made easier by other still-pending safety proposals. In 2009, the BEA suggested black-box makers add a new, lower frequency that carries further and is easier for military vessels - typically first on the scene - to spot.

European regulator EASA has ordered airlines to fit the longer-range devices from the start of 2019, almost a decade after the crash that first inspired the change. To many, such slow

progress highlights the regulatory problems facing the aviation industry which is struggling to adapt to a series of accidents including the loss of MH370 with 239 people on board, the shooting down of another Malaysian aircraft over Ukraine in 2014 and last year's crash by a Germanwings pilot who flew his plane into the French Alps. Despite the high-profile plane crashes, regulators say flying remains exceptionally safe, thanks in part to a unique system of standardized rules overseen by the United Nations.

Lengthy approvals

But the task of maintaining global standards by consensus requires lengthy approvals. And critics say reforms have been held up before by bureaucracy and a lack of resources at the United Nations' aviation agency, where a special panel on black boxes did not meet between 1998 and 2006 because it had no secretary.—Agencies

KEY STAGES IN THE WAR AGAINST IS

BAGHDAD: Here are key developments in the war against the Islamic State group as Iraqi forces launch an assault on Fallujah, a key IS stronghold west of Baghdad.

The top US general for the Middle East has also paid a surprise visit to American soldiers advising Syrian rebel groups as they prepare to attack IS in Raqqa, the jihadist group's other main stronghold.

The first air strikes

On August 8, 2014, US jets strike IS positions in northern Iraq in response to an appeal from Baghdad, in the first American military operation in the country since troops withdrew in late 2011. Already entrenched in neighbouring Syria, IS seized swathes of Iraqi territory in a lightning offensive launched in June 2014 and marked by a complete collapse of the security forces.

On September 5, US President Barack Obama vows to build "a broad, international coalition" to defeat IS. On September 23, the US and Arab allies launch air strikes on IS in Syria.

IS driven out of Kobane

On January 26, 2015, IS is driven out of the Syrian border town of Kobane after more than four months of fighting led by Kurdish forces backed by coalition air strikes.

On the same day, an Iraqi military official says that the eastern province of Diyala has been liberated.

Iraq's Tikrit recaptured

On March 31, 2015, Baghdad announces the "liberation" of Tikrit, 160 kilometres (100 miles) north of Baghdad. Government forces backed by Shiite militias had launched their offensive on March 2 against the IS, which had controlled it for nearly 10 months.

But in May, the IS takes Iraqi provincial capital Ramadi, and then Syria's famed ancient city of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

IS ousted from border town

On June 16, 2015, Kurdish militia backed

by Syrian rebel forces and coalition air strikes seize the Syrian border town with Turkey of Tal Abyad from IS, which had occupied it for more than a year.

Tal Abyad was one of two main transit points on a key supply route to de facto IS capital Raqqa.

Turkey declares war on IS

On July 24, 2015, Turkish warplanes bomb IS positions inside Syria for the first time in a dramatic toughening of Ankara's stance. But the Turkish raids are largely aimed at positions of the Kurdistan Workers Party in Iraq and Syria.

Turkey gives Washington the green light for American warplanes to fly operations over Syria from its strategic southeastern air base of Incirlik.

Russia intervenes in Syria

On September 30, 2015, Russia launches air strikes in Syria in what it calls a campaign against "terrorists" to help its Damascus regime ally.

Washington accuses Moscow of mainly targeting Syrian rebels.

Iraq's Sinjar, Ramadi retaken

On November 13, 2015, Iraqi Kurds announce the "liberation" of Sinjar from IS in an assault backed by US-led strikes that severs a key jihadist supply line with Syria. Across the border, a coalition of Arab and Kurdish fighters drives IS out of the village of Al-Hol, also on the supply route.

On December 27, Iraqi forces retake Ramadi.

Syrians retake Palmyra

On March 27, 2016, Syrian forces backed by Russia retake Palmyra, but the jihadists manage to isolate the city again on May 10.

US tally of IS retreats

On May 16, a Pentagon spokesman says the IS has lost around 45 percent of its territory in Iraq, and between 16-20 percent of land it occupied in Syria. Meanwhile, the US-led coalition continues to target top IS officials.—AFP



FALLUJAH, IRAQ: Iraqi pro-government forces advance towards the city of Fallujah yesterday as part of a major assault to retake the city from Islamic State (IS) group.—AFP

GAZA CEMENT DELIVERIES RESUME AFTER ISRAEL LIFTS BAN

GAZA CITY: Private cement deliveries to the Gaza Strip resumed yesterday after Israel lifted a six-week ban it imposed over the alleged diversion of materials by an official in the Palestinian territory. Israel imposed the ban in early April in the territory run by Islamist movement Hamas which is still rebuilding after a devastating 2014 war. The ban affected private providers, meaning Qatar, a major donor to Gazan reconstruction, and the United Nations were still able to bring in cement to Gaza, under an Israeli blockade that has been in place for nearly a decade.

Raed Fattouh, who oversees the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip, said private deliveries had resumed for the first time since April 3. Robert Piper, the UN humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, confirmed that more than 90 trucks entered Gaza on Monday, calling it a "decent return" close to levels towards the beginning of the year.

Israel said late on Sunday that it was lifting the ban "in accordance with the security assessment and the understandings reached with the international community". It had imposed the ban after accusing Imad al-Baz, deputy director of the Hamas economy ministry, of diverting supplies, which he denied.

Israel restricts the entry of goods into Gaza out of fears they will be used to make weapons or build tunnels that can be used for attacks. Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza have fought three wars since 2008. UN officials point out that cement deliveries are vital to Gaza's reconstruction and pushed for the ban to be lifted.

Nickolay Mladenov, UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, welcomed Israel's decision to lift the ban. "It is critical for the security of both Palestinians and Israelis that Gaza remains calm and hope is restored to its people," he said.—AFP



RAFAH, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES : A United Nations vehicle follows a truck loaded with bags of cement after it entered the southern Gaza Strip from Israel through the Kerem Shalom crossing in Rafah yesterday.—AFP

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SHOTS FIRED AT FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY GRENoble OFFICE, PARTY DECRIES ‘VANDALISM’

PARIS: The local headquarters of France’s ruling Socialist Party in the southern city of Grenoble were targeted overnight by a dozen gunshots, party officials said yesterday, linking the act to anti-government protests and calling it “vandalism”.

Investigators said bullet holes in the front of the party office were made by a 9 millimeter automatic weapon in two bursts fired at around 2300 GMT on Sunday. Several other

local offices were damaged during labour reform protests over the past weeks. “Must there be casualties for our concerns to be taken into account and for all to condemn those acts without any ambiguity?” Socialist Party chief Jean-Christophe Cambadélis said in a statement, urging union leaders to condemn such attacks. Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said authorities were investigating the attack.—Reuters

NETANYAHU REJECTS FRENCH PEACE INITIATIVE, OFFERS TO MEET ABBAS

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a multilateral French peace initiative as he met his French counterpart yesterday, offering instead to hold direct talks with Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas in Paris.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said he would speak to President Francois Hollande about Netanyahu’s proposal. “It can still be called the French initiative because you would host this genuine effort for peace,” Netanyahu said. “But here’s the difference: I will sit alone, directly, with president Abbas in the Elysee (French presidential) palace or anywhere else that you choose. Every difficult issue will be on the table.” Netanyahu, who has repeatedly expressed his opposition to the French proposal, said “this initiative can still take place in Paris, because that would be a marvelous place to sign a peace accord. It’s a marvelous place anyway.”

Valls is visiting Israel and the Palestinian territories to advance his country’s plan to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. He is due to hold talks in Ramallah on Tuesday with Palestinian prime minister Rami Hamdallah. 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 regularly called for direct talks and offered to meet Abbas, and he reiterated his argument on Monday that peace would not be achieved through “international diktats.”

Palestinian leaders say years of negotiations with Israel have not ended its occupation and have pursued a strategy of diplomacy at international bodies. Negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians have

been at a standstill since a US-led initiative collapsed in April 2014.

Political turbulence

An upsurge in violence since October has killed 204 Palestinians and 28 Israelis, though the unrest has steadily declined in recent weeks. Most of the Palestinians killed were carrying out knife, gun or car-rammings attacks, Israeli authorities say. Many analysts say Palestinian frustration with Israeli occupation and settlement building in the West Bank, the complete lack of progress in peace efforts and their own fractured leadership have fed the recent unrest. Israel says incitement by Palestinian leaders and media is a main cause of the violence. Those arguing for a new peace effort say the lack of any initiative leaves a vacuum that can be filled by hardliners on either side. Valls has sought to address Israel’s concerns over the French initiative, saying it would not try to impose a solution and that negotiations between the two sides would ultimately resolve the conflict. He has at the same time criticized Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank, considered a major stumbling block to peace. Jewish settlements in the West Bank are considered illegal under international law and built on land the Palestinians see as part of their future state.

Valls’s visit also 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.

Netanyahu has 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.—AFP



JERUSALEM: French Prime Minister Manuel Valls, left, speaks with Israel’s President Reuven Rivlin at the President’s residence yesterday.—AP

MOST HOUSE GOP WOMEN IN TOUGH RACES BIDDING TIME ON DONALD TRUMP

WASHINGTON: Before deciding if she’ll vote for Donald Trump, Martha McSally says she’ll spend time “determining what kind of man he is.” Mia Love says some comments by the presumptive Republican presidential candidate need “some sort of explanation,” while Renee Ellmers backs him because he’s “a problem solver.”

McSally, Love and Ellmers are hardly random women. They’re Republican members of the House, part of a sorority of five GOP congresswomen facing competitive re-election races whose reactions highlight the hard choices Trump’s provocative statements are forcing on his own party.

Each of the five must confront a question with political and personal implications: Will you support your party’s standard-bearer, knowing his history of comments about women that many consider offensive? Trump has called some women a “dog,” a “fat pig” or “flat-chested,” republished a tweet dubbing Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly a “bimbo” and accused likely Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton of using “the woman’s card” to win votes. “I think it puts all women in an awkward position,” Rep. Ann Wagner, R-Mo., whose seat is safe and is a leader of the House GOP campaign committee, said of Trump’s impact on female Republican lawmakers. “And I want to see that tone and temperament changed.”

Angst across the GOP

Trump, of course, is causing angst across the GOP. House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., has withheld his endorsement, citing questions about policy and party unity while giving cover to hesitant rank-and-file Republicans. Male congressional Republicans in difficult races and women in secure seats are also distancing themselves. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., the House’s top-ranking GOP woman, said last week she is voting for Trump though “not exactly” with enthusiasm and “vehemently” opposes his remarks about women, the disabled and others.

For the five GOP women fighting to pre-

serve their House careers, the perils are obvious. Rejecting Trump could alienate his energized supporters, jeopardizing needed votes. Embracing him might cost support from women, Hispanics and others he’s angered with incendiary comments and invite criticism for backing a man who has repeatedly insulted their own gender.

“They’re going to have to do some deep soul-searching and really think about, ‘Is Donald Trump’s Republican Party a party they feel comfortable in?’” said Alexandria Lapp, executive director of the House Majority PAC, which backs Democrats in House campaigns.

Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski said rather than diminishing female support for GOP congressional candidates, Trump will increase voter turnout and said a bigger factor will be Clinton’s unpopularity among men. He said there is a “complete misconception” that Trump faces problems with women, citing the billionaire businessman’s hiring of women over the years and his “security at home” campaign theme. “Whether you’re a male or a female, what you want is, you want families to be safe. That is first and foremost,” Lewandowski said in an interview. A New York Times-CBS News poll last week showed Clinton leading Trump by 17 percentage points among women and trailing among men by 5 points.

Caution when discussing Trump

Most of the five GOP women in close races have been cautious when discussing Trump, instead emphasizing their focus on their district’s needs and Clinton’s vulnerabilities as a candidate. “I don’t want to talk about that,” McSally said last week about Trump, saying she and her staff are “working our butts off” for her swing district around Tucson, Arizona. Her campaign provided a written statement saying she respects “the will of voters” but citing “concerns” about Trump’s statements about women. “I’ll spend the next six months if needed watching closely, learning more about him and determining what kind of man he is before I decide whether to give him my vote,” it said.—AP



ACAPULCO, MEXICO: The gate of the once popular restaurant “Los Braseros” is emblazoned with a graffiti drawing of a gun, situated on the seaside boulevard, known as “La Costera”, that runs through the hotel zone.—AP

POLICE, SOLDIERS SWARM MEXICO’S ACAPULCO, KILLINGS CONTINUE PISTOLS BECOME LATEST MUST-HAVE ACCESSORY

ACAPULCO, MEXICO: Along with beach towels or sandals, there’s a new popular beach accessory that says a lot about the violence gripping this once-glamorous resort: A small black leather tote hanging from the neck or shoulders of some men. It’s not a man-bag, exactly; it holds a small pistol. “When I saw you guys standing outside my office, I almost went for my bag,” said one businessman who lives in terror after getting death threats and extortion demands by criminal gangs at his office four blocks from the water. “I’m in fear for my life.”

Death can strike anywhere in Acapulco these days: A sarong vendor was slain on the beach in January by a gunman who escaped on a Jet Ski. Another man was gunned down while enjoying a beer at a seaside restaurant. In the hillside slums that ring the city, a 15-year-old girl’s body was found chopped into pieces and wrapped in a blanket, her severed head in a bucket nearby with a hand-lettered sign from a drug gang.

The upsurge in killings has made Acapulco one of Mexico’s most violent places, scaring away what international tourism remained and recently prompting the US government to bar its employees from traveling here for any reason.

In response, Mexico has lined the city’s coastal boulevard with heavily armed police and soldiers, turning Acapulco into a high-profile test case for a security strategy that the government has used elsewhere: When homicides spike, flood the area with troops.

Bulletproof

Today it’s almost easier to find a truck full of soldiers, a federal policeman or a gaggle of local tourist cops than it is to find a taxi along the “costera,” the seaside boulevard that runs through the hotel zone. Marines patrol the beach, while federal police watch over the breakwaters. “This area has been made bullet-proof,” Guerrero state prosecutor Xavier Olea said. Except it hasn’t. A week after AP reporters visited, gunmen shot to death three young men in broad daylight two blocks away from a restaurant where they met with an underworld figure. Two of their bullet-ridden bodies lay on the concrete just off the beach, and one bled out on the sand. Two were waiters, and the third a roving coconut oil vendor. On a recent day, farther down the beach, another black bag hung around the neck of a man nicknamed “the lieutenant.” He works as a bodyguard for a man with underworld connections who agreed to meet near an open-air restaurant to discuss the security situation. He spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid being targeted by rivals or authorities.

“There are 300 paid killers on the costera,” the underworld figure said, gesturing expansively over plates of fried fish and shrimp. At least one other bodyguard was nearby. “A decent killer makes about 5,000 pesos (\$275) a week.”

Experts say Acapulco shows the limitations of the government’s security strategy. Federal police, almost none of whom are from the city, quickly get lost once they leave the coastal boulevard and ascend into twisting, hillside neighborhoods. Their heavy weapons are ill-suited to urban policing, and they’re hampered as well by Mexico’s unwieldy judicial system and a lack of investigative training.

Last week two men were shot and wounded on the street a block from the popular Caleta beach. Police showed up, but when no ambulance arrived, relatives or friends simply bundled the men into private vehicles to take them to the hospital. Police marked spent shell casings with cut-off plastic soda bottles, but there was no sign of any in-depth investigation.

“It’s the same problem in Guerrero, the same problem in Tamaulipas, in Michoacan,” security analyst Alejandro Hope said, referring to three states where homicides have spiked. “Suddenly there’s an emergency, they send troops to where the problem is and in the short term crime drops. But then there is an emergency somewhere else, and then the troops have to leave, and they have not developed local law-enforcement capacity.”

Latest killing sprees

Acapulco’s latest wave of killings began April 24 with bursts of gunfire along the coastal

boulevard. It was the first time such sustained shooting had been seen there since the darkest days of 2012, when the murder rate in this city of 800,000 hit 146 per 100,000 inhabitants. It has since fallen to about 112 per 100,000, but that remains far higher than nationwide levels and appears to be on the rise again.

Both prosecutor Olea and the underworld figure agree the conflict started late last year between the Beltran Leyva gang, which used to control the city, and the Independent Cartel of Acapulco, or CIDA, which arose following the death of cartel boss Arturo Beltran Leyva in 2009. The Beltran Leyva family, now supported by Mexico’s fastest-rising cartel, the Jalisco New Generation gang, tried to reassert control in November, calling themselves “La Empresa,” or “The Company,” and employing a small group of professional killers known as the Russians.

The Beltran Leyvas quickly antagonized the CIDA by cutting pay in half for enforcers and dealers, resulting in an open war. It is suspected that the waiters and the coconut oil vendor killed last week were innocents with no drug connections, allegedly slain by the Russians just to bring heat on the local gang.

Drud dealing

Street-level drug dealing may well be second only to Acapulco’s much-diminished tourism industry for the amount of money involved. A so-called Oxoxo - local slang for a drug retail house, borrowed from the name of a ubiquitous convenience store chain - can do an estimated 150,000 pesos (\$8,100) in business in a single night. The underworld figure said there are about 50 such “stores” in Acapulco, meaning that drug sales probably amount to about 7.5 million pesos (\$400,000) per day.

That pays for a lot of hit men. The April 24 shootout came just after mysterious text messages circulated among city residents warning of a bloody weekend, prompting many to stay off

the streets and keep their kids home from school. State authorities initially described it as a direct attack on police installations, but as more information emerged it seems to have resulted from an attempt by unknown attackers to rob a drug gang payroll of about 50 bundles of cash, each containing thousands of pesos.

After the first shots were heard on the coastal boulevard, federal police in their underwear began firing from a nearby hotel where they were staying. Farther down the road, another hotel had its facade sprayed with bullets.

Police reaction

The police reaction, captured in online videos of loud, staccato gunfire, worsened the public perception of violence in Acapulco. About 1,600 businesses in the city have already closed due to security problems, said business chamber leader Alejandro Martinez. “There is a lot of mystery about what happened (in the shootout), but whatever they did, they did it badly,” Martinez said of security forces. “That was an error on the part of the federal government that cost us a lot.” He added that the drop-off in tourism has hit business owners already dealing with extortion demands from the gangs. “First they send text messages,” Martinez said. “Then come the phone calls, and if you don’t pay, they come to your business, four or five men, asking for the owner.”

There have been targeted killings of business owners, and also collateral damage: One waiter at a downtown restaurant was killed by a stray bullet during a gun battle. Joaquin Badillo, who runs Acapulco’s leading private security firm, estimated that 95 percent of the killings in the city are linked directly or indirectly to criminal gangs. “Somebody didn’t live up to a deal, somebody didn’t pay, somebody didn’t deliver, somebody was given (drugs) to sell and didn’t, somebody else went to work for the competition,” Badillo said. “None of these people are doing Acapulco any good.”—AP

FRANCE TO TIGHTEN UP DRUG TRIAL RULES AFTER FATAL INCIDENT

PARIS: France’s health minister presented a plan yesterday to tighten the rules regarding human drug trials following an experimental test that killed a volunteer in January.

The minister, Marisol Touraine, also demanded that the Biotrial company which carried out the fatal trial provide an action plan within a month to guarantee that “major breaches” cannot happen again. “If they don’t, we will suspend their activities. If this report is handed in, we will carry out verifications by the end of the year”, Touraine said in a news conference. “This accident should have been reported without delay to the National Agency for Drug safety,” she said. “But the lab-

oratory only reported it formally on Thursday, Jan. 14, four days after the first volunteer was taken to a hospital and three days after the decision was made to suspend the test.”

Touraine stressed that the investigation by the health administration showed that the conditions under which the trial by the Rennes-based firm were authorized were “compliant with the current legislation,” but there were breaches in the way Biotrial handled the problem.

The trial for the Portuguese pharmaceutical company Bial involved 90 healthy volunteers. It was stopped after six people became seriously ill, and one died.—AP



RENNES, FRANCE: Biotrial laboratory displayed on its building.—AP

INDIAN CLIMBER DIES ON EVEREST, TWO OTHERS STILL MISSING

KATHMANDU: An Indian mountaineer has died on Mount Everest and two of his teammates are missing, expedition organizers said yesterday, as the death toll from the Himalayan climbing season rose to five.

Subhash Pal reached the 8,848-metre (29,029-foot) summit on Saturday but collapsed while descending the Hillary Step ice wall and died the following day. He was the third to die on Everest in recent days, after an Australian and a Dutch climber succumbed to altitude sickness. Another two climbers have died on other peaks. "He died while the guides were bringing him down," said Loben Sherpa of Trekking Camp Nepal, which organized the Indian team's expedition to Mount Everest.

Expedition officials made contact with Pal and teammate Sunita Hazra on Sunday and helped

them descend to Camp 3, but the whereabouts of the remaining two climbers are still unknown. "Sunita has been rescued and brought to a hospital in Kathmandu for treatment. We still don't have any update on the missing two," said Sherpa.

Another Indian climber died after falling ill while descending from Mount Dhaulagiri in the Himalayas. On Thursday a Nepali guide was killed when he slipped and fell 2,000 meters down Mount Lhotse, the world's fourth-highest peak.

The number of deaths brings the dangers into focus but is not unusual according to the authoritative Himalayan Database, 34 people died on Everest in the five years to 2013. As climbers ascend above 8,000 metres, they enter the "death zone"—notorious for its difficult terrain and thin air where oxygen

supplies fall to dangerously low levels and make mountaineers susceptible to altitude sickness.

"There are mixed feelings with the recent deaths, frostbite and rescues as it brings into focus the danger of climbing Everest," said veteran mountaineer and blogger Alan Arnette. "However there is a sense of relief that in many ways, it was a 'normal' season."

A tourism official said more than 30 climbers had been rescued this season after suffering altitude sickness or frostbite.

More than 350 climbers including 140 foreigners have successfully scaled Everest this season after two consecutive years of deadly disasters that led to almost all attempts being abandoned. Since the first summit of the world's highest peak in 1953 more than 300 people have died on Everest and

Lhotse, which share the same route until Camp 3 at 7,200 meters.

The last year in which no deaths were recorded on the mountain was 1977. Despite the risks and recent disasters, Everest's allure remains undimmed, with Nepal issuing 289 permits to foreigners for this year's spring climbing season.

Hundreds of climbers fled Everest last year after an earthquake-triggered avalanche at base camp killed 18 people. Only one climber reached the top in 2014 after an avalanche killed 16 Nepali guides that year. Mountaineering is a major revenue-earner for impoverished Nepal. But last year's earthquake, which killed almost 9,000 people nationwide, threatened the future of the Himalayan nation's climbing and trekking industry. — AFP



SRINAGAR, INDIA: An Indian policeman cleans the ground where police officers were killed when suspected rebels fired at a group of police yesterday. — AP

SUSPECTED REBELS KILL 3 POLICEMEN IN KASHMIR

SRINAGAR, INDIA: Suspected rebels fired at police officers at two places in the main city of the Indian portion of Kashmir yesterday, killing three of them, police said. In the first shooting, at least two militants on motorbike fired at close range on two policemen in the downtown Zadibal area of Srinagar. Both of the policemen died on the spot, said police officer Nazir Ahmed.

Indian security forces were searching the area for the assailants, who fled after the attack. Police said another policeman was killed after suspected militants fired at him in Srinagar's Tengpora area in the second attack of the day.

In a telephone call to Current New

Service, a local news agency, a man who gave his name as Burhan-ud-din and identified himself as the operations spokesman for Kashmir's largest militant group, Hizbul Mujahideen, said both shootings were carried out by militants belonging to the group.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep among the mostly Muslim population of Kashmir, which is divided between India and Pakistan. Rebel groups in India's portion of the Himalayan region have been fighting since 1989 for independence or a merger with Pakistan. More than 68,000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in the armed uprising and subsequent Indian crackdown. — AP



TAIPEI, TAIWAN: New Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen, left, and Vice President Chen Chien-jen wave during their inauguration ceremonies on Friday. — AP

TAIWAN'S NEW GOVT DROPS LAWSUIT AGAINST PROTESTERS

TAIPEI: Taiwan's new government announced yesterday it has dropped a lawsuit against 126 protesters who stormed the cabinet headquarters in 2014 to protest against a controversial China trade pact.

President Tsai Ing-wen, from the Beijing-skeptic Democratic Progressive Party, (DPP) and her new government took office on Friday, following eight year of cross-strait rapprochement under her predecessor Ma Ying-jeou of the Kuomintang (KMT).

Although Ma oversaw an unprecedented thaw in ties with China, public sentiment in Taiwan had turned against his approach in recent years, — leading to the so-called Sunflower Movement which occupied parliament to demonstrate opposition to the trade pact. Some protesters also infiltrated government headquarters, pulling down barbed-wire barricades outside and using ladders to break into offices on the second floor until riot police used water cannon to dislodge them.

Premier Lin Chuan defended the decision to drop the lawsuit against the protesters,

saying the movement had its "legitimacy". It was only the second document he had signed since taking office. "The Sunflower Movement's demand has become a social consensus. Parliament is legislating the oversight bill on cross-strait agreements based on such a demand, which highlights the movement's legitimacy and social contribution," Lin said in a statement.

Among the key demands of the Sunflower activists was for parliament to pass an oversight bill to monitor all agreements with China. They complained that trade deals with China were agreed in secret and would leave Taiwan vulnerable to Chinese influence.

The opposition KMT said it regretted that the new government made a "reckless" and "irresponsible" decision out of political considerations. The cabinet "tolerated people who entered government offices and damaged public property and approved of the crowd achieving political goals with illegal means. A democracy without the rule of law is a fake democracy," it said in a statement. — AFP

MANHUNT AFTER MILLIONS STOLEN IN HOURS-LONG JAPAN ATM HEIST

TOKYO: A manhunt is underway for criminals who looted millions from Japan's cash machines nationwide in an hours-long heist, officials and reports said yesterday. Armed with fake credit card details from South Africa's Standard Bank, the thieves hit 1,400 convenience store ATMs in a coordinated attack earlier this month.

The international gang members, reportedly numbering around 100 people, each made a series of withdrawals in less than three hours, Japanese media said. Their haul totaled 1.4 billion yen (\$13 million), according to the reports, with machines in Tokyo and Osaka among those targeted. It was not clear how the gang made off with the equivalent of millions of dollars so

quickly as the cash machines usually limit withdrawals to 100,000 yen (\$910) a day.

Japanese police declined to confirm the robbery, but Standard Bank acknowledged the heist and put its losses at around \$19 million. The bank said it was a "victim of a sophisticated, coordinated fraud incident". "This involved the withdrawal of cash using a small number of fictitious cards at various ATMs in Japan," it said in a statement.

Japan's top-selling Yomiuri newspaper said the lightning-fast raids began early on the morning of May 15, a Sunday, when banks were closed. That may have bought the thieves enough time to pull off the robbery and leave the country before authorities could act, reports said. — AFP

OBAMA CONFIRMS DEATH OF TALEBAN CHIEF MANSOUR

WILL THE FACTION COME TO THE SURFACE?

ISLAMABAD: President Barack Obama confirmed yesterday that a US drone strike in south-west Pakistan had killed Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour, heralding a new chapter in the Afghan insurgency which had grown fiercer under him.

Who will succeed him?

Mansour was appointed head of the Taliban in July 2015 following the revelation that the group's founder Mullah Omar had in fact been dead for two years. He was widely blamed for leading the cover-up. The roster of candidates to succeed him, currently being debated at a shura (council), will include many of the same names who entered the fray last year.

These include Omar's son Mullah Yakoub, who was favored by some commanders as new leader but at the time judged too young and inexperienced, and Omar's brother Mullah Abdul Manan Akhund. Other possible successors are Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who helped Omar found the TALEBAN movement and is seen as close to the Pakistani establishment, and Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir, considered one of the group's most violent and committed commanders.

But it is Sirajuddin Haqqani—leader of the feared Taliban-allied Haqqani network responsible for some of the worst attacks on Afghan and US targets—whose name has popped up most frequently among senior sources. His appointment could intensify the conflict even further. "This could be the time Haqqanis will try to take over the whole movement," said Pakistani security analyst Amir Rana.

What does the death mean for the insurgency?

Mansour had been particularly effective at subduing dissidents and eliminating rivals. Now, analysts believe, differences are once again likely to surface within the group. "This could help the peace process—if it allows the moderate faction to come to the surface," said Ahmed Rashid, author of the book "Descent into Chaos".

While infighting could buy some breathing space for beleaguered Afghan police and troops, the strategy of "divide and rule" may also back-



QUETTA, PAKISTAN: Pakistani security officials and hospital staff stand next to unidentified dead bodies placed on stretchers at a morgue in a hospital on Sunday. — AFP

fire. "First Mullah Omar and now Mansour—once you take the core out of a movement it could begin to unravel," said Imtiaz Gul, director of the Islamabad-based Centre for Research and Security Studies. "On the other hand, peacemaking will become even more difficult if you are dealing with so many leaders. This has been the strategy for several years—to splinter them and make deals—but whether that works, we don't know." According to Rana, Mansour's death could also pave the way for groups like the Islamic State and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, long in the Taliban's shadow, to make inroads.

What does the drone attack mean for Pakistan?

The US has carried out hundreds of drone strikes in Pakistan, mainly in the border tribal regions with Afghanistan, and leaked documents show Islamabad had quietly consented despite publicly protesting. But this was the first by the

US in Balochistan province and Pakistan—whose spy agency long supported the Taliban—angrily denounced it as a violation of its sovereignty. It appears US patience with Mansour, who had resisted peace negotiations, finally snapped.

If Pakistan was not a part of the plan, the incident marks the most serious incursion into its airspace since the 2011 raid that killed Osama Bin Laden. But security analyst Talat Masood said the two countries would seek to mend ties sooner rather than later.

"They will get over it because both countries need each other and they need to work together. There is going to be a change in Taliban leadership and Washington and Islamabad cannot afford to disconnect or have a rupture to the point they can no longer cooperate."

The incident could also force Pakistan to rethink its policy. "They will probably push the Taliban harder and say look: Engage in a political process, and if you fail to do that then you have no space in Pakistan," Masood said. — AFP

US GENERAL IN AFGHANISTAN: MANSOUR AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE

KUNDUZ, AFGHANISTAN: The top US commander in Afghanistan said yesterday that Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Akhtar Mansour was an obstacle to peace and his death will have a disruptive effect on the insurgency.

Resolute Support Commander, Gen. John W. Nicholson, said during a visit to the northern province of Kunduz that Mansour rejected the chance offered by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to participate in the peace process. "I hope that the Taliban leadership will realize it is time to lay down their weapons and join the peace efforts, so the people of Afghanistan can enjoy peace and prosperity in the future," Nicholson said.

President Barack Obama also said Mansour's death marks an "important milestone" in the long-standing effort to bring peace to Afghanistan. Nicholson was in Kunduz for the second time since becoming commander of the Resolute Support mission. In late September 2015, Mansour's Taliban fighters overran the city of Kunduz and held it for four days before being driven out. The takeover was a major embarrassment for President Ashraf Ghani's government.

Nicholson also met victims and families of people killed on Oct. 3, 2015 when US warplanes mistakenly bombed a Kunduz hospital run by Doctors Without Borders during the offensive to retake Kunduz. The hospital was destroyed and 42 people killed in the attack, which the Pentagon said was a mistake, caused by human error. Asadullah Amerkhail, the governor of Kunduz province, told Nicholson that, "Mansour's death will definitely have a positive impact on security. I am taking it as a positive step and I think we will now have good negotiations between the government and the Taliban." Mansour, believed to be in his 50s, was killed when a US drone fired on his vehicle in the southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan. He had emerged as the successor to Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, whose 2013 death was only revealed last summer.

Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for the Afghan Interior Ministry, told reporters during a press conference in Kabul that Mansour's death could cripple the Taliban. "This year will be the year of destruction and defeat for the Taliban, as they lost their leader. This will make them weak in all parts of the country and finally this terrorist group will be destroyed," Sediqqi said.

However the Russian presidential envoy to Afghanistan said the killing of the Taliban leader would only exacerbate the situation by hindering the negotiation process and leading to an escalation in fighting. Zamir Kabulov told the Interfax news agency that the Taliban field commanders would not give up, and if Mansour's deputy Sirajuddin Haqqani takes over as leader of the Taliban, "He'll show everyone what's what." — AP



BALUCHISTAN, PAKISTAN: The destroyed vehicle in which Mullah Mohammad Akhtar Mansour was traveling in the Ahmad Wal area. — AP

INDIAN PILOTS GROUNDED FOR MISTAKING ROAD FOR RUNWAY

MUMBAI: An Indian airline has grounded two pilots for attempting to land their plane on a road which they mistook for a runway, the airline and reports said yesterday. The IndiGo flight from Ahmedabad in Gujarat state to Jaipur in Rajasthan was close to touching down until the pilots were alerted by a "too low terrain" warning in the cockpit, IndiGo said in a statement. "The captain in command immediately took a precautionary measure and carried a go-around. The aircraft landed safely on subsequent approach," added the statement.

The incident, the latest to highlight safety concerns in India's rapidly expanding aviation sector, happened on February 27 but has only just come to light in Indian media.

The Hindustan Times quoted an aviation official as saying the plane was at an altitude of around 900 feet and 90 seconds away from landing on a road running parallel to the runway. IndiGo said the pilots were made aware of their mistake by an enhanced ground proximity warning system, which alerts the cockpit if the plane is in danger of flying into the ground or hitting something. "At no time was safety compromised.

Both pilots have been taken off flight duty with immediate effect, pending investigation," said the statement. "The matter was duly reported to the (aviation regulator) Directorate General of Civil Aviation by IndiGo flight safety department," IndiGo added. IndiGo, famed for its no-frills approach and fixation with punctuality, commands almost 40 percent of its home market, the biggest share of any airline. It is the country's only consistently profitable airline.

The government wants to make air travel affordable for millions of its citizens but a number of safety incidents have led to concerns over the speed of growth. Earlier this year an Air India plane with 160 passengers was forced to return to New Delhi almost 30 minutes into a Milan-bound flight after smoke was detected in the cabin. In December a London-bound Air India flight with over 200 passengers returned to Mumbai after three hours in the air over a suspected rat sighting in the cabin. That same month a technician working for Air India died after being sucked into a jet engine as the plane pushed back for take-off at Mumbai airport. — AFP

JAPAN TO PRESS OBAMA TO GET STRICT ON CRIME FROM US BASES

TOKYO: Japan will ask US President Barack Obama to take strict measures to prevent crime by people from US military bases after the arrest last week of a US worker in connection with the murder of a Japanese woman.

Obama will visit Japan this week for a Group of Seven nations summit and he will also make a historic visit to the city of Hiroshima, which the US military attacked with an atomic bomb in 1945.

US troops have been stationed in Japan since its World War Two defeat and about 50,000 remain in various bases. Occasional crime by US personnel or civilian base workers infuriates Japanese people

and often fuels call for the bases to go. "I expect him to ask President Obama to deal with the matter strictly, taking into account the Japanese people's feelings," Japan's top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga told a regular news conference, referring to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe was expected to ask Obama to ensure that strict discipline is enforced at bases and other measures are taken to prevent crime, Suga said. A 32-year-old US civilian working at the Kadena air base on Japan's southern island of Okinawa was arrested last Thursday on suspicion of dumping the body of a 20-year-old woman. Police are investigating.

Okinawa, the site of a bloody World War Two battles, hosts the bulk of US military forces in Japan and many residents resent what they see as an unfair burden. The island's governor, Takeshi Onaga, who was elected on a pledge to shift a big US Marines base off the island, was skeptical anything would be done on crime.

"We've heard 'strict enforcement of discipline' and 'thorough steps to stop recurrence' hundreds of times over the past several decades, but that nothing has changed," Onaga told reporters after meeting Abe.

Obama's visit to Hiroshima on Friday will be the

first by a serving US president to the city devastated by a US atomic bomb on Aug. 6, 1945. Obama said in an interview with the NHK broadcaster on Sunday his visit would emphasize friendly ties between former enemies, and he reiterated he would not apologize for the atomic bomb attack.

The city of Nagasaki was bombed three days after Hiroshima was bombed and Japan surrendered six days after that. A majority of Americans see the bombings as having been necessary to end the war and save US lives, although many historians question that view. Most Japanese believe they were unjustified. — Reuters



CHIANG RAI, THAILAND: The outside of a damaged school dormitory is seen yesterday where local police say 18 girls, ranging from 5 to 12 years old, died in a fire in. — AP

18 GIRLS KILLED IN FIRE AT SCHOOL DORM IN NORTHERN THAILAND

BANGKOK: A nighttime fire at a dormitory of a primary school in northern Thailand killed 18 girls, many of whom had been roused by a dorm-mate but went back to sleep, thinking it was a prank, officials and the girl who sounded the alarm said yesterday. The victims were between 5 and 12 years old.

Five girls were injured in the Sunday night fire. Many survived by rappelling down from a second-floor window using sheets tied together to form a rope. The two-story wooden structure that caught fire housed 38 girls, most of them belonging to the area's ethnic minorities. Fifteen girls escaped without injuries. The cause of the fire was not immediately known.

Some of the students were still not asleep when the fire broke out and were able to raise the alarm, said Rewat Wassana, manager of the Pithakkaiait Witthaya School, to which the dorm is attached.

The kindergarten and primary school in Wiang Pa Pao district, just outside the city of Chiang Rai, has about 400 day students and boarders. It is about 800 kilometers (500 miles) north of Bangkok.

Rewat said the fire broke out in the dorm's lower level, which is used for activities. The upper level housed the sleeping quarters. It is one of the two dorms on the 20-acre (8-hectare) school grounds. The other dorm, which is located nearby and is for boys, was untouched, Rewat said.

"We have a teacher who sleeps with the girls in the dorm. She tried to help the students escape," Rewat told reporters at a news conference broadcast on local television.

An 11-year-old girl identified only as Suchada said at the same news conference that she had gotten up to go to the bathroom when she noticed the fire downstairs, and ran to tell her friends in various rooms. But some of them didn't believe her and closed the door on her to go back to sleep, she said.

"We remembered some lessons from Girl Scouts to tie cloth together to make a long rope and we climbed out of the window," the fifth-grade student said. "The teacher helped us. While the teacher was climbing down, the rope tore and she hurt her leg and waist."

A police official told The Associated Press by phone that besides the 18 dead, another five girls were injured, including two in serious condition. He said two of the bodies were so badly burned they were unidentifiable. The official did not wish to be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Firefighters took three hours to extinguish the fire, and pulled survivors and bodies from the second-story window of the wooden building. — AP

SOUTH KOREA REJECTS NORTH KOREA TALKS PROPOSAL AS 'BOGUS'

SEOUL: South Korea dismissed yesterday a North Korean proposal for military talks as "a bogus peace offensive" and said it was formally rejecting the overture because it lacked a plan to end the North's nuclear program.

North Korea said the proposal on the weekend for talks between the two Koreas, a repeat of a call by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a congress of his ruling party this month, came after a period of heightened tension on the peninsula.

North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January and launched a long-range rocket in February, triggering tougher international sanctions and the adoption of a more hard-line position by South Korean President Park Geun-hye.

North Korea said dialogue between military officials from the two sides was urgently needed to reduce tension, and suggested they be held in late May or early June.

South Korea said the offer was insincere. "The dialogue proposed by the North does not mention its nuclear program, which is the fundamental issue for peace on the Korean peninsula and South-North ties," South Korean Defense Ministry spokesman Moon Sang-gyun told a briefing.

"Proposing dialogue without an expression of its position on denuclearization is a bogus peace offensive for bogus peace that lacks sincerity."

Moon said the South had sent a message over a military hotline on Monday expressing regret over the North's proposal and asking it to state its position on denuclearization. This month, at the first congress of North Korea's Workers' Party in 36 years, Kim declared his country a nuclear weapons state and vowed to press on with nuclear development, which he said was defensive.

In the run-up to the congress, North Korea test-fired a series of missiles including a submarine-based ballistic missile. It also attempted a launch of an intermediate-range ballistic missile.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles political ties with the North, said Pyongyang's intention may be to sow discord among the public in the South and create a rift in the international commitment to sanctions. "Let me repeat: Now is not the time for dialogue," said ministry spokesman Cheong Joon-hee.

North Korea came under tougher international pressure with the March adoption of a UN Security Council resolution that was even backed its lone major ally China, which disapproves of its nuclear arms program. South Korea has also cut off all commercial contacts with the North.

The two Koreas have remained in a technical state of war since their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. — Reuters

MH370 KIN 'GRAVELY CONCERNED' AT THE IMPENDING END OF SEARCH

KUALA LUMPUR: An international network of MH370 next-of-kin said Monday it was "gravely concerned" that the search for the missing jet could end by August, calling instead for it to be extended and expanded.

The grouping, known as Voice370, appealed to countries involved in the expensive operation, aircraft manufacturer Boeing and the International Civil Aviation Organization to commit resources to continue the search in the southern Indian Ocean.

"We are gravely concerned about the impending completion of the search in the current targeted area," the group said in a statement to AFP. "It has always been, and still remains, in everyone's best interest that this plane is found."

Australian Transport Safety Bureau chief Martin Dolan, who is in charge of the search, said last week that deep-sea sonar scanning of a designated 120,000-sq-km (46,332-sq-mile) area was likely to finish by early August. In comments to The Australian newspaper, he added there was no indication the search zone would be enlarged. The Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 vanished on March 8, 2014 en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, with 239 people including 152 from China aboard. The cause of the disappearance of Flight MH370 is still unknown and it remains one of the greatest mysteries in aviation history. Australia, Malaysia and China have said their joint search would likely be abandoned if nothing is found in the current designated zone. Many family members still suspect a

cover-up in the mystery and have repeatedly called for the most expensive search operation in history to continue until something is found.

Authorities have said the cost of the search could be up to \$130 million. Five pieces of debris which have been identified as either definitely or probably from the jet have been discovered thousands of kilometers from the search zone in South Africa, Mauritius, Mozambique, Mauritius

and the island of Reunion likely swept there by currents. Voice370 said it was "appalled" at the lack of a concerted international effort to round up more such debris and piece together what happened. "A highly concerted effort must be made to find more pieces if the authorities are interested to solve the mystery," it said. "The biggest, most unprecedented aviation mystery of all time warrants unprecedented action." — AFP



Malaysian aircraft MH370 that has been missing since March 8, 2014. — AFP

OBAMA'S HIROSHIMA VISIT STIRS DIFFERING VIEWS ACROSS PACIFIC
WORLD WAR II SURVIVORS SHARE THEIR VISIONS

TOKYO: Two very different visions of the hell that is war are seared into the minds of World War II survivors on opposite sides of the Pacific.

Michiko Kodama saw a flash in the sky from her elementary school classroom on Aug. 6, 1945, before the ceiling fell and shards of glass from blown-out windows slashed her. Now 78, she has never forgotten the living hell she saw from the back of her father, who dug her out after a US military plane dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, Japan.

People were walking like zombies, with their flesh scraped and severely burned, asking for help, for water. A little girl looked up, straight into Michiko's eyes, and collapsed.

Lester Tenney saw Japanese soldiers killing fellow American captives on the infamous Bataan Death March in the Philippines in 1942. "If you didn't walk fast enough, you were killed. If you didn't say the right words you were killed, and if you were killed, you were either shot to death, bayoneted, or decapitated," the 95-year-old veteran said. He still has the bamboo stick Japanese soldiers used to beat him across the face.

Different experiences, different memories are handed down, spread by the media and taught in school. Collectively, they shape the differing reactions in the United States and Japan to Barack Obama's decision to become the first sitting American president to visit the memorial to atomic bomb victims in Hiroshima later this week.

The second bomb

The US dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki three days after Hiroshima, and Japan surrendered six days later, bringing to an end a bloody conflict that the US was drawn into after Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

Japan identifies mostly as "a victim rather than a victimizer," Stephen Nagy, an international relations professor at the International Christian University in Tokyo, said. "I think that represents Japan's regional role and its regional identity, whereas the United States has a global identity, a global agenda and global presence. So when it views the bombing of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, it's in the terms of a global narrative, a global conflict the United States was fighting for freedom or to liberate countries from fascism or imperialism. To make these ends meet is very difficult."

A poll last year by the Pew Research Center found that 56 percent of Americans believe the use of nuclear weapons was justified, while 34 percent do not. In Japan, 79 percent said the bombs were unjustified, and only 14 percent said they were.

Terumi Tanaka, an 84-year-old survivor of the Nagasaki bombing, said of Obama: "I hope he will give an apology to the atomic bomb survivors, not necessarily to the general public. There are many who are still suffering. I would like him to meet them and tell them that he is sorry about the past action, and that he will do the best for them."

The White House has clearly ruled out an apology, which would inflame many US veterans and others, and said that Obama would not revisit the decision to drop the bombs. "A lot of these people are telling us we shouldn't have dropped the bomb - hey, what they talking about?" said Arthur Ishimoto, a veteran of the Military Intelligence Service, a US Army unit made up of mostly Japanese-Americans who interrogated prisoners, translated intercepted messages and went behind enemy

lines to gather intelligence.

Now 93, he said it's good for Obama to visit Hiroshima to "bury the hatchet," but there's nothing to apologize for. Ishimoto, who was born in Honolulu and rose to be an Army major general and commander of the Hawaii National Guard, believes he would have been killed in an invasion of Japan if Japan had not surrendered.

"It would have been terrible," he said. "There is going to be controversy about apologizing. I don't think there should be any apology. ... We helped that country. We helped them out of the pits all the way back to one of the most economically advanced. There's no apology required."

Beyond the deaths - the atomic bombs killed 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 73,000 in Nagasaki by the end of 1945 - the effects of radiation have lingered with survivors, both physically and mentally.

Kodama, the Hiroshima schoolgirl, faced discrimination in employment and marriage. After her first love failed because her boyfriend's family said they didn't want "radiated people's blood in their family," she married into a more understanding one.



TOKYO: Michiko Kodama, a survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bombing, points at a poster describing human damages by an atomic bomb during an interview at an office of a survivors' organization on May 12, 2016. — AP

The younger of her two daughters died of cancer in 2011. Some say she shouldn't have given birth, even though multi-generational radiation effects have not been proven.

Obama doesn't have to apologize, Kodama said, but he should take concrete actions to keep his promise to seek a nuclear-free world. "For me, the war is not over until the day I see a world without nuclear weapons," she said. "Mr. Obama's Hiroshima visit is only a step in the process."

Nagasaki survivor Tanaka views the atomic bombings as a crime against humanity. A promise by Obama to survivors to do all he can for nuclear disarmament "would mean an apology to us," he said. He added that his own government also should take some of the blame for the suffering of atomic bomb victims. "It was the Japanese government that started the war to begin with, and delayed the surrender," he said, adding that Japan has not fully faced up to its role in the war.

Japan did issue apologies in various forms in the 1980s and 1990s, but some conservative politicians in recent years have raised questions about them, said Sven Saaler, a historian at Sophia University in Tokyo. "In particular right now when

Japan has a government that is ... backpedaling in terms of apologizing for the war, if now the US apologized, that also would be, I think, a weird signal in this current situation," Saaler said.

Tenney, one of only three remaining POWs from the Bataan Death March, wants Obama in Hiroshima to remember all those who suffered in the war, not just the atomic bomb victims.

"From my point of view, the fact that the war ended when it did and the way it did, it saved my life and it saved the life of those Americans and other allied POWs that were in Japan at the time," he said at his home in Carlsbad, California. "I was in Japan, shoveling coal in a coal mine. No one ever apologized for that. ... I end up with black lung disease because they didn't take care of me in the coal mine, and yet there is no apology, no words of wisdom, no nothing."

Obama's visit is firmly supported by Earl Wineck, who scanned the skies over Alaska for Japanese warplanes during World War II. "He's not going there like some of them might, and keep reminding them of all their transgressions," the 88-year-old veter-

an of the Alaska Territorial Guard said. "That should have ended after the war, and I think a lot of it did, but of course, there's always people who feel resentment."

Japan occupied two Alaskan islands during the war. The battle to retake one of them, Attu Island, cost about 3,000 lives on both sides. "We hated them," Wineck said. "But things change, people change, and I think people in the world should be closer together."

How so?

One Tokyo high school student has a suggestion. Mayu Uchida, who said she cried when she heard survivors recount their memories on a school trip to Hiroshima, wants Obama to bring home what he learns and tell any supporters of nuclear weapons how horrifying they are.

"He could also suggest, promoting opportunities for more Americans to visit Hiroshima, or to hear the story of Hiroshima," the 18-year-old said. "It will be even better if those opportunities are available for younger generations like us."

Watson reported from Carlsbad, Calif. Associated Press writers Audrey McAvoyn in Honolulu, Mark Thiessen in Anchorage, Alaska, and Ken Moritsugu in Tokyo also contributed to this report. — AP

CHINA SAYS IT HOPES VIETNAM-US TIES CONDUCTIVE TO PEACE, STABILITY

BEIJING: China said yesterday it hopes developing ties between the United States and Vietnam will be conducive to regional peace and stability, after the United States ended its embargo on trade in lethal arms with Vietnam.

The United States had completely lifted the embargo on trade in arms with Vietnam, President Barack Obama said in Hanoi earlier yesterday, an overture that should enable an old foe to boost its defenses at a time of rising South China Sea tension. Obama said the sale of arms would depend on Vietnam's human rights commitments.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying made the remarks on China's hopes for US-Vietnamese ties when asked about the lifting of the arms embargo. China resents US efforts to forge stronger military bonds with its neighbors amid rising tension in the disputed South China Sea. — Reuters

WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT VITAL...

Continued from Page 1

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon gathered over 60 heads of state and government with top NGOs at the summit, aiming to better keep conflicts from erupting and ensure legal retribution for those guilty of humanitarian crimes.

Celebrity stardust was sprinkled by actors Daniel Craig, Forest Whitaker and Sean Penn, while top NGOs called for a wholesale reform of a now outdated humanitarian system. With some 60 million people displaced around the world and at least 125 million requiring assistance and protection in the biggest humanitarian crises since World War II, Ban said that the summit represented a chance to forge a "different future".

But the event has been shadowed by the boycott of medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) and doubts that the two-day event can make any genuine impact. "Let us seize this opportunity, let us make our mark as agents of change," said Ban. He warned that realizing the aims was not "an easy task" and required a "political will on a scale we have not seen in recent years." James Bond star Craig told the world leaders: "This summit is about potential to start the biggest humanitarian movement in our history," warning against "empty words without action."

Host Erdogan emphasized the contributions of his country, which is hosting some three million refugees from the Syria and Iraq conflicts and, in a barb at the West, complained others were not sharing the burden. "The current system falls short... the burden is shouldered only by certain countries, everyone should assume responsibility from now on," he said. "Needs increase every day but resources do not increase at the same pace. There are tendencies to avoid responsibility among the international community."

"Turkey knows this bitterly," he added, saying Turkey had spent \$10 billion on its hosting of Syrian refugees compared to \$450 million from the rest of the international community. Reprising a familiar theme, Erdogan also urged reform of the UN Security Council, saying the "fate of humanity" cannot depend on its five veto-wielding permanent members. "The extent to which the international humanitarian sys-

tem lies broken is alarming," Erdogan earlier wrote in an opinion piece published in Britain's Guardian newspaper. "The international community in particular has largely ignored its responsibilities toward the Syrian people by turning a blind eye to Bashar Al-Assad's crimes against his own citizens."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, one of the highest profile guests at the summit, called for an end to empty pledges on aid that fizzled into nothing. "Too many promises are made and then the money does not come for the projects - that must end," said Merkel, adding that the world currently had no humanitarian system that was "compatible with the future".

The commitments adopted by the states will be non-binding and while leaders like Merkel and HH Sheikh Sabah are attending the summit, many other prominent world leaders were conspicuous by their absence. UN Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson said the first session had made progress on finding agreement on the need to prevent conflict rather than dealing with the bloody consequences. "I think we need to see the necessity to move from dealing with symptoms to dealing with root causes. I think that is the main conclusion of that meeting," he said, saying spending on prevention of conflict was dwarfed by what is spent on relief.

Participants expressed alarm over deteriorating observance of humanitarian law, with schools and hospitals regularly targeted in conflict. The UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA said in a report almost half its schools had been hit by conflict in the last five years. "It is absurd to expect humanitarian responses to improve at a time when the repeated bombing of field hospitals and routine targeting of civilians go unchecked," Amnesty International Secretary General Salil Shetty added in a statement.

MSF, which is boycotting the event, said the summit risked being just a "fig leaf" for the world's failure on humanitarian action. "I regret very much that they came to that decision," said Eliasson. "One of the main purposes of this conference is our outrage against violations of international humanitarian law," adding he hoped the "convictions they (MSF) stand for" would come out of the meeting. — Agencies

MINISTER: INDIAN WOMEN IN GULF JAILS NEED...

Continued from Page 1

Women from Andhra Pradesh and the neighboring state of Telangana "are being sold like products in a retail shop," Reddy wrote in the letter sent last week. "Women are being sold to the tune of 400,000 rupees (\$6,000) in Saudi Arabia and between 100,000 (\$1,500) to 200,000 rupees (\$3,000) in Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait," the minister wrote. He added that at least 25 women jailed in Gulf states have sought the state government's help recently.

POPE, AZHAR IMAM EMBRACE IN HISTORIC...

Continued from Page 1

The Vatican did not immediately confirm the conference plans. A spokesman said the talks had been "very cordial" with the imam spending 30 minutes with the pope and just over an hour in total at St Peter's. Tayeb's decision to fly to Rome, unexpectedly announced last week, followed the easing of serious tensions that marked the reign of Francis's predecessor, Benedict XVI. Ties were badly soured when the now-retired Benedict made a Sept 2006 speech in which he was perceived to have linked Islam to violence, sparking deadly protests in several countries and reprisal attacks on Christians.

Pope John-Paul II met the then-grand imam of Al-Azhar in Cairo in 2000, a year before the Sept 11 attacks on New York transformed relations between the West and the Islamic world. Yesterday's visit was effectively the long-delayed reciprocal meeting and the Vatican said that both clerics had "underlined the great significance of this new meeting".

Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi said in a statement that the pope and the imam had "mainly addressed the common challenges faced by the authorities and faithful of the major religions of the world". These included working together for world peace, rejecting violence and terrorism, and the situation and protection of Christians against a backdrop of conflict and terrorism in the Middle East.

The pope presented the imam with a copy of his recent encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, a letter to the faithful in which he urges the world to wake up to the threat posed by climate change and economic inequality. Tayeb decided to accept the invitation to Rome as a result of the numerous conciliatory gestures Francis has made to the Muslim world since being elected in early 2013. "If it were not for these good positions the meeting would not be happening," Shuman told AFP on Sunday, adding that the imam wanted to promote "true Islam and to correct misunderstandings created by extremist terrorist groups." "He encourages countries not to deal with their Muslim citizens as groups that present a threat," Shuman said. "And he encourages Muslims in Western society to meld with their societies... it is a message for both sides."

After the tensions of the Benedict years, Francis moved quickly to set a new tone, sending a personal message to the Muslim world to mark the end of the first month of Ramadan of his pontificate. The Argentinian pontiff followed up by pushing various inter-faith initiatives and he was accompanied by both Rabbi Abraham Skorka and Islamic studies professor Omar Abboud when he visited Jordan and Israel in 2014. But perhaps the gesture that clinched the deal was the most dramatic piece of political theatre of his papacy: his April visit to the migrant crisis island of Lesbos which concluded with him bringing three Syrian Muslim families back to the Vatican. — AFP

INDIA AND IRAN AGREE PORT DEAL, REVIVING TRADE TIES

TEHRAN: India agreed yesterday to finance the development of an Iranian port as a trading hub, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to revive economic ties with Tehran after the lifting of sanctions. The Indian leader met Iranian officials including President Hassan Rouhani during a visit that he said would mark "a new chapter in our strategic partnership". Modi and Rouhani oversaw the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the provision of a line of credit from India's EXIM Bank to develop Iran's southern port of Chabahar, on the Gulf of Oman. Rouhani hailed the project, saying it could become a "great symbol of cooperation between Iran and India".

Modi's visit, the first by an Indian premier to Iran in 15 years, comes after international sanctions against Tehran were lifted in mid-January following an agreement with world powers over its nuclear program. Since that long-awaited agreement was reached in July, officials from dozens of mainly Asian and European countries have visited Iran to seek a share of its 80-million strong market.

India, China's greatest economic rival in Asia, is among the last regional powers to arrive. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Iran in late January and pledged to expand trade to \$600 billion in the next 10 years. Xi's visit, only days after economic sanctions against



TEHRAN: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani (right), Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (center) and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hold hands in a show of solidarity after their trilateral meeting and signing of agreements at the Saadabad Palace yesterday. — AP

Iran were lifted, was in line with his signature foreign policy initiative known as "One Belt One Road".

The first train to connect China and Iran arrived in Tehran in February loaded with Chinese goods, reviving the ancient trade route known as the Silk Road. President Park Geun-Hye of South Korea visited Iran at the beginning of this month. Iran and South Korea decided to triple their annual trade volume to \$18 billion and Woori Bank opened an office in Tehran, becoming the first South Korean

lender to do so.

Modi and Rouhani were joined later by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who landed in Tehran yesterday morning, to sign a three-way transit accord. The three huddled and clasped hands gleefully like teammates after signing the accord. The deal, connecting Iran, India, and Afghanistan to central Asia - bypassing Pakistan, would boost economic growth in the region, Modi said. "We want to link to the world, but connectivity among ourselves is also a priority," he said. — AFP

YEMEN FOES HOLD DIRECT TALKS AFTER...

Continued from Page 1

The government demanded a written pledge from the Houthi rebels and their allies recognizing an April 2015 UN Security Council resolution calling for their withdrawal from the capital and other territories they have overrun since 2014, as well as the legitimacy of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. Hadi had agreed to end the latest boycott after mediation by UN chief Ban Ki-moon and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the UN special envoy said on Sunday.

Foreign Minister Abdulmalek Al-Mikhlafi said on Twitter Sunday 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.

Meanwhile, twin bombings claimed by the Islamic State group hit Yemeni forces in Aden yesterday, killing at least 41 people in the latest of a spate of attacks in the southern city. The attacks in Aden - which is serving as the temporary government headquarters after rebels forced authorities from the capital - follow a major military operation against jihadists in parts of southern and southeastern Yemen.

In the first attack, a suicide bomber killed 34 people queuing to enlist at a recruitment center near the Badr base in Aden's Khormaksar district, said Brigadier General Nasser Al-Sarei, the commander of Yemen's special security forces. A subsequent explosion inside the base killed seven soldiers, he said. Medics said that 38 people were wounded in the twin attacks. In a statement posted online, IS said one of its fighters detonated an explosives belt among "apostate soldiers" at a recruitment center, followed by the bombing at a gate of the Badr base.

A local resident in Aden described the scene of the Badr explosions as "horrible", saying body parts had been blown dozens of metres away. "They came to complete the procedure of their recruitment and receive their first salary," he said, speaking of the young men who had gathered outside the army center. Abandoned slippers and sandals, apparently from the victims, covered the area, television footage showed. Aden resident Ramzi Al-Fadhli said "wailing filled the air" as women identified the remains of relatives at Al-Jumhuriyah Hospital, where at least 32 bodies were taken. Aden has seen a wave of attacks in recent months claimed by Al-Qaeda or its jihadist rival IS after government forces drove Houthi rebels out of the port city in July. — Agencies

IS BLASTS IN SYRIA KILL NEARLY 150

Continued from Page 1

adjacent governorate of the same name. Both cities have remained relatively secure even as the war has raged in Latakia province's rural northeast and throughout the country. State media earlier said 78 people - 45 in Jableh and 33 in Tartous - were killed in the bombings.

The attacks began at 9:00 am local time (0600 GMT) with three explosions at a busy bus station in Tartous, where regime ally Russia has long maintained a naval facility. The Observatory said one car bomb detonated first, and as people began to flock to the site two suicide bombers detonated explosive belts. A police source in the city confirmed a car bomb had hit the entrance to the station and two suicide bombers attacked inside. State television broadcast footage of the damaged station, where charred mini-buses lay on their sides while others were still ablaze. Approximately 15 minutes after the Tartous

blasts, the explosions began in Jableh, 40 km to the north.

The Observatory said four blasts - one car bomb and three suicide attackers - targeted a bus station, a hospital, and a power station there. One attacker detonated explosives inside the emergency room of the state-run hospital after carrying victims of the first attack there, the monitor said. A police officer told AFP a car bomb also targeted the Asaad hospital in the city.

A Kremlin spokesman condemned the attacks, saying they "demonstrate yet again how fragile the situation is in Syria and the need to take energetic measures to relaunch peace talks." A spokesman for the French foreign ministry also slammed the bombings as "heinous". Yesterday's bombings were reminiscent of a string of attacks in 1986 in northwestern Syria - including in Tartous - that killed 144 people and which Syrian officials blamed on the regime of Saddam Hussein in neighboring Iraq. — AFP

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Focus

KASHMIR MILITANTS
WAGE SELFIE WAR
AGAINST CRACKDOWN

By Douglas Busvine and Fayaz Bukhari

Rebels like Burhan Wani, more adept at spreading their message via smartphone than wielding an assault rifle, are becoming a rallying point in disputed Kashmir for youth who reject the authority of India's federal government. Wani, a 22-year-old commander of Islamic separatist group Hizb-ul Mujahideen, personifies a new generation of militant who is winning public sympathy in a battle that once again risks destabilizing the troubled northern region.

"He is on a pious path and we are proud of him," said Mohammad Muzaffar Wani, the father of the militant who shot to notoriety with pictures of his group on social media last year, along with speeches calling Kashmiris to arms. "All of Kashmir supports his cause," Wani, the headmaster of a school, said in an interview at the family home in Tral in southern Kashmir.

A massive crackdown by Indian security forces has contained a separatist revolt in Kashmir that first flared in the 1990s, with Pakistan's backing, but is now mainly home-grown. But the backlash it has provoked reflects what many Kashmiris call the refusal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-year-old government to engage in a meaningful dialogue over the fate of India's only Muslim-majority region. "The government of India has decided that they want to engage with the problem militarily, not politically," said Mirvais Umar Farooq, a hereditary religious leader and advocate of a peaceful path to independence.

Separatist leaders accuse New Delhi of keeping people in Kashmir, long the centre of a bitter territorial dispute between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan, under the heel of up to 750,000 security forces. At the same time, they say, it is pursuing a long-term strategy to effectively annex the region of 12.5 million people demographically, religiously and economically.

The result, both moderate and hardline separatists warn, will be the further radicalization of a generation already brutalized by a crackdown on a wave of street protests that peaked in 2010. "It's troubling - there should not be this level of alienation," said Naeem Akhtar, the state's education minister and a leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), that has run Jammu and Kashmir state in an unlikely coalition with Modi's Hindu-centric Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since last year.

"We should try and build emotional bonds between Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the country," added Akhtar. "It will take time, but I think we are on course." Both parties say their alliance of opposites is working, but their development agenda - including a road building campaign to upgrade infrastructure ruined by decades of neglect - has yet to deliver.

Cat and Mouse

Human rights advocates say the militants are not capable of launching serious attacks, preferring instead to play cat and mouse with security forces, who outnumber them by more than 3,000 to one, to make a political point. "They have guns in their hands but circulating videos is not violence - it's propaganda," said Khuram Parvez, an official of a civil society grouping. Wani, who remains at large, featured in a recent video, warning his hands by a forest campfire, chatting and laughing with colleagues.

In recent months, outpourings of sympathy for the militants have escalated, with stone-throwing crowds gathering at the site of gun battles to thwart efforts to kill or capture the gunmen. Huge numbers have turned out, too, at funerals of rebels killed in "encounters", such as a recent shootout in which three militants - two linked to Wani - died. "The worrying part is that the trust deficit between the system and the public is huge," said a senior Indian military officer who estimates the number of militants active in the Kashmir Valley at about 200. "The only way they can express their grievances is by violence against the symbols of the state," said the officer, who sought anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Militancy has decreased in Kashmir, a senior aide to Modi told Reuters, but social volatility has increased as security forces systematically eliminate domestic rebels, who rely on the sympathy of many Kashmiris. "Before, the goal was to neutralize foreign infiltrators," the aide said, on condition of anonymity. "Now the domestic terrorists are being bumped off."

Female student Shaista Hameed, 22, and a male youth died in stray fire in one such encounter, in the village of Lelhar in February, that killed a militant from the Pakistan-backed rebel group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Two rebels escaped, shielded by a stone-throwing crowd. "These militants are our brothers," said a local high school senior, who gave his name as Tariq. "They are fighting for us and demanding the right to freedom." Asked how he saw his future, he said, "If the atrocities continue, I will take up the gun." — Reuters

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LAND MEANS HOPE FOR SINGLE INDIAN WOMEN

By Manipadma Jena

When her husband died seven years ago, leaving her to fend for herself, 37-year-old Kuni Majhi survived hunger, illness, drunk men hammering at the flimsy tin door of her thatched hut - and very nearly lost all hope. Recently however, Majhi was offered a chance of a secure future - in the form of a small block of land complete with a brick house of her own. Single women like Majhi are among the most vulnerable and invisible of India's landless class, often from lower caste indigenous communities. But one district, Mayurbhanj in the eastern state of Odisha, is challenging gender inequality in the country's land laws by offering land and shelter to women living alone. "The indigenous communities here have a fragile family fabric: women are often abandoned or widowed early, left single with small children to care for," Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, administrative chief of Mayurbhanj told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "They bear a life of exploitation and indignity and even become targets of human trafficking and witch-hunting. Their suffering stems from lack of access to a land title," he said.

Odisha's 2014 policy states that landless single women with an annual income below \$615 should be registered as a separate household and are eligible for a plot of government-owned land up to 4,350 square feet, similar to the size of a tennis court. Women can receive the land grant on the proviso that they are living alone and independently. Traditionally, most widows, abandoned wives and unmarried women older than 30, including those with disabilities, stay with their extended family. This often means that they forfeit their land rights because by custom, these transfer back to the male head of the household.

In Mayurbhanj, access to land for single women has

been further complicated by the fact that 92 percent of the 2.5 million-strong population live in rural areas, Odisha District Government data shows. Of these, 66 percent are classified as indigenous and Dalit and nearly half lack any schooling or formal education. Half are women.

Despite introducing more progressive inheritance and land rights laws, Odisha district data also shows that just 3.3 per cent of farm land is owned by women compared to the national Indian average of 13 per cent. India's Housing census data from 2012 also showed there are more households headed by women in Odisha than the national average, at more than 12 percent. India's 2012 Socio-Economic Caste Census data reveals that 40 percent of single-women household heads do not own land and are forced to eke out an existence through manual labour.

Reaching Out

In India, identification of those eligible for state assistance is the role of the Revenue (Land Administration) Department. However the Mayurbhanj district is trying to speed up the identification process by pioneering a new, informal, community based network of local health workers. Known as 'anganwadi', they help look after village mothers with children and now work closely with Department of Women and Child Development to help identify and register landless single women.

Their day-to-day work at village level means that they become familiar with local families and can regularly update lists, including any changes in women's economic situation. This less formal system of monitoring is backed by visits from local land officers who verify and check the information and use it to draw up the final eligibility list of women targeted for land grants.

Over the three years since the program was launched, 68,000 single women have been identified across Mayurbhanj and 19,000 are deemed eligible for land titles, district officers say. An estimated 3,500 women will be granted new land parcels from the government's 'Land to Landless' program while 450 will be given formal title to the land they are already living on. A further 6,200 widows will be given their own land titles after their deceased husbands' names are removed from deeds.

For the first time too, an Indian family land partition law, amended in 2005 but largely sidelined until now, is to be vigorously implemented allowing women to share land equally with their brothers. "So far, 3,000 single women have received land titles and the rest are being processed," administrative chief, Patil told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The database of single women identified via the program will be stored in a web-based system set up by Landesa, a Seattle-based land rights NGO, and run by the government. This will allow tracking of service delivery, monitor accountability and provide links with other government social security schemes.

Recruitment Drive for Women Workers

The Mayurbhanj administration has also tried to assuage women's anxiety about navigating male officialdom and the land titling system without male family members by launching a recruitment drive for more women to work in the land sector. In her leaky thatched house, Kuni Majhi said her \$5 monthly widow's pension is spent on buying rice and there simply isn't enough left over to save for a new roof. Now, having a land title means she is eligible for the government-built, one-room brick house which is nearing completion. — AFP

CONGRESS COMEBACK A DAUNTING TASK

By Douglas Busvine and Rupam Jain

Prashant Kishor, the election campaign manager brought in by India's opposition Congress party to reverse its declining fortunes, knew his real work would begin when the party hit rock bottom. It looks like that moment has come. The party run by the fabled Gandhi dynasty, which has led the world's largest democracy for most of its existence, suffered humiliation last week when it lost Assam to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in a state election.

Congress had controlled Assam, in India's northeast, since 2001, and for the nationalist BJP it was a first. The race was not even close, underlining the crisis facing the mother-and-son team of Sonia and Rahul Gandhi. Two years ago they were eclipsed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a landslide national ballot won on promises of economic growth and a strong, modern India.

While the euphoria of that time has faded and Modi's agenda has been slowed by stalled reforms, other state election setbacks and devastating droughts hitting rural India, he remains comfortably the most popular politician. The challenge for Rahul Gandhi, the public face of Congress' comeback, is to make up lost ground in time for the biggest test before a 2019 general election - the state vote next year in Uttar Pradesh, home to around 200 million people.

That, and the state of Punjab, will go a long way to defining who is the next prime minister; in 2014, the BJP won 71 of 80 parliamentary seats in Uttar Pradesh and only Sonia and Rahul Gandhi held theirs for Congress. Rahul Gandhi declined to be interviewed for this article, but, in a series of public appearances that have become more frequent in recent months, he sought to target Modi directly. "Modi talked about good days to come but today the country is reeling under drought and farmers are committing suicide," he told a recent "Save Democracy March" of a few thousand people in New Delhi. "Modi has nothing to say."

Inside Knowledge

The land document also confirmed her below-poverty status, securing a 10 kg ration of rice under India's food security

scheme. "When a single woman separates from the larger family ... local networks too also largely withdraw support," said 70-year-old Gurubari Dei, widowed when she was just 20. However the women say that some cultural change is happening and the newer generation's responses are becoming less negative.

"It is as if this small piece of land has given her life into her own hands, such is the transformation in my mother," said her daughter Sombari Singh. "She made me re-think if we should not change our long-held assumption that women should always remain under a male power," Singh said. Gurubari Dei also has a bank savings account now, as this is a requirement for all land holders. Klaus Deininger, a World Bank economist, says a bank account can become a kind of bargaining shield against exploitation and family violence: in India, women who own land are eight times less likely to experience domestic violence.

The 38-year-old, who largely avoids the public eye but engages the press and senior party figures with increasing confidence, has a backroom team of researchers analyzing census data to more effectively translate votes into seats. That may mean targeting a particular caste or religion, for example. Sources close to Kishor, who worked in health activism before being taken on as policy adviser to Modi when he was chief minister of Gujarat state, said Kishor had "24/7" access to Gandhi, although he did not decide his day-to-day movements. Kishor is determined to move away from a system of patronage, inject a sense of urgency and bring in fresh faces from the grassroots level upwards, even if it means upsetting the Congress establishment. And, reflecting a growing interest in politics rather than focusing on number crunching, Kishor wants to portray Congress as the only inclusive national party in India, the sources said.

The BJP has been accused of stifling free speech and promoting a Hindu-first agenda to appeal to the country's majority at the expense of significant minorities, including around 170 million Muslims. "We are a party of all, for all and by all," said Jyotiraditya Scindia, a Congress parliamentarian, and, in his mid-40s, is of Gandhi's generation and one of the party's "new guard". "The only other national party, which is the BJP, is not rep-

resentative of pan-India, because it is not of all, it is not by all and it is not for all."

Kishor is understood to want to launch a "new face" to lead the Uttar Pradesh campaign, which could be Gandhi, his popular sister Priyanka or someone else. Congress officials and Kishor declined to comment. Separately, a party source said this week that Gandhi's long-awaited promotion to take over Congress from his mother might happen "sooner than you think". Kishor, for one, is realistic about Congress' chances of catching up with the BJP. "We are way behind the curve," said a source familiar with his thinking. "The total collapse of the party isn't something we can ignore."

Rahul Relaunch?

In a party steeped in tradition, secrecy and deference, enthusiasm for Kishor is not universal. "Indian politics is not susceptible to modern, professional analysis," said one former Congress cabinet member.

"You get it right, you're lucky; you get it wrong, you're unlucky." Indian media have also reported on the campaign manager's frustration at Gandhi's reluctance to take quick decisions, and on speculation that Kishor would resign. Kishor's organization, Indian Political Action Committee, published two tweets to address the rumors.

"Question of quitting is nothing but wild speculation. We are deeply honored by the responsibility and totally committed to the job," one said. "Grateful for the opportunity and the trust shown by the Congress, its leadership and each & every worker for their faith in us," read the second. As Kishor works behind the scenes, Rahul is re-emerging on the national stage to take the fight to Modi. Congress loyalists say Gandhi returned a changed man from a sabbatical in a secret location in early 2015.

"He ... discovered his inner politician," said Shashi Tharoor, a prominent Congress lawmaker. "He's active in parliament. He's more confident. His repartee shows he can think on his feet." Since Kishor joined Gandhi's team a few months ago, the leader has set a frenetic pace, joining student protesters on the barricades, showing solidarity with drought-hit farmers and hitting the campaign trail up and down the country. He has landed rhetorical blows on Modi, taking the floor of parliament in March to liken a tax amnesty announced in the budget to a skin-lightening cream that turns black money white.

Any Chance in Uttar Pradesh?

The latest state polls, which also included Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal where regional parties expectedly dominated, suggest that Gandhi's impact has been limited so far. State polls are especially important for the BJP because state legislators elect members of the upper house of parliament where Modi's goods and services tax bill is stuck because it does not have a majority. Some of Modi's closest advisers say they are more worried about Kishor's involvement with Congress than about Gandhi, given his impact on Modi's victory and inside knowledge of the way he thinks. — Reuters

LUKAKU HOPES TO STAY
AS EVERTON EXIT LOOMS

LONDON: Striker Romelu Lukaku has fuelled speculation about his future at Everton, saying he has decided where he will be playing next season and insisting he would prefer to ply his trade in England. The Belgium international, who netted 25 goals in 46 appearances this campaign, has been the Merseyside club's top scorer for the past two seasons following his a record 28 million-pound (\$40.5 million) move from Chelsea. "In my head I know where I want to go but I'm keeping that to myself. You will know when it is concluded. I have to make a good choice but in my head that has happened already," Lukaku, 23, told British media. "I have played (in England) for five years now, it's my league. But there are other nice clubs. I follow Spanish and German football and I also have something for the Italian league. Wherever I go I want to win prizes." Belgium face Italy, Ireland and Sweden in European Championship Group E in France which starts on June 10.—Reuters



SOUTH KOREA WAITS ON VAULT
CHAMP YANG TO PROVE FITNESS

SEOUL: South Korea has given Olympic vault champion Yang Hak-seon some breathing room in his race to regain fitness after injury left his chances of making the team for the Rio Games hanging by a thread. Yang ruptured his right Achilles in March during practice but was included in a preliminary list for the Rio Olympics announced on Sunday by the Korea Gymnastic Association (KGA). The 23-year-old, who became South Korea's first gold medal winner in gymnastics at the 2012 London Games, would be the country's best hope of a medal in Rio if he was fit, KGA official Han Chung-sik said yesterday. "Under normal circumstances, Yang Hak-seon would be our strongest athlete at the Olympics," Han said by telephone, adding that he had until the final trials in July to prove his fitness. "We have a regulation that allows us to recommend athletes with a high possibility of winning a medal in various competitions so we've put him in according to the regulation." The KGA said that if Yang made the team they would try to send another gymnast as cover in case the injury flared up.—Reuters

MCILROY HOPES IRISH OPEN
VICTORY WILL SPUR SUCCESS

LONDON: World number three Rory McIlroy has said he hoped his Irish Open victory would spur him to greater heights in the remaining three majors and the Olympics Games in Rio de Janeiro, following a lacklustre start to the year. The 27-year-old was in danger of losing a three-shot lead in the final round of the Irish Open, but a closing 69 secured a dramatic victory for the Northern Irish golfer, his first triumph since last November's DP World Tour championship in Dubai. "It means a lot for my summer," McIlroy told British media. "Maybe those last three holes is the catalyst for another big summer." Despite his limited success this year, the four-time major winner brushed aside concerns of a dip in form, adding that his game was good enough to challenge for the top. "I kept telling myself, kept telling anyone that would listen, my game was close. It was just a matter of everything clicking," McIlroy added. "I really feel like my game is in good enough shape to kick on from here and to challenge in the three final majors, and obviously everything else we have to play for this year, Olympics, Ryder Cup, Race to Dubai, FedEx Cup."—Reuters



MLB results/standings

Detroit 9, Tampa Bay 4; NY Mets 3, Milwaukee 1; Seattle 5, Cincinnati 4; Washington 8, Miami 2; Philadelphia 5, Atlanta 0; Boston 5, Cleveland 2; Chicago White Sox 3, Kansas City 2; Texas 9, Houston 2; Toronto 3, Minnesota 1; Arizona 7, St. Louis 2; LA Angels 10, Baltimore 2; NY Yankees 5, Oakland 4; LA Dodgers 9, San Diego 5 (17 innings); San Francisco 1, Chicago Cubs 0.

American League

Eastern Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Baltimore	26	16	.619	-
Boston	27	17	.614	-
NY Yankees	21	22	.488	5.5
Tampa Bay	20	21	.488	5.5
Toronto	22	24	.478	6

Central Division

Chicago White Sox	26	18	.591	-
Cleveland	22	19	.537	2.5
Kansas City	22	21	.512	3.5
Detroit	21	22	.488	4.5
Minnesota	11	32	.256	14.5

Western Division

Seattle	26	17	.605	-
Texas	25	19	.568	1.5
LA Angels	20	24	.455	6.5
Oakland	19	26	.422	8
Houston	17	28	.378	10

National League

Eastern Division

Washington	27	17	.614	-
NY Mets	25	18	.581	1.5
Philadelphia	25	19	.568	2
Miami	22	21	.512	4.5
Atlanta	12	31	.279	14.5

Central Division

Chicago Cubs	29	13	.690	-
Pittsburgh	23	19	.548	6
St. Louis	23	21	.523	7
Milwaukee	18	26	.409	12
Cincinnati	15	29	.341	15

Western Division

San Francisco	27	19	.587	-
Colorado	21	21	.500	4
LA Dodgers	22	23	.489	4.5
Arizona	21	25	.457	6
San Diego	19	26	.422	7.5



SAN FRANCISCO: (From left) San Francisco Giants' Angel Pagan, Gregor Blanco, and Denard Span celebrate after a 1-0 win over the Chicago Cubs during a baseball game on Sunday, May 22, 2016. — AP

BUMGARNER SHINES AS GIANTS OVERPOWER CUBS

SAN FRANCISCO: Madison Bumgarner pitched 7 2/3 dominant innings and doubled in a run in the fifth to lift the San Francisco Giants over the Chicago Cubs 1-0 on Sunday night. The Giants won for the 11th time in 12 games and took two of three from a Cubs team with the best record in baseball. Bumgarner (6-2) struck out six and allowed three hits and two walks while winning his fifth straight decision. The Giants have won each of the left-hander's last six starts. The Giants won despite a persistent problem hitting with runners in scoring position. They were 0 for 7 in that department and have 16 hits in their last 98 at-bats with runners in scoring position. Bumgarner's run-scoring double to left off Kyle Hendricks (2-4) followed Gregor Blanco's leadoff walk. Giants closer Santiago Casilla pitched a scoreless ninth for his 12th save.

DODGERS 9, PADRES 5, 17 INNINGS

Yasiel Puig hit a tiebreaking, two-run single with the bases loaded and one out in the 17th inning and Los Angeles beat San Diego to snap a four-game losing streak. The game started in afternoon sunshine and ended at dusk, taking 5 hours, 47 minutes. The Dodgers started the four-run rally off rookie Luis Perdomo when Howie Kendrick hit a leadoff double that bounced over the wall in right-center field. Adrian Gonzalez was intentionally walked and reliever Ross Stripling advanced them with a groundout. Joc Pederson was intentionally walked to load the bases, and then Puig singled up the middle. Pederson scored on a wild pitch and Carl Crawford hit an RBI grounder. Stripling (2-3) pitched three innings for the win. Perdomo (1-1) was the hard-luck loser after pitching five innings.

RED SOX 5, INDIANS 2

David Ortiz went 4 for 4 with a solo home run and a double that sent a fan flying. Jackie Bradley Jr extended his hitting streak to 27 games and Boston beat Cleveland for its 10th win in 14 games. Bradley singled in the fifth inning and has the longest hitting streak in the majors since a 28-gamer by Colorado's Nolan Arenado in 2014. Ortiz drove in three runs. His RBI double in the second put the Red Sox ahead 3-2, and when the ball bounced over Boston's bullpen, a fan came charging

from his seat and fell into a fence trying to retrieve the souvenir. Ortiz was a triple short of a cycle when another ground-rule double bounced into the bullpen near the center-field triangle. Rick Porcello (7-2) allowed two runs and five hits in 5 2/3 innings, and Craig Kimbrel got three outs for his 12th save. Danny Salazar (4-3) gave up four runs in 4 1/3 innings.

TIGERS 9, RAYS 4

Jordan Zimmermann (7-2) left with a strained right groin after allowing two runs and five hits in 5 2/3 innings. Miguel Cabrera and Victor Martinez homered for Detroit, which has won six of seven. Cabrera also left early, with a left knee bruise after being hit by a pitch in the seventh. Chris Archer (3-5) gave up six runs and eight hits in three innings.

BLUE JAYS 3, TWINS 1

Jose Bautista and Josh Donaldson started the game with back-to-back home runs in a three-run first inning against Phil Hughes (1-7), who leads in the major leagues in losses. Marcus Stroman (5-1) allowed one run and three hits in 7 2/3 innings, one start after giving up career-highs of seven runs and 13 hits in a loss to Tampa Bay. Roberto Osuna got four straight outs for his ninth save. A day after Donaldson was ejected by umpire Toby Basner in the first inning, John Gibbons got the early exit from crew chief Joe West in the fifth - the fourth ejection of the year for the Toronto manager.

METS 3, BREWERS 1

Noah Syndergaard (5-2) struck out 11 in seven overpowering innings, allowing an unearned run and six hits. Michael Conforto homered in the third off Chase Anderson (2-6) as New York completed a three-game sweep. Asdrubal Cabrera broke a fourth-inning tie with a two-run single that sent the Mets to their 12th victory in the last 16 home games. Alex Presley grounded into a game-ending double play against Jeurys Familia, who pitched for the third day in a row and earned his 15th save.

NATIONALS 8, MARLINS 2

Max Scherzer (5-3) struck out eight while giving up two runs and six hits in eight innings with no walks. He has 38

strikeouts in his past three starts, including a record-tying 20 against Detroit. Justin Bour ended Scherzer's shutout bid with a two-run homer in the seventh. Washington won the three-game series and took a 7-6 edge in the season series. The NL East foes don't meet again until Sept 19. Adam Conley (3-3) allowed six runs and walked seven, three intentionally, in 5 1/3 innings.

MARINERS 5, REDS 4

Leonys Martin got four hits, Robinson Cano drove in two runs and Seattle completed a three-game sweep that extended Cincinnati's losing streak to seven. Wade Miley (5-2) shook off a rocky first to allowed four runs and eight hits in six innings. He is 5-0 over his last six starts, all Seattle victories. Steve Cishek pitched a perfect ninth for his 10th save. Alfredo Simon (1-5) gave up five runs and nine hits in five innings.

PHILLIES 5, BRAVES 0

Jerad Eickhoff (2-6) pitched five-hit ball over seven innings for his first win since April 13, and Philadelphia avoided a three-game sweep. He had lost his previous five decisions. Cameron Rupp homered for the Phillies, and Maikel Franco had two RBIs. Casey Kelly (0-1) allowed three runs over five innings in his first start this season for Atlanta, an NL-worst 12-31.

WHITE SOX 3, ROYALS 2

Todd Frazier tied for the AL lead with his 13th home run, Melky Cabrera drove in two runs and Chicago avoided what would have been the first sweep against the White Sox this season. Carlos Rodon (2-4) allowed two runs and eight hits in six-plus innings for his first victory since April 13. David Robertson got three outs for his 11th save, helping the AL Central leaders win for just the third time in 11 games. Lorenzo Cain and Paulo Orlando had two hits apiece for the World Series champions, who had won six of their previous eight. Yordano Ventura (4-3) gave up three runs and six hits in six innings.

RANGERS 9, ASTROS 2

Cole Hamels (5-0) won his career-best 12th straight decision. He fanned a season-high 11 in eight innings, allowing two runs - one earned - and five hits as the Rangers completed a three-game sweep. Texas has

won six straight from Houston and 14 of 16. The Astros have lost four straight overall. Dallas Keuchel (2-6) gave up seven runs and nine hits in six innings, losing his fifth straight decision.

DIAMONDBACKS 7, CARDINALS 2

Zack Greinke (5-3) won for the fifth time in six starts, allowing one run and five hits in eight innings. Paul Goldschmidt drove in a pair of runs and Michael Bourn had three hits as Arizona won a series in St Louis for the first time since April 18-20, 2003. Jaime Garcia (3-4) gave up five runs and 10 hits in 2 1/3 innings.

ANGELS 10, ORIOLES 2

Jered Weaver (4-3) took a shutout into the seventh inning to win for the first time since April 26, and Carlos Perez homered, had three hits and drove in a career-high five runs. Weaver allowed

five hits in seven innings and struck out a season-high six, giving up Jonathan Schoop's two-run homer in the seventh. Ubaldo Jimenez (2-5) gave up six runs and eight hits in 5 2/3 innings.

YANKEES 5, ATHLETICS 4

Michael Pineda (2-5) allowed three runs and six hits in six innings to win for the first time since his opening start this season, Starlin Castro hit a tiebreaking, two-out single in the sixth off Jesse Hahn (1-2) and New York extended a winning streak to five for the first time since winning seven straight from last June 1-9. Brian McCann and Jacoby Ellsbury homered for the Yankees (21-22), who swept the four-game series. Dellin Betances, Andrew Miller and Aroldis Chapman pitched an inning each to complete a six-hitter, with Chapman getting three straight outs for his sixth save.— AP

GARCIA JOINS BALLESTEROS
ON 9 PGA TOUR VICTORIES

TEXAS: Sergio Garcia displayed shades of Seve Ballesteros on his way to victory at the AT&T Byron Nelson in Texas on Sunday, matching his late countryman for most career wins by a Spaniard on the PGA Tour. Garcia overcame some poor swings to collect his ninth tour victory, beating American Brooks Koepka in a playoff at the TPC Four Seasons in Irving. "I won a bit a la Seve today. I definitely wasn't really on," Garcia said in a greenside interview after finding two water hazards in the final round but still coming through to win. "It means so much (to match Ballesteros). I played really well the last five holes, including the playoff, but other than that I was battling with my swing a little bit, playing hard and chipping great, and made some great putts."

Garcia carded a closing 68, while Koepka shot 71. They finished at 15-under 265, one stroke ahead of American Matt Kuchar. Garcia won with a par at the first extra hole after Koepka yanked his drive into a water hazard. "I had no idea where the ball was going (the final two

rounds) and you can't play out here when you're hitting it in the rough," said a disappointed Koepka. It is Garcia's first victory on the PGA Tour since 2008, though the 36-year-old has continued to pile up victories outside the US. Garcia's win is a big boost to his hopes of making the European team for this year's Ryder Cup, where he hopes to carry on Ballesteros' legacy.

Garcia has a huge passion for the biennial team event against the United States. He has played in it seven times, on five occasions on the winning side. "I played nicely this week," Garcia continued. "I know I can play better. Obviously this is going to jump me (up the Ryder Cup rankings), which means a lot to me. "My swing wasn't all the way there but I played as hard as I could with what I had." Five-times major winner Ballesteros played a huge part in making the Ryder Cup competitive back in the early 1980s, after decades of American dominance. Renowned as one of the game's great short game exponents, he died of a brain tumor in 2011 at the age of 54.— Reuters

ENGLAND'S ALL-ROUNDER STOKES OUT OF 2ND TEST

LEEDS: England all-rounder Ben Stokes is facing several weeks on the sidelines after being ruled out of the second Test against Sri Lanka with a knee injury. Stokes has been replaced in England's 12-man squad by Warwickshire all-rounder Chris Woakes. Durham star Stokes jarred his left knee during England's crushing innings and 88-run win in the first Test at Headingley. He will now miss the second of the three-match series, which starts at his Chester-le-Street home ground on Friday. The 24-year-old, who is due to see a specialist on Tuesday, could be out of action for as long as six weeks. That would see him miss both the final two Tests against Sri Lanka and the subsequent five-match one-day international series with the islanders starting on June 21.

And with England also facing Pakistan in a four-Test series that gets underway at Lord's in July, team management will be wary of rushing key player Stokes back into the side. An England and Wales Cricket Board statement issued Monday said: "England all-rounder Ben Stokes will miss the second Investec Test at Emirates Riverside after sustaining a left knee injury during England's first Test victory at Headingley. "Following a scan (on Sunday) and review by the medical team, it was advised that Stokes would be unavailable for the match in Durham.

"The 24-year-old will be reviewed by a consultant (on Tuesday), to decide on a management plan."

Woakes is now in the hunt for a seventh Test cap. His last appearance came against South Africa at Centurion in January, a match where England lost but won the series. He will compete for a place in England's X1 against uncapped Nottinghamshire quick Jake Ball, in the squad at Headingley. Both players will join up with the England squad in Durham after leaving their ongoing matches in the County Championship on Monday. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka have confirmed that Kusal Perera will be joining their squad.

Perera was cleared to play again two weeks ago after the International Cricket Council lifted a provisional doping ban and all associated charges against him following concerns over the reliability of the drug test carried out by a World Anti-Doping Agency accredited laboratory in Qatar. The wicket-keeper/batsman's arrival, possibly in time for the second Test, will change the balance of Sri Lanka's squad as he is replacing injured paceman Dhammika Prasad, who has returned home with a shoulder injury. "Kusal will join the team as soon as possible and acclimatize, so he can do some serious work with the bat," Sri Lanka chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya told Cricinfo.—AFP

GAYLE SAYS SEXISM ROW WAS JUST A 'LITTLE FUN'

LONDON: West Indies star Chris Gayle has insisted controversial comments he made to a female television reporter earlier this year were "just a little fun" as he turned on critics including Andrew Flintoff and Ian Chappell. Gayle, 36, came under fire for asking Australian broadcaster Mel McLaughlin out on a date in a live television interview during a Big Bash Twenty20 game in January.

"I wanted to see your eyes for the first time, hopefully we can win this game and then we can have a drink after as well," said star batsman Gayle, before adding: "Don't blush, baby." Chappell and Flintoff, former captains of Australia and England respectively, were among those to criticize Gayle's conduct. But Gayle, in an extract from his autobiography published in The Times yesterday, said of his remarks during the Melbourne Renegades' match against Hobart Hurricanes: "I meant it as a joke. I meant it as a little fun. I didn't mean to be disrespectful and I didn't mean it to be taken serious."

'International incident'

"Channel 10's commentary team could be heard laughing in the background... but someone above them clearly decided to step in, and a throwaway comment in a fun format escalates and blows up and within hours it has turned into a major international incident." Flintoff responded on Twitter by saying Gayle had made himself look a "bit of a chop". But Gayle, in his autobiography, said: "The only

chop Freddie (Flintoff) knows is when he used to bowl short to me and I would chop him past backward point for four."

As for Chappell, Gayle said: "Ian Chappell, calling for me to be banned worldwide, a man who was once convicted of unlawful assault in the West Indies for punching a cricket official. "Ian Chappell, how can you ban the Universe Boss? You'd have to ban cricket itself." Saturday saw Gayle facing fresh accusations of sexism following the publication of an interview with female journalist Charlotte Edwardes in The Times magazine. In the article, the Jamaican opener boasted of his "very, very big bat". He also asked Edwardes if she had ever "had" a black man and been in a threesome. The interview also saw Gayle say women did have equality. "Women can do what they want. Jamaican women are very vocal. They will let you know what time is it, for sure," he said. Gayle added: "Women should please their man," explaining: "When he comes home, food is on the table. Serious," although if she also works, "they share" and it is down to the "first person home". Gayle is currently playing for the Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League Twenty20 competition. He is also due to play for Somerset in English cricket's domestic T20 Blast event, having enjoyed a successful spell with the south-west county in 2015. Somerset chief executive Guy Lavender, responding to the Edwardes interview, said: "We were disappointed to read the report in The Times (magazine). —AFP



West Indies star Chris Gayle



PITTSBURGH: Chris Kunitz #14 of the Pittsburgh Penguins celebrates after scoring a goal against Andrei Vasilevskiy #88 of the Tampa Bay Lightning during the 2016 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Consol Energy Center on May 22, 2016. — AFP

JOHNSON'S OT DEFLECTION LIFTS LIGHTNING OVER PENGUINS 4-3

PITTSBURGH: Tampa Bay's Jason Garrison saw his shot deflect off a teammate's back and into the net in the first minute of overtime to give the Lightning a 4-3 win over Pittsburgh on Sunday and a 3-2 lead in their NHL Eastern Conference finals series. A year after falling to Chicago in the Stanley Cup finals, Tampa Bay can head back to the championship round with a win in Game 6 at home on Tuesday. Tyler Johnson, who received stitches and lost teeth when hit in the face by the puck during the warmup before Game 4, was again in the firing line of Garrison's game-winning shot 53 seconds into overtime. "I was just battling in front," Johnson said. "I saw Garry starting to shoot it, thought he was going for my head again, so I turned around."

The goal was credited to Johnson for his seventh goal of the playoffs. The Lightning are 12-1 in the past 13 postseason games in which Johnson has scored. Tampa Bay came from 2-0 down and still trailed 3-2 in the third period but pulled off a vital road victory. Nikita Kucherov scored twice to boost his postseason total to an NHL-best 11 - including a wraparound that beat

Marc-Andre Fleury and tied the game 3-3 with just 3:16 left in regulation. Alex Killorn picked up his fifth of the playoffs as the Lightning handed the Penguins consecutive losses for the first time since January.

Tampa Bay goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 31 shots while Fleury, who returned to the lineup for the first time in more than seven weeks after a concussion and the good form of his rookie replacement Matt Murray, finished with 21 saves, but couldn't protect leads of 2-0 and 3-2. "It wasn't the best I have felt in a game," Fleury said after his 100th playoff game. "Still, I have been practicing a lot, so I should have been better." Brian Dumoulin, Chris Kunitz and Patric Hornqvist scored for the Penguins, who appeared to be in firm control at certain points but now find themselves on the brink of elimination. "This is the first time we've been in this position," coach Mike Sullivan said. "I know our guys will respond the right way. They have for four months, five months now."

While the Penguins have peppered Vasilevskiy for the better part of five games, the Lightning keep finding ways to create quality

chances around the Pittsburgh net, though Garrison's flick toward Johnson might not exactly qualify. "No shot's a bad shot in overtime," Garrison said with a laugh. The Penguins blocked 22 shots before they even made it to the goal crease and continued their series-long dominance in creating pressure at the other end. Dumoulin's first goal in 17 months in the final second of the first period put Pittsburgh in front.

Hornqvist's tap-in off Carl Hagelin's feed made it 2-0 just 90 seconds into the second. Killorn drew Tampa Bay within a goal 13:15 into the second on a wrist shot from the left circle that went in and out of the goal so quickly play continued for a few seconds before referees pointed to the red goal light. Kucherov tied it 70 seconds later on an easy one-timer. Kunitz's rebound with 1:30 left in the second gave the Penguins the lead again. Tampa Bay's Ryan Callahan saw a shot ring off the far post and along the goal line - but not across it - with 3:50 remaining in what appeared to have been the visitors' last chance. But barely 30 seconds later, Kucherov was flying behind the Pittsburgh net to tie it.—AP

FEARLESS HINCHCLIFFE GRABS 100TH INDIANAPOLIS 500 POLE

INDIANAPOLIS: Canada's James Hinchcliffe turned in a fearless performance on Sunday when he grabbed pole for the Indianapolis 500, one year after being critically injured in a crash during practice at the famed Brickyard. Hinchcliffe will be joined on the front row for next Sunday's centennial showcase by two Americans, Josef Newgarden and 2014 Indy 500 winner Ryan Hunter-Reay. "The Arrow Electronics car was an absolute smoke show out there, it was right on the edge," Hinchcliffe told trackside reporters. "Now we've got the best seat in the house for the start of the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500." Two days of qualifying at the sprawling Indianapolis Motor Speedway reached a pulsating climax when Hinchcliffe, the last car onto the track, stormed around the 2.5 mile oval in a four-lap average speed of 230.760 mph (371 kph) triggering wild celebrations in the Schmidt Peterson Motorsport's pit. It was far different scene a year ago when Hinchcliffe was rushed to hospital fighting for his life instead of battling for pole following a spectacular crash that ended his IndyCar season.

The Canadian lost control entering turn three and careened into the wall. A piece of the car's suspension pierced his left thigh and he lost massive amounts of blood. "I came into this

month really hoping we would have a new story to talk about after what happened last year and I think we did it. I can't believe it," a beaming Hinchcliffe told trackside reporters. "A year ago (my parents) came here for a very different reason. They were out of the country when I had my accident and I can't imagine what that plane trip must have been like for them."

"Mom moved in on May 1. She said she wasn't missing a single lap just in case I tried to kill myself again and luckily that wasn't the case."

It was a big day for the little guys at the Brickyard as Hinchcliffe and Newgarden, driving for two of IndyCar's smaller outfits, upstaged two of the sports giants Penske Racing and Chip Ganassi Racing. Newgarden, who drives for local outfit Ed Carpenter Racing, threw down the gauntlet putting his Chevrolet at the top of the timing sheets with a 230.700 mph average and then watched nervously as Townsend Bell, three-time winner Helio Castroneves, Will Power and Hunter-Reay all failed to better his effort.—Reuters



INDIANAPOLIS: James Hinchcliffe, of Canada, celebrates after winning the pole for the Indianapolis 500 auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indianapolis on Sunday, May 22, 2016. — AP

INJURED BLACKWELL SLAMS 'INHUMAN' EUBANKS

LONDON: Nick Blackwell has spoken of his "disgust" at the "inhuman" reaction of Chris Eubank Jnr and his father following the British middleweight title clash that threatened to cost him his life. Blackwell was placed in an induced coma having collapsed shortly after being stopped the bout with Eubank Jnr back in March. The 25-year-old, who has since retired, was found to have suffered a bleed on the skull but woke after a week without requiring surgery. Television images appeared to show Eubank Sr telling his son not to aim for Blackwell's head during the fight, which was stopped in the 10th round by referee Victor Loughlin.

"Even in sparring, I tell Junior to stay away from the head because his punching is fast, powerful and dangerous," Eubank, a former middleweight and super-middleweight world champion, told the BBC days after the bout. "So most certainly I was saying this to protect the fighter." That led Blackwell to say the Eubanks were trying to "grab as much attention as they could" and "make themselves look like the good guys". Blackwell told The Sun: "I haven't any hard feelings about the fight because you're in there to win and try and hurt someone-it's just the stuff he has done after. It's inhuman, it's disgusting."

"My family and friends were begging them not to talk, but they ignored it." I was

still in a coma but they went ahead and did it. "That's the Eubanks, isn't it? They just want attention, no matter if it's a bad or a good thing. "If Chris Jnr was in a coma and I wanted to do a press conference on the Tuesday and their family was begging me not to do it, I would not do it. "My promoter was begging Chris Snr. The Boxing Board of Control rang him and begged him not to do it." Eubank

senior's ringside comments were seen by many as a reaction to his 1991 World Boxing Organization super-middleweight title stoppage-win over Michael Watson. That bout ended with Watson needing major surgery. It also left him with irreparable brain damage and partially paralyzed.

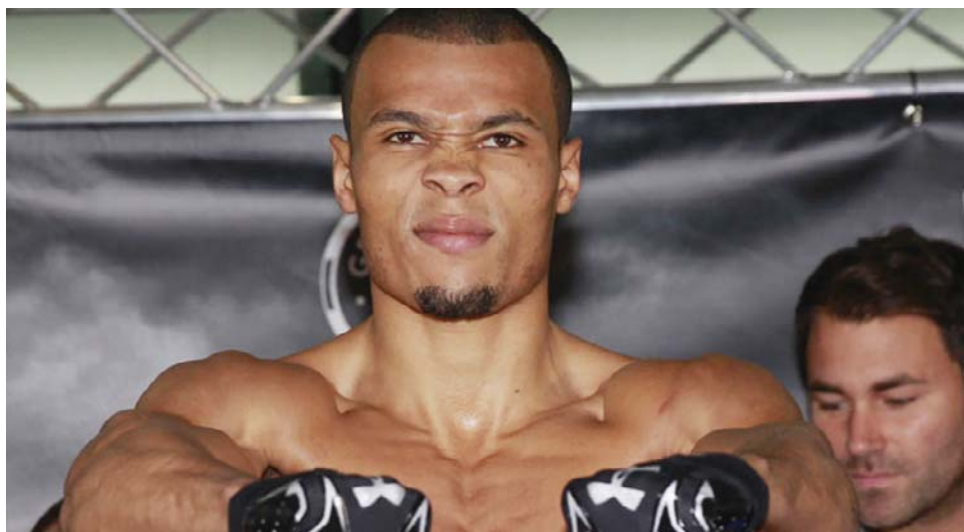
But Blackwell said: "The people who saved my life were the referee, the person

who put me in the coma and the people at St Mary's Hospital. The Eubanks didn't save my life. "Chris Jnr was asked later if he'd pick the belt or my health. He refused to answer. "I'm not being funny, but someone's health is more important. "The night of the fight he went partying. He was celebrating...I would have wanted to go to the hospital and be by his side until he woke up." Eubank Jnr

defended his conduct by telling the Sun: "People and media demanded that we speak to them. If we had just said 'No comment' it would have come off as cold." The 26-year-old added: "If Nick is part of the small percentage that took offence, that's unfortunate. It's sad for me to hear something like that. "All I have ever wanted for Nick has been the best."—AFP



Nick Blackwell



Chris Eubank Jnr

30 THE NEW 20 AS VETERANS FLOOD FRENCH OPEN

PARIS: Once littered with a generation of teenage Grand Slam champions, the balance atop the tennis pyramid has since shifted markedly in favor of the sport's more experienced pros with a record 51 men aged 30 or over in the 2016 French Open main draw. That figure, just a shade under 40 percent of the 128-man field, easily eclipses the previous high of 41 from this year's Australian Open and could have been higher if not for the withdrawal of 17-time Grand Slam winner Roger Federer. But while the likes of Mats Wilander, Stefan Edberg, Boris Becker and Pete Sampras all claimed their first major titles before turning 20, Rafael Nadal remains the only teenaged

champion in the past 25 years. The Spaniard, who himself turns 30 on June 3, downed Federer in four sets to win the 2005 French Open on his tournament debut—the beginning of Nadal's remarkable clay-court reign. However, just four teens are present in the first round of Roland Garros this year with promising German youngster Alexander Zverev the highest-rated of the quartet at 41 in the world. Zverev is joined in the draw by Borna Coric, Quentin Halys and 2015 boys' singles finalist Taylor Fritz, with Croatia's Coric, who reached the third round in Paris last year, the only one to have registered multiple wins at a Grand Slam event.

At the other end of the spectrum is 37-year-old Radek Stepanek, the oldest player in the field, who came through three rounds of qualifying to set up a first-round match against second seed Andy Murray.

"These young guys, that's a challenge for me. It's three generations of players I'm meeting on the courts, and I'm still able to beat them, which is giving me confidence," Stepanek, the former world number eight, told rolandgarros.com. "To be compared with guys like Jimmy Connors is very special because I was always keen to learn from the past generation. I always say that history proves everything and now it's only repeating in

a different way." Last year Stepanek became the oldest man to win a match in Paris since 38-year-old Connors in 1991, having recovered from a crippling back injury that could have ended his career. Stepanek, who turns 38 in November, is far from the only veteran still plugging away in his twilight years with towering Croat Ivo Karlovic, also 37, seeded 27th at Roland Garros. Even the average age of the top 10 seeds without the 34-year-old Federer is 28 years and six months, with defending champion Stan Wawrinka aiming to become just the fifth man in the Open era to win two or more Grand Slams after turning 30.

As for Nadal, bidding to become just

the second player since Margaret Court to win 10 titles at any Grand Slam event, age is just a number for the world number five. "No, I'm not feeling old. On court is true that I had a lot of years here on the tour, but in terms of mentality and in terms of life I feel myself young," said Nadal, who would also break Guillermo Vilas' record for most clay-court titles with another victory in the French capital. "I don't think about going to be 30. You know, time never stops. Nobody stops the time. That's not a good thing, but at the same time, I am happy with my life. I enjoyed all these years on the tour, and I hope to keep enjoying the next couple of years." — AFP

FRUSTRATED OPEN CHIEF FORGET 'CONFIDENT' OF A ROOF BY 2020

PARIS: French Open chief Guy Forget insisted yesterday that the showpiece Court Philippe Chatrier will have a roof by 2020 as a wet and chilly Roland Garros endured another frustrating day of rain delays. After just 10 of 32 matches were completed in a little over four hours of play on Sunday, the second day of the tournament was hit by another two and a half hour delay. That in turn pushed 12 of the scheduled 66 matches back to Tuesday. It once again brought into sharp focus that the French Open is the only one of the four Slams not to have a covered court.

Both the Australian Open and Wimbledon have stadiums with roofs while the US Open's cavernous Arthur Ashe stadium will be covered for the first time this year. "I think it's a question of respect to the crowd, to the people, to you guys from the media and the players that are waiting hours and hours in the lounges, in the locker rooms," said former Davis Cup winner Forget. "We wait and wait and wait and wait. While Wimbledon, Melbourne, and

New York now have the roof, you know, we'll have to wait until 2020." The historic Roland Garros site is the smallest of the four Slams and when it rains, it becomes terribly congested with thousands of fans jostling for the few areas of cover.

The planned 350-million-euro expansion of the grounds set in the leafy and plush western district of Paris has, however, hit trouble. A new 5,000-seat stadium is planned for the neighboring Serres d'Auteuil but work has come to a halt due to ongoing protests over the impact the work will have on the botanical gardens historic greenhouses which date back to the 19th century. That stadium will only be completed at 2018 at the earliest. "I think this is the perfect example of why we need to get bigger, so the stadium is not as congested as it is today. We need to modernize our facility for these reasons. It's a necessity," added Forget. "It's an ongoing process which will take us in 2020 where hopefully everything will be done. And the roof is actually the last piece of that puzzle." — AFP

RAIN BRINGS MORE HAVOC TO SECOND DAY OF FRENCH OPEN

PARIS: Heavy rain brought more havoc to the French Open yesterday with the scheduled 1100 (0900GMT) start time delayed by 90 minutes leaving organizers' hopes of playing 66 matches looking decidedly optimistic. With rain not expected to ease until around 1500 (1300GMT), the tournament was already facing a backlog after just over four hours of play were possible on Sunday. Temperatures also plummeted to a chilly 12 degrees although forecasters expect highs of around 24 degrees by the weekend.

If the rain relents, Andy Murray and defending champion Stan Wawrinka are due to start their campaigns against a pair of fiery Czechs. Second seed Murray, a three-time semi-finalist in Paris, takes on 37-year-old Radek Stepanek, the oldest man in the draw and one of a record 51 men over the age of 30 to start the first round. Murray, buoyed by beating world number one Novak Djokovic to the Rome Masters title on clay on the eve of Roland Garros, holds a 6-2 career record over Stepanek. But the wily Czech is a former world number eight who is a Grand Slam doubles and Davis Cup champion.

Despite his advancing years, Stepanek came through the qualifying competition and that's a factor which makes Murray wary of the challenge. "The qualifiers have played three matches. That's tough," said Murray. "They are probably feeling pretty good about their conditions and comfortable on the courts." Stepanek is one of the game's more entertaining characters whose antics on court occasionally get

under the skin of opponents. Off court, his life is just as colorful—he was engaged to Martina Hingis, married and divorced former player Nicole Pietrangeli and briefly dated two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitová. Wawrinka, who shattered Djokovic's latest attempt to complete the career Grand Slam with victory in last year's final, takes on another Czech, Lukas Rosol. Rosol famously defeated Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon in 2012 and was involved in a bad-tempered clash with Murray in Munich last year when the Scot told the Czech that "everyone hates you". Wawrinka defeated Rosol as recently as last Friday in the semi-finals in Geneva on his way to the title. Japanese fifth seed Kei Nishikori is due to complete his match with Italy's Simone Bolelli. Nishikori was leading 6-1, 7-5, 2-1 when play was halted on Court Philippe Chatrier on Sunday.

Victory would give the 26-year-old Japanese his 50th Grand Slam win. Second seed Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland starts against Serbia's Bojana Jovanovski. Radwanska was a quarter-finalist in 2013 but lost in the first round to Germany's Annika Beck last year. Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova, the 2009 champion, resumes against Yaroslava Shvedova of Kazakhstan at 4-6, 6-1, 3-1. Fourth seed Garbine Muguruza starts against Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova with a 4-0 career advantage. But Schmiedlova, the world number 37, made the third round in 2014, defeating Venus Williams on the way. Ana Ivanovic, the 2008 champion, takes on France's Oceane Dodin. — AFP

LOVE HIM, HATE HIM, STEPANEK THRIVES AS A CHARACTER ACTOR

PARIS: He's been described as the Don Juan of tennis as well as the sport's least likeable man, but at 37 years old, Radek Stepanek is just happy to still be playing. The colorful and controversial Czech is one of the few devil-may-care characters left in tennis even if his antics often leave opponents feeling cold. From leaping over the net, performing his 'worm' dance, exaggerating celebrations or even facing down potential physical altercations with rivals, the Czech is hard to ignore—on or off the court.

Stepanek was engaged to Martina Hingis, married and then divorced fellow tour professional and top 10 player Nicole Pietrangeli and more recently dated two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitová. But he insists his personal life is taking a different direction these days. "It's two people living different lives together...you can be sure that I am done dating tennis players," said Stepanek who is due to face second seed Andy Murray at the French Open. Having turned pro in 1996, he prefers to spend time on extending a career which is enjoying something of an Indian summer. In 2013, he teamed with India's Leander Paes—who he described as a 'brother'-to win the US Open men's doubles. Since then, he has suffered a crippling back injury which sent his ranking down to its current 128 and forced him into the qualifying tournament at Roland Garros for the first time since 2002. "It's three generations of players I'm meeting on the courts, and I'm still able to beat them, which is giving me confidence," the

former world number eight told rolandgarros.com. "I'm feeling 25 again and enjoying every second of my tennis."

However, not everyone would be pleased to see Stepanek, who last year became the oldest man to win a match in Paris since 38-year-old Jimmy Connors in 1991, still playing. In a 2012 Davis Cup tie against Serbia, he was accused by Janko Tipsarevic of giving him the finger and calling him names at the end of a five-set, five-hour duel. "After five hours and 10 minutes instead of shaking my hand, he gave me the middle finger and told me I am stinking something bad, it's a swear word," said Tipsarevic, who had to be restrained by his team captain from taking the matter further.

Even a teenage Murray took a dislike to the Czech when they met at Wimbledon in 2005 and where his opponent theatrically bent over and kissed the net and played up to the crowd. "I was annoyed at him because he tried to put me off," said Murray. "He knew I was young and that's why he was trying to put me off—but I got the better of him. I don't know if he said anything to me—I wasn't listening. I don't like him." The relationship between the two men seems to have thawed since then. In 2008, Stepanek played as an alternate at the Shanghai ATP season-ending championships but arrived in China without his playing gear which hadn't cleared customs. He was without his contact lenses and had to borrow tennis racquets from Novak Djokovic and socks from Murray. — AFP



PARIS: Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka reacts after winning against Czech Republic's Lukas Rosol during their men's first round match yesterday. — AFP

WAWRINKA ESCAPES HISTORIC BLOW, MUGURUZA STRUGGLES

CHAMPION WAWRINKA SURVIVES ROSOL SCARE AT FRENCH OPEN

PARIS: Stan Wawrinka avoided becoming the first defending champion to lose first round at the French Open yesterday when he battled past combative Lukas Rosol in five tough sets. Third seed Wawrinka fired 56 winners but committed 46 unforced errors and saved eight break points to book a second round clash against Japan's Taro Daniel. Wawrinka, 31, had defeated 59th-ranked Rosol in the semi-finals of the Geneva

clay-court tournament just last Friday. But Rosol went into the match on a chilly Court Philippe Chatrier with the pedigree of having famously stunned Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon in 2012.

That free-swinging masterclass almost paid dividends again yesterday but once he had let slip two break points at 2-2 in the fourth set, his hopes slowly slipped away. Spanish fourth seed Garbine Muguruza was also struggling on Court

Suzanne Lenglen, coming back from a set down to defeat Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova 3-6, 6-3, 6-3. Muguruza, who has made the quarter-finals for the last two years, will take on French wildcard Myrtille Georges, the world number 203, for a place in the last 32.

But the 22-year-old Wimbledon runner-up was far from impressive in the two and a half hour encounter. After dropping the first set, Muguruza had to save nine break points just in the opening game of the second set. She then allowed her 37th-ranked opponent, who has won just one match all year, to claw her way back from 0-4 down to 3-4 in the decider before the Spaniard settled herself to see out the win. Muguruza fired 44 winners but hit 53 unforced errors and had to save 17 of 21 break points.

Play started two and a half hours late yesterday because of more rain with 12 of the 66 scheduled matches pushed back to Tuesday. However, there was plenty of time for notable firsts. Qualifier Cagla Buyukakcay beat Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus 5-7, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 to become the first Turkish woman in the Open era to reach the second round of a Grand Slam. The 26-year-old Buyukakcay, ranked at 83, had earlier this clay-court season become the first Turk to win a WTA title when she triumphed in Istanbul.

Japan's Naomi Osaka won her first match at Roland Garros with a 6-4, 7-5 triumph over Latvian 32nd seed Jelena Ostapenko. Elsewhere, Canadian eighth seed Milos Raonic, a 2014 quarter-finalist, defeated Serbia's Janko Tipsarevic 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 (7/5). Tipsarevic, ranked at 686, was playing his first Roland Garros since 2013 after being treated for a benign tumour on his left foot.

Murray in action

Later on, second seed Andy Murray, a three-time semi-finalist in Paris, took on 37-year-old Radek Stepanek, the oldest man in the draw and one of a record 51 men over the age of 30 to start the first round. Murray, buoyed by beating world number one Novak Djokovic to the Rome Masters title on clay on the eve of Roland Garros, holds a 6-2 career record over Stepanek. But the Czech is a former world number eight who is a Grand Slam doubles and Davis Cup champion.

Despite his advancing years, Stepanek came through the qualifying competition and that's a factor which makes Murray wary of the challenge. "The qualifiers have played three matches. That's tough," said Murray. "They are probably feeling pretty good about their conditions and comfortable on the courts." Japanese fifth seed Kei Nishikori is due to complete his match with Italy's Simone Bolelli. Nishikori was leading 6-1, 7-5, 2-1 when play was halted on Court Philippe Chatrier on Sunday.

Victory would give the 26-year-old Japanese his 50th Grand Slam win. Second seed Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland starts against Serbia's Bojana Jovanovski. Radwanska was a quarter-finalist in 2013 but lost in the first round to Germany's Annika Beck last year. Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova, the 2009 champion, won her resumed match against Yaroslava Shvedova of Kazakhstan 4-6, 6-1, 6-4. There was also a win yesterday for Croatia's Mirjana Lucic Baroni who first played the main draw in Paris in 1999. The 34-year-old knocked out 33-year-old Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia 6-1, 6-2. — AFP



PARIS: Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova serves the ball to Spain's Garbine Muguruza during their women's first round match at the Roland Garros 2016 French Tennis yesterday. — AFP



Group photo of shooters and officials



Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi is pictured with Shooter Khalid Al-Mudhaf

KUWAIT'S SHOOTERS SHINE IN TODI, ITALY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti shooters Abdelrahman Al-Faihan and Khalid Al-Mudhaf won first and second places respectively in the Trap Event of the Green Cup tourna-

ment being held in Todi, Italy. ISSF vice president Luciano Rossi, President of UAE Shooting Federation President, head of the Gulf Organizing Committee Maj General Ahmad Al-Reese and Lebanese Shooting Federation President

Pier Jalakh were present during the tournament.

Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations President and head of delegation Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi congratulated the winners on their

achievements in this annual tournament that is being held under the patronage of Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Al-Maktoum. 400 shooters representing 42 countries participated in the event. Al-Otaibi dedicated the

victory to HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince and Kuwaitis. He also thanked Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and the sports authority for their support.

FONUUA HAILS SPARKLING HULL

LONDON: Mahe Fonua claimed Hull FC's hard work is paying off at last as his double sent them to the top of the Super League table. The Black and Whites trailed 16-10 in the second half to their local rivals Hull KR on Sunday, but Fonua's second try and Mark Minichiello's late score sealed victory for Lee Radford's side at St James' Park. Hull FC are now two points clear on their own at the summit of the standings after 15 rounds of action after breaking a four-way tie with Warrington, Wigan and Catalans.

And former Melbourne Storm star Fonua, who joined the Black and Whites this season from the NRL, is adamant his side are only going to get better. "It's always good to beat our rival team and in a big occasion like Magic Weekend is even better," he said. "We knew it

would be tough regardless of where they are on the ladder but it's always big to get a win against your rival team. "I am trying to do whatever I can to help out the team and put us on the front foot so I am pretty happy with that. "It's great to be top and see that hard work pays off. The boys have been trucking along this season and it's good to be sitting outright first in the table, hopefully we can continue that for the rest of the season."

The most dramatic clash of a bumper Magic Weekend, that welcomed an all-time record crowd of 68,276 fans across both days for the 10th anniversary of the event, also came on Sunday as Jacob Miller slotted a last-gasp drop goal to give Wakefield victory over Catalans. —AFP



Katie Ledecky

POISED FOR STARDOM, LEDECKY SHIES AWAY FROM SPOTLIGHT

NORTH BETHESDA: When an athlete is poised to become a huge Olympic star, it's only natural to wonder what might come next. Hosting "Saturday Night Live," perhaps? Maybe a reality show? Not so with Katie Ledecky. She might be one of the world's greatest swimmers, but everything else about her seems downright ordinary. There is zero interest in the spotlight, just an insatiable desire to keep going faster in the pool. The 19-year-old doesn't have a driver's license yet, perfectly content to ride to practices and meets with her parents. She enjoys playing board games; no video games for her. She's worked with a charity that collects bicycles and ships them to developing countries. She's a big fan of Bruce Springsteen, despite the generation gap.

Parent's dream

When someone brings up the idea of becoming a big star away from the pool - anyone up for show called "Kickin' It With the Ledeckys?" - Katie and her father erupt in laughter. "Yeah, that'll happen," the swimmer said, rolling her eyes. "You've got to get to know us a little better," David Ledecky interjected. "They can come watch us play a game of Scrabble," Katie added. "That's about it." There's nothing ordinary about Ledecky when she dives into the pool. Four years ago, not long after arriving on the international scene, she stunningly captured her first Olympic gold medal with a dominating victory in the 800-meter freestyle at London.

Since then, she's basically been unbeatable in a growing repertoire of freestyle events. She captured four golds at the 2013 world championships in Barcelona, five at the 2014 Pan Pacific Championships, five more at last year's worlds in Kazan. She holds the world record in the 400, 800 and 1,500 free (the latter a non-Olympic event), and will be among the favorites in the 200 free at Rio. Her growing prowess in the 100 free gives her, at the very least, a shot at competing on two relay teams in Brazil, which could set her up for a haul of five gold medals.

Only 10 athletes in the history of the Olympics have captured that much gold in a single games, a list that includes such towering figures as Michael Phelps, Eric Heiden and Paavo Nurmi. More impressive to those she competes against is her ability to pull off historic times pretty much any time she's in the water. Back in 2014, she eclipsed her own world records in

both the 800 and 1,500 free at a low-level meet in suburban Houston. This past January, she set another mark in the 800 at a grand prix meet in Austin, Texas.

Incredibly inspiring

In a sport where swimmers normally taper their training to be at their best only for the biggest competitions, Ledecky has hit a reset button on the way things are done. "It's been incredibly inspiring watching her," said fellow American star Missy Franklin, who won four gold medals in London. "I feel like she's really re-writing the rules of the sport." In suburban Washington, DC, Ledecky trains each day with coach Bruce Gemmell and the Nation's Capital Swim Club, a collection of mostly younger swimmers who can only dream of reaching her heights one day.

Over the course of a 21/2-hour practice at the Georgetown Preparatory School, an elite boys academy that has turned out famous alumni ranging from actor John Barrymore to former US Sen Christopher Dodd, she might swim close to 9,500 yards in the 25-yard pool, a monotonous, back-and-forth grind that separates the true champions from those who only think they're willing to pay the price. Because there's no one in her class on the female side, she does most of her head-to-head training against the coach's son, Andrew Gemmell, who competed in the 1,500 free at London and is hoping to qualify for his second Olympics. Like Franklin, the younger Gemmell realizes he's in the presence of an otherworldly talent. "It's fun being part of that," he said. "It could be 40 years before we see someone like her again."

In practice, Gemmell is usually the faster swimmer. But not always. "Any guy who thinks that they are going to be faster than Katie all the time is lying to himself," Gemmell said. "It definitely keeps me honest. There is a little pride sometimes to not want to get beat by a girl. I hope I help her, too. ... I don't know if she would admit it, but I think, yeah, beating the boys is something fun for her. I think she realizes it's pretty unique, it's a little extra edge. And the fact of the matter is, not many girls can train with her, so she's got to be racing with the guys." So, what makes Ledecky so special?

Imposing wingspan

It's not some unique physical characteristics,

like Franklin's huge feet or Phelps' long torso and imposing wingspan. At around 6 feet tall, Ledecky wouldn't be called diminutive, like American distance queen Janet Evans, but there's nothing that really stands out. "She's relatively short on a world-class scale," Bruce Gemmell said during a recent meet in Atlanta. "She's got small hands. She's got small feet. She doesn't have an excessive wingspan. That's not it." David Ledecky points to a family work ethic that was passed down by Katie's grandparents. Her paternal grandfather was a Czech immigrant who came to the United States in 1947 to build a better life.

Her maternal grandfather won a Silver Star and two Bronze Stars for his valiant service in the Pacific during World War II; afterward, he returned home to become a doctor in his hometown for some 40 years. "I don't know if I would call it a competitive streak in her, but I think there's a lot of determination," David Ledecky said. "I always like to give credit to her grandparents. I think all four of her grandparents are pretty special people."

Katie comes from a family where high achievement is expected. Her father is an attorney. Her mother, Mary Gen Ledecky, was a top college swimmer. Her older brother, Michael, will be graduating from Harvard next month. In the fall, Katie will head off to Stanford to begin her college life, a transition she delayed a year to prepare for the Olympics, though she did take a couple of classes this past fall at Georgetown - History of China and Comparative Political Systems - just to stay in somewhat of an academic frame of mind. She is still pondering what her major might be, mentioning history and psychology as possibilities.

"Not surprisingly, I get asked to do a lot of talks on her," her coach said. "When I'm preparing to do the talk, I always say to my wife, half-kiddingly, that I want to say, 'She works her ass off and she's tough as nails. Does anybody have any questions?' My wife is like, 'They probably won't pay you for an hour's talk to say that.'" Turning serious, Gemmell struggles to find the words to explain Ledecky's success. "She has a real desire to get better," he finally said. "In some ways, I think it's as simple as that." Nothing too flashy, that's for sure. Which seems just right for Ledecky. It's just not her style. Well, except in the pool.—AP



NEW DELHI: A file photo shows Michael Diamond of Australia ejecting a shell after firing a shot during the men's singles trap event at the Karni Singh shooting range in New Delhi. Australia's dual Olympic shooting champion Michael Diamond has been charged with drink-driving and firearms offences, jeopardizing his chances of a seventh Games at Rio this year. — AFP

COACHING REVOLUTION TAKES ICELAND TO TOP TABLE

REYKJAVIK: Rykivik Siggi Eyoﬀsson had only modest success as a professional footballer abroad, but he worked wonders when he returned home to launch a coaching revolution that many credit for Iceland making their European Championship debut this year. With a population of about 329,000 - roughly that of England's soccer wonder-child Leicester - Iceland is the smallest nation to qualify for Euro 2016 in France next month, playing in a group with Austria, Hungary and Portugal. But in spite of its small size the Nordic country of geysers and glaciers has more top-level coaches, per capita, than any other nation and has benefited from a huge investment in facilities including "football houses" and artificial pitches in the past 15 years.

Eyoﬀsson should take a bow. As a 26-year-old with seven years at Icelandic clubs under his belt, he left to play for English and Belgium sides, where he had a modest career, before returning home in 2002. On his return home Eyoﬀsson won successive domestic titles with KR Reykjavik, but then took over as head of education at the KSI,

Icelandic football's governing body, where he launched an overhaul of the coaching system. Eyoﬀsson knew his subject, having studied in the United States before embarking on a football career, acquiring a degree in exercise and sports science, and a Masters in sports psychology.

Now Iceland has nearly 850 coaches holding UEFA licences who, apart from coaching professional teams tutor boys and girls from the age of five. Early results of Eyoﬀsson's revolution showed up with the women's national team qualifying for the Euros in 2009 and 2013. "The KSI deserve so much credit for starting the coaching," said Hermann Hreidarsson, who played in England for 15 years and won the FA Cup with Portsmouth in 2008. "The man behind it was Siggi he kept talking about it when he was head of education until it happened." Hreidarsson recalled his early days in England when he signed for Crystal Palace as a 23-year-old in 1997. "My technical ability was no better than a 14-year-old's today. The improvements have been immense," he said.

New system

Nearly every player Iceland's Euro squad, all of whom play abroad, were coached in their teenage years in the new system. There are other achievements. About 100 Icelanders play overseas, and many more compete full-time or part-time in Iceland - from a playing base of only 3,000 registered adult males. The overhaul of coaching in Iceland was matched by a huge investment in facilities. The boom years before the 2008 economic crash saw indoor "football houses" and artificial pitches arriving in large numbers.

There are seven full-sized indoor pitches, six half-sized pitches for junior games and training, and nearly 200 outdoor artificial pitches of various sizes - with more on the way. Everything was paid for by clubs, municipalities and sponsors. "Football is no longer a six-month game in Iceland," said Omar Smarason, marketing and media manager of the KSI.

"Iceland is out-performing about 150 bigger countries and arguably is the best in the world in developing



Rykivik Siggi Eyoﬀsson

players," said Eyoﬀsson, who helped to ensure that the coaching network extended even to the most remote villages. "You don't know where the next Eidur Gudjohnsen is going to come from," Eyoﬀsson told Reuters, referring to the Icelandic midfielder who has played for top flight foreign clubs

including Chelsea and Barcelona. "It could be a small village, so you need a qualified coach in that village." Eyoﬀsson, 42, left the KSI in 2013 to try club coaching and now works alongside another Icelandic manager Runar Kristinsson as assistant manager at Lillestrom in Norway.—Reuters



MADRID: Sevilla's French defender Adil Rami (left) helps Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez (center) during the Spanish 'Copa del Rey' (King's Cup) final match FC Barcelona vs Sevilla FC on May 22, 2016. —AFP

LUIS SUAREZ IN TEARS AFTER INJURY, COULD MISS COPA

MADRID: Luis Suarez' participation in the Copa America Centenario is in doubt after the Uruguay striker left Spain's Copa del Rey final with an apparent muscle injury and in tears on Sunday. Suarez is expected to undergo tests Monday to find out the extent of the right leg injury that forced him to limp off the pitch in the second half of the game against Sevilla at the Vicente Calderon Stadium in Madrid. He was seen celebrating with the rest of his teammates after Barcelona won 2-0 in extra time to secure its second straight Copa title, but walked gingerly and at times still looked in pain. On Twitter, Suarez showed optimism. "Now we wait for the tests tomorrow," he said. "I hope it's nothing so I can be with my national team next week. Thanks for the support."

Cameras showed the striker crying on the bench after being substituted, with his teammates comforting him. A few times he covered his head with his jersey, looking desolate. Uruguay's first Copa America

game is on June 5 against Mexico. The 100th anniversary edition of the tournament will be held in the United States, the first edition staged outside South America. The striker appeared to get hurt while going for a ball crossed to him inside the area early in the second half. He over-extended his right leg to try to reach the ball and immediately felt a strain on the back of his right leg.

He tried to continue for a bit but ended going to the ground and asked for medical assistance. Suarez walked off the pitch by himself in the 56th minute, very slowly and clearly in pain. Barcelona was yet to provide any official information about the injury, only saying that it would be re-evaluated. Suarez had been crucial to the team in the final stages of the season. He had scored 14 goals in the last five matches. Suarez finished the season with 59 goals in all competitions and was the top scorer in the Spanish league with 40, five more than Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo.— AP

BEIJING GUOAN FIRE COACH ZACCHERONI

SHANGHAI: Struggling Beijing Guoan sacked their coach Alberto Zaccheroni but saw no immediate improvement as a laboring 1-1 draw at unfashionable Shijiazhuang left them just two points above the Chinese Super League relegation zone. The Italian former Juventus and Japan coach was shown the door after winning just two of nine matches during an acrimonious spell in charge at the capital city powerhouse that saw fan protests and criticism from Chinese media.

With former player and backroom staff member Xin Feng installed as caretaker boss, hopes for an immediate improvement were dashed as the Hebei province side took a 38th-minute lead when goalkeeper Guan Zhen stepped up to slot home a penalty. After Brazilian midfielder Renato Augusto secured a point with a 53rd-minute equalizer, Xin told Sina Sports: "We have played five games in the last 15 days and the players are fatigued."

Beijing Guoan spent eight million euros (\$9 million) on Turkish striker Burak Yilmaz in January, but the former Galatasaray man has only played in two matches because of injury. "We are still without key players at the back and up front, so a draw today was a decent outcome," said Xin. The club have so far given no indication if or when a long-term replacement for Zaccheroni will be appointed. At the top of the table, Luiz Felipe Scolari's Guangzhou Evergrande won their ninth consecutive match to go six points clear of second-placed Jiangsu Suning.

Evergrande sit on 27 points from 10 games after former Charlton and Celtic midfielder Zheng Zhi, plus in-form Brazilian forwards Ricardo Goulart and Alan were on target in the 3-0 win at Liaoning Whowin-Alan finding the net for the fifth league match in succession. Jiangsu lost ground with a 1-0 defeat at Tianjin Teda, whose Senegalese striker Mbaye Diagne scored the only goal in the 24th minute. Sven-Goran Eriksson's third-placed Shanghai SIPG are now just a point behind Jiangsu after a 1-0 win at home to Hangzhou Greentown, thanks to Ivorian striker Jean Kouassi's 55th minute-winner. Also on 20 points in fourth place are Hebei China Fortune who beat Yanbian Funde 1-0 at home through Dong Xuesheng's goal in the 31st minute.— AFP



Alberto Zaccheroni

UNITED SACK VAN GAAL

MAN UTD SHARES DIP IN CHOPPY FRANKFURT TRADING

LONDON: Louis van Gaal has been sacked as manager of Manchester United, several British media outlets reported yesterday, amid speculation he will be replaced by Jose Mourinho. Both Van Gaal and leading employment lawyer Paul Gilroy were seen entering United's Carrington training ground yesterday. Gilroy's clients have included David Moyes, whose sacking as United manager paved the way for Van Gaal's appointment. There has a yet been no official confirmation from United, 20-times English champions, about the position of Van Gaal, who still has a season remaining on his three-year contract.

But James Ducker, the northern football correspondent of Britain's Daily Telegraph newspaper, tweeted yesterday: "Paul Gilroy QC finalizing Van Gaal's severance package now...£5m pay off. Expect an announcement lunchtime." The BBC said that United would make a statement about Van Gaal at 1:00pm local time yesterday. British media have been awash with reports of Van Gaal's demise, after a leak from an unknown source spread as Manchester United lifted the FA Cup on Saturday. The Dutchman cryptically commented, "It's over" as he left the squad's Cup final hotel on Sunday, but it was not clear whether he was referring to his tenure or United's season.

The BBC said Van Gaal had not been informed whether he was staying for next season, although it said Saturday's 2-1 win over Palace at Wembley was believed to have been his last game in charge of United. Van Gaal himself was defiant after Saturday's Cup final. "I show you the cup and I don't discuss it with my friends of the media, who already sacked me for six months," the 64-year-old said. "Which manager can do that, what I have done?"

Despite winning their first trophy since the great Alex Ferguson's retirement in 2013, Van Gaal's United didn't challenge for the Premier League title and failed to qualify for the Champions League. Fans were also unhappy with the brand of football their team played under Van Gaal. United scored just 49 league goals this season, their lowest return for 26 years and many supporters felt Van Gaal's approach 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 their Premier League title defense.

United captain Wayne Rooney accepted this term's performance had not been good enough by the standards expected at Old Trafford. "He has been under pressure," Rooney said of Van Gaal. "I think we all have. That's part of playing for Manchester United and managing Manchester United-it is a massive club. "You



Louis van Gaal

have to set standards and we fell below them this season. "But we have to make sure as players we get back to those standards and make sure we are back challenging for the main trophies." Meanwhile former United midfielder Ray Wilkins said Mourinho was the man to revitalize the club. "He (Mourinho) is a winner-there is no two ways about it," Wilkins, also a former Chelsea assistant manager, told talkSPORT radio yesterday. "When he goes to a club, normally he wins a big trophy within the first couple of years."

Man U shares dip

Meanwhile, shares in English soccer giant Manchester United slipped in volatile trading on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange yesterday, following media reports the club was set to replace its manager with former Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho. Manchester United's main stock market listing is in New York, although it has a secondary, and less widely traded, share listing in Frankfurt. The Premier League club's Frankfurt-listed shares briefly opened up 2.4 percent, but then slipped back to stand 2.5 percent lower. Manchester United's shares closed up 2.4 percent in New York on Friday. British media reported that Mourinho, 53, would take over at Manchester United even though Dutchman Louis van Gaal, who steered United to an extra-time FA Cup final win over Crystal Palace on

Saturday, had a year left on his contract.

Mourinho, sacked by Chelsea in December after his second spell in charge of the west London club, has also managed Porto, Inter Milan and Real Madrid, winning Europe's premier Champions League tournament with both Porto and Inter Milan. Manchester United was bought in 2005 for about 800 million pounds (\$1.3 billion) by the Glazer family, owners the Tampa Bay Buccaneers franchise in the National Football League. Shares in Manchester United were listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 2012 in an initial public offering.

According to Thomson Reuters data, the Glazers' Red Football LLC investment vehicle has a 20 percent stake in the club's New York-listed shares. US investment firm Baron Capital Management, Lansdowne Partners, Jupiter Asset Management and Fidelity are among other major institutional investors. The New York-listed shares have fallen by around 6 percent so far in 2016. Earlier in May, Manchester United reported record third-quarter revenues and higher earnings. However, van Gaal's failure to qualify for the Champions League is likely to have proved costly. Manchester United said earlier this month that not getting into the Champions League would cost it more than 30 million pounds (\$43.5 million) in revenue next season.—Agencies

SAN JOSE, GALAXY DRAW IN 'CALIFORNIA CLASICO'

LOS ANGELES: Fatai Alashe headed a late equalizer as the San Jose Earthquakes snatched a 1-1 draw against the Los Angeles Galaxy in Major League Soccer's "California Clasico" on Sunday. Alashe glanced in a Chad Barrett cross on 87 minutes to give San Jose a share of the points at the StubHub Center in Carson just four minutes after the Galaxy had taken the lead through a Marvell Wynne own goal.

It was a disappointing result for the Galaxy, who had been hoping to continue their march up the Western Conference standings with a victory. The Galaxy fielded all of the biggest names of their overseas contingent-including Steven Gerrard, Robbie Keane and Ashley Cole-and looked to be on their way to a win after Wynne's own goal on 83 minutes. The San Jose defender steered a Sebastian Lletget cross into his own net as the Earthquakes defense finally cracked after a sustained period of Galaxy pressure in the second half.

Ireland record international goalscorer Keane and Mexican international Giovanni dos Santos had both gone close to opening the scoring in the minutes before San Jose's own goal. However, with Galaxy's boisterous home fans preparing to celebrate a victory, San Jose conjured a goal in a rare foray into Los Angeles territory. Barrett's persistence saw him win the ball on the left flank, and he curled an inviting cross into the area which Alashe met to direct into the Galaxy goal. The draw leaves Galaxy in fifth place in the Western Conference standings with 20 points from 11 games. Real Salt Lake and Vancouver Whitecaps are third and fourth on 20 points ahead of Los Angeles on goal difference.

The Colorado Rapids head the table with 27 points from 13 matches. In Sunday's other game, MLS Cup champions Portland downed Vancouver 4-2 in the Pacific Northwest derby, which saw three penalties awarded. Diego Valeri fired Portland ahead from the spot in the fourth minute and Jack McInerney made it 2-0 just before the half-hour mark. Kekuta Manneh pulled a goal back for the Whitecaps just after half-time but two goals in four minutes from Dairon Asprilla (78) and Darlington Nagbe (82) gave the Timbers a 4-1 lead. Pedro Morales scored a late consolation for Vancouver with a penalty on 84 minutes. — AFP

Sports

Johnson's OT
deflection lifts
Lightning over
Penguins 4-3



Champion
Wawrinka
survives Rosol
score



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MADRID: Barcelona's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Spanish 'Copa del Rey' (King's Cup) final match FC Barcelona vs Sevilla FC at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid on May 22, 2016. — AFP

BARCELONA CLAIM DOUBLE, LIFT KING'S CUP BARCA EDGE OUT SEVILLA IN BAD-TEMPERED CUP FINAL

MADRID: Jordi Alba and Neymar struck in extra-time as Barcelona completed a league and Cup double by lifting the Copa del Rey for a 28th time after a 2-0 win over Sevilla in a fiery game that saw three red cards on Sunday. Javier Mascherano's dismissal just before half-time for pulling down Kevin Gameiro put Barca on the back foot and they were further depleted when 59-goal top scorer Luis Suarez limped off early in the second period. However, they resisted Sevilla's pressure after the break and Barca's numerical disadvantage was cancelled out in stoppage time when Ever Banega saw red for chopping down Neymar.

Barca dominated the extra 30 minutes, but needed just six to finally make the breakthrough when Lionel Messi's sumptuous pass picked out Alba to volley into the far corner. Neymar then slotted home a second in the dying seconds from another brilliant Messi assist after Daniel Carrico had also been dismissed for two bookable offences. "It was a great intense and exciting

final," said Barcelona captain Andres Iniesta. "It was a last push for the club to complete a magnificent season." Sevilla were looking for a double of their own after winning a third consecutive Europa League by beating Liverpool 3-1 on Wednesday. However, just as in a thrilling 5-4 defeat to Barca to open the season in the European Super Cup in August, they fell just short as Luis Enrique's men claimed their fourth trophy of the season, having also won the Club World Cup in December.

"It has been a spectacular end to the season," added Barca boss Luis Enrique. "The team has known how to compete marvelously despite the difficulties we have faced this season." And Sevilla coach Unai Emery believes his side's exertions in midweek robbed them of the energy needed to make their numerical advantage count. "We lacked freshness. If we had have been fresher we would have been able to create more chances," said Emery. "Barca didn't have many opportunities, but they were efficient." The political fallout over an initial ban on

Catalan separatist flags by the Madrid authorities that was eventually overturned on appeal in the courts continued before kick-off as Barca fans jeered the Spanish national anthem. The game appeared to swing Sevilla's way nine minutes before half-time when Mascherano hauled down Gameiro just outside the box as he bore down on goal. Banega nearly doubled Barca's punishment as his sweet strike from the resulting free-kick was brilliantly tipped over the bar by Marc-Andre ter Stegen. Sevilla roared back from a goal down at the break to out-class Liverpool in midweek and started the second-half with intent once more as Banega's low drive came back off the post.

Barca were then dealt another huge blow just before the hour mark when Suarez pulled up with a muscle injury before leaving the field in tears with his chances of representing Uruguay at the Copa America next month now in jeopardy. Sevilla were camped in the Barca half for much of the second half, but struggled to

create clear-cut chances.Grzegorz Krychowiak saw a deflected effort flash just wide, whilst Vicente Iborra's appeals for a penalty after he clashed with Dani Alves were waived away.

Parity was restored in numbers on each side in stoppage time when Banega saw red for tripping Neymar on the edge of the area, but Sergio Rico tipped over Messi's resulting free-kick to take the game into extra time. However, the Spanish international was left flat-footed when Alba latched onto Messi's ball over the top six minutes into extra-time and volleyed across goal into the far corner. Pique kept Sevilla in the game with brilliant saves from Pique and Sergio Busquets, whilst Dani Alves also hit the post from distance as Barca threatened a second. Sevilla's hopes of an equalizer were ended when Daniel Carrico was also sent-off for a second bookable offence. And Messi promptly teed up Neymar to round off Barca's fourth Cup triumph in eight years in stoppage time. — AFP

THUNDER HUMBLE WARRIORS

WASHINGTON: Behind 33 points from Kevin Durant and 30 by Russell Westbrook, the Oklahoma City Thunder humbled defending NBA champion Golden State 133-105 Sunday to seize the lead in their playoff series. The Thunder grabbed a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference finals and captured momentum with the lopsided blowout, making Tuesday's fourth game at Oklahoma City crucial for both clubs.

"We have got to keep the same intensity, same attack mode," Westbrook said. "They didn't have the best record in the NBA for nothing. We've got to come back with the same mindset and play with the same intensity." Golden State, which set an NBA record with 73 regular-season wins, has not lost two games in a row all season but will have to quickly bounce back from an embarrassment. "Using our brains, making them compete, moving the ball-we didn't do any of those things and we got what we deserved," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "I'm confident we're going to come out and play a great game in game four. We'll see what happens."

Either the Thunder, who have won 10 best-of-seven series in a row when going up 2-1, or the Warriors will face the Eastern Conference winners, the Toronto Raptors or Cleveland Cavaliers, in next month's NBA Finals. In addition to sparking the highest-scoring performance by any team in any NBA playoff game this year, Westbrook and Durant each added eight rebounds and blocked two shots while Westbrook also contributed 12 assists. "We've got a physical team, an athletic team and we tried to use that to the best of our ability," Westbrook said. "Our guys do a great job of putting in the work every day. My job is to put the ball in their hands."

Thunder must keep passion

Stephen Curry led Golden State with 24 points and Klay Thompson added 18, but Curry hit only 7-of-17 shots from the floor, Thompson shot 8-of-19 and Draymond Green was 1-of-9. The Warriors were also out-rebounded 52-38. "Come game four, we have to grind them out," Thompson said. "We can't have Westbrook and Durant combine to shoot 60 percent." Durant scored 23 in the first half while Westbrook added 16 as the

Thunder leaped ahead in the second quarter and piled on more punishment in the second half, stretching the lead to 117-80 after three quarters and went on to match a club playoff scoring record. "We were physical and we rebounded the ball well," Durant said. "My teammates did a great job taking the pressure off me. We have to keep playing with the same energy and passion."

The Thunder closed the second quarter on a 32-7 run to seize a 72-47 half-time edge, aided by the Warriors missing 21 of their last 23 first-half shots from the floor. "Frustrating way to end the quarter," Curry said. "It was a bad flow out there. We couldn't stop it. That six minutes decided the game. That's something we have to take care of in game four." Golden State lost their three prior playoff defeats in the past month by a total of 19 points, nine fewer than they lost by in game three. "We got our butts kicked," Kerr said. "It doesn't matter if it's one point or 30."

Green kicked Thunder big man Steven Adams of New Zealand in the groin late in the second quarter and could face a suspension for game four. "I wasn't trying to kick somebody in the mid-section," Green said. "I'm sure he wants to have kids one of these days." Thunder coach Billy Donovan praised the Kiwi's toughness. "That's the one thing with Steven that's really remarkable-he takes a physical pounding and he's a tough kid," Donovan said. "He has got a great pain threshold."

Oklahoma City outscored Golden State 29-13 on fast break points, humbling the team that led the NBA in that category. Time and again Durant and Westbrook penetrated the Warriors defense to slam down a dunk or simply toss in a layup. "We went (isolation) basketball and everything went bad," Green said. "We just have to be better." The Warriors, who hit only 19-of-55 shots from the floor in the first half (34 percent), faced their largest half-time deficit of the season. "We stopped moving the ball," Kerr said. "We took quick shots. It wasn't so much turnovers as bad shots, quick shots, no movement. We weren't forcing them to defend at all and that's death here. We were playing right into their transition game. "We didn't compete hard enough to stay in the game." — AFP



OKLAHOMA CITY: Oklahoma City Thunder guard Dion Waiters (3) dunks against the Golden State Warriors during the first half in Game 3 of the NBA basketball Western Conference finals on Sunday, May 22, 2016. — AP



AL-TAMIMI & COMPANY CLOSES \$250M SUKUK TRANSACTION FOR BOUBYAN BANK



LEVERKUSEN: German chemicals giant Bayer said it had offered \$62 billion for US agriculture group Monsanto as it seeks to create the world's biggest supplier of seeds, pesticides and genetically-modified crops. (inset) Bayer CEO Werner Baumann speaks to the press at the Bayer headquarter in Leverkusen yesterday.—AFP

BAYER DEFIES CRITICS WITH \$62BN MONSANTO OFFER

DRUGS GIANT UNFOLDS BIGGEST FOREIGN TAKEOVER BY A GERMAN FIRM

FRANKFURT: German drugs and crop chemicals group Bayer has offered to buy US seeds company Monsanto for \$62 billion in cash, defying criticism from some of its own shareholders in a bid to grab the top spot in a fast-consolidating farm supplies industry. The unsolicited proposal, which includes debt, would be the largest foreign takeover by a German company if accepted.

The move would eclipse a planned combination of Dow Chemical and DuPont's agriculture units and comes just three weeks after Werner Baumann took over as Bayer CEO. It was condemned by a major Bayer shareholder as "arrogant empire-building" when news of the proposal emerged last week.

Giving details for the first time, Bayer said yesterday it would offer \$122 per share, a 37 percent premium to Monsanto's stock price before rumors of a bid surfaced. "We fully expect a positive answer of the Monsanto board of directors," Baumann told reporters on a conference call, describing criticism from some investors as "an uneducated reaction in the media" when deal terms were not yet known, and driven by an element of surprise.

Monsanto, which said last week it had a received an approach from Bayer but gave no details, has yet to comment on the offer. Its shares were 5 percent higher at

\$106.60 at 1430 GMT, well below Bayer's offer and potentially reflecting doubts about Bayer's assertion that regulatory scrutiny would be manageable. Antitrust experts see an overlap in the seeds business, particularly in soybeans, cotton and canola. Bayer's LibertyLink line of weed killers, plus crops that are resistant to it, are an important alternative for farmers suffering from weeds that have grown resistant to Monsanto's Roundup herbicide.

Shares in Bayer, which had already fallen 14 percent since rumours of a bid emerged last week, dropped as much as 5.4 percent on Monday to a new 2-1/2 year low of 84.68 euros.

"UPPER LIMIT"

Global agrochemicals companies are racing to consolidate, partly in response to a drop in commodity prices that has hit farm incomes and also due to the growing convergence between seeds and pesticides markets. ChemChina is buying Switzerland's Syngenta for \$43 billion after Syngenta rejected a bid from Monsanto, while Dow and DuPont are forging a \$130 billion business.

With German rival BASF also looking into a possible tie-up with Monsanto, Bayer has moved to avoid being left behind. Baumann rejected suggestions from some

investors that Bayer should instead try to forge a joint venture with Monsanto, saying this would have tax disadvantages.

Sources close to the matter have said BASF is unlikely to start a bidding war with Bayer. BASF declined to comment yesterday. But analysts say Bayer might still have to pay more to persuade Monsanto and its shareholders to sell up. That could be a problem, with some saying Bayer's proposal, at 15.8 times its earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) for the year ended Feb. 29, is already a stretch for the German company. "The price that has now been disclosed is at the upper limit and it is just about economical. Should it rise further, which is to be assumed, the takeover will become increasingly unattractive," said Markus Manns, a fund manager at Union Investment, Bayer's 14th biggest investor.

Berenberg analyst John Klein said Monsanto and its shareholders were likely to argue that based on 2017 EBITDA expectations, the bid would represent a multiple of only 14 times, compared with the nearly 16 times ChemChina agreed to pay for Syngenta.

When pressed by analysts whether Bayer might sweeten its bid, Baumann said the offer reflected Monsanto's value. "We are putting forward a very, very full price," he said.

AMBITIOUS SYNERGIES

Bayer said it would finance the bid with a combination of debt and equity, primarily a share sale to existing investors. Equity would account for about a quarter of the deal value. Equinet analyst Marietta Miemietz, who has a 'buy' rating on Bayer stock, said the extra debt appeared manageable but could limit Bayer's ability to invest in its healthcare business, which some analysts think needs a boost to its drugs pipeline.

Baumann said Bayer would continue to develop its healthcare arm, which includes stroke prevention pill Xarelto and aspirin, the painkiller it invented more than a century ago.

"We are not feeding Peter by starving Paul here," he said, adding no asset sales were planned to help pay for the deal. Bayer also forecast synergies from a deal with Monsanto would boost annual earnings by around \$1.5 billion after three years, plus additional future benefits from integrated product offerings - a reference to its push to combine the development and sale of seeds and crop protection chemicals.

Berenberg analysts, who have a 'buy' rating on Bayer shares, described the synergies estimate as "very ambitious". — Reuters

GE ANNOUNCES DEALS WORTH OVER \$1.4 BILLION WITH SAUDI ARABIA

DUBAI: General Electric Co said yesterday it made a series of deals with Saudi Arabia worth more than \$1.4 billion as part of the kingdom's ambitious plan to wean itself off crude oil. GE said \$1 billion worth of projects would be implemented by 2017 with the Saudi Arabian Industrial Investments Co, which was formed in 2014 by royal order to boost the country's manufacturing industry. GE said its agreement with the organization would see it help develop industry and manufacturing in the kingdom, as well as create jobs for Saudi youth.

Another \$400 million would go toward building a forging and casting manufacturing facility for the marine and energy industry in the kingdom, with hopes of it being operational by 2020 and providing over 2,000 jobs, GE said. In the future, there's a possibility of another \$2 billion in projects coming after 2017, the company said. Other projects, which GE did not offer monetary values for, include boosting the local aviation repair industry, offering digital services to factories, working on manufacturing LED lights in the kingdom and training young men and women.

GE's chairman and CEO Jeffrey Immelt said the project showed the company wanted to expand its long-time presence in Saudi Arabia in "a new and visionary way". "Together, we will create quality jobs for Saudi youth ... boost exports, enhance



JEDDAH: Saudi Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid Al-Falih (second left) poses with Chairman and CEO of General Electric Co Jeffrey Immelt (left) and others yesterday. — AP

economic competitiveness and support the vision and aspirations of Saudi Arabia," Immelt said in a statement.

The deal comes as part of the kingdom's Vision 2030 plan to wean itself off dependence on oil production. The plan, announced by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the son of King Salman, also calls for floating a stake in the world's largest oil company, Saudi Arabian Oil Co., and setting up one of the world's

biggest government investment funds.

Immelt met yesterday in Jeddah with Khaled Al-Falih, Saudi Arabia's new energy minister and the chairman of Aramco, the state-run Saudi Press Agency later reported. The agency offered no details of the agreements between the kingdom and GE. "We are delighted in Saudi Arabia that GE is supporting the kingdom's Vision 2030 and the new plan for economic growth," Falih said in a statement.—AP

UAE'S ISSUE OF BUSINESS DEBTORS SKIPPING COUNTRY 'CONTAINED'

DUBAI: The problem of small business owners in the United Arab Emirates "skipping" the country over unpaid debts has been contained, although it is set to remain an issue well into next year, the head of the Gulf state's banking federation said yesterday.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have come under pressure in recent months as low oil prices have resulted in slowing economic growth and a tightening up on lending by banks.

For those struggling to make payments in a nation where bouncing a cheque risks landing the issuer in jail, many choose to "skip" the country instead. Estimates put the total figure for deserted debts in the year to November 2015 at around 5 billion dirhams (\$1.36 billion). With opaque and ineffective bankruptcy laws in the UAE, the country's banking federation agreed in March to a voluntary system whereby indebted businesses could work with their lenders to put new payment schedules in place. This system has been well received by customers, according to Abdul Aziz al-Ghurair, chairman of the UAE Banks Federation, noting that while some business owners continue to leave others were negotiating with lenders.

"I think it's been contained and it's under control," said Ghurair when asked whether the 5 billion-dirham figure for desertions had increased since he gave it in November. "It's a work in progress and we'll have to continue working this year and next year to tackle this issue but, overall, the size of the issue is very small compared to the 1 trillion of lending," he added on the sidelines of an event to launch an initiative aimed at improving governance at Gulf family businesses.

EIBOR

Meanwhile a new system for calculating the Emirates interbank offered lending rate (EIBOR) was now in place and would help provide a better and more transparent quotation, Ghurair confirmed yesterday. Banking sources said in April the UAE's central bank was reforming the way in which banks quote indicative money market rates, used to price financial instruments in the Gulf's top banking centre.

Within the new system, which will be audited on a quarterly basis to ensure its effectiveness, was a component which would reflect the cost of a bank going to the market for funding, as opposed to the past in which only bank-to-bank lending was included. "It should reflect the true cost of funding for the bank, it's not just bank-to-bank," said Ghurair. Gulf banks are increasingly turning to international debt markets for funding after years of bountiful liquidity provided by governments placing oil revenues on deposit, cash which is now being withdrawn to bridge budget shortfalls.

Meanwhile, Dubai-based Emirates Islamic Bank has launched the sale of \$750 million in sukuk with five years duration, which was to be completed later yesterday, a document from lead managers showed. Pricing for the instrument has been set at 220 basis points over midswaps after attracting orders from investors worth more than \$2.2 billion, the document showed.

The pricing is tighter than the 225 bps over the same benchmark indicated earlier in the day, and well inside initial guidance of the 240 bps area. The sharia-compliant bank, owned by lender Emirates NBD, hired itself and its owner to arrange the issue, as well as Standard Chartered, Al Hilal Bank, Bank ABC, Dubai Islamic Bank, HSBC, Maybank and Noor Bank. — Reuters



The ExxonMobil refinery in Notre-Dame-de-Gravenchon, northwestern France. — AFP

OIL PRICES DIP AS IRAN SAYS NO PLAN TO FREEZE OUTPUT

LONDON: Oil prices slipped yesterday after Iran said it had no plans to join any output freeze by other major producers. Despite a recent rebound, world crude prices are still at less than half of their levels of June 2014 because of a supply glut, partly fed by Iran's return to world markets in January after the lifting of nuclear-linked Western sanctions.

"The government has no plans for the time being to freeze or interrupt its increase in oil output and exports based on plans that are being carried out," National Iranian Oil Co. managing director Rokneddin Javadi told Iran's Mehr news agency, according to Bloomberg News.

Tehran's stance appeared to reinforce market doubts that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) — of which Iran is a member-will take any firm action to curb oversupply at its next meeting in Vienna on June 2. Last month, talks in Doha involving OPEC members and other major producers such as Russia had already failed to reach a deal to cap production.

At about 1200 GMT, US benchmark West Texas Intermediate for delivery in July was down 54 cents at \$47.87 a barrel. Brent

North Sea crude for July shed 46 cents to \$48.26. CMC Markets senior sales trader Alex Wijaya told AFP the news out of Iran dashed rising confidence among traders prompted by a tightening of the supply-demand equation, with US output steadily falling and Nigeria and Canada suffering temporary cutbacks.

Officials had on Sunday lifted the evacuation order for several oil production sites north of Fort McMurray, the city threatened by massive Canadian wildfires, although officials said thick smoke still prevented a resumption of most production. The fires, which forced the evacuation of 100,000 residents of Fort McMurray and the oil facilities to the north, interrupted extraction and refining of an estimated 1.2 million barrels of oil per day.

However, Wijaya said traders' focus would now shift to longer-term supply issues. "There is concern that supply could still exceed demand at this point of time," Wijaya said. "The key going forward is the OPEC meeting. If there is a strong agreement from the meeting and concrete implementation, the market will react to this." — AFP

KUWAIT REAL ESTATE MARKET CONTINUES TO BE MUTED

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

KUWAIT: Activity in the real estate market continues to be muted despite the improvement in oil prices and the stock market during the last two months. Real estate activity softened in April following a slight pickup in March. Real estate sales continue to lag performance from a year ago, with the exception of the commercial sector. Sales totalled KD 902 million year-to-date, down 22 percent for the same period last year. Meanwhile, NBK's real estate price indices were mixed. While the residential home price index slipped to its January 2014 levels, the other two indices posted stable and positive growth y/y, hinting at some firmness.

Activity in the residential sector cooled after a somewhat better performance in March. The sector registered 186 transactions during the month worth KD 60 million, down by 49 percent and 54 percent y/y, respectively. The slowdown was more pronounced than in March.

Residential real estate price indices posted mixed signals. The NBK residential home price index slid 6.9 percent y/y for the second consecutive month bringing down the price index to January 2014 levels. On the other hand, the residential land price index, which has been highly correlated with oil prices, remains firm as oil prices crept back above \$45 per barrel. At 197 points, the index recorded a growth of 8.2 percent y/y.

In the investment sector, sales continued to soften in April, recording KD 75 million in sales for the month as smaller single apartments (for investment) dominated activity . Apartment transactions were 111 in April, more than double from a year ago. The shift in the composition of investment sector sales towards individual apartments rather than buildings resulted in a 35 percent y/y decline in April KD sales while the number of transactions improved by 12.3 percent y/y.

There was little change in the investment-building price index in April. The index stood at 212 points, 0.5 percent above the previous year. (Chart 5). The rising demand for small-ticket investments, coupled with rising construction material costs which could inject more volatility

into investment prices. Commercial sector sales continued to improve from the previous year. Sales for the month totalled KD 60.4 million, up 13.3 percent y/y. This was on only 11 transactions, half the number recorded during the same period last year. The two largest transactions recorded were; a new office tower in Al Murqab for KD 18 million and a commercial tower in Jahra for KD 8.15 million. Kuwait Credit Bank

(KCB) approved KD 19.2 million loans in April. The value of approved loans during the month was down 31 percent y/y, it was the lowest in five years, signalling a slow start for the bank's fiscal year. Disbursed loans were up by 12 percent y/y totalling KD 27.1 million. Loans approved or disbursed for new constructions were down by 56 percent and 57 percent, respectively.

Table 1: Real estate sales and KCB housing loans

Real estate sales	Year average		2016		m/m		y/y
	2014	2015	Feb	Mar	Apr	%	%
Sales (KD mn)	365.8	253.5	257.8	235.0	195.4	-16.8	-34.6
Residential property	158.3	113.4	79.7	96.1	60.0	-37.5	-54.1
Investment property	151.0	102.2	91.1	81.8	75.0	-8.4	-34.5
Commercial property	46.4	37.9	90.0	57.1	60.4	5.8	13.3
Number of transactions	635	452	341	425	343	-19.3	-32.9
Residential property	484	323	221	307	186	-39.4	-48.5
Investment property	143	120	106	104	146	40.4	12.3
Commercial property	8	8	14	14	11	-21.4	-45.0
Transaction size (KD '000)	557.1	566.0	756.0	552.9	569.7	3.0	-2.5
Residential property	334.0	351.6	346.9	313.0	322.7	3.1	-10.9
Investment property	1084.7	881.6	859.5	786.6	513.4	-34.7	-41.7
Commercial property	4,937	5,185	6,431	4,076	5491	34.7	106.0
KCB housing loans							
Approved loans (KD mn)	25.4	20.1	23.7	23.9	19.2	-19.6	-30.8
New construction	20.8	15.5	15.2	12.6	10.3	-18.4	-56.5
Purchase of existing homes	3.3	3.1	3.1	2.6	3.1	22.8	-6.3
Additions & renovations	1.3	1.4	5.4	8.7	5.8	-33.7	623.2
Number of approved loans	423.3	379.5	477	536	424	-20.9	-19.8
New construction	303.3	229.2	225	185	149	-19.5	-57.2
Purchase of existing homes	52.2	49.4	45	38	50	31.6	4.2
Additions & renovations	67.8	100.9	207	313	225	-23.1	69.2
Disbursed loans (KD mn)	16.9	22.0	24.5	31.0	27.1	-12.5	-12.0
New construction	13.1	17.5	16.6	23.2	19.8	-14.9	-21.8
Purchase of existing homes	2.5	2.8	4.9	2.6	2.3	-12.1	-11.2
Additions & renovations	1.2	1.8	3.1	5.1	5.1	-1.6	71.5

News

in brief

IMF visit to focus on Moldova's banking system

CHISINAU, Moldova: An International Monetary Fund mission will focus on developments in the finance and banking system in Moldova, which is seeking a loan after the disappearance of more than \$1 billion from Moldovan banks. Ivanna Vladkova-Hollar, the head of a fact-finding mission to Moldova, said yesterday the visit was the first step toward negotiating a loan that Moldova desperately needs. She said Moldova's banks need to operate within a regulated banking system, without outside interference. Prime Minister Pavel Filip said yesterday his government would continue reforms in the finance, banking and judicial system, to fulfil conditions that creditors demand.

Dubai's Shuaa Capital cuts 15% of staff

DUBAI: Dubai investment bank Shuaa Capital has cut about 15 percent of its workforce, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters, ahead of a possible sale of a stake in the company by Dubai Group. Before the lay-offs, which took place at the end of last week, the bank had about 70 employees. Shuaa did not respond to comment when contacted by Reuters. Dubai Group, a unit of Dubai Holding, the investment vehicle of the emirate's ruler, mandated Emirates NBD in April to arrange a sales process for its 48 percent stake in Shuaa. The stake is worth about 315 million dirhams (\$86 million) at stock market prices. It was not immediately known whether the lay-offs were related to the sales process.

OPEC basket at \$44.77pb

VIENNA: OPEC daily basket price stood at \$44.77 a barrel last Friday compared with USD 43.84 per barrel the previous day, said a statement by the organization yesterday. The OPEC statement indicated that the monthly average for March and April were at \$34.65 and \$37.86 pb respectively. The Month-to-date average for May \$42.50 pb.

GULF BOND FEAST FAILS TO SATISFY ARRANGING BANKS

LONDON: A flurry of new issuance has swept the Gulf but arranger slots on trades are becoming increasingly bloated as there is still not enough volume to support the number of banks vying for the business. The number of banks hired to run deals in the Middle East is shooting up from the typical five or six arrangers. Qatar has hired 10 banks for an upcoming trade, DP World and Emirates Islamic Bank nine each while Noor Bank has a more modest seven.

"We're not happy at all with the practice," said a debt capital markets banker based in the region. Issuers are engaging in the age-old trade-off of rewarding banks with bond mandates for providing cheap loans. All 10 firms on Qatar's bond, for example, were part of a 14-bank syndicate that lent the sovereign \$5.5 billion in January. Gulf borrowers have signed \$21.6 billion in syndicated loans this year, according to Thomson Reuters LPC. Only \$13.5 billion of bonds have been issued.

Compare this with 2013 and 2014, when \$34 billion and \$37 billion of bonds were placed by Gulf issuers, against syndicated loan volumes of \$17 billion and \$21 billion respectively. "In busier times, issuers can rotate mandates between lenders," said a second debt capital markets banker. "Now we don't have that." Large arranger groups are becoming an issue for some fund managers too, with one international investor at a recent roadshow directly questioning a Gulf issuer about why it needed so many banks for what was likely to be a fairly standard deal, according to a banker present.

"The issuer didn't really have an answer," the banker said. Abu Dhabi showed in April that an issuer can use far fewer arrangers

and still get a good outcome, after raising \$5 billion with three banks running the trade.

CUMBERSOME

For investors, having so many banks makes deals more cumbersome and potentially cuts into the allocation if each bank brings its own buyers. For bankers, having so many houses involved in a deal eats into league table rankings and fees, even though some do more work than others. "There will

only be three or so banks that run the trade," said another DCM banker. "On DP World, only a few banks are arranging the tender, which gives a good signal about who will run the trade." Of the nine banks on the books, four are involved in a tender on the company's 2017 sukuk. Those four also arranged the roadshow for the new potential transaction. Bankers worry that future deals will continue to have big syndicates. The market is likely to stay busy throughout the year. Qatar's

Ooredoo has hired for a US dollar bond issue, according to sources.

Abu Dhabi state fund IPIC has mandated for a euro offering. That deal is likely to include all nine banks that lent 3.6 billion euros to IPIC subsidiary Aabar Investments in March. And then there's Saudi Arabia's mooted debut in the international bond market. The kingdom took its first steps towards the transaction last week after sending out RFPs. — Reuters

SAUDI TO JOIN TURKEY, INDONESIA IN INFRASTRUCTURE ISLAMIC BANK

JAKARTA: Saudi Arabia has joined Turkey, Indonesia and the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) as a prospective founder member of a new Islamic finance infrastructure bank, according to Indonesia's finance minister.

Speaking to Reuters on the sidelines of the annual IDB meeting of governors in Jakarta on Thursday, Bambang Brodjonegoro said the four could contribute around \$300 million each for the project, with plans calling for the establishment of two regional Islamic banks based in Istanbul and Jakarta. "It will be the effort of not only the four of us, but also others. But the four will be the founders."

The new entities could be operational as early as next year, tasked not only with financing via Islamic bonds (sukuk) but also supporting the secondary market for those financial instruments, Brodjonegoro added.

"In order to make a market for sukuk, the existence of this bank will be very important." The IDB held its annual meeting of governors in Jakarta last week, with 57 member countries represented. Efforts to create an Islamic bank with the bal-

ance sheet to underwrite large infrastructure deals dates back more than a decade, but previous efforts have failed to materialize. The addition of Saudi Arabia, the IDB's largest shareholder and home to some of the world's largest Islamic banks, could spell success this time. Last year, Indonesia, Turkey and the IDB said they planned to launch an Islamic infrastructure bank, but until last month no other countries had signaled an interest to join them. The asset-backed nature of Islamic finance should in theory make it ideal to build highway networks and ports, with no shortage of projects across Muslim-majority countries.

But technical, legal and political issues have traditionally confined Islamic finance to mid-sized deals with shorter tenors. The IDB has also held discussions with the China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to use Islamic finance in joint transactions. The two multilateral lenders could help co-finance a \$1.74 billion national slum upgrading project in Indonesia, which could be announced as early as next month. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.327
Indian Rupees	4.488
Pakistani Rupees	2.892
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.072
Nepali Rupees	2.812
Singapore Dollar	220.660
Hongkong Dollar	38.971
Bangladesh Taka	3.860
Philippine Peso	6.476
Thai Baht	8.510

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.776
Qatari Riyal	83.207
ani Riyal	786.772
Bahraini Dinar	804.440
UAE Dirham	82.471

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	32.950
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	34.484
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	146.610
Jordanian Dinar	426.740
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.018
Syrian Lira	2.159
Morocco Dirham	31.702

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.750
Euro	341.200
Sterling Pound	442.320
Canadian dollar	232.710

Turkish lira	102.280
Swiss Franc	308.300
Australian Dollar	221.610
US Dollar Buying	301.550

GOLD

20 Gram	253.210
10 Gram	129.530
5 Gram	65.610

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer

US Dollar	303.000
Canadian Dollar	231.330
Sterling Pound	440.205
Euro	340.995
Swiss Frank	301.070
Bahrain Dinar	801.595
UAE Dirhams	82.735
Qatari Riyals	83.950
Saudi Riyals	81.480
Jordanian Dinar	426.835
Egyptian Pound	34.024
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.072
Indian Rupees	4.485
Pakistani Rupees	2.885
Bangladesh Taka	3.854
Philippines Peso	6.465
Cyprus pound	577.120
Japanese Yen	3.745
Syrian Pound	2.376
Nepalese Rupees	3.876
Malaysian Ringgit	75.020

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.610
Thai Bhat	9.465
Turkish Lira	101.845

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

COUNTRY SELL CASH

Europe		
British Pound	0.431791	0.440791
Czech Korune	0.004535	0.016535
Danish Krone	0.041568	0.046568
Euro	0.0333930	0.0341930
Norwegian Krone	0.032297	0.037497
Romanian Leu	0.075092	0.075092
Slovakia	0.009023	0.019023
Swedish Krona	0.032313	0.037313
Swiss Franc	0.298732	0.308932
Turkish Lira	0.096938	0.107238
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.210292	0.221792
New Zealand Dollar	0.198458	0.207958
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225151	0.233651
US Dollars	0.298650	0.303150
US Dollars Mint	0.299150	0.303150
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003442	0.004016
Chinese Yuan	0.044898	0.048398
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036881	0.039631

Indian Rupee	0.004276	0.004666
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002663	0.002843
Kenyan Shilling	0.002994	0.002994
Korean Won	0.000245	0.000260
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070950	0.076950
Nepalese Rupee	0.002885	0.003055
Pakistan Rupee	0.002685	0.002965
Philippine Peso	0.006400	0.006680
Sierra Leone	0.000074	0.000080
Singapore Dollar	0.215528	0.221528
South African Rand	0.013325	0.021825
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001697	0.002277
Taiwan	0.009132	0.009312
Thai Baht	0.008163	0.008713

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.796481	0.804481
Egyptian Pound	0.029193	0.034311
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.423005	0.430505
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020832	0.044832
Nigerian Naira	0.000917	0.001552
Omani Riyal	0.779944	0.785624
Qatar Riyal	0.082447	0.083660
Saudi Riyal	0.079847	0.080797
Syrian Pound	0.001283	0.001503
Tunisian Dinar	0.143282	0.151282
Turkish Lira	0.096938	0.107238
UAE Dirhams	0.081446	0.082595
Yemeni Riyal	0.001368	0.001448

POWER, SPEED, PERFORMANCE - THE NEW HIGH-PERFORMANCE AUDI R8 SPORTS CAR



KUWAIT: From 0 to 100 km/h in 3.2 seconds, from 0 to 200 km/h, 9.9 seconds and a top speed of 330 km/h. The Audi R8 naturally-aspirated V10 mid-engine thrills with up to 610 hp of power and responds instantly to throttle inputs. The new Audi R8 is the aerodynamic concept of a race car: it is the dynamic vanguard of Audi - no other car with the four rings is so close to car racing. The all-new Audi R8 V10 engine and V10 plus model are now available at Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company Audi Kuwait showroom.

"The Audi R8 was and will always be the sports car icon of the four rings," says Tarek AlShafie General Manager & Dealer Principal - Audi Kuwait "from the stability and the dynamics of the quattro drive to the engine and the dual-clutch S-tronic transmission without forgetting the sporty sleek design of the lightweight body. The motorsport DNA of the all-new Audi R8 thrills your feelings with the way it drives, the way it sounds and the way it performs. With the all-new MMI, the virtual cockpit and the B&O sound system, it is a race car loaded with entertaining technology."

Named "2016 World Performance Car" in the World Car Awards, the all-new Audi R8 promises tremendous performance and a highly emotional, dynamic drive. The all-new model is available in two engine versions - with the R8 V10 plus being the most powerful and fastest production Audi ever built. The top version 610 hp naturally-aspirated 5.2 liter V10 mid-engine sprints from 0 to 100 km/h in 3.2 seconds, from 0 to 200 km/h in 9.9 seconds and has a governed top speed of 330 km/h. Like a race car engine, it has dry sump lubrication - meaning that its characteristic sound is now even fuller, and a sport exhaust system can be installed as an option. The fuel economy has been improved by up to 13 percent in the R8 model series compared to the previous model.

Fully variable torque distribution

In the powertrain, the lightning-quick shifts of the seven-speed S tronic dual-clutch transmission, an optimized mechanical differential lock and a new electrohydraulically activated multi-plate clutch work together. The actively cooled all-wheel drive system can distribute torque freely between the axles. The intelligent dynamic control system for the quattro drive is incorporated into the Audi drive select dynamic handling system that offers four basic modes. In each mode, the new high-performance sports car expresses a different character - from relaxed freeway cruiser to race car on the circuit track. In the top R8 V10 plus model, a performance

leather steering wheel is standard equipment.

In its performance mode, it offers three additional modes: dry, wet and snow. They make handling even more precise and sharper, tuned to the friction coefficient of the specific road surface. The new technology is also available on the R8 V10, including the steering wheel that is used to select the special modes.

Dry weight: 1,454 kg

The new Audi R8 V10 plus has a dry weight of just 1,454 kg. This was primarily due to its newly conceptualized Audi Space Frame (ASF) in multimaterial construction - which consists of aluminum and CFRP parts. The ASF weighs just 200 kg. The entire underbody has a smooth covering, like on a race car, and the air flow exits via a large diffuser. This increases downforce. At top speed, this amounts to 40 kg at the front axle and 100 kg at the rear axle. The large CFRP rear wing also plays an important role in attaining these top figures.

Exclusively for the driver: operating controls

Just like in a race car, the interior of the high-performance sports car focuses on the driver. The driver can read off all key information at a glance from the Audi virtual cockpit. The steering wheel, instrument cluster and road all line up along one central visual axis. Drivers can operate all important functions with the multifunction and satellite push-buttons without having to take their hands off the steering wheel or look away from the road.

The Audi virtual cockpit is user configurable, and it shows all displays in elaborate 3D graphics - if desired, with one large rev counter and auxiliary gauges that show much more information, such as tire temperature and torque output. MMI navigation plus with MMI touch is standard equipment in the new R8. This high-end media center was designed to follow a simple operating logic.

Extreme lighting range: laser spot for the high beam headlight

The workmanship of the new R8 - which is handcrafted at a new plant near Neckarsulm - is superlative. Its range of optional technology components extends to the sound system from Bang & Olufsen and the Audi laser spot, which doubles the range of the high-beam light.

Sister models: Audi R8 LMS

No other production car with the four rings shows as much affinity for the race track as the new

R8. This is also proven by its sister models - the new GT3 race car, the Audi R8 LMS. For the first time, Audi developed all two versions simultaneously, in order to optimally exploit synergies. Both the new Audi R8 and its motorsport variant, the R8 LMS, have made significant performance gains, thanks to the close cooperation between race car engineers, motorsport specialists and developers. Just ten weeks after its world premiere at the Geneva Motor Show, the R8 LMS made its dazzling entrance on the 24-hour racing scene, seizing overall victory on the Nurburgring.

The new Audi R8 Engine

- Naturally aspirated high-revving V10 with dry sump lubrication
- 5.2-liter displacement, two versions: 540 hp and 610 hp, 540 Nm or 560 Nm of torque at 6,500 rpm
- High-revving, spontaneous engine response, characteristic sound
- Cylinder on demand (COD), coasting mode, start-stop system, dual fuel injection, fuel consumption up to 13 percent lower than in previous model.
- Excellent driving performance: 0 - 100 km/h in 3.2 seconds, 0 - 200 km/h in 9.9 seconds, top speed of 330 km/h (on the R8 V10 plus)

Drivetrain

- Lightning-fast shifts with seven-speed S tronic, shift-by-wire signal transmission
- Newly developed quattro permanent all-wheel drive with electro-hydraulically activated multi-plate clutch, fully variable distribution of drive torque, rear differential lock.

Chassis

- Double wishbone suspensions, front and rear, optional Audi magnetic ride damper control
- High-performance brakes at all four wheels, optional ceramic brake disks
- Newly developed electromechanical steering, dynamic steering system as an alternative
- Standard 19-inch wheels with mixed tires, optional 20-inch wheels
- Audi drive select dynamic handling system with four standard modes; optional three additional performance modes for maximum dynamic performance (standard in V10 plus)

Exterior design and Audi Space Frame (ASF)

- Characteristically taut mid-engine sports car design

- Two-part sideblades, standard LED headlights, optional laser spot for high-beam, dynamic turn signals
- New Audi Space Frame in multimaterial construction made of aluminum and CFRP; ASF weighs 200 kg, vehicle dry weight 1,454 kg (R8 V10 plus)
- Top figures for torsional rigidity, crash safety and acoustics
- Aerodynamic concept focuses on high downforce figures

Interior

- Clean lines, monoposto arch in cockpit, hovering instrument panel
- Newly conceptualized sport seats, R8 V10 plus with lightweight bucket seats
- New colors and materials, many customization options

Controls & displays

- Controls are fully focused on the driver; all key functions are on the steering wheel
- Two steering wheel versions with two or four satellite buttons
- User-configurable Audi virtual cockpit that offers a 12.3-inch screen with brilliant, high-resolution displays is standard. Performance view shows additional information such as torque, power, oil and tire temperatures, g-forces and lap times on the race track

Infotainment and Audi connect

- MMI navigation plus with MMI touch is standard, newly developed operating concept with flat hierarchies like on a smartphone, including free text search
- Technology is based on second generation modular infotainment platform (MIB)
- Audi connect, Audi phone box and sound system from Bang & Olufsen are optional
- Production
- Crafted at Audi B'linger H'fe at the Audi production site in Neckarsulm
- Flexible and innovative production, high share of highly skilled handcrafted work
- Audi R8 LMS
- GT3 race car for global customer racing program;
- Around 50 percent of its parts are identical to those of production sports car, including the engine
- Reinforced ASF with safety cage, exterior skin made of CFRP

MOHAMED NASER AL-SAYER & TOYOTA GENUINE SPARE PARTS CONCLUDES 'DIAMOND SURPRISES' PROMOTION

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons Co (MNSS) Group Spare Parts Division, one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies, held an electronic raffle at the Ministry of Commerce & Industry premises to select the winners of the third and final draw of Toyota Genuine Spare Parts "Diamond surprises" promotion.

Mohammed Hilal, Business Director Group

Spare Parts and Accessories Division said "Diamond Surprises promotion has generated huge popularity and immense interest among our customers. We highly appreciate the support from them to make this promotion a huge success. We congratulate the 15 lucky winners of all the 3 draws and we are committed to bringing such value added offers in the future compli-



menting Toyota genuine spare parts values of quality, reliability and performance."

5 lucky winners who were selected from the third raffle draw were presented marvelous diamond prizes. Names of the winners and the prizes won are as follows:

- 1) Nawaf Hmoud Munawer Alshammari — 0.90 carat (VS) diamond
- 2) Mohammed Sayed Ahmed Basha — 0.83 carat (VS) diamond.
- 3) Abdulrahman Abdulrazzaq Alibrahim — 0.73 carat (VS) diamond
- 4) Ali Yosof Mulla Eissa — 0.50 carat (VS) diamond.
- 5) Emad Abbas Abdolkarem Ramadan — 0.40 carat (VS) diamond

The Spare Parts Winter Promotion which had commenced on the 14 February ended on 14 May 2016. During the promotion period with every KD 5 spent on Toyota Genuine Parts at any Al-Sayer spare parts outlet or service facility customers entered one of the three draws, grabbing a chance to win the attractive prize.



WIN GOLD THIS SUMMER SEASON WITH GULF BANK

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank recently announced its new and exciting summer promotion, whereby Credit and Debit Cardholders are offered the chance to win up to 1kg of Gold, during the summer season, through entering a raffle draw upon using their Cards locally or abroad. Offer is valid from now and until end of July 2016.

Gulf Bank Credit Cardholders will automatically get a single chance to enter the draw for every KD10 spent locally, and three chances for every KD10 spent abroad using their credit and debit cards. Twenty lucky winners will be announced at a raffle draw, which is set to take place on 14 August, 2016.

EUROZONE BUSINESS GROWTH SLOWS

LONDON: Business growth across the euro zone dipped to a 16-month low in May but stronger showings from Germany and France suggest it is the smaller member countries that may be struggling. Offering the latest evidence that a strong acceleration in growth in the first three months of the year was only temporary, Markit's flash Composite Purchasing Managers' Index edged down to 52.9 from April's 53.0.

While essentially stable - and still indicating growth - the reading was the lowest since the start of 2015. It ran against expectations in a Reuters poll, which had predicted a tick up to 53.2 in one of the earliest reported broad indicators of growth during the month. Markit said the PMI pointed to quarterly GDP growth of

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0.3 percent, in line with forecasts in a Reuters survey published earlier this month, but short of 0.5 percent in the first quarter, which was initially reported as 0.6 percent.

Individually, surveys showed growth in Germany's private sector accelerated to hit the fastest rate so far this year. French business activity also grew faster than expected, returning to a rate not recorded since before the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris. "That suggests that the PMIs for the other major eurozone economies such as Italy and Spain will be soft when released next week," said Stephen Brown at Capital Economics. Germany and France are the only individual euro zone countries for which Markit publishes flash PMIs. — Reuters

STOCKS SEE-SAW AS INVESTORS OFF TO CAUTIOUS START

LONDON: Global stocks seesawed yesterday while oil, the dollar and bond yields all fell as investors began the week cautious about prospects that US interest rates could soon be raised. The FTSEuroFirst 300 index of leading shares, Germany's DAX and France's CAC 40 all fell as much as 1 percent in early trade but then rebounded into positive territory.

Shares in German drugs and chemicals group

Bayer AG were among the most notable decliners, however, down as much as 3 percent after it unveiled a \$62 billion bid for US seeds company Monsanto Co. US futures pointed to a fall of around 0.3 percent at the open on Wall Street, as investors continued to digest last week's surge in US rate hike expectations.

"The Fed's decision to convey a much firmer hawkish tone has certainly woken people up to

the possibility that rates could rise over the summer and with that, the markets have perked up as well," said Craig Erlam, senior analyst at Oanda.

Purchasing managers index data showed that euro zone business growth slipped in May to a 16-month low, the latest evidence to suggest a strong acceleration in growth in the first three months of the year was only temporary. Markit's flash Composite Purchasing Managers' Index, one of the

first growth indicators in a month, edged down to 52.9 from April's 53.0, essentially stable but still the lowest since the start of 2015. Germany's private sector growth accelerated in May to the highest level so far this year, but activity elsewhere failed to keep pace. Earlier in Asia shares mostly rose, with MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan up 0.3 percent, but Japan's Nikkei ended down 0.5 percent.

The Markit/Nikkei flash Japan manufacturing PMI showed Japanese manufacturing activity contracted at the fastest pace in more than three years in May, while a slump in Japanese trade and reports that Japan's sales tax increase would indeed be implemented all weighed on the Nikkei.

"In a climate dominated by speculation over monetary policy, PMIs give a solid insight into the state of the 'real' economy and how domestic industries are coping with policy measures, and are not to be ignored," said Ana Thaker, Market Economist at PhillipCapital UK.

Markets have started to entertain the prospect of a near term US rate hike after last week's release of Fed meeting minutes showed that policymakers weren't shying away from raising interest rates as early as next month. The probability for a June rate hike rose from around 4 percent at the start of the week to 30 percent on Friday, according to CME Group's FedWatch site. Futures markets are predicting two rate increases this

year as opposed to just one as recently as last week. Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen will appear at a panel event hosted by Harvard University on Friday. Fed branch presidents including those from San Francisco, St. Louis, Dallas, Minneapolis are also slated to speak earlier in the week. But given the speed of these expectation shifts, investors took the opportunity for a pause yesterday, pushing bond yields lower across the board.

The 10-year US Treasury yield fell 2 basis points at 1.83 percent, after having chalked up its biggest weekly rise last month for six months. The two-year yield fell a basis point, flattening the yield curve slightly. Lower US yields and a flatter curve kept a lid on the dollar. The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of six rival currencies, edged down 0.2 percent to 95.190 . It has racked up three straight weekly gains, a run not seen since the first quarter of last year.

The yen gained most among the major currencies, supported by the ballooning Japanese trade surplus. The dollar was last down 0.6 percent at 109.50 yen, and the euro was steady at \$1.1217. Crude oil prices fell as much as 1 percent, once again running out of steam as the \$50 a barrel level came into view. It took three months for oil to make the convincing and lasting break below \$50 on the way down last year, and it's shaping up to be a psychological barrier on the way back up. Both US and Brent crude were hovering around \$48 a barrel. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Global

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Monday 23 May 2016

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low		
Price index	▼ -2.53	6,314.50	6,317.03	6,326.01	6,309.92		
Weighted Index	▼ -1.16	354.57	355.83	357.04	354.37		
KSX 15	▼ -4.94	224.90	225.84	233.14	223.52		

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	— 0.0
KARUS	42.0	41.5	30,003	1,250	4	41.5	▼ -0.5
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350	— 0.0
NAFESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	730	— 0.0
ENERGY	51	50	7,200	365	3	51	▲ 1.0
GPI	43.5	42.5	3,983,076	171,330	103	43.5	▲ 1.0
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	98	— 0.0
Oil & Gas			4,620,276	172,995	110	789.67	▲ 2.81
KFCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	182	— 0.0
BPCC	530	510	142,561	74,153	9	520	— 0.0
ALCUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	650	— 0.0
ALQURAN	208	204	84,692	17,457	14	204	▼ -2.0
Basic Materials			227,273	91,846	23	967.74	▼ -2.58
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	370	— 0.0
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	280	— 0.0
CABLE	425	400	173,800	70,102	38	400	▼ -20.0
SHIP	168	164	47,172	7,746	14	168	▲ 0.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,030	— 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	285	— 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	59	— 0.0
ADCO	315	300	350,824	107,600	40	315	▲ 16.0
GGVC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	142	— 0.0
KBMVC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0
NCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	— 0.0
EQUIPMENT	66	52	7,678,428	451,928	251	62	▼ -3.0
MCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	12.5	— 0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	— 0.0
SALBOORH	76	75	90,564	4,993	4	75	— 0.0
AGLT	450	435	536,469	261,547	39	435	▼ -10.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	194	— 0.0
CLEANING	39.0	38.5	54,345	2,117	3	39.0	▼ -0.5
CITYGROU	530	530	9,649	5,114	3	530	▲ 10.0
KCL	48.0	47.0	27,000	1,271	4	48.0	▲ 0.5
KDPC	202	194	1,770	344	2	202	▼ -2.0
HLMANISOFT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,120	— 0.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	168	— 0.0
SARWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290	— 0.0
GFC	33.0	33.0	25,199	832	1	33.0	— 0.0
MAYADEEN	23.0	22.0	2,895,099	64,836	31	22.0	— 0.0
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	780	— 0.0
VTCC	76	74	141,050	10,575	9	76	▲ 1.0
UFAC	560	530	952	443	1	580	▼ -30.0
ALAFOD	208	202	230,110	46,863	8	208	▲ 4.0
MUSARRAD	54	54	210,000	13,440	13	54	▼ -1.0
LOGISTCS	79	77	745,122	58,152	25	78	— 0.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	— 0.0
GCEV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	77	— 0.0
QIC	71	70	192,361	11,375	9	71	— 0.0
FCEM	76	75	1,122,877	84,222	24	76	— 0.0
RWVC	53	53	57,190	6,245	1	53	— 0.0
SPEC	74	74	50	4	1	74	▲ 2.0
Industrials			13,933,722	1,210,853	501	1031.55	▼ -0.55
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	— 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	— 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	— 0.0
CATTL	108	102	9,039	928	5	108	▼ -4.0
DANALI	112	96	9,140,100	953,979	148	96	▼ -4.0
PCULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	176	— 0.0
FOOD	2,300	2,300	15,723	36,156	3	2,300	▲ 20.0
Consumer Goods			8,169,359	1,051,664	156	1077.15	▼ -0.45
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	— 0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	320	— 0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	— 0
Health Care			0	0	0	9.06	— 0.00
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,200	— 0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	— 0
SULTAN	50	55	258,555	15,935	17	59	▼ -1
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	23.5	— 0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0
FAIR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	— 0
QULAFUEL	108	106	32,803	3,528	12	106	— 0
MUNTAAHAT	78	75	57,001	5,175	4	77	▼ -3
LAZERA	850	830	31,095	27,664	6	890	▲ 10
SCOR	110	108	53,387	5,755	13	108	▲ 2
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0
ALRAI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	— 0
ZIMAH	45.0	43.0	5,218,303	272,230	132	43.5	▲ 1
PHOLD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	140	— 0
Yezan	1,000	1,000	35,000	38,000	11	1,000	▼ -20
Consumer Services			8,709,147	348,338	156	918.71	▼ -2.20
ZAIN	350	345	3,140,760	1,093,911	57	345	— 0
DOREDOO	1,100	1,120	1,085	1,913	0	1,120	▲ 20
HITSTELEC	36.0	33.5	21,002,457	728,030	303	35.0	▲ 2
VIVA	940	920	236,577	162,590	50	930	— 0
Telecommunications			24,351,679	2,021,633	467	684.60	▲ 5.30
NBK	630	620	714,665	449,758	23	620	▼ -10
BEK	226	222	38,783	8,720	6	226	— 0
CEK	435	430	74,735	32,354	4	435	▲ 5
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	335	— 0
ALMUTAHED	430	415	2,180	931	3	415	▼ -5
KIB	202	198	1,358,163	271,927	45	200	— 0
BURG	330	330	591,197	185,125	16	330	— 0
KFIN	475	465	3,818,116	1,794,779	126	470	▼ -5
BOUBAYAN	400	400	55,357	22,543	14	400	▲ 5
ALB	162	162	1,766,996	321,593	21	162	— 0
THAIR	38.5	38.5	100	4	1	38.5	▲ 1
WARSABANK	172	172	837,121	108,535	50	172	▼ -2
Banks			9,628,432	3,197,439	319	811.76	▼ -0.55
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	305	— 0
GINS	670	670	1,126,155	754,524	10	670	▲ 10.0
AFVS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	465	— 0.0
WINS	102	100	7,172	717	4	102	▲ 2.0
KLAWATRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	— 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	— 0.0
WETHAQ	33.0	33.0	10,000	330	1	33.0	▲ 1.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
Insurance			1,143,327	755,571	15	1025.22	▲ 10.69

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUR	33.5	35.5	260,189	56,002	54	34.0	▲ 0.5
KRE	56	55	1,275,010	71,239	18	56	▲ 1.0
JRC	50	50	12,663	1,135	5	50	— 0.0
NRE	51	50	1,134,786	101,584	22	51	▲ 2.0
SRE	360	360	10,850	3,834	2	360	— 0.0
TAV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	580	— 0.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	138	— 0.0
MASALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	44.0	— 0.0
ARABEC	31.5	31.0	953,500	29,560	16	31.0	— 0.0
ERESCO	61	60	7,500	453	2	60	▼ -1.0
MABANEE	770	760	188,949	145,336	11	770	— 0.0
INJAZZAT	75	72	28,665	2,146	8	72	▼ -1.0
INVESTORS	21.5	21.0	3,490,199	74,355	46	21.0	▼ -0.5
IRC	30.5	30.0	1,102,211	33,117	44	30.5	▲ 0.5
ALTUMARIA	77	75	152,144	13,973	4	77	— 0.0
SANAM	32.0	31.5	26,620	940	4	32.0	▼ -1.0
AAYANRE	64	64	70,000	4,466	3	64	— 0.0
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	— 0.0
ALAQAR.A	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	21.0	— 0.0
MASAYA	118	118	592,314	68,713	10	118	— 0.0
ADNC	15.0	14.0	4,785,203	68,223	62	14.0	▼ -0.5
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	— 0.0
TIJARIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	36.5	— 0.0
TAMEER	22.5	22.0	60,000	1,325	2	22.0	▼ -0.5
ARKAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	94	— 0.0
ARKAN	160	160	20,000	3,200	2	160	— 0.0
ASYAR	24.5	24.5	1,000	25	1	24.5	— 0.0
MUNSHAAT	54	53	445,854	23,529	16	54	▼ -1.0
FIRSTDUBAI	56	54	81,100	3,302	6	55	— 0.0
KBT	42.5	41.5	957,930	39,991	24	42.0	— 0.0
REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	145	— 0.0
MENA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	24.5	— 0.0
ALMUDON	30.6	30.0	624,583	18,137	15	26.0	— 0.0
MARAKEZ	23.0	23.0	2,500	58	1	23.0	▲ 1.0
REMAH	34.0	33.0	1,100	36	2	34.0	▲ 0.5
MAS-FAER	78	78	60,000	4,680	1	78	— 0.0
Real Estate			13,745,451	919,778	378	845.27	▼ -1.23
KUV	86	85	70,000	6,000	1	86	— 0.0
FACIL	106	178	112,813	20,237	11	185	▲ 4.0
FA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	26.5	— 0.0
NIN	112	105	1,982,000	215,167	57	108	— 0.0
KPROJ	540	520	1,587,229	836,419	26	620	▼ -10.0
CCAST	42.5	41.0	3,140,513	131,559	83	41.5	— 0.0
SECH	41.5	39.5	2,659,750	107,435	55	40.5	▼ -1.0
SOC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	— 0.0
ARZAN	32.0	31.5	116,780	3,695	6	32.0	▲ 0.5
MARNAZ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	— 0.0
KMERIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	28.0	— 0.0
ALAMAN	51	50	32,869	1,643	3	51	▲ 1.5
ALOLA	52	51	253,390	12,937</			

FRENCH UNIONS DIG IN HEELS TO DISRUPT FUEL SUPPLY

PARIS: France's hardline CGT and FO unions launched a 24-hour strike at the Fos-Lavera oil terminals and blockaded a fuel depot in the southern port city of Marseille yesterday as they toughened their stance against labor market reforms. The rolling strikes, which began in March and have gathered pace in recent weeks, have disrupted fuel supplies in France since Friday with protesting workers blockading petrol depots and halting production at refineries.

French oil and gas company Total, which operates five of the eight refineries in France, has started the process of shutting down three - at Normandy, Donges and Feyzin - while its Grandpuits refinery was running at minimum

output. Rival Exxon Mobil said the strike has not affected output at its two refineries but striking workers had blockaded the oil terminal at Fos-sur-Mer in Southern France.

Oil sector workers in the CGT, which is France's biggest trade union, and at the third biggest FO, said on Monday they planned to intensify the action until the government withdraws a labour reform law, because they say it will hurt workers.

"It is clear that the dissatisfaction with the law is unwavering," the unions said in a statement.

As part of efforts to force the government to withdraw the bill, the union launched a strike at the Fos-Lavera oil terminals yesterday. "No ship is operating at the installations," Pascal

GalEotE, CGT Secretary General at Marseille port told Reuters.

The terminals supply Petrolneos Lavera, Total's La Mede and Exxon's Fos refineries on the southern coast. They also supply Total's Feyzin; Varo's Cressier in Switzerland and the MiRO refinery in Karlsruhe, Germany, via pipelines. A similar prolonged strike at French refineries in 2010 led to a glut of crude in Europe because it could not be delivered, and a spike in refined product prices due to low output. The French government has moved to reassure the public that France was not running out of fuel after shortages at hundreds of petrol stations in several regions sparked panic buying.

Finance Minister Michel Sapin accused CGT of holding France hostage, saying the government would take the necessary action to end the blockades and restart production at refineries. Total said in a statement it had begun the procedure of shutting down its 247,000 barrels-per-day (bpd) Normandy;

220,000 bpd Donges and 117,000 bpd Feyzin refineries. Its 101,000 bpd Grandpuits refinery was running at minimum output. It said 612 out of its 2,200 petrol stations across France had partially or completely ran out of fuel, while striking workers were blockading two out of its nine fuel depots. There are 78 primary fuel depots in mainland France. — Reuters

TOO RISKY TO INCREASE US INTEREST RATES

By Hayder Tawfik

As soon as the Federal Reserve releases any meeting minutes describing a weaker dollar, the currency surges against all currencies. It is an election year and the last thing the Federal Reserve wants is surging US\$. This is one dilemma the US central bank is facing. Another one is the weak health of the global economy. In particular the eurozone economies. At present the US central bank is weighing all the economic data to determine when next to raise US interest rates. The Fed's signals of a potential June move may backfire if the resurgent US dollar undermines growth and weighs on stocks and oil prices, ultimately eroding the case to boost borrowing costs.

The Fed can't raise rates because it will lead to a stronger dollar, and it means deflationary pressure in the world. The Federal Reserve is caught in vicious circle. I don't think it should be blamed for not doing



anything with rates. Since the middle of 2014 the dollar is up by a whopping 25% against all major currencies. This has put pressure on US multinationals companies that derive revenue overseas. More than 20 percent of the S&P 500 companies have at least 50 percent of their sales outside the US. Also, the strong dollar has led to big deterioration in the US trade deficit with the rest of the world. US economic data is very important for the Federal Reserve when deciding on US interest rates. However, it is also watching the financial market, specially the global financial markets. If the US\$ continues its recent rebound, commodities producers including oil will suffer accordingly.

May be it is too late for the Federal Reserve to raise rates this year. By just talking about increase rates, it is giving signals to the market to reduce the risk of complacency. To be fair to the Fed it has indeed succeeded in doing so. At the same time it did not bother to raise rates. May be by just talking rates up it wants the market to do the tightening. Global financial markets got the message. The probability of next rate rise rose to 32 percent. The Federal Reserve has talked about a rate increase next month on the table as long as US economic data continues to show positive signs. But there is a mix signals from the economic data's.

Some members of the Federal Reserve Committee believe that there is a sense of urgency to act now. They argue that inflation is gradually moving higher and labor markets continue to post solid-to-strong gains in payrolls that has lowered the US jobs rate below 5 percent, which is close to Fed estimates of full

employment. Moving closer It is difficult to know when there will be enough good news to persuade cautious Fed officials, but it is getting much closer. The Federal Reserve has achieved its mandate of full employment and inflation rate of close to 2 percent. However, this is a backward looking. As I mentioned earlier, the Federal Reserve's dilemma is the shape of the global economy and the future prospects for the US economy if rates went up and the dollar surges. The unknown future may include lots of unpleasant surprises or events that could push the economy off track. It is difficult for both economists and Federal Reserve to define or forecast. It is not a guess game that they can gamble with. The risks are there and are clear too. I believe most monetary policy makers see zero interest rates as a result of the 2008 financial crises. They see that today's economy is back to normality so should interest rates. Hence the urgency to raise rates. This I believe what is going through their minds. But the zero or very low rates may reflect the present reality that the global economy experiencing today and going forward. The Federal Reserve introduced Quantitative Easing in the early days of the financial crises as an emergency policy and by stopping the easy policy it may have already been normalized. I think there is a strong resistance to this argument. Some do not believe that tapering and ending the bond-buying program reflects a tightening of policy.

The hawks at the Federal Reserve do not believe it has engineered the soft landing just yet. It expects that interest rates will need to rise farther to tame future inflationary pressures. In fact, the Fed believes that the economy will evolve in such a way that it can raise short-term rates back to levels comparable to the old normal.

Financial markets and investors, however, disagree with the Federal Reserve's argument. They strongly believe that US rates will stay lower for longer time than the Federal Reserve's Open Market Committee anticipate. I would argue that financial markets are signaling that a soft landing has already been achieved and that much additional tightening will risk tipping the economy back into recession. In fact, weak first quarter US corporate results might have given us the proof that a soft landing in the US economy is already underway. At the end of the day the decision to raise rates or not is with the Federal Reserve Open Market Committee and not the financial markets or investors. I believe that the Fed's Committee believes that rates are not tight enough. This could be the tipping point between a soft landing for the US economy or a global recession. I think the US economy is already in a soft landing. I hope the Federal Reserve take this into account when meeting next month. — Rasameel



PARIS: Striking workers stand near a burning barricade preventing the access to a refinery in Fos sur Mer, southern France, yesterday. The union-led blockade, one of several set up at refineries and depots across France, is aimed at securing the withdrawal of the country's labor reforms, which hopes to inject new life into the country's rigid labor market. —AP

BP'S OIL SEARCH STRATEGY SHRINKS WITH BUDGET CUTS

EXPLORATION BOSS QUILTS AFTER SPOTLIGHTING NEW STRATEGY

LONDON: The surprise departure of BP's exploration boss has turned the spotlight on an oil search strategy that, after years of spending cuts, is focusing mainly on expanding existing fields rather than venturing expensively into the unknown. That caution reflects a firm chastened by the \$55 billion cost of its 2010 Gulf of Mexico spill, and needing to squeeze every last drop out of a sharply reduced exploration budget at a time of low oil prices.

"Exploration doesn't necessarily have to look like (nature broadcaster) David Attenborough standing on a brand new frontier," a BP source told Reuters. While BP's total reserves and fields coming onstream in the next four years look healthy compared to the other majors, its long-term project pipeline is the slimmest among its peers and its break-even costs are the highest, according to some analysts, among them Macquarie.

Several BP sources said Chief Executive Bob Dudley and his team were hammering out a new long-term strategy, with investors expecting an update on its post-2020 plans later this year or early next. The plan is likely to chime with a phrase that Dudley is fond of using: "Big is not necessarily beautiful."

After asset sales forced on it by the Gulf disaster shrank the company by a third, BP is today focusing its operations on five regions: Angola, Azerbaijan, Egypt, the Gulf of Mexico and the North Sea. It was in Angola, Egypt and the North Sea, already BP core regions, that Richard Herbert notched up his main successes during his two years as head of exploration.

SHRINKING BUDGET

BP said his departure followed its decision to bring exploration and field development under one upstream team, headed since February by Bernard Looney. But Herbert, who worked with Dudley in Russia in the 2000s, had also seen his annual budget shrink from \$3.5 billion in 2013 to \$1 billion this year - not enough to drill even a dozen complex deep-water wells, and certainly not enough to throw at a frontier exploration with potential high gain, but also a high risk of coming out empty-handed. Royal Dutch/Shell sank \$7 billion into an Alaskan exploration that it abandoned last year - something BP simply cannot afford. While BP's existing resources are not small compared to its peers, analysts say the lack of a long-term project pipeline is a worry.

BP's reserves-to-production ratio, the number of years reserves can sustain current production, is the third highest among oil majors at nearly 13 years, excluding output from Russia's Rosneft, in which BP has a near-20 percent stake. It trails only Exxon Mobil's 17 years and Total's 13.5, but is more than Shell, Eni or Chevron. By 2020, the startup of projects such as the West Nile Delta in Egypt and the Clair Ridge field in the North Sea will have added 800,000 bpd of oil equivalent to its oil and gas output capacity, Dudley told Reuters last year.

In the short term, that appears to be comfortably enough to offset shrinking output from mature fields and maintain or increase a current output level of around 2 million bpd. But another indicator, the reserves replacement ratio (RRR) new proven but unexploited discoveries as a proportion of annual production - reveals a less rosy picture.

DISAPPOINTMENTS

BP's RRR fell last year to 61 percent, its lowest in many years, from 129 percent in 2013.

The RRR reflects not only a failure to unlock new deposits - a problem for all the multinationals - but also a reluctance to commit investment as oil prices languish about 60 percent below mid-2014 levels.

Among BP's rivals, Shell's RRR was negative last year, while that of Eni, fresh from discovering the giant Zohr field off Egypt, was 148 percent. Some of the seemingly promising projects that Herbert inherited from his predecessor, Mike Daly, have proved disappointing.

In Brazil, a corruption investigation has slowed projects for other majors as well as BP. Turmoil in Libya has forced it to write off some investments there, while low oil prices have hurt development of the Canadian oil sands. Australian authorities have also refused so far to allow BP to explore the Great Australian Bight, an untapped basin off the southern coast, amid environment protests.

BP has said it plans to make further acquisitions to build its resource base, such as the doubling of its stake in the North Sea Culzean field announced this week.

But Macquarie analyst Iain Reid said BP's pipeline of new projects, totalling 1.8 billion barrels of oil equivalent, was the lowest among the world's top five oil companies.

"BP has the lowest amount of pre-FID (final investment decision) resource, which leads to the weakest future growth rates," Reid said. BP's project break-even costs are also the highest in the group at around \$72 a barrel, according to Macquarie.

"BP's portfolio looks thin compared to peers, hence we continue to believe that it will need to acquire further resource to supplement the current project list and provide stronger growth at lower costs than its current portfolio." — Reuters



DUBLIN: The central control room for Ryanair flight operations at the airline's Dublin headquarters. The liquid crystal wall map shows a live picture of every Ryanair flight airborne over Europe, North Africa, the Mediterranean. — AP

RYANAIR PREDICTS SLOWER PROFITS GROWTH

DUBLIN: Irish no-frills airline Ryanair yesterday forecasts rising annual profits on higher traffic and lower fuel prices but at a slower rate than its last financial year. The company said net profit was set to rise by around 13 percent in the 12 months to the end of March 2017, as it predicted that passenger traffic would grow by 9.0 percent.

Profit after tax had surged 43 percent to 1.242 billion euros (\$1.395 billion) in 2015/16, Ryanair added in an earnings statement. It said average fares would fall by around 7.0 percent in the current financial year, as a result of recent terror attacks in Western Europe and thanks to lower fuel prices.

"Ryanair has thrown down the gauntlet to its budget airline rivals promising further cuts in air fares as it bids to maintain its market share," noted AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould. Michael O'Leary, chief executive of the Dublin-based airline, said pricing was being affected by the attacks on Brussels and Paris.

"What terrorists always misunderstand is that it won't change customers' behaviour, but the airlines will respond with lower prices to keep people flying," he told reporters.

Ryanair repeated its support for Britain remaining part of the European Union, noting that a vote to leave the EU in the June 23

referendum "will damage economic growth and consumer confidence in the UK for the next two to three years". It added: "As the UK's largest airline, Ryanair strongly believes that the UK economy and its future growth prospects are stronger if it remains a member of the European Union."

"One of Europe's great success stories was airline deregulation in the late 1980s which allowed Ryanair to break up the high fare cartel of Europe's flag carrier airlines, and has enabled us to transform air travel, tourism, economic growth and jobs all over Europe."

O'Leary meanwhile said that growth in traffic and profit at the airline in 2015/16 had risen strongly despite the company having to pay an average of \$90 for a barrel of oil-far higher than the market value-as a result of the hedging policy it had adopted in 2014.

The final quarter of its last financial year was hit also by the terrorist attacks in Brussels and strikes by air traffic controllers across Europe that resulted in the cancellation of more than 500 flights. It added that such strikes would impact its latest first-quarter performance. But the airline still managed to carry more than 100 million passengers internationally during its last financial year that ended in March, a first for an airline, according to Ryanair.—AFP

HUNGARIAN MEDIA GROUP FUELLED WITH CB CASH

BUDAPEST: Shortly after National Bank of Hungary (NBH) Governor Gyorgy Matolcsy took his post three years ago, a group of businessmen launched an online media group that has grown rapidly with the help of the central bank. The company, New Wave, has received central bank grants totalling \$2 million and a loan from a lender under the control of the central bank, according to NBH and company records. New Wave also received a bigger slice of money from a central bank advertising campaign than any of its online rivals, in the period covered by published NBH data.

None of this funding violated any regulations or broke any laws, according to the central bank. It has nonetheless prompted some Hungarian media outlets and opposition politicians to allege New Wave received preferential treatment because it is owned by businessmen with close ties to Matolcsy and his family. Matolcsy and New Wave deny these allegations.

New Wave said in a statement to media outlets: "It is completely incorrect to assume that support from the National Bank of Hungary's foundations transferred to these companies had anything to do with family ties." New Wave launched news website VS.hu in late 2013 and bought web portal Origo.hu from Magyar Telekom for \$15 million in January this year to become one of Hungary's biggest online news groups.

Balazs Weyer, Origo editor until 2011 and chair of Hungary's Editors' Forum, said that in his experience of the media industry, the speed of the New Wave group's expansion was "highly unrealistic" under normal business circumstances. "A mid-size media company acquiring the market-leading brand (Origo) is unimaginable outside the zone of power," he said. VS, the news website of New Wave, has been the only major news outlet to benefit from grants handed out by the central bank through six foundations, according to a list published by the foundations. Matolcsy set up the foundations in 2014 and endowed them with money from the NBH's operating surplus in 2013 and 2014. He said their aim was to promote financial education.

VS received \$2 million of grants last year to produce a series of articles on subjects that the NBH said were important but neglected in the local press. VS produced the series, sending reporters to produce about 10 video reports in places where Hungarian outlets rarely go, including Kenya and California. Only a handful of other news companies received grants, but much smaller ones. The next biggest media recipients were two small news stations, Echo TV and Business Radio, which received grants worth about \$25,000 and \$7,000 respectively for programming.

Hundreds of companies and individuals in other sectors received money - grants or contracts - from the four-

foundations. The total spending on grants, and the selection process involved, was unclear.

The central bank did not directly address Reuters questions about the grant to New Wave, instead referring to Matolcsy's comments to daily newspaper Magyar Nemzet on May 6. "The foundations do not examine what owners stand behind the supported projects," Matolcsy said. "(VS) submitted a modern, excellent program that fits the foundations' philosophy perfectly, so we supported it." Matolcsy is a close ally of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who described him as his "right-hand man" when he served as economy minister in 2010-2013 and nominated him for the NBH job. Orban has enjoyed strong support in print and broadcast news, with most leading outlets either swinging behind his Fidesz party or largely refraining from criticism during the 2014 election. But online outlets have been more critical.

Fidesz has sought to increase its influence in online media for several years, according to sources with knowledge of the government's communication strategy. "New Wave is an important new player among media groups close to Fidesz, one that strengthens the party's influence in the online sphere, where it had less clout than in the traditional press," said media analyst Gabor Polyak of the MerteK Institute think-tank in Budapest. Orban's government denies infringing on media independence and says it meets EU standards on media freedom. A government spokesman declined to comment on central bank ties to New Wave or allegations of Fidesz influence.

JOURNALISTS QUIT

Matolcsy's cousin, Tamas Szemerey, played a central part in the launch of New Wave; his consultancy firm BankKonzult paid registration fees to state authorities on behalf of the media company when it was set up in 2013, the registration documents show. Weeks later a Czech company called Idspisa bought a majority stake in New Wave through a subsidiary. Jan Nagy, Szemerey's longtime business partner, is the only board member listed at Idspisa, according to company records. He is also listed as the "official representative" for the subsidiary, Bawaco.

New Wave's other shareholder and its CEO is Istvan Szaraz, a close friend of Matolcsy's son Adam and Szemerey's son Bertalan, according to media reports and sources close to New Wave. While no one is asserting that these deals have cross legal lines, the partners' links to Matolcsy have led to some opposition politicians calling for him to resign, accusing him of nepotism. Matolcsy has dismissed such calls as political opportunism. Reuters was unable to contact Nagy. Szemerey did not reply to repeated emails seeking comment about the central bank funding and allegations of preferential treatment.—Reuters

ABK APPOINTS EL SALAWY AS CEO FOR ABK EGYPT

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), announced yesterday that Khaled El Salawy has officially been appointed as Chief Executive Officer for ABK - Egypt.

He joins ABK from Union National Bank, where he was the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, leading the Corporate Banking Division, Treasury & Investment, SME's and Financial Institution activities. Prior to Union National Bank, he spent 8 years with AlexBank-Intesa SanPaolo Group as General Manager - Head of Corporate Banking.

"Mr El Salawy's broad range of experience, his relationships in the country and his ability to understand business dynamics in Egypt confirmed him to be the best per-



Khaled El Salawy



Ali E Marafi

son for the position," said Ali E Marafi, Chairman of ABK Egypt.

"He has an extensive knowledge base and perspective on the banking industry in the region and brings the right combination of knowledge and experience to achieve our goals in Egypt." "On behalf of Mr Talal Behbehani, Chairman of ABK Kuwait, Board Members and Management, we welcome Mr. El Salawy to the team".

Khaled El Salawy succeeds Constantinos Loizides, who has stepped down as Chief Executive to return to Piraeus Bank in Greece. ABK acquired Piraeus Bank in 2015, and is currently in the process of rebranding Piraeus Bank to Al-Ahli Bank - Egypt pending final approval.



DAIMLER AG LAUNCHES NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH AR ALBISHER & Z ALKAZEMI COMPANY

KUWAIT: Daimler AG has enhanced its relationship with AR Albisher & Z. Alkazemi Company, Mercedes-Benz Kuwait, by entering into an additional distribution agreement to supply the new "Mercedes-Benz Accelo 915C" medium-duty truck in Kuwait.

On May 8, Roland Schneider, President & CEO of Daimler Commercial Vehicles (MENA), arrived in Kuwait for the signing of the additional distribution agreement with A R Albisher & Z. Alkazemi Company (A&A). Top executives from A&A attended the signing ceremony, including the Directors, Bisher AR Albisher and Mohammed A R Albisher, the CEO of A&A, Michael Ruehle and the A&A's GM Commercial Vehicles & Daimler Busses, Ralph Geyer.

At the ceremony, Schneider said that the additional agreement reflects the strength of the relationship between Daimler and A&A, "who have been one of our greatest partners in the region." Schneider praised A&A for its business excellence and performance, adding "our growth story and leading market share position in Kuwait would not be so spectacular without A&A's dedication to its Customers, its comprehensive understanding of the Kuwaiti market and its robust Sales and Aftersales operations."

Daimler and A&A's long-standing relationship spans more than 6 decades, and this new agreement further strengthens their ties. Describing the relationship, Director Bisher A R Albisher noted that the success of the partnership has been built upon A&A's local expertise, committed staff and in-depth market insight, combined with the continuous support and trust from one of the world's most advanced automobile manufacturers, Daimler AG Mercedes-Benz. He added, "we are proud to have been the exclusive distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait for more than 60 years. This expansion in the company's product lineup will ensure the partnership continues to grow and strengthen well into the future."

Director Mohammed A R Albisher commented, "fulfilling the requirements of our Clients has always been our first priority. Thanks to Daimler's

quality products and continuous efforts in setting new world-class benchmarks in safety, reliability and comfort, we have been able to satisfy our Customers' expectations again and again, and we will continue to do so in the future."

A&A CEO Michael Ruehle extended his welcome to the visiting President and thanked Daimler for their trust and confidence in A&A by signing this new agreement. In closing he said, "when we talk about the brand Mercedes-Benz, we are talking about 130 years of tradition for innovation. At A&A we are proud to have had such a long association with these pioneers of automotive technology."

The new truck is designed to suit Kuwait's industrial demands in the Medium Duty Segment, and helps consolidate A&A's position as market leader in Kuwait, with a more comprehensive and flexible product lineup than ever before.

Ralph Geyer, GM Commercial Vehicles & Daimler Busses at A&A, gave a rundown of some of the exciting features in the new Accelo 915C truck;

"Compact and agile, the Accelo has a spacious cab with a car-like interior, suitable for a driver and 2 co-passengers. This truck is equipped with a fuel-efficient 4-cylinder diesel engine producing 150hp and astonishing torque of 580 Nm and it has an impressive payload of more than 5 tons. Maximum safety, comfort and reliability are other focal points in the development along with weight-optimization resulting in maximum payload. There are a large number of assistance systems available, which make this truck highly efficient in collection and distribution channels. With these highlights, this truck will be the new shining star in the medium duty segment of Kuwait."

Mercedes-Benz Trucks are recognized as the hallmark of premium quality, catering to all types of use across the full spectrum of light, medium and heavy-duty trucks. Flexible, profitable, practical and safe, the trucks specialize in all-round long distance transportation. The new Accelo 915C is another reason to choose A&A and Mercedes-Benz Kuwait.



DRAGON CITY SET TO LAUNCH 'SUMMER SURPRISES' FESTIVAL

MANAMA: Dragon City, Bahrain's flagship wholesale and retail shopping destination, announced that it will be holding a month-long 'Summer Surprises' festival in Dragon Mall started on 18th of May, 2016. The summer extravaganza will offer the people of Bahrain and the neighboring countries the chance to immerse themselves in the beautiful intricacies of the Chinese culture.

The lavish, Oriental themed nature of the 'Summer Surprises' campaign will be embodied in and exemplified by its opening ceremony that will encompass Chinese tea-making experiences, different sections that teach the delicate, age-old art of Chinese calligraphy and professional Chinese artists that will reveal the ethereal world of traditional Chinese painting. The ceremony is set to host invited dignitaries and exclusively invited guests of Dragon City management, along with members of the local and regional media. Dragon City extends its invitation to visitors of all ages from the Kingdom of Bahrain and beyond to attend both the opening ceremony and the festival itself.

Speaking on the occasion, Patrick Zheng Shuo, Mid-East Regional President of Chinamex Middle East Investment & Trade Company Limited, the operating company of Dragon City, said: "With Dragon City being such a monumental project in terms of its size, stature and the contribution it has to offer to the Kingdom of Bahrain, it was only fitting that we host a festival of sorts to celebrate the completion of the first quarter of the year since our inception. Therefore, it is with great pride that I announce that 'Summer Surprises' will be officially open for engagement to the public from May 18, 2016."

During the month-long celebrations, Dragon Mall will be packed with fun activities, breathtaking events and captivating experiences in and around the pioneering establishment that is set to take the Kingdom of Bahrain by storm. The Galleria of Dragon Mall will host a Chinese Auto Spare Parts and Accessories exhibition that will last the whole month with various prestigious Chinese car brands being put on display. Dragon Mall will also offer motoring enthusiasts the glorious chance to take any of the vehicles on a free, impromptu test drive that will start from the Mall, accompanied by a certified test drive staff member for safety and security purposes. This is besides the opportunity given to the public to register for a comprehensive test drive on a later, scheduled date.

To add to the festivities that envelop the exhibition, Auto Car Performances that will include spectacular stunts by professional Chinese drivers will regularly adorn the 'Summer Surprises' gala. The

concept of the automobile oriented show is to highlight the substantial contribution that the Chinese have made towards the advancement of the motoring industry, while emphasizing on a technological and eco-friendly approach. Dragon Mall will also hold an exclusive Chinese Art and Craft show on the 26th of May, 2016, that will elaborate on the different methods and techniques that harbour the unique trademarks of Chinese Art which have been passed down through generations so that visitors can indulge themselves in this truly breathtaking world.

"With plenty of delightful and recreational pursuits in store, we have something on offer for everyone that will keep them entertained, with lasting memories, for a whole month. We look forward to welcoming one and all to our event and as the day approaches closer, we grow excited to be the cause for the spread of cheer that is set to be a defining characteristic of 'Summer Surprises,' he added.

To add a rewarding element to the exotic features of 'Summer Surprises', various promotions will also encompass a major component of the festival with over 240 outlets participating in this collective offering. During the 'Summer Surprises' festival, every purchase of BD 20 in any participating outlet at Dragon Mall entitles customers to a scratch and win card that offers instant gifts. To increase their chances of winning, every BD 20 spent also enters them into a raffle draw that allows for the opportunity to win a summer holiday package for two at exotic touristic destinations, namely Beijing, Hong Kong, Dubai, and Bangkok.

"We at Dragon City witness an influx of visitors over weekends and public holidays. This, coupled with the increase in the inflow of visitors to Bahrain from throughout the GCC during the summer holidays, makes Dragon Mall all the more appealing for customers during the coming month. With the summer season on our doorsteps, we wanted to make shopping at Dragon Mall that much more rewarding, which is why we decided to launch the promotions as well to coincide with the 'Summer Surprises' festival. We hope all our customers, both regulars and prospective, enjoy our offering, the magnificently fun 'Summer Surprises' festival, as much as it pleases us to have organized it," he concluded.

Located within Diyar Al-Muharraq, Dragon City is a first of its kind development spread over an area of 115,000 square kilometers, encompassing over 780 commercial units, making it the largest wholesale and retail trading centre in the Kingdom of Bahrain that caters to customers from both the Kingdom and beyond.



BAPCO CEO Dr Pete



Andrew Owens, CEO, Greenergy

BAPCO SIGNS STRATEGIC JV AGREEMENT WITH GREENERGY

KUWAIT: Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco), an operating company wholly owned by nogaholding, has announced yesterday that it has formed a strategic joint venture with Greenergy, a large-scale blender of gasoline in the United Kingdom, to establish Bahrain Gasoline Blending (BGB). The joint venture will combine Bapco's infrastructure and refinery gasoline production with Greenergy's blending, terminal operations and trading expertise to meet Bahrain's domestic demand for gasoline blend components as well as create opportunities to import and export.

BGB will commence gasoline blending in Bapco's 260,000bpd capacity refinery in Bahrain using gasoline blend components produced by Bapco's refining operations and purchased from third parties. Finished-grade gasoline will be sold to Bapco and to customers in the region and further afield. In due course, drawing on Greenergy's infrastructure expertise, the joint venture plans to develop new dedicated blending facilities in Bahrain that will allow it to process a wider variety of gasoline components.

Commenting on the announcement, Dr Pete Bartlett, Bapco Chief Executive explained: "We are excited about the long-term growth potential of this unique joint venture and are proud to be working with a company of Greenergy's industry caliber and international reputation. This partnership will help us to further develop our activities, and position Bahrain as a leading participant in the gasoline markets in the Middle East. We are confident that Bahrain Gasoline Blending will allow us to maximise the value of the refinery products we produce, which will contribute positively to Bahrain's economic development."

Commenting on the agreement, Greenergy Chief Executive Andrew Owens added: "This is a further area of expansion for us, allowing us to bring our experience and expertise to grow in a new market. Bapco's facilities are located on a trading channel in and out of the Arabian Gulf and form an ideal base for a new gasoline operation. We look forward to working in close cooperation with the team at Bapco."

Bapco is the national oil company for the Kingdom of Bahrain, and is involved in various aspects of Bahrain's energy-related activities; primarily refining, distribution of petroleum products and natural gas, sales and export of crude oil and refined products. The company owns a 260,000 barrel-a-day refinery, storage facilities for over 14 million barrels, a marketing terminal and a marine terminal for export of petroleum products. The refinery is export based with 95% of production shipped regionally and internationally, with a major portion of its customers from the Middle East, India, Far East, South East Asia and Africa. Over the years, Bapco has prided itself on its environment-centered approach and a steadfast workforce.

Greenergy

Greenergy is a UK based oil company with international operations. It is the leading national provider of road fuel, supplying more than 18 billion litres of fuel annually, with significant infrastructure and service capability. By investing in infrastructure over the last decade, Greenergy has created a unique supply chain that allows it to source fuel products from the lowest cost global producers and move that fuel in the most efficient way to customer forecourts. It blends gasoline at state-of-the-art facilities in the north east and south east of the UK.

AL-TAMIMI & COMPANY CLOSES \$250M SUKUK TRANSACTION FOR BOUBYAN BANK

KUWAIT: Al-Tamimi & Company, the largest law firm in the Middle East, acted as legal counsel for Boubyan Bank KSCP (Bank), a leading Kuwaiti Islamic Bank, in its issuance of Sukuk worth \$250 million.

The transaction is the first Sukuk issued by a Kuwaiti Bank to enhance Tier 1 Capital. The transaction used a Mudarabah structure in order to ensure Shari'a compliance. It will be listed in the NASDAQ market as well as the Irish Stock Exchange and will be priced at 6.75 per cent.

Boubyan Capital, the investment arm of Boubyan Bank, served as the global coordinator for the issuance along with Standard Chartered and HSBC. Other financial institutions involved in the issuance as bookrunners and joint lead managers include NBD Capital, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates, KFH Capital, and the National Bank of Kuwait.

The Al-Tamimi team was led by Head of Office and Partner, Alex Saleh, as well as Senior

Associate Omar Handoush, Associate El Hassan Abdelrazek and Associate Abdullah Masud.

Alex Saleh, commenting on the transaction, said: "We are very excited to have had the opportunity to work on the first Tier 1 Capital Sukuk issuance emanating out of Kuwait with Boubyan Bank. We expect that this transaction will serve as a template for other Islamic banks in Kuwait and the region as more Islamic banks will try to increase their liquidity through the issuance of Shari'a compliant debt instruments."

Al-Tamimi & Company's Kuwait office is headed by Partner & Head of Office, Alex Saleh and operates through its joint venture with Kuwaiti lawyer Yaqoub Yousef Al-Munayae. Al-Tamimi & Company was established in 1989 and is the largest law firm in the Middle East. The firm has 16 offices in 9 countries including Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Bahrain.



INDIA'S BUDGET MINI SPACE SHUTTLE BLASTS OFF

BANGALORE: India successfully launched its first mini space shuttle yesterday as New Delhi's famously frugal space agency joined the global race to make rockets as reusable as airplanes. The shuttle was reportedly developed on a budget of just one billion rupees (\$14 million), a fraction of the billions of dollars spent by other nations' space programs. The Reusable Launch Vehicle, or RLV-TD, which is around the size of a minibus, hurtled into a blue sky over southeast India after its 7:00am (0130 GMT) lift off.

After reaching an altitude of about 70 kilometres (43 miles), it glided back down to Earth, splashing into the Bay of Bengal 10 minutes later. The test mission was a small but crucial step towards eventually developing a full-size, reusable version of the shuttle to make space travel easier and cheaper in the future.

"We have successfully accomplished the RLV mission as a technology demonstrator," Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) spokesman Devi Prasad Karnik told AFP. The worldwide race for reusable rockets intensified after NASA retired its space shuttle program in 2011. They are seen as key to cutting costs and waste in the space industry, which currently loses millions of dollars in jettisoned machinery after each launch. Internet tycoon Elon Musk's SpaceX and Blue Origin of Amazon owner Jeff Bezos have already successfully carried out their own test launches. Musk told reporters in April that it currently costs about \$300,000 to fuel a rocket and about \$60 million to build one. SpaceX first landed its powerful Falcon 9 rocket in December while Blue Origin's New Shepard



SRIHARIKOTA: The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) yesterday shows a scale version of a "Reusable Launch Vehicle" or RLV-TD as it is readied for launch from Sriharikota on the south-east coast of India yesterday. — AFP

successfully completed a third launch and vertical landing in April this year. But ISRO hopes to develop its own version, primarily to cash in on the huge and lucrative demand from other countries to send up their satellites.

The Indian space agency is no stranger to stellar achievements on a shoestring budget. It made global headlines in 2013 after sending an unmanned rocket to orbit Mars at a cost of just \$73 million. NASA's Maven Mars mission had a \$671 million price tag. The launch and its low cost were a source of immense pride in India, which beat rival China in becoming the first Asian country to reach the Red Planet.

K Sivan, a scientist involved in the latest project, said the seven-metre (23-foot) long shuttle survived the test flight, and scientists hope subsequent models six times as big, to be built over the next decade, will glide safely back to land. "We have located the place where the vehicle is floating. The landing was soft and the vehicle did not break," Sivan told AFP. "The mission went off as planned and data from the experiment showed that we have achieved its objectives and demonstrated the RLV technology." Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the "industrious efforts" of ISRO scientists. "Dynamism & dedication with which our scientists & @isro have worked over the years is exceptional and very inspiring," Modi said on Twitter. Modi has often hailed India's budget space technology, quipping in 2014 that a local rocket that launched four foreign satellites into orbit had cost less to make than Hollywood film "Gravity". — AFP



A drone operated captures videos and still images of an apartment building in Philadelphia. A panel of privacy experts and technology companies organized by the Obama administration has issued guidelines for using drones without being overly intrusive. — AP

PRIVACY FEARS: PANEL HAS ADVICE FOR DRONE OPERATORS

DALLAS: A panel of privacy experts and technology companies organized by the Obama administration has issued guidelines for using drones without being overly intrusive. The suggestions are voluntary, but some business interests involved in the debate hope the guidelines head off tougher regulations that they fear could smother the drone industry in its infancy.

News organizations are exempt from the guidelines on free-press grounds. Supporters say drones could provide huge benefits, from inspecting power lines to delivering medicine to remote areas. Google Inc. and Amazon.com Inc. want to use them for deliveries. Falling prices have made drones popular among hobbyists, too.

However, their small size and ability to go just about anywhere - while carrying cameras and sensors - have raised privacy concerns. The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration on Thursday released the "best practices," which were supported by drone makers, Amazon and other technology companies and retailers, and privacy advocates. The suggestions are aimed at both commercial and private drone users.

Among the many recommendations:

- * Operators shouldn't fly their drones over private property without the owner's consent.
- * They should alert people in the area ahead of time when it is practical and explain the purpose of the drone flight.
- * Unless there is "a compelling need," operators shouldn't fly a drone where someone has a reasonable expectation of privacy and a drone should not be used to follow someone continuously.
- * Don't use information gathered by drones for decisions about employment, credit or eligibility for health care.
- * Don't use personal information for marketing purposes without the individual's consent.
- * Information from drones shouldn't be held longer than "reasonably necessary," although exceptions can be made for legal disputes, safety reasons or with permission of the person being watched.

There are about 5,600 drones registered for commercial purposes and about 450,000 hobbyists have registered at least one drone, according to figures from the Federal Aviation Administration. Their popularity has soared over the past year or so, putting pressure on the industry and privacy advocates to agree on guidelines governing their use.

The Consumer Technology Association, a corporate group whose members include Google, Apple and Microsoft, said this week's

guidelines balance innovation and privacy. The group's director of regulatory affairs, Alex Reynolds, said that more "prescriptive rules" would threaten the benefits offered by drones, from delivering disaster relief to helping agriculture and infrastructure maintenance. The Center for Democracy and Technology, a civil liberties group, said it hoped big companies and hobbyists alike would follow the guidelines.

Protections

"We're concerned about the widespread use of drones for surveillance without any rules," said Chris Calabrese, the group's vice president of policy. He said the group got all the important protections it wanted in the guidelines, including protection against persistent surveillance even in public places and use of drone-gathered data in employment and marketing.

News outlets including The Associated Press were represented in the discussions leading up to the guidelines and won an exemption. The standards say news organizations should be able to use drones the same way they use comparable technology - such as planes and helicopters - to record data in public spaces as long as they follow their own ethics policies and federal and state laws.

Joel Roberson, an attorney who represented the news groups, said the outcome "will ensure that news-reporting organizations have a First Amendment right to gather the news through drones in the national airspace."

There were some holdouts to the final report. Four companies including GoPro, whose cameras are mounted on many drones, and drone maker DJI refused to sign the guidelines. Kara Calvert, a spokeswoman for the companies, said there are no such guidelines for security cameras or camera-toting people on ladders or rooftops. Drone users shouldn't face tougher rules, she said.

The American Civil Liberties Union objected to qualifiers that suggest drone operators can sometimes ignore the guidelines if they have a "compelling need" or "implied" consent of individuals. "What does that mean?" said Jay Stanley, a privacy analyst with ACLU. "That kind of weasel language runs throughout the document." The Federal Aviation Administration is close to issuing final rules regarding drones, but those regulations are expected to stick to safety issues, not privacy. Airline pilots have reported seeing drones flying dangerously close to their planes. In February 2015, President Barack Obama ordered the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration to help develop best practices for privacy and other issues surrounding drone use. — AP

AFTER LONG DISPUTE, LONDON METRO TO RUN ALL NIGHT AT WEEKENDS

LONDON: Trains will run all night at the weekend from August 19 on two lines of the London Underground metro network in what new Mayor Sadik Khan said yesterday would be a boost to the British capital's night-time economy. Plans to introduce all-night services on the Tube, as Londoners call the Underground, were one of the main causes of a long-running dispute between management and the RMT rail workers' union that involved several strikes.

"The Night Tube is absolutely vital to my plans to support and grow London's night-time economy, creating more jobs and opportunities for all Londoners," Khan, who was elected mayor earlier this month, said in a statement. The RMT said there were still unresolved issues concerning the Tube's engineers and it urged management to move quickly to reach a settlement with

that group of workers that did not leave them disadvantaged on conditions and pensions.

"All parties have to be clear that Night Tube, a development that RMT supports, cannot be delivered on the cheap," the RMT's General Secretary Mick Cash said in a statement.

The 24-hour weekend services will start on the Central and Victoria lines, with the Piccadilly, Jubilee and Northern lines to follow in the autumn. The statement from Khan's office said hundreds of thousands of late-night revellers and shift workers would benefit, with journeys cut by an average of 20 minutes and some by more than an hour. The statement said this would support around 2,000 permanent jobs and boost London's economy by 360 million pounds (\$521 million). — Reuters

WITH HOLOLENS, MICROSOFT AIMS TO AVOID GOOGLE'S MISTAKES

EARLY EDITION OF HOLOLENS AUGMENTED-REALITY GOGGLES DISPLAYED

SAN FRANCISCO: When Google introduced its Google Glass smartglasses four years ago, it turned to Glass-sporting skydivers buzzing a San Francisco convention center, Glass-adorned models at a glitzy fashion show and a Twitter campaign to notify early "Glass Explorers" of their luck in snagging a pair.

This year, when Microsoft showed off an early edition of its HoloLens augmented-reality goggles, it took the opposite approach: targeting the software developers it needs to make the device useful. No stunts. No fashion spreads. No consumer marketing at all.

The discreet launch reflects the daunting hurdles confronting the nascent industry of augmented reality, known in the industry as AR. Such devices overlay images as holograms onto a user's real-life field of vision, with the goal of improving efficiency at businesses ranging from doctors' offices to factory floors. Some industry veterans see it as an even bigger opportunity than its cousin, virtual reality, which completely immerses users in an artificial world. But early efforts around augmented reality, including Google Glass and Microsoft's own predecessor to HoloLens called Kinect, have sputtered.

"They're taking a more measured approach with HoloLens, and it's the right strategy," said Tipatat Chennavasin, general partner at the Venture Reality Fund, which invests in augmented-reality and virtual-reality start-ups. "You don't want to overhype it and get people very disappointed, and that's what happened with Google Glass." The market research consultancy Digi-Camp predicts the AR industry could be worth \$90 billion annually by 2020. That's triple the projections for total sales in virtual reality. Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Sony are among the many tech firms that are betting on augmented reality, virtual reality or both. The traditional methods of interacting with a computer - usually featuring a keyboard or a touch screen - will eventually seem quaint as these technologies proliferate, many in the industry believe. "Microsoft has a huge opportunity here, that is: to create a market for holographic, mixed reality and to dominate it," said J.P. Gownder, an analyst at Forrester Research. Success, he said, would mean selling hundreds of thousands of units by the end of 2017 to businesses.

But history suggests augmented and virtual reality still have a long way to go. Virtual reality developers, newly energized by the release of Facebook's Oculus headset, have focused on gaming, but no "killer app" - must-have software that motivates someone to buy a device - has yet emerged. Many users still experience problems with nausea, which plagued earlier virtual reality efforts. Google announced last week a big virtual reality initiative, and players in the space ranging from start-up Leap Motion to smartphone



Microsoft showed off an early edition of its HoloLens augmented-reality goggles.

maker HTC have generated plenty of buzz. But many of the promised products have yet to hit the market. Augmented reality, meanwhile, seems destined at this stage for specialized niches in industries such as medicine and manufacturing. Google has shifted its focus too and no longer sells Glass to consumers, who found few useful things to do with the devices. Glass is still available to developers. "It took Google a long way to evolve to a more substantive approach," said Ian Shakil, chief executive of Augmedix, a San Francisco startup that recently raised \$17 million for a smart-glass system for doctors that automatically records patient data.

LEGACY OF KINECT

The HoloLens traces its lineage to Kinect, an add-on for Microsoft's Xbox gaming console that was introduced in 2010. Kinect turned user gestures into commands, and deployed sensors and cameras to map the rooms where it was set up, creating the foundation for a more immersive gaming experience.

Consumers liked Kinect, but it never lived up to its full potential, in part because it spawned no blockbuster games. Microsoft failed to persuade top gaming studios to invest seriously in Kinect, developers say, and by 2014 it was no longer being included with Xbox consoles. But the Kinect technology found a second life in the HoloLens, which enables users to control holograms through finger bends in a motion called the "air tap." Kinect developer Alex Kipman and much of his team also led the creation of HoloLens. The new product, which sells in its developer version for \$3,000, featured prominently at Microsoft's recent software developers conference in San Francisco, with participants

donning goggles to take a tour of Mars led by a hologram of astronaut Buzz Aldrin. They also played with the "air tap," which controls a hologram's movements much as a mouse manipulates icons on a computer screen.

But Microsoft makes it clear the playfulness takes a back seat to purpose. It plans to "cultivate a thriving developer community and to foster a vibrant app ecosystem," according to a company spokesperson. Tim Gahrhel, a developer at IT consultancy Concurrency who attended the Build conference, talked about how useful HoloLens would be for maintaining industrial-scale printing equipment. Workers probing malfunctioning parts, he explained, could get tailored instructions beamed onto the screen, or perhaps a hologram of a skilled technician showing how to make repairs.

Ronald van der Putten, a software architect at Honeywell, said the HoloLens could allow hands-free scanning in warehouses. Brandon Haase, an engineer at Valorem Consulting, said he could see uses in insurance: creating inventories of homeowners' belongings by wearing a HoloLens during a walk-through of a house, for example. James Ashley, a software developer in Atlanta and an expert on Kinect, said Microsoft was aiming to "fix a mistake seen with the Kinect, that the Kinect was for gamers' only."

"They're trying to align this new technology with their core business" of building technology for corporations, he said. Eventually, perhaps some time in 2017, Microsoft will likely unveil a consumer version of HoloLens, said Gownder, the analyst. "Over time, less expensive hardware would create a larger market," he said, adding he expected the first consumer HoloLens to be priced under \$1,500. — Reuters

CHINA MULLS NEW WAYS TO CONTROL VIDEO WEBSITES

BEIJING: Chinese authorities are exploring new ways of imposing controls on the Internet, state-run media cited experts as saying yesterday, after reports said state-owned enterprises may be encouraged to take stakes in video streaming websites. The Communist country restricts access to foreign websites including Google, Facebook and Twitter with a vast control network dubbed the Great Firewall of China, and under President Xi Jinping it has tightened its grip on broadcast, print and online media. Content deemed politically sensitive, violent or morally "unhealthy" is regularly blocked.

New regulations being considered by China's censorship authority would allow a select list of SOEs to buy "special management stakes" of up to 10 percent in the country's popular video streaming websites, giving them the right to oversee production and decision-making, respected business magazine Caixin reported.

The Chinese-language report was later removed from Caixin's own website, although the text was widely reposted elsewhere. Video sites such as Youku Tudou, acquired last year by tech giant Alibaba for an estimated \$4.8 billion, and Baidu's iQiyi.com could be affected, with greater scrutiny over content and potential modifications to in-house productions. The move showed that the government hopes to tighten its grip on websites mostly privately run-over which they have had "little influence" in the past, the state-run Global Times newspaper on Monday cited Xiang Ligang, CEO of telecommunication industry portal cctime.com, as saying. "The government cannot punish [the websites] on a daily basis or shut down [a website] at will as it would trigger a backlash," he

explained. The paper cited communications law professor Zhu Wei as adding that the new mechanism would be a preventive measure capable of blocking objectionable content before it was even released, unlike current regulations which only punish perpetrators after the fact.

The initial list of SOEs to take part in the venture included state broadcasters China National Radio and China Radio International, among others, the

Global Times added. The State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAP-PRFT) met with video websites last week to discuss the plans, and suggested non-binding agreements between them and the SOEs as soon as June 10, Bloomberg News reported. Some websites present at the meeting objected, but it remained unclear what the consequences of non-participation might be, it added. — AFP



BEIJING: Chinese Minister of Science and Technology Wan Gang arrives for a press conference on a recently announced National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy in Beijing yesterday. — AP

TOY ‘ARMS RACE’ TURNING LEGO VIOLENT: STUDY

WELLINGTON: Lego products are becoming increasingly violent as toymakers engage in an “arms race” to retain children’s attention in the digital age, New Zealand researchers said yesterday. The University of Canterbury team said child’s play was becoming more brutal, with a higher proportion of weapons appearing among Lego’s building blocks and war-like scenarios featuring in its themed kit sets. “The Lego company’s products are not as innocent as they used to be,” lead researcher Christoph Bartneck said. “The violence in Lego products seems to have gone beyond just enriching game play.” In a peer-reviewed study published by the online journal PLOS ONE, the researchers concluded that Lego “showed significant exponential increases of violence over time.”

While Denmark-based Lego has been making plastic building blocks since 1949, the study found its first weapons were issued in 1978 when a castle kit included swords, axes and lances. An analysis found that weapons had steadily become more commonplace and were now included in 30 percent of Lego kits. Bartneck said the

percentage was probably higher as the data included only small, single-brick weapons, not items such as the best-selling Star Wars’ Death Star, which in itself is a giant planet-destroying ray blaster. In addition, the research examined Lego catalogues from 1973 to 2015 and found the scenarios depicted in the company’s kits had become more violent.

“Currently, around 40 percent of all pages contain some type of violence-in particular, scenarios involving shooting and threatening behavior have increased over the years,” it found. “The atmosphere of the violent acts is predominantly perceived as exciting.” The study said Lego was simply reflecting a broader trend in children’s entertainment. “To catch the attention of their customers, toy manufacturers are similarly locked in a metaphorical arms race for exciting new products,” it said. Bartneck also conducted separate research released in 2013 which found the number of angry expressions on Lego figures was rising as the number of happy faces declined.

Lego has radically reinvented itself

since it almost went bankrupt in 2003-4 as electronic games threatened its future. The privately-held company embarked on

a bold strategy to embrace popular culture while shedding “non-core” activities such as clothing lines and the Legoland

theme parks. Instead it began selling themed kits linked to popular movie franchises such as Star Wars, Batman and Harry Potter. It also created light-hearted computer games and animation along the same lines, paying off when “The Lego Movie” was a surprise hit in 2014. The result has been 11 straight years of growth, with the company announcing earlier this year that net profit in 2015 soared 31 percent to 9.2 billion Danish kroner (1.2 billion euros; US\$1.4 billion).

Lego said it was a record-breaking year for the brand, with an estimated 100 million children in 140 countries playing with Lego bricks and other toys. Lego spokesman Troy Taylor said the company’s products promoted a range of play activities such as construction, fantasy and conflict. “As with other play types, conflict play is a natural part of a child’s development,” he said. Taylor said weapons in Lego were always used for a broader purpose, such as saving the world, and character was emphasized over firepower. “We always try and use humor where possible as it helps tone down the level of conflict.” — AFP



CHRISTCHURCH: Associate professor Christoph Bartneck from the university holds a Lego container at the campus. Lego products are becoming increasingly violent as toymakers engage in an ‘arms race’ to retain children’s attention in the digital age, New Zealand researchers said yesterday. — AFP



AGRA: The sun rises over the Taj Mahal in Agra, India. Archaeological experts say insects proliferating from a polluted river near the Taj Mahal are marring the intricate marble inlay work by leaving greenish black patches of waste on the walls of the 17th century monument of love. — AP

INSECT EXCREMENT TURNS INDIA’S TAJ MAHAL GREEN

LUCKNOW: Its gleaming white marble walls have for years been yellowed by India’s air pollution and now the Taj Mahal faces a fresh threat-from green insect excrement. Authorities have ordered an investigation after green-tinged patches began appearing on the back wall of the monument to love, which stands on the banks of the heavily polluted Yamuna river. Environmentalists believe the pollutants in the river have caused a rise in levels of algae, which has in turn led to a surge in the numbers of the insects which feed on it. India’s National Green Tribunal, which hears cases related to environmental protection, raised the issue last week. Now the state government of Uttar Pradesh, home to the world’s most famous tomb, has ordered an inquiry.

“The state government is extremely concerned about this issue. People can rest assured that we will let no harm come to the Taj Mahal,” the chief minister’s spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary said yesterday in the state capital Lucknow. He said the chief minister, Akhilesh Yadav, had ordered officials to find urgent solutions.

The alert was sounded by environmental activist DK Joshi. “Three types of insects breeding in the stagnant and polluted waters of the Yamuna flowing behind the Taj Mahal are causing the problem,” he said. “They’re attracted to the white sheen of the marble and the swarms are leaving behind greenish-black faeces, which is discoloring the ancient monument.”

Authorities have taken steps in recent years to try to protect the 17th-century monument from pollution from the nearby busy city of Agra, including banning local coal-powered industries. The Taj-India’s top tourist attraction-was built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan as a tomb for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died giving birth in 1631. It has drawn a string of world leaders and royalty including former US President Bill Clinton, while Diana, the late British princess, was famously photographed alone on a marble seat there in 1992. District officials in Agra said they had not yet heard of the chief minister’s directive but would take any action deemed necessary. — AFP

US STATES ON ZIKA FRONTLINE SEE BIG GAPS IN FUNDING, EXPERTISE

MOSQUITO CONTROL PROGRAMS REFLECT DEEP ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

MISSISSIPPI: In Mississippi, a small team of entomologists has begun the first survey of mosquito populations in decades. Experts do not believe the kind of mosquitoes most likely to carry the Zika virus are active in the state, but they cannot know for sure. By contrast, the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District, has been active since the late 1920s. With an annual budget of over \$15 million, it now deploys four helicopters, two airplanes and 33 inspectors covering 125 square miles. Because they are funded by local taxpayer dollars, US mosquito control programs reflect deep economic disparities between communities, leaving some at-risk locations badly unprepared for the virus that is spreading through the Americas.

First detected in Brazil last year, Zika has been linked in that country to more than 1,300 cases of microcephaly, a rare birth defect defined by unusually small heads. The outbreak is expected to reach the continental United States in the coming weeks as temperatures rise and mosquito populations multiply. In interviews with Reuters, more than a dozen state and local health officials and disease control experts say they worry they will have neither the money nor the time to plug gaping holes in the nation’s defenses.

They say the poorest communities along the Gulf of Mexico with a history of dengue outbreaks are at the highest risk. States in the south are “woefully under-invested,” said Dr Thomas Dobbs, epidemiologist for the Mississippi State Department of Health. “You have these gaping holes in capacity,” he said, with many poor communities mobilizing their first mosquito control efforts in years. Among the best-prepared is Harris County, Texas, which includes the city of Houston. It dedicates \$4.5 million a year to controlling disease carriers, or vectors, such as mosquitoes, ticks or rodents.

The 50-year-old program is considered one of the best in the country. Traps have been set up in 268 areas in the county to capture and catalog mosquitoes and test them for pesticide resistance. It is adding new traps for the Aedes aegypti mosquitoes

that carry Zika. New York City plans to spend \$21 million over three years to combat the virus. Aedes aegypti have never been found in the city, so its efforts will target Aedes albopictus, a mosquito believed to be capable of spreading the virus.

At the other end of the spectrum, some communities may only have a “Chuck in the truck” - someone who does spraying runs with a fogger attached to his pickup, said Stan Cope, president of the American Mosquito Control Association. Many municipalities do not even have that much. The Obama administration has asked Congress for nearly \$1.9 billion to fight Zika, including \$453 million to assist with emergency response, laboratory capacity and mosquito control. Lawmakers in the House of Representatives and Senate have presented their own funding proposals, which each fall far short of that sum.

Stopgap funding

To help plug some of the gaps until Congress acts, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is adding \$38 million to an existing infectious diseases grant program to expand lab testing capacity and surveillance for Zika. For the first time, CDC will also provide an additional \$15 million to help local programs most in need, CDC entomologist Janet McAllister told Reuters. She said states’ proposals are due by the end of May and could cover funding for trucks, equipment and chemicals, as well as hiring contractors. The CDC has also earmarked \$25 million for at-risk states and territories, though the funds would primarily go health departments to help them deal with Zika cases.

But the CDC money is not expected to reach states until August at the earliest, late in the game to do mosquito surveillance. The agency estimates that Aedes aegypti could be present in as many as 27 US states, though the chief worry will be areas with recent dengue fever cases, McAllister said. Those include South Florida, South Texas, Southern California, areas along the US border with Mexico, Louisiana and Hawaii. Frank Welch, medical direc-

tor for the office of community preparedness for Louisiana, a state with 64 different types of mosquitoes, said his concern was that federal emergency funding might get delayed until the fall. “That would certainly be too late for immediate Zika preparedness,” he said.

Different animal

Even communities with established, well-funded insect-fighting programs may lack the tools to prevent an outbreak. “We don’t feel horribly confident that anybody in the world is very good at controlling these mosquitoes,” said Susanne Klugh, Scientific-Technical Services Director for the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District. One reason is that most US programs are designed to deal with nuisance mosquitoes or those carrying West Nile, which are controlled by spraying at night and dropping tablets that kill mosquito larvae into catch basins.

Confronting Aedes aegypti, a daytime biter that lives in and around homes and breeds in tiny containers of water, is more expensive and inherently less efficient. “It’s a different animal. It requires a very different method to control,” said Michael Doyle, a former CDC entomologist who directs mosquito control in the Florida Keys. In 2009, Doyle oversaw efforts to fight dengue, also carried by Aedes aegypti. Inspectors went door to door every week, dumping containers of water in back yards that could serve as breeding sites, spraying pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes and using a liquid non-toxic bacterial formulation to kill larvae. After every rainstorm, they continue to spray 80,000 acres with the larvicide.

That has proved expensive at \$16 per acre plus helicopter costs. The efforts have only reduced the Aedes aegypti mosquito population by half since 2010, which Doyle said is not enough to prevent disease transmission. In California, Aedes aegypti mosquitoes arrived as recently as 2013 and have spread to seven counties from south of Fresno to San Diego. — Reuters

FRENCH INSURER AXA PULLS OUT OF TOBACCO INDUSTRY

AXA BECOMES FIRST MAJOR INSURER TO CUT TOBACCO TIES

PARIS: The AXA group yesterday became the first global insurer to cut ties with the tobacco industry, saying it would sell about 1.8 billion euros (\$2.0 billion) worth of investments in the sector, to cheers from anti-smoking campaigners. “This decision has a cost for us, but the case for divestment is clear: the human cost of tobacco is tragic; its economic cost is huge,” said Thomas Buberl, deputy chief executive of the French giant.

The group took the decision “as a responsible health insurer and investor,” AXA said in a statement, urging other insurers to follow its lead. “Smoking poses the biggest threat to public health in the world today,” AXA said. “Its cost, estimated at 2.1 trillion euros per year, equals



PARIS: Photo shows the logo of the insurance and bank group Axa. France’s biggest insurance group AXA said yesterday it was pulling out of the tobacco industry, divesting about 1.8 billion euros (\$2.0 billion) of assets in the sector as part of the fight against smoking. — AFP

the combined expenses of war and terrorism,” said the company, which a year ago also said it was pulling out of the coal sector. The company said it would begin by selling its equity holdings in tobacco companies, which are currently valued at about 200 million euros. AXA will also run down its existing bond holdings in the tobacco industry, valued at about 1.6 billion euros, it said. Buberl said that, by dropping the tobacco industry, the company was doing its “share to



CENTREVILLE: Photo shows cigarettes in an ashtray on April in Centreville, Virginia. The US Supreme Court has refused to hear an appeal by tobacco giant Philip Morris USA which had been ordered to pay \$25 million to a man whose wife died of cancer. — AFP

support the efforts of governments around the world.” AXA, whose revenues from its health care business reached almost 12 billion euros last year, is the first global insurer to take this step, a spokesman for the group said. The company said that as a major investor it wanted to be “part of the solution, and our hope is that others in our industry will do the same.” AXA warned that without urgent action to curb the rise in smoking-related deaths, tobacco was expected to kill one billion people worldwide during the 21st century.

Industry ‘kills its customers’

“We need companies like AXA to signal that investing in an industry which kills its customers is simply the wrong thing to do,” said Cary Adams, CEO of the US-based Union for International Cancer Control. Norway’s sovereign wealth fund, the biggest in the world with

shares in more than 9,000 companies, does not invest in tobacco. A major US pension fund, CalPERS, has shunned tobacco investments since 2001, but recent news reports said it is reconsidering this policy after calculating the cost in lost income at some \$3.0 billion.

Tobacco remains a good financial investment despite declining sales in the West, as smoking continues to grow in the developing world with increases in disposable income. Shares in tobacco giant Philip Morris International skyrocketed 80 percent in the past five years, while those of British American Tobacco have risen 55 percent. Nearly 80 percent of the world’s one billion smokers live in low- and middle-income countries, according to the World Health Organization. The WHO says some eight million people a year will die of smoking-related diseases by 2030, mostly in developing countries. — AFP

PREGNANT WOMEN IN US WITH ZIKA SPIKES ON NEW COUNTING METHOD

NEW YORK: The number of pregnant women in the United States infected with Zika virus is suddenly tripling, due to a change in how the government is reporting cases. Previously, officials had reported how many pregnant women had both Zika symptoms and positive blood tests. In a change announced Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s count will include all women who tested positive, regardless of symptoms. There are now 157 pregnant women infected with Zika in the 50 states, up from the 48 reported last week under the old definition.

Experts emphasized that there does not appear to be any dramatic actual increase of pregnant women with the disease in recent months. There was a spike in diagnoses in February and March, but relatively few new cases since then, according to CDC data that includes women who experienced symptoms and those who didn’t. The Zika virus causes only a mild and brief illness, at worst, in most people. But in the last year, infections in pregnant women have been strongly linked to fetal deaths and to potentially devastating birth defects, mostly in Brazil.

The virus is spread mainly through the bite of a tropical mosquito called Aedes aegypti. It can be found in the southern United States, but there’s no evidence that they’ve been spreading the virus in the US yet. All the 544 total cases in the 50 states so far have been people who had traveled to outbreak areas, or who had sex with someone who did. Experts think mosquitoes on the US mainland will probably start spreading the virus in the months ahead, when hot weather hits and mosquito populations boom.

The sudden rise in the count of pregnant women with the disease in the US may seem jarring. But Dr Neil Silverman, a UCLA professor of obstetrics who has been

advising the California Department of Public Health on Zika issues, explained the change in method does not indicate a greater risk of infection. When he gets calls from patients, he said, “About 90 percent of what we’re doing is reassuring and calming people.” Only an estimated 1 in 5 people infected with Zika develop symptoms - fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes - which usually last no more than a week.

Initially, doctors recognized the connection between the virus and birth defects only in women who had suffered symptoms during pregnancy. But reports published this year indicate some pregnant women with laboratory evidence of a recent Zika infection - but who never had symptoms - have delivered infants with these defects.

International health agencies have already been reporting Zika infections in women based solely on lab tests. Some experts have found it surprising that the CDC has been basing its official number on a more conservative case definition. However, CDC officials had voiced concerns that one kind of blood test is too prone to giving a false positive test result if a woman was infected with a different but similar tropical virus.

CDC officials on Friday said it’s possible the new count may include a few false positives, but they say the new count will offer a more complete picture of the effects of Zika in the US states and territories. CDC says doctors should consider testing pregnant women who have been to an area where Zika is spreading, whether or not they have symptoms. Doctors also are encouraged to ask pregnant women if their sex partner has been infected or traveled to an outbreak area. The new counting “will give us a better idea of the correlation between a mom’s symptoms and the effects on the baby,” said Dr. Richard Beigi, an obstetrics expert at the University of Pittsburgh. — AP

GOSH RUNS UNDERSTANDING ARABIC CULTURE COURSE FOR STAFF

KUWAIT: Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) in London, one of the world's leading paediatric hospitals, treats over 5,000 children every year from over 80 countries around the world. GOSH endeavors to provide an open and supportive atmosphere for patients and their families and to achieve this, the hospital runs regular Understanding Arabic Culture Study Days for staff. These are run in partnership with University of London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

This May, GOSH ran the course again for fifty staff from across the hospital, including nurses, consultants and administrative staff. Trevor Clarke, Director of International Services explains "We understand that travelling overseas for treatment can be a stressful and difficult time, and we strive to make sure that our patients and their families are as comfortable as possible. We therefore believe it is essential for our staff to undertake training to facilitate this. We are delighted to continue working with the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies to provide this course for our staff."

There were two speakers on the day: Jonathan Fryer, a freelance writer, lecturer at SOAS and broadcaster who has worked for the BBC and Middle Eastern television channels, and Dr Alanoud Al Sharekh, a



researcher on youth and gender demographics, GCC security, bi-cultural trends and a specialist on Arab Feminist Theory as well as a Research Associate at SOAS.

Jonathan offered an in depth look at the historical, political and religious backdrop of the region which was informed by his first-hand knowledge from working and living in

the area. He began with a brief overview of the history and geography of the Arabian Gulf and then an explanation of the Five Pillars of Islam, followed by a Q&A session.

Jonathan commented, "Dealing with patients and families from other cultural traditions can lead to misunderstandings and unintentionally giving offence, so I was happy to share some of my experiences from working in and with the Gulf over the past 25 years. It was great to have people from many different departments at GOSH and there was lots of lively discussion."

Dr Alanoud offered a more detailed look into the societal and cultural conventions of the region, before running an informative discussion with staff about the differences between healthcare in the UK and Kuwait, and the expectations families from the Middle East might have when visiting the hospital. "I think patients from the Arabian Gulf would appreciate the nuanced approach Great Ormond Street Hospital is taking to ensure that this difficult period is handled with compassion and cultural tolerance," Dr Alanoud says.

Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital (GOSH) in London is a world-class centre of excellence with over 50 different paediatric specialities and 300 world-leading consultants under one roof. Through pioneering translational research, GOSH provides cutting-edge treatment for the rarest and most complex paediatric conditions. GOSH is rated as one of the top 5 children's hospitals in the world.



GUJARAT: Photo shows Asiatic lion 'Ambar' inside his open enclosure at the Kaila Nehru Zoological Garden in Ahmedabad. Thirteen endangered Asiatic lions that only live in a forest in western India have been caught and caged after three villagers were killed in recent months. — AFP

INDIA CAGES ENDANGERED LIONS AFTER FATAL ATTACKS

AHMEDABAD: Thirteen endangered Asiatic lions that only live in a forest in western India have been caught and caged after three villagers were killed in recent months, a wildlife official said yesterday. The pride of lions has been rounded up from Gir sanctuary in Gujarat state after at least one of the animals last week dragged a teenager from his village while he was sleeping and killed him.

Gujarat's chief conservator of forests, J A Khan, said the lions were captured in recent days from an eastern part of the protected forest in a bid to find the "man-eaters" responsible. Khan said it was unclear why or how many of the cats had ventured outside of the sanctuary, their last remaining natural habitat, to find prey, describing the attacks as rare. "Lions that have preyed upon humans will be analyzed in detail, while the rest will be slowly introduced back into the wild," Khan said. "We will be doing a scat analysis which includes testing the animals' faeces for human tissues, chemical analysis of their blood and even genetic analysis," he said.

The cats, slightly smaller than their

African cousins and with a fold of skin along their bellies, have been increasing in numbers in Gir, with 523 recorded in the latest census. Conservationists have suggested some of the lions be relocated to a different sanctuary, to reduce human-animal conflict and avoid being wiped out by disease or natural disaster. In the latest attack, the 14-year-old boy was dragged from his sleeping spot in a mango orchid in Ambardi village near the forest on May 20. His father was also injured while trying to scare the animal away. A lion also killed a 50-year-old woman on April 10 in a nearby village as she slept in an open field.

At least one of the predators dragged and killed a 60-year-old man as he slept in his hut in Ambardi village on March 19. The Asiatic lion was listed as endangered in 2008, up from critically endangered in 2000, after numbers improved in the forest. But the International Union for Conservation of Nature has warned that as the lion survives in only one area it remained vulnerable to extinction from an epidemic or large forest fire. — AFP

CAMPAIGNERS SAY EATING FAT WON'T MAKE YOU FAT

GROUP CHALLENGES UK ADVICE

LONDON: Encouraging people to eat a low-fat diet is making Britain's weight problem worse not better, and having a disastrous impact on health, two anti-obesity campaign groups said yesterday. In a report questioned by other health specialists, the National Obesity Forum (NOF) and Public Health Collaborative (PHC) said "eating fat does not make you fat". UK dietary guidelines advise people to eat lots of fruit and vegetables, plenty of carbohydrates such as potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods, alongside some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy proteins.

They also encourage using low-fat milk and dairy products, and warn that foods and drinks that are high in salt, fat and sugar should be consumed in small amounts. The NOF/PHC report, entitled "Eat Fat, Cut The Carbs and Avoid Snacking To Reverse Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes", called for a "major overhaul" of the guidelines and said snacking in-between meals is what is making people overweight. "The role of poor dietary advice has been ignored for too long. Specifically, the 'low fat' and 'lower cholesterol' messages have had unintended disastrous health consequences," the report said.

Others disagree

But other health and nutrition experts questioned the report's conclusions and voiced concern that it had been selective in its citing of evidence. "This report is full of ideas and opinion however it does not offer the robust and comprehensive review of evidence," said Mike Knapp, associate medical director at the British Heart Foundation. "This country's obesity epidemic is not caused by poor dietary guidelines; it is that we are not meeting them." He warned that "focusing on single foods, nutrients or risk factors is short sighted and will perpetuate confusion and

fear amongst the public about what they should and shouldn't eat." John Wass, a special adviser on obesity at the Royal College of Physicians, also said the issue was not as simple as fat or no fat. He warned campaigners not to quote selective studies and risk "misleading the public". "There is good evidence that saturated fat increases cholesterol and

problems with arterial disease," he said. "What is needed is a balanced diet, regular physical activity and a normal healthy weight." The PHC is a non-profit health campaign group made up of public health experts and the NOF is a charity which campaigns to raise public awareness of obesity and of ways to tackle it through lifestyle changes. — Reuters

FRANCE FAULTS BIOTRIAL AND BIAL OVER FATAL DRUG TRIAL

PARIS: Portuguese drugmaker Bial and French laboratory Biotrial are at fault "on several counts" for a fatal drug trial that left one person dead and five others hospitalized in January, French Health Minister Marisol Touraine said yesterday. All trials of the drug, which is intended to treat mood and anxiety issues as well as movement coordination disorders linked to neurological issues, have since been suspended.

The victims were given the experimental drug made by Portugal's Bial in an initial phase 1 stage at a private facility in Rennes, Brittany, run by France's Biotrial. "A final investigation report confirms that the conditions under which the test was approved did not breach existing legislation," Touraine told journalists. "Inspectors consider, however, that Bial and Biotrial are responsible on several counts; regarding the dosage prescribed (...) and the time taken to alert authorities," she said.

An initial inquiry in February had already established that Biotrial had been too slow to react when the first patient fell ill. Touraine said the five people who had fallen ill after the trial were out of danger and

no longer in hospital but she criticized the way Biotrial had managed the crisis. In their final report, inspectors from France's social affairs inspectorate (IGAS) found that the company did not properly inform volunteers and had implemented a flawed testing protocol. Biotrial contested the IGAS findings in a statement on Sunday evening, complaining of "carefully orchestrated leaks". Bial was not immediately reachable for comment yesterday.

Touraine gave Biotrial a month to present a comprehensive action plan to ensure accidents would not happen again. France will liaise with the European Commission and the European Medicines Agency to improve trial practices at an international level, she said. In addition to the IGAS investigation, the affair is the subject of a separate judicial inquiry. Cases of early-stage clinical trials going badly wrong are rare but not unheard of. In 2006, six healthy volunteers given an experimental drug in London ended up in intensive care. On Jan 21, US company Johnson & Johnson said it had suspended international trials of a drug similar to the one experimented by Bial. — Reuters

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
فهد علي المخيزيم

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

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



ATRIUM RESTAURANT AT COURTYARD KUWAIT LAUNCHES THE MARKET

Located in the heart of Kuwait City, Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait launched a new culinary adventure called 'The Market.' The new culinary concept allows guests to enjoy a dining extravaganza from around the globe. The Market offers a wide array of sta-

tions with ready-to-eat food from the most popular cuisines in the World, including Indian, Asian, Mediterranean and a lot more.

The wide array of stations offer a spread of delectable dishes for lunch and dinner, including a huge selection of

appetizers, salads, main courses such as butter chicken masala, stir-fry noodles with miso shrimps, Spanish hamour stew with roasted stuffed olives, hamour biryani, classic couscous with vegetables, in addition to mouth-watering desserts.

Suitable for families and groups of all ages, 'The Market' enhances the dining experience with traditional décor and breathtaking views of Kuwait City.

"Our success is coming from understanding our guests' needs and the market demand," said George Aoun, Cluster

General Manager at Marriott Hotels in Kuwait.

"While guests' satisfaction is our top priority, we always try to be creative and trendsetters when it comes to our food and beverage offerings," Aoun added.



Embassy of Japan

The Embassy of Japan launched its new website to help further the deep-rooted friendly relations between Japan and the State of Kuwait. The new website is available in Arabic, English and Japanese languages. The website provides information about Japan's Foreign Policy and Economy, VISA, education, tourism, events and many more. The link of the new website is: <http://www.kw.emb-japan.go.jp>.



INDIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL AWARDS ADEEB SHUHAIBER

Kuwait Television and FM 99.7 news anchor Adeeb Shuhaiber recently received an award from the Indian Business and Professional Council by the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain and Honorary Chairman Tony Jashanmal and Shiv Bhasin. The award was to acknowledge outstanding leadership in promoting India Kuwait business social

and cultural relationship thru media. Adeeb writes regularly about Indian movies and India. He also regularly visits India. He also hosted a radio show on Indian music and has interviewed many top Indian actors for his show on Kuwait Television 2.



ICSK JUNIOR CONDUCTS CEREMONY TO INDUCT NEWLY ELECTED SENATE

The Indian Community School Kuwait (ICSK) Junior conducted Investiture Ceremony to induct the new school senate for the academic session 2016-17 on May 11, 2016. Principal of Indian English Academy School Kuwait Rev Father Lionel Braganza SDB was the esteemed chief guest for the occasion. Parents of the newly elect Senate members were invited to attend the function.

The Investiture ceremony denotes investment in being leaders and the trust and confidence the school reposes in the newly elected office bearers for the involvement of the students' community in day today functioning of the school, for a child centric approach.

The decorative ceremonial lamp of knowledge to invoke the blessings of the Lord Almighty, was lit by chief guest Rev. Father Lionel Braganza, Principal in-charge Sherly Dennis, Vice-Principal Gomathy Murthy, Supervisor Anita Handa, Physical Education in-charge Jimmy Murphy, Senate Advisors Meena Raicer and Ancy Jophy.

Sherly Dennis, in her address, justified and expressed the truly democratic election procedure of cabinet members 2016-2017. Elected members were advised to maintain the discipline and the decorum of the school. Senate advisor Meena briefly described the election procedure conducted in stages from the day of filing in nomination, meeting with candidates for interview, canvassing and the day of electronic voting.

The excitement of the smartly attired new members was palpable as they marched in with their heads held high, ready to shoulder the responsibilities as student leaders. The music prodigies of the school presented a melodious inspirational theme song infusing and instilling courage in the newly elected cabinet members to function in unison. A dance to the rhythm thanking the Almighty Lord was par excellent. Another fusion dance by a large number of students captivated the audience.

Sherly Dennis administered the oath of office to the newly appointed members of the Student

Council. The office bearers of the four houses were invested ceremoniously with the Chief Guest presenting badges.

Esteemed Chief Guest Rev Father Lionel imparted his divine thoughts with a difference on leadership. Father's dramatic address to the level of little children mesmerized the audience. On behalf of ICSK Junior school, Sherly Dennis and Gomathy Murthy presented a memento to the Rev. Father Lionel. The President of the School Senate Navya Prashanth, on behalf of the senate, proposed a hearty vote of thanks.





FASTING TIPS GIVEN AT SHUHADA HEALTH CENTER

By Abdellatif Sharaa

The Shuhada health center held a health awareness day in preparation for the month of Ramadan.

The event included stands where participants gave advises on healthy food, particularly for those suffering from diabetes, and other chronic diseases, and how to deal with them during the fast-

ing hours. Advice was also given on how to take care of the body in general, as well as what to do and avoid especially that this year's Ramadan takes place during hot weather, while fasting will be

for longer hours. One important factor is the maintaining of moisture in the skin, and keeping it hydrated during those long fasting hours. Sebamed, which participated in the event, provided advice

and explained about the products that help retain the moisture and reduce excess loss.



(Left to Right) Professor Nizar Hamzeh, AUK President; Professor Sherif Sedky, AUC Provost signing the MoU



(Left to Right) Professor Nizar Hamzeh, AUK President; Professor Sherif Sedky, AUC Provost



(Left to Right) Professor Nizar Hamzeh, AUK President; Professor Sherif Sedky, AUC Provost

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF KUWAIT SIGNS MOU WITH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

In a formal signing ceremony, The American University of Kuwait (AUK) and The American University in Cairo (AUC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate bilateral collaboration between the two universities on a wide spectrum of academic programs and activities.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by AUK President, Nizar Hamzeh, and AUC Provost, Sherif Sedky, to mark the beginning of collaboration between their respective institutions. The signing ceremony took place at AUK and was attended by top management officials from both institutions.

AUK President Hamzeh indicated that the purpose of the MOU "is to promote academic collaboration that would allow students and faculty from both institutions exchange knowledge, ideas, and resources contributing to academic excellence". He added, "we are very pleased with this partnership because AUC is one of the few leading universities in the region, and that our mutual goal is to expand this academic collaboration to include development of new programs, including dual or joint degrees in engineering."

"We are delighted to have acquired a new partnership with AUK to share our common goals of academic excellence, said AUC

Provost Sherif Sedky. "We are especially pleased because AUK is a sister University in the region and we believe our cooperation will yield benefits to both institutions and reflect positively on the educational experience of students and faculty."

According to the MOU, possible venues of collaboration between the two universities will include, but not limited to:

- Articulation of course credits, study abroad or student exchange,
- Collaboration with the AUC Center of Teaching and Learning
- Collaboration with other potential areas such as executive education programs and dual degrees in engineering, in particular; mechanical, civil, architecture, and environmental.

The MOU will enable students and faculty from both institutions to pursue productive academic collaboration through exchange of knowledge, ideas, and resources contributing to academic excellence.

This is not the first time AUK establishes collaboration with academic counterparts; other AUK academic collaborators include Dartmouth College and The George Washington University.



A group photo of top management officials from both institutions.

amc

03:00 Coming Home
05:05 Death Rides A Horse
07:00 Adventures Of Hercules
08:30 The Apartment
10:35 The Wilby Conspiracy
12:20 One More Kiss
14:00 Big Screen
14:15 Beat Street
16:00 Nobody's Fool
17:45 The Secret Invasion
19:20 One Summer Love
21:00 Halt And Catch Fire
00:45 White Sands
02:25 Winners Take All

ANIMAL
APLANET HD

03:25 Gangland Killers
04:15 Gator Boys
05:02 Treehouse Masters
05:49 Dog TV
06:36 Call Of The Wildman
07:00 Call Of The Wildman
07:25 Too Cute!
08:15 Dog TV
09:10 Treehouse Masters
10:05 Tanked
11:00 Too Cute!
11:55 Bondi Vet
12:50 Dog TV
13:45 Gator Boys
14:40 Treehouse Masters
15:35 Tanked
16:30 Gangland Killers
17:25 River Monsters
18:20 Giant Pandas Go Wild
19:15 Tanked
20:10 Natural World
21:05 Treehouse Masters
22:00 Giant Pandas Go Wild
22:55 Gator Boys
23:50 River Monsters
00:45 Ivory Wars
01:40 Giant Pandas Go Wild
02:35 Tanked

BBC
FIRST

03:20 Orphan Black
04:10 Casualty
05:10 Doctor Who
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Eastenders
07:00 Casualty
07:50 Casualty
08:45 Father Brown
09:35 Dickensian
10:25 Doctor Who
11:15 Casualty
12:10 Father Brown
13:00 Dickensian
13:45 Doctor Who
14:35 Casualty
15:30 Father Brown
16:20 Dickensian
17:10 Doctor Who
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Doctors
19:05 Father Brown
20:00 Blackout
21:00 Wallander
22:45 Orphan Black
23:35 Doctors
00:05 Doctors
00:40 Blackout
01:35 Wallander

ci

03:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
04:00 Gangsters: America's Most Evil
05:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
06:00 The FBI Files
07:00 Beyond Scared Straight
08:00 The FBI Files
09:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
10:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
11:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
12:00 Frenemies
12:30 Frenemies
13:00 Homicide Hunter
14:00 The First 48
15:00 Beyond Scared Straight
16:00 The FBI Files
17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
18:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
19:00 Homicide Hunter
20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
21:00 The First 48
22:00 They Took Our Child, We Got Her Back
23:00 My Crazy Ex
00:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
01:00 Campus Nightmares
02:00 The First 48

Discovery
CHANNEL
HD

03:40 Lost And Sold
04:05 Storage Wars Canada
04:30 Property Wars
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 South Beach Classics
06:00 Yukon Men
06:50 Wheeler Dealers
07:40 Fast N' Loud
08:30 Lost And Sold
08:55 Storage Wars Canada
09:20 Property Wars
09:45 How Do They Do It?
10:10 South Beach Classics
10:35 Gold Rush (Season 6 Specials)
11:25 Rebel Gold
12:15 Outback Truckers
13:05 Lost And Sold
13:30 Storage Wars Canada
13:55 Property Wars
14:20 Yukon Men
15:10 Wheeler Dealers
16:00 Fast N' Loud
16:50 Carfellas
17:15 How Do They Do It?
17:40 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
18:30 Running Wild With Bear Grylls...
19:20 The Island With Bear Grylls: Men
20:10 Storage Wars Canada
20:35 Property Wars
21:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
21:50 Rival Survival
22:40 Dive Wars Australia
23:30 Fast N' Loud
00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:10 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
02:00 Rival Survival
02:50 Dive Wars Australia

Discovery
Family

03:00 Untamed & Uncut
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Kids vs Film
07:25 Doki

07:50 Bad Dog
08:40 You Have Been Warned
09:30 How It's Made
09:55 How It's Made
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Bondi Vet
12:00 Bad Dog
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Ultimate Survival
14:30 Dirty Jobs
15:20 Mythbusters
16:10 Kids vs Film
16:35 Doki
17:00 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
17:50 Driving Me Crazy
18:40 You Have Been Warned
19:30 Mythbusters
20:20 How It's Made
20:45 How It's Made
21:10 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
22:00 Driving Me Crazy
22:50 Untamed & Uncut
23:40 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
00:30 Mythbusters
01:20 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
02:10 Driving Me Crazy

ID.
INVESTIGATION
DISCOVERY

03:00 Evil Stepmothers
03:48 Surviving Evil
04:36 Blood Relatives
05:24 The Perfect Murder
06:12 Secret Lives Of Stepford Wives
06:37 Secret Lives Of Stepford Wives
07:00 Blood Relatives
07:50 I Almost Got Away With It
08:40 The Perfect Murder
09:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
10:20 I Was Murdered
10:45 I Was Murdered
11:10 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
12:00 Blood Relatives
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:40 The Perfect Murder
14:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
15:20 Secret Lives Of Stepford Wives
15:45 Secret Lives Of Stepford Wives
16:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
17:00 Blood Relatives
17:50 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
18:40 The Perfect Murder
19:30 I Almost Got Away With It
20:20 Secret Lives Of Stepford Wives
20:45 Secret Lives Of Stepford Wives
21:10 California Investigator
21:35 California Investigator
22:00 Shadow Of Doubt
22:50 Murder Among Friends
23:40 Disappeared
00:30 Surviving Evil
01:20 Shadow Of Doubt
02:10 Murder Among Friends

sc DISCOVERY
SCIENCE

03:05 How It's Made
03:29 Mythbusters
04:16 You Have Been Warned
05:03 Alien Mysteries
05:50 Prototype This
06:37 How Do They Do It?
07:23 Mythbusters
08:08 How It's Made
08:53 Prototype This
09:38 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
10:23 You Have Been Warned
11:08 Alien Mysteries
11:53 Prototype This
12:38 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
13:23 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
14:10 How It's Made
15:44 Alien Mysteries
16:31 Prototype This
17:18 How It's Made
18:05 Mythbusters
18:50 Food Factory USA
19:15 Food Factory USA
19:40 Alien Mysteries
20:25 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
21:15 How It's Made
22:00 Food Factory USA
22:45 Alien Mysteries
23:35 Mythbusters
00:20 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
01:08 Food Factory USA

Disney
CHANNEL

03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Lollipop
06:25 Sofia The First
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:40 Hank Zipzer
08:05 Shake It Up
08:55 Hannah Montana
09:45 H2O: Just Add Water
10:35 I Didn't Do It
11:00 Jessie
11:25 Jessie
11:50 Jessie
12:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
12:45 Hank Zipzer
13:10 Austin & Ally
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Liv And Maddie
14:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:30 Liv And Maddie
14:55 Dog With A Blog
15:20 Dog With A Blog
15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
16:10 Violetta
17:00 Backstage
17:25 Alex And Co
17:50 Jessie
18:15 Best Friends Whenever
18:40 Girl Meets World
19:05 Evermoor Chronicles
19:30 Liv And Maddie
19:55 Liv And Maddie
20:20 Backstage
20:45 Good Luck Charlie
21:10 H2O: Just Add Water
21:35 H2O: Just Add Water
22:00 Binny And The Ghost
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:10 Hank Zipzer

Disney
Junior

03:10 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 Calimero
03:35 Zou
03:45 Loopdidoo
04:00 Art Attack
04:25 Henry Hugglemonster
04:35 Calimero
04:50 Zou
05:00 Loopdidoo
05:15 Art Attack
05:35 Henry Hugglemonster
05:50 Calimero
06:00 Zou
06:20 Loopdidoo
06:35 Art Attack
07:00 The Hive
07:10 Zou
07:25 Loopdidoo
07:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
08:05 Sofia The First
08:30 Goldie & Bear
08:45 Miles From Tomorrow
09:10 PJ Masks
09:35 Doc McStuffins
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Goldie & Bear
11:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
11:25 The Lion Guard
11:50 Handy Manny
12:15 Jungle Junction
12:30 Special Agent Oso
12:45 The Hive
13:00 Sofia The First
13:25 Miles From Tomorrow
13:50 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
14:15 The Lion Guard
14:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
15:10 Doc McStuffins
15:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
16:00 Sofia The First
16:25 Jungle Cubs
16:50 Aladdin
17:15 The Lion Guard
17:40 Goldie & Bear
18:05 Miles From Tomorrow
18:30 Sofia The First
19:00 PJ Masks
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Goldie & Bear
20:30 Sofia The First
21:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
21:25 PJ Masks
21:50 Jungle Cubs
22:20 Aladdin
22:50 Zou
23:05 Henry Hugglemonster
23:20 Calimero
23:35 Zou
23:50 Loopdidoo
00:05 Art Attack
00:30 Henry Hugglemonster
00:45 Calimero
01:00 Zou
01:15 Loopdidoo
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Calimero
02:20 Zou

Disney
XD

06:00 Boyster
06:10 Super Matrak
07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
07:25 K.C. Undercover
07:50 Supa Strikas
08:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
09:10 Kirby Buckets
09:35 Pokemon Series Xy: Kalos Quest
10:00 Rocket Monkeys
10:25 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister
10:50 Marvel Avengers Assemble
11:20 Guardians Of The Galaxy
11:45 Pair Of Kings
12:35 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
13:30 Phineas And Ferb
14:20 Kickin' It
15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:15 Rocket Monkeys
15:40 Guardians Of The Galaxy
16:05 Mighty Med
16:30 Kirby Buckets
16:55 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
17:25 K.C. Undercover
17:50 Supa Strikas
18:15 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
18:40 K.C. Undercover
04:30 How To Make It In America
05:00 Empire Falls: Part I
07:00 Empire Falls: Part II
09:00 Recount
11:00 Introducing Dorothy Dandridge
13:00 I Can't Do This But I Can Do That
13:45 The Laramie Project
15:30 The Dead Mother's Club
17:00 Introducing Dorothy Dandridge
19:00 HBO Comedy Half-Hour
20:00 Def Poetry Jam
21:00 Big Love
21:00 True Blood

osn FIRST
MORE

03:00 Game Of Thrones
04:00 Silicon Valley
04:30 How To Make It In America
05:00 Empire Falls: Part I
07:00 Empire Falls: Part II
09:00 Recount
11:00 Introducing Dorothy Dandridge
13:00 I Can't Do This But I Can Do That
13:45 The Laramie Project
15:30 The Dead Mother's Club
17:00 Introducing Dorothy Dandridge
19:00 HBO Comedy Half-Hour
20:00 Def Poetry Jam
21:00 Big Love
21:00 True Blood

EHD

03:15 WAGs
06:00 Fashion Bloggers
06:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:05 El News
14:05 Fashion Bloggers
14:30 Fashion Bloggers
15:00 Dash Dolls
16:00 House Of DVF
17:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 Botched
20:00 Live From The Red Carpet
22:00 Fashion Police
23:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
00:00 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
01:50 Botched
02:20 Giuliana & Bill

food
network

03:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:00 Man Fire Food
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Chopped
07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
08:00 Chopped
09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 Anna Olson: Fresh
12:00 Chopped
13:00 Guy's Big Bite
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Man Fire Food
16:00 Chopped
17:00 The Kitchen
18:00 Anna Olson: Fresh
19:00 Chopped
20:00 Iron Chef America
21:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:00 Man v Food
23:00 Iron Chef America
00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:00 Man v Food

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COMEDY

03:00 The Muppets
03:30 The Goldbergs
04:00 Living With Fran
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 Better With You
06:00 My Name Is Earl
06:30 Community
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 Living With Fran
08:30 Better With You
09:00 The Muppets
09:30 The Grinder
10:00 My Big Fat Greek Life
10:30 Community
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 My Name Is Earl
12:30 Living With Fran
13:00 Better With You
13:30 Community
14:00 The Goldbergs
14:30 The Grinder
15:00 My Big Fat Greek Life
15:30 Life In Pieces
16:00 Suburgatory
16:30 My Name Is Earl
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 The Muppets
18:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
19:00 Modern Family
19:30 Angie Tribeca
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Life In Pieces
21:30 Suburgatory
22:00 You're The Worst
22:30 The League
23:00 Married
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers
00:30 Life In Pieces
01:00 Suburgatory
01:30 You're The Worst
02:00 The League
02:30 Married

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MORE

22:00 Code Black
23:00 Entourage
00:00 HBO Comedy Half-Hour
00:30 Def Poetry Jam
01:00 Big Love
02:00 True Blood

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03:00 Dominion
04:00 Good Morning America
06:00 Recovery Road
07:00 C.S.I.
08:00 Prison Break
09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
10:00 Stitchers
11:00 C.S.I.
12:00 Prison Break
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 Recovery Road
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 Prison Break
19:00 The Voice
21:00 Castle
22:00 Lucifer
23:00 The Player
00:00 Tyrant
01:00 Castle
02:00 Lucifer

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ACTION

04:00 Wrath
06:00 Crimson Tide
08:00 The X Files
10:15 Dying Of The Light
12:00 Age Of Dinosaurs
14:00 Crimson Tide
16:00 The Outsider
18:00 Dying Of The Light
19:45 Oblivion

22:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:00 Into The Grizzly Maze

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COMEDY

04:00 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads
05:45 Raising Helen
08:00 Bottle Rocket
10:00 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads
12:00 Cas & Dylan
14:00 Mr. Destiny
16:00 Bottle Rocket
18:00 Spy Hard
20:00 Textuality
22:00 Kick-Ass 2
00:00 Adult World
02:00 Spy Hard

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DRAMA+2

03:15 Jamie Marks Is Dead
05:00 Blood Ties
07:30 Snitch
09:30 The Love Guide
11:00 Filly Brown
13:00 Snitch
15:00 Viktor
17:00 A Valentine's Date
19:00 Filly Brown
21:00 71
23:00 Blue Ruin
01:00 Good Kill

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FAMILY

03:00 My Girl
05:00 Mulan

07:00 The Shaggy Dog
09:00 Paranorman
11:00 Sky High
13:00 How To Train Your Dragon 2
15:00 Earth To Echo
17:00 The Princess Diaries
19:00 Beverly Hills Chihuahua
21:00 My Girl 2
23:00 Earth To Echo
01:00 Beverly Hills Chihuahua

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FESTIVAL

03:00 The Silent Storm
05:00 The Apostle
07:30 We Are Family
09:00 The Man Who Would Be King
11:15 The Apostle
13:30 Blackfish
15:00 Vanity Fair
17:30 The Man Who Would Be King
20:00 What Maisie Knew
22:00 Foxcatcher
00:30 The Motel Life
02:30 Blackfish

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05:00 The Last 5 Years
07:00 Penthouse North
09:00 McFarland, USA
11:15 A Gift Of Miracles
13:00 Left Behind
15:00 The Cobbler
17:00 Some Girls
19:00 Tammy
21:00 Now Add Honey
23:00 This Is Where I Leave You
01:00 The Purge: Anarchy

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KIDS

03:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
04:30 Columbus In The Last Journey
06:00 Hatching
08:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
09:45 Miffy The Movie
11:15 Evolution Man
13:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
14:30 Marco Macaco
16:00 Bolts And Blip
18:00 Miffy The Movie
20:00 Goat Story 2
22:00 Marco Macaco
23:30 Bolts And Blip
01:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
02:45 Goat Story 2

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PREMIERE

04:00 Middle Of Nowhere
06:00 Louder Than Words
08:00 Selma
10:15 Foodfight!
12:00 Taken 3
14:00 Parkland
15:45 Selma
18:00 Still Alice
20:00 Blackhat
22:15 Before I Disappear
00:00 Project Almanac
02:00 Still Alice

STAR
MOVIES HD

04:00 Staten Island
05:45 Devil's Knot
08:00 Sympathy For Delicious
09:45 Instinct
12:00 The Limits Of Control
13:45 Saving Mr. Banks
16:00 Ironclad
18:15 Love And Other Impossible Pursuits
20:00 Deep Rising
21:45 The Joneses
23:15 Fright Night
01:00 Another Year

STAR
WORLD HD

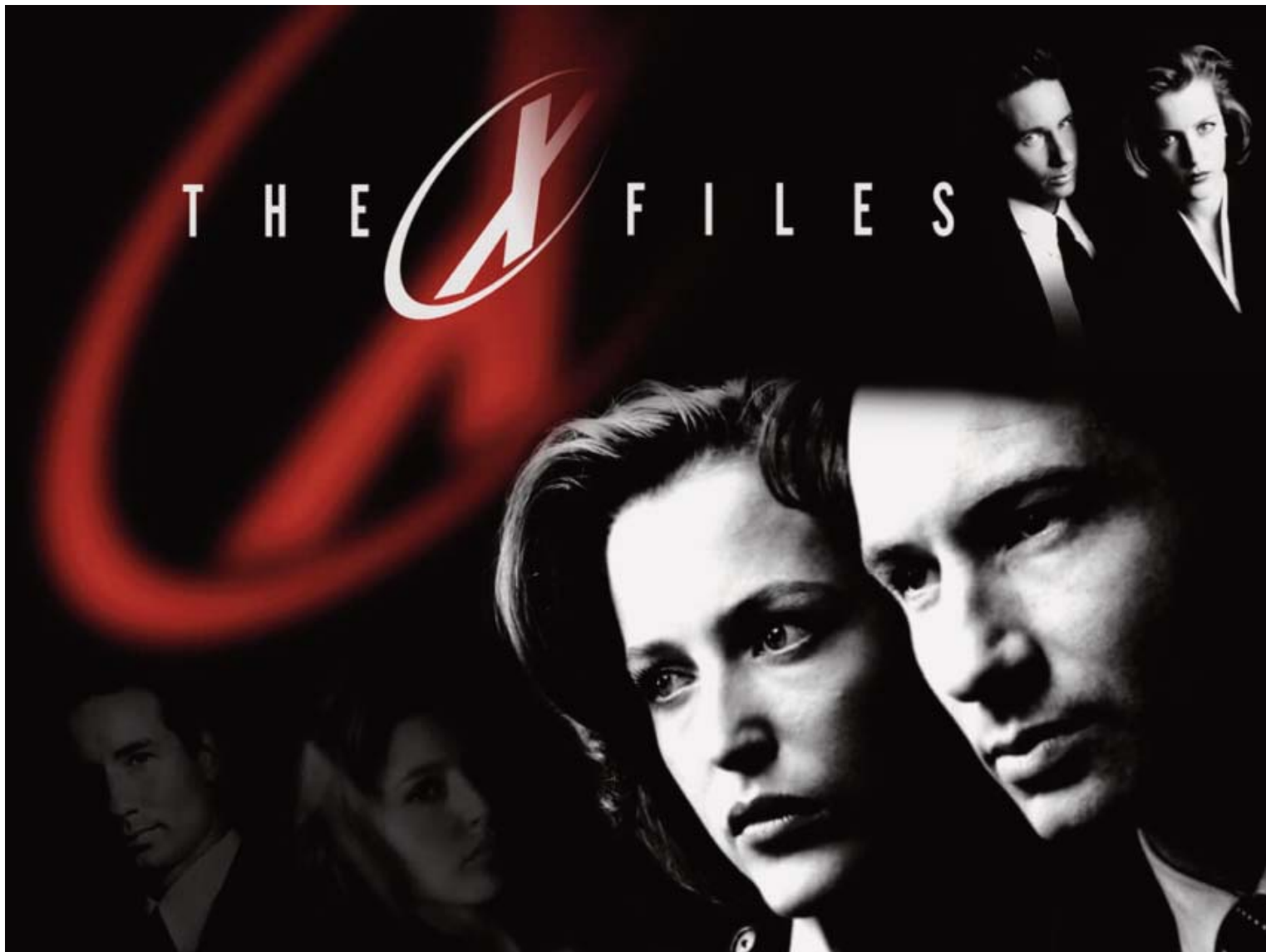
03:00 Grey's Anatomy
05:00 Melissa & Joey
06:00 The Simpsons
07:00 Revenge
08:00 72 Hours
09:00 Lost
10:00 Grey's Anatomy
13:00 Melissa & Joey
14:00 The Simpsons
15:00 Revenge
16:00 72 Hours
17:00 Lost
18:00 Bones
21:00 Cougar Town
22:00 The Simpsons
23:00 Revenge
00:00 72 Hours
01:00 Lost
02:00 Bones

TLC
HD

03:30 Randy's Wedding Rescue
04:20 Little People, Big World
04:45 Little People, Big World
05:10 Cake Boss
05:35 Something Borrowed, Something New
06:00 Say Yes To The Dress
06:25 Bakery Boss
07:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
07:57 Sister Wives
08:45 Suddenly Royal
09:32 Little People, Big World
09:57 Little People, Big World
10:20 My Five Wives
11:10 Cake Boss
11:35 Love At First Swipe



OBLIVION ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



THE X FILES ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

CLASSIFIEDS



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (19/05/2016 TO 25/05/2016)

SHARQIA-1	
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR	1:00 PM
Ely Ekhtashou Matou	1:45 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR	4:00 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR	7:00 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	10:00 PM
Ely Ekhtashou Matou	1:00 AM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)	4:00 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)	7:00 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)	10:00 PM
WARCRAFT	10:00 PM
WED 25.05.2016	
WARCRAFT	12:30 AM
WED 25.05.2016	
SHARQIA-2	
X-MEN: Apocalypse	12:15 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	3:15 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	6:15 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	9:15 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	12:15 AM
SHARQIA-3	
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE	11:30 AM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE	1:30 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE	3:45 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE	6:00 PM
Ely Ekhtashou Matou	8:15 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR	10:30 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR	12:45 AM
MUHALAB-1	
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE	11:30 AM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR	1:45 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)	1:45 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE	4:45 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE	7:00 PM
Ely Ekhtashou Matou	9:15 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR	11:30 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)	11:30 PM
WARCRAFT	11:30 PM
MUHALAB-2	
X-MEN: Apocalypse	1:00 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE	1:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	4:00 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)	4:00 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)	7:00 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	10:00 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)	10:00 PM
JU ON: THE GRUDGE 4	1:00 AM
MUHALAB-3	
X-MEN: Apocalypse	11:45 AM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	2:45 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse	5:45 PM

X-MEN: Apocalypse		8:45 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		11:45 PM
FANAR-1		
Ely Ekhtashou Matou		11:30 AM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		1:45 PM
Ely Ekhtashou Matou		4:45 PM
JU ON: THE GRUDGE 4		7:00 PM
Ely Ekhtashou Matou		9:00 PM
JU ON: THE GRUDGE 4		11:15 PM
JU ON: THE GRUDGE 4		1:15 AM
WARCRAFT		11:15 PM
WED 25.05.2016		
FANAR-2		
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		11:45 AM
KILLING SALAZAR		2:00 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		4:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK		6:15 PM
KILLING SALAZAR		8:30 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		10:30 PM
KILLING SALAZAR		12:45 AM
FANAR-3		
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		12:45 PM
JU ON: THE GRUDGE 4		1:45 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		3:45 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		6:45 PM
NO FRI+SAT+MON		
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		9:45 PM
JU ON: THE GRUDGE 4		12:45 AM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)		3:45 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)		6:45 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)		9:45 PM
FANAR-4		
X-MEN: Apocalypse		12:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse -3D		3:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		6:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse -3D		9:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		12:30 AM
FANAR-5		
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		11:45 AM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		2:00 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		4:15 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		6:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		8:45 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		11:45 PM
MARINA-1		
X-MEN: Apocalypse		12:15 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		3:15 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		6:15 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		9:15 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		12:15 AM

MARINA-2		
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		11:30 AM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		1:45 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		4:00 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		6:15 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		8:45 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		11:45 PM
WARCRAFT		8:45 PM
WARCRAFT		11:45 PM
WED 25.05.2016		
MARINA-3		
X-MEN: Apocalypse		11:30 AM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		2:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		5:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		8:30 PM
X-MEN: Apocalypse		11:30 PM
AVENUES-1		
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		12:00 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		2:15 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)		1:30 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		4:30 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		6:45 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		9:00 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		11:15 PM
AVENUES-3		
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		1:00 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		4:00 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		7:00 PM
CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR		10:00 PM
OUR KIND OF TRAITOR		1:00 AM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)		4:00 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)		7:00 PM
BRATMOT SAVAM (Telugu)		10:00 PM
360°- 1		
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		12:30 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE- 3D		2:45 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		5:00 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		7:15 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE- 3D		9:30 PM
THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE		11:45 PM
WARCRAFT 3D		9:30 PM
WED 25.05.2016		
WARCRAFT		12:15 AM
WED 25.05.2016		
360°- 2		
KILLING SALAZAR		1:00 PM
KILLING SALAZAR		3:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK		5:30 PM
KILLING SALAZAR		7:45 PM
KILLING SALAZAR		10:00 PM
KILLING SALAZAR		12:15 AM

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Skills:

Fluent in English - Good memory skills, Microsoft program knowledge and background in arts, child development and/or gymnastics are a plus. Must be open to coaching.

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23-5-2016

EMERGENCY



112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	03:21
Shorook	04:52
Duhr:	11:45
Asr:	15:20
Maghrib:	18:38
Isha:	20:06



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats



Arrival Flights on Tuesday 24/5/2016		
Airlines	Flt	Route
THY	772	Istanbul
MSC	415	Sohag
JZR	239	Amman
JZR	267	Beirut
FDB	069	Dubai
DLH	635	Doha
QTR	1086	Doha
JZR	539	Cairo
PGT	858	Istanbul
RJA	642	Amman
ETH	620	Addis Ababa
GFA	211	Bahrain
KAC	418	Manila
UAE	853	Dubai
OMA	643	Muscat
FDB	067	Dubai
MSR	612	Cairo
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi
QTR	1076	Doha
KAC	544	Cairo
JZR	555	Alexandria
THY	6376	Istanbul
DXH	170	Bahrain
THY	770	Istanbul
JZR	529	Asyut
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok
QTR	8121	Doha
BAW	157	London
FDB	5061	Dubai
KAC	382	Delhi
KAC	346	Ahmedabad
KAC	206	Islamabad
KAC	302	Mumbai
FDB	053	Dubai
KAC	354	BLR
KAC	332	Trivandrum
KAC	352	Kochi
KAC	362	Colombo
UAE	855	Dubai
KAC	784	Jeddah
KAC	284	Dhaka
ABY	125	Sharjah
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi
QTR	1070	Doha
IRA	675	Lar
FDB	055	Dubai
UAE	873	Dubai
GFA	213	Bahrain
MEA	404	Beirut
JZR	561	Sohag
RBG	553	Alexandria
JZR	165	Dubai
NIA	151	Cairo
FDB	075	Dubai
MSC	401	Alexandria
SAW	701	Damascus
MSR	610	Cairo
KAC	620	Doha
IRC	6507	Shiraz
KAC	514	Tehran
FBA	831	Al Najaf
QTR	1078	Doha
KAC	672	Dubai
AXB	393	Kozhikode
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh

FDB	057	Dubai
GFA	221	Bahrain
SVA	500	Jeddah
KAC	788	Jeddah
KNE	529	Jeddah
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi
OMA	645	Muscat
ABY	127	Sharjah
UAE	857	Dubai
RJA	640	Amman
FDB	051	Dubai
QTR	1072	Doha
JZR	325	Al Najaf
JZR	535	Cairo
CLX	784	Luxembourg
NIA	251	Alexandria
KAC	680	Muscat
KAC	562	Amman
SVA	510	Riyadh
GFA	215	Bahrain
JZR	177	Dubai
JZR	777	Jeddah
QTR	1080	Doha
JZR	483	Istanbul
MSR	620	Cairo
KAC	502	Beirut
KAC	774	Riyadh
KAC	786	Jeddah
KAC	742	Dammam
KAC	618	Doha
KAC	542	Cairo
KAC	104	London
UAE	875	Dubai
GFA	217	Bahrain
KAC	166	Paris/Rome
FDB	063	Dubai
KAC	614	Bahrain
ABY	123	Sharjah
JAI	572	Mumbai
KAC	674	Dubai
FDB	059	Dubai
DLH	634	Frankfurt
SYR	341	Damascus
MEA	402	Beirut
OMA	647	Muscat
JZR	189	Dubai
MSR	618	Alexandria
QTR	1088	Doha
FDB	5053	Dubai
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi
UAE	859	Dubai
ALK	229	Colombo
KLM	415	Amsterdam
KAC	172	Frankfurt
QTR	1082	Doha
GFA	219	Bahrain
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi
JZR	125	Bahrain
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad
PIA	739	Sialkot
KAC	282	Jeddah
JZR	185	Dubai
THY	764	Istanbul
MSC	403	Asyut
JAI	574	Mumbai
MSR	614	Cairo
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh
FDB	071	Dubai
JAD	301	Amman

Departure Flights on Tuesday 24/5/2016		
Airlines	Flt	Route
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai
BBC	144	Chittagong/Dhaka
MSC	404	Asyut
JAI	573	Mumbai
MSR	615	Cairo
FDB	072	Dubai
KLM	411	Amsterdam
MSC	416	Sohag
THY	773	Istanbul
DLH	635	Frankfurt
THY	765	Istanbul
ETH	621	Addis Ababa
PGT	859	Istanbul
KAC	783	Jeddah
UAE	854	Dubai
OMA	644	Muscat
FDB	068	Dubai
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi
MSR	613	Cairo
QTR	1077	Doha
JZR	560	Sohag
RJA	643	Amman
QTR	1087	Doha
THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul
THY	771	Istanbul
GFA	212	Bahrain
FDB	070	Dubai
JZR	164	Dubai
FDB	5062	Dubai
BAW	156	London
QTR	8121	LGG
FDB	054	Dubai
KAC	171	Frankfurt
KAC	513	Tehran
JZR	534	Cairo
KAC	787	Jeddah
KAC	619	Doha
KAC	671	Dubai
JZR	482	Istanbul
ABY	126	Sharjah
UAE	856	Dubai
KAC	101	London/New York
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi
QTR	1071	Doha
FDB	056	Dubai
IRA	674	Lar
KAC	501	Beirut
KAC	561	Amman
KAC	679	Muscat
KAC	165	Rome/Paris
GFA	214	Bahrain
MEA	405	Beirut
KAC	541	Cairo
UAE	874	Dubai
RBG	554	Alexandria
JZR	776	Jeddah
JZR	384	Al Najaf
KAC	725	Jeddah
JZR	176	Dubai
FDB	076	Dubai
NIA	152	Cairo
MSC	402	Alexandria
SAW	702	Damascus
MSR	611	Cairo
IRC	6508	Shiraz
PAL	669	Dubai/Manila

Time	KAC	773	Riyadh	15:00
00:05	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:00
	KAC	673	Dubai	15:05
00:10	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:05
00:10	FDB	058	Dubai	15:05
00:25	FBA	832	Al Najaf	15:10
00:30	AXB	394	Kozhikode	15:10
00:30	KAC	617	Doha	15:15
00:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
01:05	KAC	741	Dammam	15:30
01:40	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
02:00	JZR	188	Dubai	15:50
02:45	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
02:45	KAC	613	Bahrain	16:00
02:55	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
03:30	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
03:45	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
04:00	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
04:05	JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	17:15
04:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
04:15	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
04:35	KAC	781	Jeddah	17:30
05:00	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
06:25	NIA	252	Alexandria	17:50
06:30	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
06:35	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
06:45	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
06:50	JZR	538	Cairo	18:30
07:05	CLX	713	NBO	18:30
07:15	JZR	238	Amman	18:45
07:55	QTR	1081	Doha	19:05
08:25	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:20
08:30	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
08:30	KAC	285	Dhaka	19:40
08:40	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
09:15	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
09:25	ABY	124	Sharjah	19:55
09:30	KAC	361	Colombo	19:55
09:30	FDB	060	Dubai	20:30
09:30	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
09:45	JAI	571	Mumbai	20:35
09:45	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:45
09:50	DLH	634	Doha	20:50
10:00	KAC	353	BLR	20:55
10:00	KAC	343	Chennai	20:55
10:35	KAC	543	Cairo	21:00
10:40	KAC	351	Kochi	21:00
10:40	SYR	342	Damascus	21:10
11:00	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
11:20	OMA	648	Muscat	21:15
11:25	JZR	554	Alexandria	21:15
11:25	MSR	607	Luxor	21:30
11:35	QTR	1089	Doha	21:45
12:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
12:05	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:55
12:10	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	21:55
12:10	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
12:15	UAE	860	Dubai	22:25
12:50	KLM	415	Dammam/Amsterdam	22:25
13:00	KAC	381	Delhi	22:25
13:10	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:30
13:10	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	22:55
13:20	GFA	220	Bahrain	23:00
13:30	KAC	205	Islamabad	23:00
13:35	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
14:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	23:15
14:20	JZR	528	Asyut	23:15
14:45	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

CROSSWORD 1263

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- ACROSS**
1. A sudden loss of consciousness resulting when the rupture or occlusion of a blood vessel leads to oxygen lack in the brain.
4. Gin (or vodka) with dry vermouth.
11. An impudent or insolent rejoinder.
15. (Irish) The sea personified.
16. A representation of common ground between theories or phenomena.
17. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
18. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
20. A feudal lord or baron in Scotland.
21. The Fate who spins the thread of life.
22. Hardened sugary exudation of various trees.
23. A short plaid coat made of made of thick woolen material.
25. (informal) Exceptionally good.
28. The clay from which adobe bricks are made.
31. Any of several plants of the genus Manihot having fleshy roots yielding a nutritious starch.
35. Lower in esteem.
38. English writer and a central member of the Fabian Society (1858-1943).
41. United States sculptor and architect whose public works include the memorial to veterans of the Vietnam War in Washington (born in 1959).
42. The seventh and last day of the week.
43. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
45. The starting place for each hole on a golf course.
46. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
48. Structure where a wall or building narrows abruptly.
50. A capacitance unit equal to one billion farads.
52. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
53. The state prevailing during the absence of war.
55. A harp used by ancient Greeks for accompaniment.
56. A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
59. Be going to.
61. An abbreviation for 'hazardous material' used on warning signs.
63. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
67. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
70. A unit of weight used in some Moslem countries near the Mediterranean.
72. A branch of the Tai languages.
73. The cry made by sheep.
74. A river in central Brazil that flows generally northward (with many falls) to join the Tocantins River.
78. A master's degree in business.
79. A slippery or viscous liquid or liquefiable substance not miscible with water.
80. A port city in northeastern Greece on an inlet of the Aegean Sea.
81. Tag the base runner to get him out.
82. An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
83. A person who swindles you by means of deception or fraud.
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- DOWN**
1. An upward slope or grade (as in a road).
2. (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir.
3. A particular environment or walk of life.
4. Among the largest bony fish.
5. The eleventh month of the civil year.
6. A network of intersecting blood vessels or intersecting nerves or intersecting lymph vessels.
7. Hormone released by the hypothalamus that controls the release of thyroid-stimulating hormone from the anterior pituitary.
8. Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
9. Indian religious leader who founded Sikhism (1469-1538).
10. A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
11. A fluid product of inflammation.
12. A primeval personification of air and breath.
13. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
14. United States humorist who wrote about rural life (1818-1885).
19. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria and closely related to Hausa.
24. The civil and religious leader of a Muslim state.
26. A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
27. Grow teeth.
29. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
30. The use of bacteria or viruses of toxins to destroy men and animals or food.
32. (biology) Having or resembling wings.
33. A Roman Catholic priest who acts for another higher-ranking clergyman.
34. A positively charged electrode by which electrons leave an electrical device.
36. English monk and scholar (672-735).
37. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
39. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
40. An area of sand sloping down to the water of a sea or lake.
44. A radioactive transuranic element.
47. Greek coloratura soprano (born in the United States) known for her dramatic intensity in operatic roles (1923-1977).
49. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
51. Resembling the beak of a bird.
54. Affect with wonder.
57. Any of several plants of the genus Camassia.
58. The azimuth of a celestial body is the angle between the vertical plane containing it and the plane of the meridian.
60. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
62. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
64. A genus of Lamnidae.
65. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
66. Jordan's port.
68. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
69. A telephone connection.
71. (aeronautical) Pertaining to the tail section of a plane.
75. (used especially of commodities) In the natural unprocessed condition.
76. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
77. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are happiest when your goals for the day are understood. People that are honest and straightforward have a special place in your heart. It is easiest to work under a boss that has clear expectations and makes clear demands. Revising or reassessing your work responsibilities and scheduling may take up most of the day. You could be helping to change several procedures just now. In-depth discussions and inquisitive conversations find you at your rational best. Your investigative abilities are at a high point. There are some fun surprises today that will have you planning a vacation for this summer that you have always dreamed about. If your goal is to lose weight before this takes place, you will be wise to pace yourself.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This day is full of interesting dialogues. There is recognition of your career accomplishments. You may be too concerned with making your own point, but in listening to the views of others, you will open the door for others to listen to you. Fortunately, any dispute you find today will cause little delay in the art of problem solving. This could be a mentally draining day. You are more open-minded and creative in your thinking at this time. You have many things going in your favor and that includes positive thinking, mental stability, good feelings, relaxation and opportunity. This is a good time to make long-range plans, take advantage of further education, take a long-distance trip or take up religious studies. It is a mentally stimulating time.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are ready for your workday this morning. You may shine in your particular job and find that practical insights are working well. You could represent or speak for your company or communicate about your skills. You may communicate a great deal with co-workers as well as friends apart from work-after work the celebrations will be strong. You may be more reflective than usual but this is natural on your birthday. A surprise this day may have four legs instead of two. You are unusually affectionate and you are likely to have that affection reciprocated. It is a good time to express your love for someone or perhaps begin a new relationship. There is plenty of time for fun!



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may be very forceful in what you say and think at this time. With all of this passion, you could speak to a crowd or simply communicate very well. Proud, you have an inner need to express feelings and emotions to others. You can be self-centered and are driven to leadership positions by a sense of your own inner worth. However, you have compassion and perhaps you are a good listener to those that are in need. You have the mental drive to get much accomplished and there are very few interruptions this day. Heed a warning you may hear from an older person-do not take roads that go nowhere just for the ride.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is the perfect time to take risks and dare to be a little unconventional. A seemingly magical talent will have everyone enthralled. You enjoy interactions that involve anything progressive, inventive and independent with regard to viewpoints. If you are around people that are involved with an original and creative idea, you are appropriately attentive. Events make it easy for you to have breakthroughs and find new solutions to old problems. You may find yourself able to implement your ideas and put them into practice. This afternoon is a good time for surrounding yourself with friends and young people and for having a good time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

In the workplace you could expand your thinking and share your ideas. If you are not working, you will be celebrating the love of family, fresh air and beautiful surroundings. You enjoy a bit of game playing and may enjoy partaking in some guidance for organizing children and children's games in the community. Competition is fun wherever you decided to involve your energies-your energies match the challenges. Put your visions and dreams to work. You can be intense, passionate and very personal. Your imagination drives you to make your dreams and inner vision a reality. Your desires are strong and you will want to enjoy yourself. Family, creativity and the ability to interact and understand each other well are very important.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Career choices may appear to go against you or challenge you beyond your idea of how you would be working as an adult. Stop and consider what you wanted as an end result and weigh the options. There is more than one way to achieve your goals. You may have become concerned about being able to achieve your end result. Do you realize that this is only a competition with yourself perhaps you have overshot the mark, so to speak. At this time, you may be advised that a nearby university can help you gain some insight of your best talent and a few job hunting strategies with tips. You must not work all your life in a profession that is unsatisfying. Find your peace-act, refocus and merge in some positive upbeat pastimes.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You should take advantage of the opportunities available now that will help you to further your professional aims. You are at your most appealing and can have the greatest impact on those at work who pass out the raises and promotions. If you have been out of work, try particularly hard during this time to find the kind of job you really want. You have fluency in communication-your intellect is sharp. You will be curious, talkative and adept at solving any problems. You will find today full of productive conversations. This afternoon you may want to contact a friend or family member that has moved far away. There is ardent passion that manifests itself in art and creative pastimes. This evening is a good time for planning a future social event.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Perhaps this is a good time to think and study-you have a real appreciation for ideas and thoughts. You may find yourself enjoying a long conversation, writing a letter, or making a special phone call. Others value you for your ability to make practical decisions concerning group issues. Sales, lectures, presentations of all sorts can be successfully experienced. Clear decisions affecting others could be made now. This evening you could be especially witty and eccentric. You may have insights or breakthroughs in regard to your living situation or life circumstances and find yourself communicating these ideas to others. Others value you for your independence and unique qualities. This is a time when you can expect a little recognition.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Good eye-hand coordination and a sustained effort make almost any task run well. These are the days when you may feel more like ignoring responsibilities and doing some social visiting. Realities may creep in and bring your attention back to the responsibilities for the day. If you are at home today, interruptions can make it difficult to concentrate on your project. Agree to visit or be with the family in the afternoon if they will allow you the morning to accomplish some needed work-you will have better cooperation. You could find that you are appreciated or valued for your feelings or your ability to act and get things done.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Pleasant attitudes are created in the home or the workplace. Communal activities that take place at this time should be both well attended and successful. A need for emotional security is accented and you should not pressure a partner into doing things just to please you. You have an increased tendency to partake in working partnerships or group activities. Mental stimulation is the key for you right now and it is a good idea to make every effort to cooperate and compromise with others. Any project begun today should be very successful. This is a time where you might find a deepening of a love relationship. If you have no love relationship, this could be a time in which you will meet that special person.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are at your most practical when it comes to dealing and working with others. You know just what to do and can act without haste and emotion. You are called on to make decisions pertaining to customer satisfaction. You are able to make good use of your natural abilities and common sense. A need to be respected is an emotionally charged issue in your life. You develop a sense of ambition and practicality and may strive for achievement. There is also a need to communicate and experience the exchange of ideas. Contact with others in the home today brings feelings of security. A landline will work well but a cell phone can be used from every room. You may find yourself shopping in a bookstore later this evening.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Christmas - Word Search
Find the words hidden in the grid of letters.

Z	T	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	B	R	L	L	P	M
G	B	E	L	L	S	K	O	U	Z	Z	I	E	O	Q	R	A
U	I	B	H	I	D	O	F	I	U	R	I	G	R	I	A	R
C	I	F	C	A	R	O	L	S	S	R	C	N	N	N	T	Y
R	M	K	T	E	E	R	T	W	B	E	O	A	A	H	S	E
E	J	Y	F	S	H	G	I	A	X	T	L	M	M	Y	J	J
D	O	N	R	X	P	S	G	A	Z	Y	I	D	E	L	I	N
S	V	T	J	R	E	S	N	E	C	N	I	K	N	A	R	F
W	I	F	E	M	H	P	E	S	O	J	V	I	T	A	S	B
R	F	N	E	L	S	Z	L	B	U	M	D	G	S	T	C	B
E	Q	N	G	U	T	E	T	L	G	J	J	L	A	F	W	D
A	D	N	S	I	G	S	P	Z	R	W	D	B	O	J	B	R
T	X	E	Q	N	Z	I	K	L	O	L	L	D	G	S	V	
H	J	S	A	G	A	G	D	M	T	E	O	J	M	D	P	F

- MISTLETOE**
MYRRH
ORNAMENTS
SHEPHERDS
SINGING
STABLE
STAR
WISE MEN
TREE
WREATH
ANGEL
BELLS
- BETHLEHEM**
CANDLES
CAROLS
FRANKINCENSE
GABRIEL
GIFTS
GOLD
JESUS
JOSEPH
MANGER
MARY

Large Print Word Search Puzzles
Air Flight - Solution

B	G	O	L	R	F	T	B	L	S	L	O	R	T	N	O	C
B	N	S	O	N	L	L	I	S	Q	P	F	I	X	M	I	Z
Y	I	T	E	E	I	F	Y	F	U	S	E	L	A	G	E	X
V	D	R	D	F	E	N	L	I	T	V	U	J	P	C	A	S
N	N	I	U	Q	S	P	S	S	N	T	S	T	N	I	G	K
W	A	M	T	W	R	N	S	T	P	G	I	E	R	N	Y	P
A	U	T	I	M	E	T	E	R	A	L	P	I	I	R	B	
I	R	A	T	L	L	P	F	U	I	U	L	W	K	O	B	C
L	U	B	L	P	I	F	L	K	B	A	M	F	P	C	T	U
E	D	S	A	L	O	U	I	R	N	O	N	E	L	W	O	Q
R	D	S	O	E	P	B	U	E	Z	L	L	U	N	I	N	C
O	E	T	K	H	S	T	J	X	K	L	U	M	R	T	A	W
N	R	A	A	S	S	L	A	D	E	P	K	A	P	I	S	T
S	T	R	U	T	S	W	F	R	E	R	U	S	S	E	R	P

- LANDING**
PEDALS
PILOT
PRESSURE
PROPELLER
RUDDER
SPOILERS
STRUTS
TAIL FLAPS
TAKEOFF
TRIM TABS
TURBULENCE
- WINGS**
AILERONS
AIRPLANE
AIRSPACE
ALTIMETER
ALTITUDE
COCKPIT
CONTROLS
FLYING
FUSELAGE
INSTRUMENTS

Yesterday's Solution

E	R	S	T		P	E	D	I	C	A	B		U	N	P	
M	A	F	A		O	R	E	G	A	N	O		F	E	E	
I	M	A	M		L	I	F	E	R		B	R	A	G	A	
T	A	X	P	A	Y	E	R		E	U		E		E	C	
				E	H	F		A	C		M	O	H	A	V	E
T	E	T	R	A	O		Y	U	C	A	T	E	C			
A	G	A		B	A	B	A		O		C	A	R	Y	A	
P	E	B	A		M	E	L	O	N			T	O	E	D	
P	R	A	W	N		G		P		S	B		B	A	A	
A	I	R	E	D		G	L	E	B	A		F	A	H	D	
N	A	D	A		R	A		C	O	B	A	L	T			
				R		E	R	A		M	A	I	A		K	A
S	H	A	Y		H		S	H	A	H		S	K	E	G	
A	A	R			S	E	C	P	A	R		A	K	A	B	A
I	R	A			C	A	P	E	W	E	E	D		M	A	M
D	E	B			D	R	U	N	K	A	R	D		A	B	A

Daily SuDoku

	1	3														
	4				7										8	
			2	1	6											
9					3					7						
	7					5					1					
		6					4							5		
					4	9	3									
2					3					6						
								4	2							

medium

Yesterday's Solution

6	7	8	1	4	2	5	3	9
3	9	1	5	8	6	7	2	4
2	4	5	3	9	7	1	6	8
7	6	9	2	5	3	8	4	1
4	1	2	8	6	9	3	7	5
5	8	3	4	7	1	2	9	6
8	5	7	9	2	4	6	1	3
1	2	4	6	3	8	9	5	7
9	3	6	7	1	5	4	8	2

very hard



Color me!



Rock Paperweight

- What You Need:**
- Smooth rock
 - Paint
 - Paint brush

Instructions:

1. Find a good rock that is heavy enough to hold down a sheet of paper on a breezy day, but not too heavy to carry around. The rock should also be smooth so it won't damage your paper.
 2. Paint the rock. You can paint it as a creature, or paint designs on it.
 3. Once the paint is dry, your paperweight is ready to use. Take your crafts or homework outside, and use the paperweight to keep any loose papers from blowing away!
- Tip:
You can glue felt to the bottom of the paperweight to keep it from scratching your desk.



WORD SEARCH

Hair

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The words may be hidden in any direction.

S G B B L A C K B S C R H
C B U G C E D B H K G S B
S R N U Y E M A I T E M D
G R U E A L A I W R O B D
M S N O R Y S R R C S A I
O H S W G T R E A T L R D
R I A H I S S D T A T B R
H S A W A G R B M R S E I
T U K A C M R Y R D O R R
A R A U A O P R N A U H G
D A R T W A L O N G I L S
C L U N B O L M O L L D B
S A N B P B W N O L A S R

BARBER CURLS SHAMPOO
BLACK CUT SHORT
BLOND GRAY STYLE
BRAID LONG TRIM
BROWN RED WASH
BRUSH SALON WIG
COMB

The Lighthouse of Alexandria



The Lighthouse of Alexandria, sometimes called the Pharos of Alexandria a lighthouse built by the Ptolemaic Kingdom between 280 and 247 BC which was between 393 and 450 ft (120 and 137 m) tall. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, it was one of the tallest man-made structures in the world for many centuries. Badly damaged by three earthquakes between AD 956 and 1323, it then became an abandoned ruin. It was the third longest surviving ancient wonder (after the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus and the extant Great Pyramid of Giza) until 1480, when the last of its remnant stones were used to build the Citadel of Qaitbay on the site. In 1994, French archaeologists discovered some remains of the lighthouse on the floor of Alexandria's Eastern Harbour. The Ministry of State of Antiquities in Egypt has planned, as of late 2015, to turn submerged ruins of ancient Alexandria, including those of the Pharos, into an underwater museum.

ORIGIN

Pharos was a small island located on the western edge of the Nile Delta. In 332 BC Alexander the Great

founded the city of Alexandria on an isthmus opposite to Pharos. Alexandria and Pharos were later connected by a mole spanning more than three-quarters of a mile, which was called the Heptastadion ("seven stadia"—a stadium was a Greek unit of length measuring approximately 180 m). The east side of the mole became the Great Harbour, now an open bay; on the west side lay the port of Eunostos, with its inner basin Kibotos, now vastly enlarged to form the modern harbour. Today's city development lying between the present Grand Square and the modern Ras al-Tiin quarter is built on the silt which gradually widened and obliterated this mole, and Ras al-Tiin represents all that is left of the island of Pharos, the site of the lighthouse at its eastern point having been weathered away by the sea.

DESTRUCTION

The lighthouse was badly damaged in the earthquake of 956, and then again in 1303 and 1323. Finally the stubby remnant disappeared in 1480, when the then-Sultan of Egypt, Qaitbay, built a medieval fort on the larger platform of the lighthouse site using some of the fallen stone.

DID YOU KNOW?

- 1) The language of a society changes slowly but steadily with the result that an educated person will not be able to read or understand words in his language written 500 years ago.
- 2) Do you feel like you can't talk to your parents? Maybe it's because you belong to the Niger-Congo family. More than 1,400 languages are spoken by different members of this family from Africa.
- 3) It has been estimated that the number of actively spoken languages in the world today is about 6,000.
- 4) There is no word that rhymes with orange.
- 5) Pinocchio is Italian for "pine head."
- 6) The most common letters in English are R S T L N E.
- 7) There is no word that rhymes with purple.
- 8) There was only one code during World War II that was never broken by the enemy and was used by the US Army. Navajo soldiers, called Codetalkers, developed a radio code based on their native language. It was the only way US soldiers on the battlefield could be sure that messages were from their own side and not from Japanese imitators.



Oat Bites!

Ingredients

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1/2 cup sultanas
- 1/3 cup cranberries
- 1 tsp marmalade or orange peel (optional)
- 1/2 cup apple sauce

Steps

- Throw it all into a bowl and mix well.
- Roll into small balls
- Bake for 10 minutes or until golden brown (180C or 356F)

About Jupiter

Jupiter is the fifth planet from the Sun and the largest in the Solar System. It is a giant planet with a mass one-thousandth that of the Sun, but two and a half times that of all the other planets in the Solar System combined. Jupiter is a gas giant, along with Saturn. (Uranus and Neptune are ice giants.) Jupiter was known to astronomers of ancient times. The Romans named it after their god Jupiter. When viewed from Earth, Jupiter can reach an apparent magnitude of -2.94, bright enough for its reflected light to cast shadows, and making it on average the third-brightest object in the night sky after the Moon and Venus.

Jupiter is primarily composed of hydrogen with a quarter of its mass being helium, though helium comprises only about a tenth of the number of molecules. It may also have a rocky core of heavier elements, but like the other giant planets, Jupiter lacks a well-defined solid surface. Because of its rapid rotation, the planet's shape is that of an oblate spheroid (it has a slight but noticeable bulge around the equator).

The outer atmosphere is visibly segregated into several bands at different latitudes, resulting in turbulence and storms along their interacting boundaries. A prominent result is the Great Red Spot, a giant storm that is known to have existed since at least the 17th century when it was first seen by telescope. Surrounding Jupiter is a faint planetary ring system and a powerful magnetosphere. Jupiter has at least 67 moons, including the four large Galilean moons discovered by Galileo Galilei in 1610. Ganymede, the largest of these, has a diameter greater than that of the planet Mercury.

Jupiter has been explored on several occasions by robotic spacecraft, most notably during the early Pioneer and Voyager flyby missions and later by the Galileo orbiter. Jupiter was most recently visited by a probe in late February 2007, when New Horizons used Jupiter's gravity to increase its speed and bend its trajectory en route to Pluto. The next probe to visit the planet will be Juno, which is expected to arrive in July 2016. Future targets for exploration in the Jupiter system include the probable ice-covered liquid ocean of its moon Europa.

How many moons does Jupiter have?

Jupiter has 67 natural satellites. Of these, 51 are less than 10 kilometers in diameter and have only been discovered since 1975. The four largest moons, visible from Earth with binoculars on a clear night, known as the "Galilean moons", are Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto.

Inner moons. These orbit the closest to Jupiter and are sometimes called the Amalthea group. The names of the inner moons of Jupiter are Metis, Adrastea, Amalthea, and Thebe.

Galilean moons. These are largest of Jupiter's moons and were discovered by Galileo Galilei in 1610 - Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto.

Outer moons. These moons are much smaller and fur-



ther away from Jupiter. They also have irregular, elliptical orbit paths and many are captured asteroids.

Facts on Jupiter

Named after the Roman king of the gods, Jupiter is fitting of its name. With a mass of 1.90 x 10²⁷kg and a mean diameter of 139,822 km, Jupiter is easily the largest and most massive planet in the Solar System. To put this in perspective, it would take 11 Earths lined up next to each other to stretch from one side of Jupiter to the other and it would take 317 Earths to equal the mass of Jupiter.

The first recorded sighting of Jupiter were by the ancient Babylonians in around 7th or 8th BC. It is named for Jupiter, the king of the Roman gods and god of the Sky. The Greek equivalent is Zeus, god of thunder. For the Mesopotamians, he was the god Marduk and patron of the city of Babylon. Germanic tribes saw the planet as Donar, also known as Thor.

When Galileo discovered the four moons of Jupiter in 1610 this was the first proof of celestial bodies orbiting something other than Earth. The discovery also provided further evidence of Copernicus' Sun-centered solar system model.

Jupiter has the shortest day of the eight planets. The planet rotates very rapidly and very quickly, turning on its axis once every 9 hours and 55 minutes. This rapid rotation is also what causes the flattening effect of the planet, which is why it has an oblate shape.

One orbit of the Sun takes Jupiter 11.86 Earth years. This means that when viewed from Earth, the planet appears to move very slowly in the sky. It takes months for Jupiter to move from one constellation to the next.

Jupiter has a faint ring system around it. Its ring is mostly comprised of dust particles from some of Jupiter's moons during impacts from comets and asteroids. The ring system begins about 92,000 km above Jupiter's clouds and reaches more than 225,000 km from the planet. The rings are somewhere between 2,000-12,500 km thick.

Jupiter has at least 67 moons in satellite around the planet. This includes the four large moons called the Galilean moons that were first discovered by Galileo Galilei in 1610.

The largest of Jupiter's moons, Ganymede is the largest moon in the solar system. The moons are sometimes called the Jovian satellites and the largest of them are Ganymede, Callisto, Io and Europa. Ganymede is larger than the planet Mercury with a diameter of around 5,268 km.

Jokes!

Q: Why did Venus have to get an air conditioner?
A: Because Mercury moved in.

Q: What did the alien say to the cat?
A: Take me to your litter.

Q: Why did Mickey Mouse go to outer space?
A: He was looking for Pluto.

Q: What do you call a loony spaceman?
A: An astronaut.

Q: What did the alien say when he was out of room?
A: I'm all spaced out!

Q: What do aliens on the metric system say?
A: Take me to your liter.

SUDOKU

6			2		4	8		
2						3		9
	5							
					6			
4	6			1			9	3
9	8			4	7			
8							1	
				6	2			
	7			3	5			4

6	3	1	2	9	4	8	7	5
2	4	8	7	5	1	3	6	9
7	5	9	6	8	3	1	2	4
3	1	5	9	2	6	4	8	7
4	6	7	5	1	8	2	9	3
9	8	2	3	4	7	6	5	1
8	2	3	4	7	9	5	1	6
5	9	4	1	6	2	7	3	8
1	7	6	8	3	5	9	4	2





Madonna performs a tribute to Prince, pictured onscreen, at the Billboard Music Awards at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. — AP/AFP photos



Madonna performs a tribute to Prince at the Billboard Music Awards.



Celine Dion performs 'The Show Must Go On'.

Celine Dion, Kesha give emotional performances at Billboard



Honoree Celine Dion poses in the press room.



Recording Artist Thomas Rhett, winner of the Top Country Song Award for 'Die a Happy Man' poses in the press room.



Recording artist Justin Bieber accepts the Top Male Artist award onstage.



David Guetta poses in the press room with the award for top dance/electronic artist.

Celine Dion and Kesha, both in the midst of drama in their personal lives, gave emotional performances at the 2016 Billboard Music Awards on Sunday. Dion sang Queen's "The Show Must Go On" in strong form Sunday, sporting a shiny dress and backed by a powerful orchestra. Dion lost her husband and brother in the same week in January, and her son presented her with the Billboard icon award after her performance. "I'm so sorry. I'm sorry for crying. I want to be so strong for my family and kids ... I don't want to cry in front of you," a teary Dion said to Rene-Charles Angeli. "Thank you very much ... This is such a tremendous honor ... Music has been my passion since before I can almost remember."

Dion said her late husband Rene Angeli will "continue to watch over me from up above." Kesha sang a heart-wrenching cover of Bob Dylan's "It Ain't Me Babe" at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. She stood still in a cream suit and was backed by a pianist and violinist, hitting all the right notes and growing teary-eyed near the end. She earned a standing ovation from the audience - a welcome response after the performance was initially nixed by her former mentor, Dr Luke. The hit-making producer and his record label reversed the decision after Kesha said she would not use the stage to discuss their ongoing lawsuit.

Bathroom symbol

Other performances were not as strong: Justin Bieber sang his hits "Company" and "Sorry" with the help of a backing track as bright laser lights beamed throughout the performance. He walked from side to side, performing a few dance moves but didn't match the energy of his backup dancers. Britney Spears - clearly lip syncing - kicked off the show in a shimmering red number with a performance that featured several of her hits, from "I'm a Slave 4 U" and "Toxic," and some of her signature dance moves. Demi Lovato's performance of "Cool for the Summer" was among the night's best. She also made a statement by wearing a shirt featuring an inclusive bathroom symbol, taking a stance against



The Weeknd poses in the press room with the awards for top 100 hot artist, top 100 sales artist, top radio songs artist, top streaming songs artist, top R&B artist, top R&B album, top R&B song at the Billboard Music Awards.



Kesha performs 'It Ain't Me Babe'.

North Carolina's recent law addressing LGBT rights and bathroom use by transgender people. Lovato, who is on tour with Nick Jonas, recently canceled shows in North Carolina in protest of the state's law. Pink also impressed with her performance - featuring her signature high-flying moves - while she sang her new song, "Just Like Fire." Rihanna was also a highlight with strong vocals when she sang "Love on the Brain."

Madonna will close the show with a tribute to Prince, who died on April 21 at age 57. The icons collaborated on "Love Song" in 1989. Leading nominee The Weeknd is nominated for the night's big prize - top artist. His competition includes Adele, Taylor Swift, Bieber and Drake. The Weeknd won top R&B song for "The Hills" and top hot 100 artist, which he dedicated to Prince.

Black nominees

"I want to dedicate this award to the late, great Prince," he said after accepting the first award of the night. "I love him so much. I didn't know him, but he was so close to me. He will always be an inspiration." He lost top male artist to Bieber, who also beat out Drake, Ed Sheeran and Fetty Wap. "I'm not really a talker, but I'll say thank you to my family. I want to thank God. I want to thank everyone that believed in me and believes in me," Bieber said. Adele's best-seller "25" bested albums from Swift, Bieber, the Weeknd and Sheeran for top Billboard 200 album. "I can't believe I've won another one," Adele said in a video message. "This record was quite a mission to make."

Adele didn't attend the show because she is on tour, but the awards show premiered her music video for "Send My Love (To Your New Lover)." Ciara and Ludacris are hosting the show, and the rapper opened the show by poking fun at this year's Academy Awards, which featured all-white acting nominees. "Unlike the Oscars, we actually have black nominees," Ludacris said to laughs. Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth's "See You Again" won top hot 100 song. "Whoa," Khalifa exclaimed as his mother cheered him on from the audience. Thomas Rhett won top country song for "Die a Happy Man." "This is incredible. I got to thank God. I got to thank my wife," he said. — AP

Kate Beckinsale presents the award for top Billboard 200 album to Adele, pictured onscreen, via satellite.



Recording artist Pink performs onstage.



Recording artist Rihanna accepts the Billboard Chart Achievement Award.



Recording artist Wiz Khalifa, co-winner of the Top Hot 100 Song award for 'See You Again' (with Charlie Puth), poses in the press room.



Group photo of the organizers and participants at the Woven Paintings: The Art of the Loom workshop recently held at Sadu House. — Photos by Athoob Al Shuaibi and Jamie Etheridge



(From left) Founder and Patron of Sadu House Sheikhha Altaf Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah, fibre artist and Fulbright specialist Dr Lesli Robertson and Weaving Stories Project Manager and crochet artist Shelby Allaho are seen at the Woven Paintings workshop.

Weaving a community together

Workshop on weaving arts celebrates Kuwait's heritage



Fiber and weaving artist Dr Lesli Robertson demonstrating a weaving technique to participants.

By Jamie Etheridge

Artisans were once among the most respected members of society. The skilled craftsmen and women of times past created the functional and the beautiful through the work of their hands. But then the Industrial Revolution changed all that and factories challenged the quality of handmade goods and overwhelmed them through quantity.

Now a revival in appreciation for all things artisanal has also brought a renewed interest in traditional arts and crafts. Among one of the oldest such art forms is weaving. In Kuwait and the Gulf, weaving was an integral aspect of Bedouin culture and life through the traditional art of Sadu.

Sadu House in Kuwait City celebrates and preserves this heritage and also works to ensure a future for a wide range of textile arts including weaving, crochet, quilting and others. As part of these endeavors, Sadu House offered a workshop on weaving last Saturday, called Woven Paintings: The Art of the Loom. Taught by weaving artist Dr Lesli Robertson, the workshop

didn't focus on Sadu but instead introduced participants to basic weaving techniques, inspiring weaving artists, the concept of design and a range of vocabulary associated with weaving.

The workshop is part of a broader program organized under the auspices of Sadu House and Sheikhha Altaf Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah to celebrate Kuwait's cultural heritage and further engage the community in understanding more about traditional arts and crafts.

"In honor of Kuwait being chosen the Islamic Cultural Capital for 2016, the Sadu House has been asked to participate," explains Sheikhha Altaf. "This workshop is an extension of the collaboration with Lesli Robertson, artist, Professor of Fibers at the University of North Texas, and US Embassy Fulbright Specialist. She first visited Kuwait in January of 2015 as part of the Fulbright program, and inspired the Sadu House to engage the community and get them involved in the textile culture of Kuwait. Sadu House is now working on a special textile art installation with Lesli, called Weaving Stories. It will open in Al Shaheed Park in October, and this workshop is to encourage people to get inter-

ested in weaving, and to inspire them to create pieces for the collaborative project."

Oversubscribed with more than 15 participants, the workshop ran from 10am to 4pm on Saturday at the Sadu House on the Gulf Road in Kuwait City. Participants including two men were each given a wooden loom and taught how to warp the loom. They were then shown basic weaving techniques including twinning, plain weave, piling and knotting as well as aspects of design.

Those interested in participating in the community weaving project in the fall can contact Project Manager Shelby Allaho at stitchstory@yahoo.com.



The community weaving project that will be part of the Weaving Stories exhibition organized by Sadu House to be displayed at Al-Shaheed Park in November.



The workshop's youngest participant, Sara Allaho working on her weaving project.



A sign shows the direction to the Woven Paintings workshop at the Sadu House.



A participant practices newly-learned weaving techniques.

Home Centre captures spirit of sharing in Ramadan catalogue 2016

Home Centre, the region's leading home retailer, is set to launch its Ramadan catalogue for 2016 across its stores in the GCC. Inspired by the spirit of sharing, the catalogue will feature 152 ideas for elegant décor, thoughtful gifts, inviting table settings and mouth-watering recipes.

The holy month of Ramadan is a beautiful time for self-reflection, prayer and good deeds. Bringing individuals and families together to share meals and exchange gifts, this is a special time of the year to reconnect with family and friends and cultivate relationships.

Capturing the mood of the season, Home Centre's 2016 Ramadan collection will comprise timeless furniture pieces, complemented by patterned fabrics and floral designs. Elegant table

accessories and serve-ware will add to the warm ambience of those special iftar gatherings.

With giving and receiving gifts being an integral part of the occasion, customers can make their selection from a wide range of gold-embellished decorative platters, antique lanterns, artsy candle holders and other beautiful objects.

The seasonal catalogue also has brand ambassador Nancy Ajram sharing her favourite picks from the Ramadan collection with the readers. Nancy commented, "It is an extremely special time of the year and Home Centre's latest collection provides inspirational ideas to make this month all about enjoying time together. I have hand-picked a few items from this collection. I am confident that shoppers will love the new collection."

Mederic Payne, CEO of Home Centre, said: "Ramadan highlights the spirit of togetherness and gatherings, which form the basis of our catalogue this year. Our Ramadan collection reflects new styles and the latest designs keeping customers' needs and preferences in mind, inspiring them to share the true essence of the occasion. Through the stimulating ideas, tips and recipes featured, we wish to offer our customers a holistic experience and help them make this month even more memorable." The Ramadan 2016 catalogue is now available at all Home Centre stores.



AIGNER One Carat limited edition diamond collection

'You and I are like diamonds: bright, rare and forever'

AIGNER One Carat diamond collection is the embodiment of a love that is eternal, magical and sage. A kaleidoscope of light, love and lucidity - this incandescent testament of love is exclusively crafted to grace the spirit and person of your soulmate.

Available in 149 pieces each, AIGNER One Carat collection reinforces the timelessness of love and exudes radiance beyond compare. Cast in sheens of gold and silver, this elegant timepiece, featur-

ing Roman hours and a jeweled mother-of-pearl dial scripts tales of love with intelligent craftsmanship, meticulous detailing and poetic splendor.

Life is ephemeral but love is everlasting - laced with a symphony of 280 diamonds, AIGNER immortalizes beauty and diamond in the craft of its stunning one carat vault of elegant timekeeping. The limited edition AIGNER One Carat timepieces are available at AIGNER boutique across Kuwait.





(From left) French director and member of the Jury Arnaud Desplechin, Hungarian director and member of the Jury Laszlo Nemes, French actress/singer and member of the Jury Vanessa Paradis, Iranian producer and member of the Jury Katayoon Shahabi, Italian actress / director and member of the Jury Valeria Golino, Australian director and President of the Jury George Miller, US actress and member of the Jury Kirsten Dunst, Canadian actor and member of the Jury Donald Sutherland and Danish actor and member of the Jury Mads Mikkelsen pose as they arrive for the closing ceremony of the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.

From ‘I, Daniel Blake’ to ‘American Honey’ to ‘Toni Erdmann,’ the best films at Cannes were Bulletins from a new world



British director Ken Loach (center) poses with (from left) British screenwriter Paul Laverty, cinematographer Robbie Ryan and British producer Rebecca O'Brien after he was awarded the Palme d'Or for the film 'I, Daniel Blake' during a photocall at 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AP/AFP photos

Movies channel the world, even when they're not trying to. At a festival like Cannes, the films that win awards and the ones that are most celebrated, which aren't necessarily the award winners-have almost always had a heartbeat of relevance. They're movies that speak to us because they matter, and they matter because they express what's going on around them. Yet at Cannes this year, that reality was only heightened by a gathering awareness-of a theme that cuts across movies, directors, cultures, nations. Accepting the Palme d'Or for "I, Daniel Blake," director Ken Loach observed, "We must say that another world is possible, and necessary." He was speaking of the issue that runs like a current through "I, Daniel Blake," and that makes it such a trenchant and moving film: not just the bureaucratic perils of the British welfare system, but the fraying social safety net in the world at large-the loss of security, jobs, the whole promise of a room with a view.

What once might have seemed a "leftist" or even "Marxist" vision has become, for people across the globe, and for movie audiences everywhere, the new normal. The rich are concentrating their wealth; the sense of stability for almost everyone else is slowly eroding. It's a brave, scary, threatening new world. And the best films at Cannes this year were about pulling back the curtain on what that looks like. "I, Daniel Blake" does it with scalding passion, which is why this may finally be the movie to give Loach, at 79, his Mike Leigh crossover moment. Another Cannes highlight, "Hell or High Water," tells the story of two bank-robbing brothers in West Texas-it looks like a gun-totin' wild-boy pop-genre exercise, and might have been nothing more had it been made 10

years ago-and embeds that crackling tale in the maw of middle-class economic erosion. In these two movies, the desperation is right up front. To watch them is to touch a nerve of topical anxiety.

Spirit and style

But two of the other festival highlights tap into this theme with a sidelong resonance that sneaks up on you. "Toni Erdmann," Maren Ade's two-hour-and-42-minute-long German comedy about an oil-company consultant, Ines (Sandra Huller), who is trying to come to grips with her shambling, annoying, prankish semi-wreck of a father, is one of the first movies you have ever seen about the one percent that's really about the one percent, the intricacies of their spirit and style. It shows us the new breed of suits who are operating in a world far above the rest of us, so that almost nothing they do seems real, whether it's cutting deals or cutting the jobs that grow out of them.

Ines, beneath her tailored pantsuits and PowerPoint manners, actually appears to be a loving person, but she has made herself over into the high-level version of a human computer chip. She earns a lot of money, but that means that she can never speak truth to power. She's on call to power, 24/7. Enter her dad, Winfried (Peter Simonischek), who's the grizzled, eccentric German-goofball version of one of those insufferable aging boomers who thinks that the world has been getting worse ever since he started getting older. He shows up in Bucharest, where Ines lives and works (one of the film's themes is that the new money culture is an international club too expansive to have borders), and he tracks her to parties



British director Ken Loach celebrates on stage after being awarded with the Palme d'Or for the film 'I, Daniel Blake'.



Director Ken Loach, center, actor Mel Gibson, left, and President of the Jury George Miller react after Roach is awarded the Palme d'or for the film 'I, Daniel Blake'.



Director Xavier Dolan, center, is awarded the Grand Prix award for the film 'It's only the end of the world'.



Director Olivier Assayas poses for photographers after receiving the Best Director award for the film 'Personal Shopper'.



Iranian actor Shahab Hosseini (left) poses after he was awarded with the Best Actor prize, with Iranian director Asghar Farhadi who was awarded with the Best Screenplay prize for the film 'The Salesman (Forushande)'.



Romanian director Cristian Mungiu (left) poses with Romanian actress Maria Dragus after he was awarded with the Best Director prize for the film 'Graduation (Bacalaureate)'.



Filipina actress Jaclyn Jose poses after she was awarded with the Best Actress prize.

Winners

Palme d'Or: "I, Daniel Blake" (Ken Loach, UK)
Grand Prix: "It's Only the End of the World" (Xavier Dolan, Canada-France)
Director (tie): Olivier Assayas, "Personal Shopper" (France), and Cristian Mungiu, "Graduation" (Romania)
Actor: Shahab Hosseini, "The Salesman" (Iran)
Actress: Jaclyn Jose, "Ma' Rosa" (Philippines)
Jury Prize: Andrea Arnold, "American Honey" (UK-US)
Screenplay: Asghar Farhadi, "The Salesman" (Iran)

Other prizes
Palme d'Honneur: Jean-Pierre Leaud
Camera d'Or: "Divines" (Houda Benyamina, France-Qatar)
Short Films Palme d'Or: "Timecode" (Juanjo Jimenez, Spain) Special Mention - Short
Shorts Palme d'Or: "The Girl Who Danced With the Devil" (Joao Paulo Miranda Maria, Brazil)
Ecumenical Jury Prize: "It's Only the End of the World" (Xavier Dolan, Canada-France) Un Certain regard
Un Certain Regard Prize: "The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Maki" (Juho Kuosmanen, Finland)
Jury prize: "Harmonium" (Koji Fukada, Japan)
Director: Matt Ross, "Captain Fantastic" (United States)
Screenplay: Delphine and Muriel Coulin, "The Stopover" (France)
Special Jury Prize: Michael Dudok de Wit, "The Red Turtle" (France-Japan) Directors' fortnight
Art Cinema Award: "Wolf and Sheep" (Shahrbanoo Sadat)
Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers Prize: "The Together Project" (Solveig Anspach)
Europa Cinemas Label: "Mercenary" (Sacha Wolff) Critics' week
Grand Prize: "Mimosas" (Oliver Saxe)
Visionary Prize: "Album" (Mehmet Can Mertoglu)
Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers Prize: "Diamond Island" (Day Chou) Fipresci
Competition: "Toni Erdmann" (Maren Ade, Germany-Austria)
Un Certain Regard: "Dogs" (Bogdan Mirica, Romania-France)
Critics' Week: "Raw" (Julia Ducournau, France-Belgium)—Reuters



(From left) Grand-Prix winner Canadian director Xavier Dolan, Palme d'or winner British director Ken Loach, best Actress winner Filipino actress Jaclyn Jose, Honorary Prize winner French actor Jean-Pierre Leaud, Best Actor winner Iranian actor Shahab Hosseini and Best Screenplay Iranian director Asghar Farhadi pose on stage at the end the closing ceremony.

and meetings as if he were Bill Murray in "What About Bob?" He does it wearing false teeth, which make him look like Fredric March in the 1931 version of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and then a more elaborate disguise consisting of a long-haired wig and slovenly jacket and tie that make him look like Leatherface minus his skin-mask. You may sense the theme here: He's a walking horror. And an irresistible one.

He is, in other words, the walking horror that Ines deserves. "Toni Erdmann" is about a father and daughter who need to lay down their arms-which, on the film's art-house crowd-pleaser terms, means either getting naked or putting on a massively oversize furry monster suit. This may be the most naggingly Teutonic movie ever made that builds to a big hug-and a giggle. Yet what gives "Toni Erdmann" its subtle juice is the way that Ines and her father seem to be occupying completely different planes of existence.

Family relationships

The way the film bridges them is not, in the end, entirely convincing, yet the double portrait is memorable. We all know that family relationships can be impossible, but in "Toni Erdmann," it's the crack in the earth between the haves and the have-nots that has left these two on separate spheres. Andrea Arnold's "American Honey" plunges the audience, with dizzying hand-held exhilaration, into the lives of a couple of dozen young pierced and tattooed drifters who have banded together into a roving derelict cult, driving around the Midwest in a van, where they have a scam going to use their hustle and beauty to guilt-trip people into buying magazine subscriptions. You may never have seen a movie that so eloquently captures the feeling of living not for the future but for the moment-and, let's be clear, living that way is not a good thing. But there's a haunting question that shadows the flying-high hip-hop catharsis of "American Honey," and that is this: How did these kids get here?

The answer is everything the movie is really about. They are refugees of the new American non-dream. The heroine,

Star (Sasha Lane), is fleeing a home of indifference and abuse, but in nearly three hours, hers is the one and only backstory we get, and that's by design. The movie is saying: We don't need to hear the other backstories-we know them in our bones. They're about children who have not been given the structure and love they need, because the love and structure was disintegrating above them. "American Honey" is about the morphing of youth culture into a big-beat deadbeat party. What's beautiful about the movie is that the characters have lost their innocence, yet they remain innocent. They're the fallout of the new world. — Reuters



Director Houda Benyamina poses for photographers after winning the Camera d'or for the film Divines.



Actor Shahab Hosseini , center, poses for photographers after winning Best Actor award for the film 'Forushande', 'The Salesman', with jury members Katayoon Shahabi, left and Kirsten Dunst.



Jean-Pierre Leaud, left, react with jury member Laszlo Nemes after being awarded the honorary Palme d'or.



Iranian actress Taraneh Alidoosti poses as she arrives for the closing ceremony.



British director Andrea Arnold (third left) celebrates on stage with (from left) French actress / singer and member of the Jury Vanessa Paradis, US actress Sasha Lane, Danish producer Lars Knudsen, cinematographer Robbie Ryan (second right) and US actress and member of the Jury Kirsten Dunst after being awarded with the Jury Prize for the film 'American Honey'.



Brazilian director Joao Paulo Miranda Maria waves during a photocall after he was awarded with the Special Prize award for Best Short.



Spanish director Juanjo Gimenez poses with his trophy during a photocall after he was awarded with the Palme d'Or award for Best Short Film for the film 'Timecode'.



Iranian director Asghar Farhadi celebrates on stage after being awarded with the Best Screenplay prize for the film 'The Salesman' (Forushande).



Director Andrea Arnold poses for photographers with her Jury Prize for the film 'American Honey'.

Philippine film industry celebrates Jose's Cannes win

The Philippines' entertainment industry yesterday celebrated Jaclyn Jose's surprise win at the Cannes film festival, hailing her as one of the nation's hardest working and most versatile actresses who deserves global acclaim. Jose, 52, famous at home mostly as a soap opera star, won best actress Sunday for her mesmerizing performance as a Manila slum matriarch who falls prey to corrupt police in acclaimed Filipino director Brillante Mendoza's "Ma' Rosa." "This is a victory for the Filipino film industry. This is a victory for the Philippines as a whole," Joel Lamangan, another well-known director, told AFP.

"Filipinos are very good actors. They can be compared to anybody. That's what Jaclyn Jose proved." Jose's original manager Ed Entrella said that although Jose has been one of the nation's most popular actresses for three decades, she decided at a young age she "wanted to be an actress, not a star". Her current manager Perry Lansigan described her as a "workaholic" who relentlessly pursued as many roles as possible. "She doesn't take a rest of two or three months (between roles) like other actors," Lansigan said.

Lilybeth Rasonable, senior vice-president of GMA, the television network where Jose has worked for the past three years, said she has surprised executives with her versatility. In the 2013 soap opera, "The World is Mine", Jose played an

antagonistic ex-beauty queen but rose above the simple stereotype. "She put real character into it. She made it different. She put in certain quirks after she discussed it with her director," Rasonable said. Jose's character proved so popular that she was introduced to do cameos in unrelated TV shows, according to Rasonable. Although Jose already stars in a soap opera, she will launch a weekly comedy on the same network as soon as she returns from France.

Wilson Tieng, head of the Movie Producers and Distributors Association of the Philippines, said the interest generated by Jose's award would likely get her movie screened in commercial cinemas. "It will be distributed in the cinema chains. People are already calling up to ask about screenings but we don't have a date yet," said Tieng, whose group distributes movies nationwide. Philippine movie theatres typically show formulaic local comedies and romances as well as Hollywood blockbusters, but shun the nation's independent films that have won many awards overseas. — AFP

Actress Jaclyn Jose, center, poses for photographers with actress Andi Eigenmann, Jury member Katayoon Shahabi, director Brillante Mendoza and Jury member Mads Mikkelsen, from left, after winning the Best Actress award for the film 'Ma' Rosa'.



From 'I, Daniel Blake' to 'American Honey' to 'Toni Erdmann,' the best films at Cannes were Bulletins from a new world

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This picture shows participants releasing lanterns over the Borobudur temple in Magelang, Central Java during Vesak Day celebrations. Indonesian Buddhists celebrated Vesak at the Borobudur temple as they marked the birth, enlightenment, and death of Gautama Buddha. — AFP

Golden ring, chain found hidden in Holocaust victim's mug



A Polish-made golden chain wrapped in canvas is displayed .

A spokesman for the Auschwitz Museum says a Polish-made golden ring and chain have been found hidden under the false base of an enameled mug that must have belonged to a victim of the Nazis' death camp. Piotr Sawicki told The Associated Press that the find was revealed during conservation work for enamel items on display at a permanent exhibition of items robbed from Auschwitz victims.

Sawicki says "it is highly probably that the mug belonged to a Jewish person who brought to Auschwitz for extermination." Tests have shown the items are made of gold and they bear a seal used in Poland from 1921-31. The false base bears a Polish company name, but there are no signs to help identify the owner. — AP



A Polish-made golden ring is displayed .



An enameled mug and a Polish-made golden ring is displayed. — AP photos



The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) organized a concert yesterday of Kuwaiti singer Fatouma. The event took place at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theater in Salmiya as part of NCCAL's ongoing International Music Festival. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh



File photo shows recording artist Lady Gaga launching 'Love Bravery' at Macy's Herald Square in New York. — AP

Lady Gaga's childhood piano doesn't sell at auction

Lady Gaga's childhood piano, which she used to write her first song at age 5, didn't hit a high note at an auction in New York. The upright piano failed to meet its reserve price Saturday when Los Angeles-based Julien's Auctions offered it as part of the "Music Icons" memorabilia sale at the Hard Rock Cafe New York. The piano had a pre-sale estimate of \$100,000 to \$200,000.

A spokeswoman for the auction house wouldn't disclose the reserve, the lowest price a seller will accept for an item. It wasn't immediately clear if the piano would be offered for sale again. More than 85 Elvis Presley items also were auctioned by Julien's. They included a 1969 Gibson Dove guitar that Presley's father made for him. It sold for \$334,000. — AP



This image taken from video shows a piano owned by singer Lady Gaga in Culver City, Calif. — AP