

Language barrier stands between expats and their rights



Kashmiris incensed as troops make kids do sit-ups



Dalit, out and proud: Indian singers rising above caste



Chelsea in shock loss, Spurs win, Liverpool beat Everton



WASHINGTON 'REBOOTS' EGYPT TIES AFTER YEARS OF TENSION

TRUMP TO MEET 'FANTASTIC GUY' SISI



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conspiracy theories

JUST ANOTHER SUMMIT

By Badrya Darwish
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Do you think anyone in the Arab world is still following Arab summits? I did a survey among my friends, and they replied, "What summits?" They said they loved the old summits - although they did not accomplish unity or solutions for the Middle East - because they were a little bit of fun, thanks to Col Gaddafi, bless his soul, the deceased Libyan leader. Because at every summit he came up with something new to amuse and abuse nations. I remember while attending a summit in Jordan, all of a sudden there was a huge commotion in the halls because Gaddafi left in the middle of the summit to go find a falafel sandwich in Amman.

Of course he caused panic as security personnel scrambled to follow him, and it was hilarious - a huge joke. Gaddafi used to amuse the crowds with his funny statements and mockery about leaders, the summit, the Americans, etc, etc. Also, the way he dressed was very fashionable and unique. Nowadays, the summits are very formal and dull. No shouting, no disputes. Maybe they have disputes under the table or behind closed doors, but not in front of the media for us. So we don't get rich material to chew on.

The latest summit in Jordan was jinxed and disastrous, in my opinion. First of all, I blame Jordanian TV for misnaming our respected Amir. The broadcaster did not do so intentionally, but she should have done her homework and known the name of the guests who were coming. The rest of the minor incidents which took place out of hand led to lots of comments, posts, sharing of WhatsApp videos and photos across the Arab world.

Bottom-line, I care for results. There were no serious solutions. It was the usual brotherly and friendly hugging and kissing and then goodbye without any solutions to the many problems we are facing in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Libya, etc.

KS-PATH, US EMBASSY IN BEACH CLEANUP



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman takes part in a rubbish collection drive organized by the Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and Their Habitat (KS-PATH) and the US Embassy along the Sulaibikhat beachfront yesterday. The objective was to preserve the natural environment and clean the sanctuary of migratory birds. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 30)

CAIRO: Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi meets his counterpart and admirer Donald Trump in Washington tomorrow for a "reboot" of relations following years of tension with the American president's predecessor. The former reality television star and tycoon has made no secret of his admiration for Sisi, an ex-army chief who overthrew Egypt's Islamist president in 2013 and cracked down on his supporters.

Mohamed Morsi's ouster, a year after he had won Egypt's first democratic election, and the ensuing crackdown on Islamists prompted then US president Barack Obama to suspend military aid to Cairo temporarily. But when Sisi meets Trump during his first state visit to Washington, he will see a partner who better appreciates his "mission" to fight Islamists and militants, without Obama's hand-wringing over human rights.

Sisi has "led Egypt's campaign to defeat a long-running terrorist threat in the Sinai", a US administration official said in a briefing on Friday. Trump "wants to use President Al-Sisi's visit to reboot the bilateral connection", he said. Sisi left for Washington yesterday and will meet cabinet members and lawmakers ahead of tomorrow's meeting with Trump, his office said.

When the two met in September, they walked away praising one another, with Sisi saying Trump shows "deep and great understanding" of the region. And Trump gushed about his "chemistry" with Sisi. "He's a fantastic guy. Took control of Egypt, and he really took control of it," he told Fox Business of the period after Morsi's overthrow which saw hundreds of Islamist protesters killed and thousands detained.

Ahead of Sisi's trip, five US senators announced they would introduce a bipartisan resolution supporting Egypt, but demanding an end to a crackdown on civil

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IRAN HARDLINERS FEELING EMBOLDENED

TEHRAN: Iran's hardliners are hoping they can benefit from the rise of Donald Trump in upcoming elections, arguing that their own country needs a tougher leader to stand up to an American president whose administration has put the Islamic Republic "on notice". They say it's time for a "revolutionary diplomacy" to confront the US after four years of a more conciliatory policy under moderate incumbent President Hassan Rouhani.

Hardliners feel energized by the Trump administration's repeated criticism of the landmark 2015 nuclear deal. The agreement found little support among the group, who feel Iran gave too much away in exchange for too little in the way of sanctions relief. The US president's tough talk on Iran plays into hardliners' hands too, reinforcing anti-American sentiments they can use to rally their base.

A group of hardliners banded together late last year to form the Popular Front of Islamic Revolution Forces, which is assessing more than a dozen potential candi-

dates. But with less than two months to go before the May 19 election, they have yet to settle on one to run against Rouhani. One potential candidate, Mohsen Rezaei, a former chief of the elite Revolutionary Guard, has lashed out at the administration for lacking revolutionary spirit - tough words in a country that prizes the heroes of the 1979 Islamic Revolution that created the current governmental system. "A group (of officials) has become hopeless and tired while trying to find a prescription for problems outside the revolutionary framework," he said.

A lack of reliable polling in Iran makes it difficult to gauge how the election could play out, particularly given that no hopefuls have formally declared their candidacies yet. But Tehran-based political analyst Soroush Farhadi said Trump's stance on Iran could bode ill for Rouhani's chances because it gives hardliners a way to denounce his foreign policy of outreach and negotiation with the West and regional rivals.

Earlier in March, the current chief of the Guard, Mohammad Ali Jafari, warned that an "un-revolutionary viewpoint" that had taken hold in recent years was the greatest danger facing Iran. The daily Javan, which is affiliated with the Guard, has meanwhile criticized the Rouhani administration for choosing "smile diplomacy" that has done little to improve Iran's standing with the rest of the world.

While candidate Trump said he'd renegotiate or dismantle the Iran nuclear deal, which Israel fiercely opposes, his administration is continuing to implement the accord for now. Because the agreement was negotiated with a group of international powers, Washington does not have the ability to tear it up on its own. But continued hostility to it by the Trump administration could discourage Western companies from doing business in Iran and embolden US allies such as Saudi Arabia that are hostile to Tehran.

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MOCOCA, Colombia: Colombian soldiers search for victims following mudslides caused by heavy rains in Putumayo department yesterday. — AFP

COLOMBIA MUDSLIDES KILL AT LEAST 112, SCORES HURT

BOGOTA: Mudslides have killed 112 people, injured 180 and left up to 200 missing after destroying homes in southern Colombia, the Red Cross and officials said yesterday. The surge swept away houses, bridges, vehicles and trees, leaving piles of wrecked timber and brown mud, army photographs from the town of Mocoa showed. The mudslides struck late Friday after days of torrential rain. President Juan Manuel Santos visited Mocoa, the capital of Putumayo department, on Saturday to supervise rescue and assistance efforts in

the heavily forested region. "I have just been informed that 112 people are dead," he said. "We don't know how many more there will be; we are still searching."

Earlier, the Red Cross aid group's rescue official Cesar Urena told AFP that 92 people were dead and 180 injured. He warned that the death toll - initially put at 16 - would probably rise further because 200 people were still missing. "The number is rising enormously and at considerable speed," he said.

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SLOW PROGRESS ON CIVIL LIBERTIES IRKS TUNISIANS

'FEARFUL' FAMILIES REMOVING WOMBS OF DISABLED GIRLS

KUWAIT: Families of some mentally-disabled girls consumed with fear about their daughters' future and their own reputations have used this as an excuse to remove their wombs as soon as they reach puberty, according to a report in Al-Qabas daily. Head of the genetic diseases center at the maternity hospital Dr Laila Bastaki said several such surgeries have been conducted in Kuwait upon the request of parents.

Obstetrics, gynecology and infertility consultant Dr Naheda Al-Ali said many hysterectomies on girls with severe mental disabilities, clinical cases and those suffering from brain paralysis have been done upon parents' requests and doctors' approval. She added that she herself had taken part in three out of five hysterectomies she witnessed when she worked at the maternity hospital.

Meanwhile, psychologists and sociologists said parents resort to such surgeries due to sexual taboos and lack of awareness in Gulf societies. They called for boosting parental awareness on how to deal with such children of various ages. Legally speaking, a number of lawyers said such surgeries must be incriminated unless they are done for compelling medical reasons.

Dr Ahmed Al-Kurdi, a cleric at the awqaf ministry's fatwa department, said removing the womb or any other organ is religiously forbidden unless done for medical reasons. "There is no use of removing a mentally-disabled girl's womb, as this will not protect her from being raped or sexually assaulted," he underlined.

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IVANKA, JARED BENEFIT FROM BUSINESS EMPIRE

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SLOW TRAIN COMING: DYLAN IN SWEDEN TO ACCEPT NOBEL

STOCKHOLM: After months of controversy, Bob Dylan was in Stockholm yesterday to finally grab his Nobel literature prize in a meeting with the Swedish Academy, which honored him for his poetry. The first songwriter to receive the prestigious award, Dylan has joined the league of Nobel laureates including Thomas Mann, Samuel Beckett, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Doris Lessing. At a secret time and place, the famously reclusive Dylan was to receive his

Nobel diploma and medal in a closed meeting at the weekend with members of the Swedish Academy, which elects the winners of the literature prize.

"The setting will be small and intimate, and no media will be present; only Bob Dylan and members of the Academy will attend, all according to Dylan's wishes," Sara Danius, permanent secretary of the Academy said in a blog post on Wednesday.

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STOCKHOLM: Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy Sara Danius enters a concert by US songwriter and singer Bob Dylan at the Stockholm Waterfront yesterday. —AP

Local spotlight

THE 2017 ARAB SUMMIT



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The 28th Arab Summit, which was held on March 29 in Jordan, concluded its meetings with a closing statement that is worth examining. Twenty-two member countries of the Arab League participated in this summit, except for Syria, which has been suspended by the League since 2011. The summit was due to be held in Yemen, but because of the political situation there, the summit was shifted to Jordan.

The summit's discussions do not mean much to Arab citizens, but the final statement, conclusions and results of the meetings and what can be transformed from a declaration and agreement to an effective action plan is what matters. I think the Arab Summit ended with a clear success for the Gulf states and their interests. This clearly upset some powers in the region.

There is always a common understanding that Arab summits have no positive impact in dealing with crises in Arab countries, with many considering them routine events without offering anything new. Despite the pessimistic expectations by some Arab media, this summit came up unexpectedly with a new stand. I believe the closing statement was bold and clear and showed the position of the Gulf states and Arab support. Of course, the statement did not appeal to some here, so they criticized the summit and its resolutions, although they were not specifically named.

Let me explain why I think this summit was a success. Firstly, I think there is no harm in reiterating support for an old and urgent issue such as the Palestinian case, which means standing with the demands of the Palestinians, even with the existence of new issues such as terrorism and Islamophobia in the Arab and international arena. Most importantly, the closing statement expressed Arab leaders' readiness to achieve a "historic reconciliation" with Israel in return for its withdrawal from the territories occupied in the 1967 war.

All agreed on the importance of ending the long conflict on the basis of the two-state solution, which guarantees the establishment of a Palestinian state. So no more shouting, condemning and demanding the exit of the Israelis from Palestine as an only solution for peace - the Arabs are looking at the caserealistically and calling for what can be achieved through possible negotiations, and not the impossible or imaginary.

Arab leaders also expressed their support for a political solution in Syria as well as the legitimate government in Yemen. Here I see the vision of the Gulf states - a position that disturbed the Houthis and their supporters, who rushed to reject the closing statement of the Arab summit. The status of refugees was also on the agenda, and everyone agreed to renew their commitment to support Arab countries that are hosting refugees to enable them to bear the cost of hosting them. They agreed to put forward the issue of adopting new programs to support these countries at the Brussels conference to be held on April 5.

The gathering also reaffirmed the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, supported its right to all peaceful measures to restore sovereignty over its lands and called to invite Iran to find a peaceful solution to the issue through direct negotiations or the International Court of Justice. Finally, the summit supported all efforts to defeat "terrorism" everywhere, and this means the support of the international coalition against terrorism and the Security Council resolutions in this regard.

I believe that there are various purposes behind Arab summits, which is the confirmation of the collective views of Arab issues and agreements despite possible differences, because such summits open the lines of communication and agreement. I believe that the recent Arab Summit achieved its agreed goals on fundamental and important issues.

FIVE MINISTERS INVITED TO ATTEND PANEL MEETING

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The parliament's financial affairs committee invited Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh and Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh to attend its meeting at 11:00 am to discuss decree law no. 69/1980 pertaining with military personnel's pensions and retirement indemnities.

Meanwhile, the parliament's legislative committee is scheduled to meet at 9:00 am this morning to discuss the constitutionality of a request made by the parliament's budgets and final statements' committee to have the finance minister provide it. The committee's meeting agenda also includes a request to lift the immunity of MP Mohammed Hayef Al-Mutairi, amending law no. 28/2011 pertaining with the allowances of Kuwaiti teaching staff members at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and amending clause no. 1 of article 26 of law no. 98/2013 pertaining the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises.

Industrial area and to the south of the municipality scrap yard.

Industrial lands

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudahn said the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) will soon discuss distributing new industrial land plots, noting that nominations would be made according to applicants' projects' added value and capital, competence, the technology used and the number of national labor hired. Roudhan said 4,200 initial approvals were ready, in addition to distributing 1,048 plots in Shedadhiya. He also noted that instead of issuing the needed licenses in two months, licenses would now be issued within 15 days.

Labor residences

The state property department's manager Salah Al-Obaidan asked the municipality to allocate two new sites to build expatriate labor residences in Shuaiba

MUNICIPALITY EMPLOYEE ARRESTED FOR TAKING BRIBES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A 43-year-old citizen working for Kuwait Municipality was recently arrested for taking bribes. Security sources said the case came to light when an Egyptian representative of a restaurant company applied to renew the license of one of the restaurant's branches in Ardhiya. The suspect - a food inspector - immediately told him that the application could not be approved because there were a number of violations, which was rejected by the representative. To his astonishment, the inspector asked him for KD 2,000 to 'forget' about the so-called violations, which made the representative report the matter. The suspect was arrested red-handed while receiving marked bribe money.



ZAIN BEST IN PUBLIC RELATIONS, CUSTOMER SERVICE

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, proudly received 6 prizes as part of the second edition of Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service Prize. The event, hosted by Kuwait's Public Relations Association, comes under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The prizes Zain received included: "Excellence in Customer Service", "Excellence in Social Awareness", "Excellence in Corporate Communications and Relations", "Excellence in Website Services", and "Excellence in Call Center". In addition, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director Waleed Al-Khashti received "PR Personality of the Year 2016".

The awards ceremony witnessed the attendance of His Highness the Amir's representative, the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh, who, alongside Chairman of Kuwait's Public Relations Association Jamal Al-Nasrullah, presented the wards to Zain's Corporate Communications and Relations Director Waleed Al-Khashti and Zain Kuwait's Customer Care Director Raed Al-Thaqeb.

Kuwait's Public Relations Association dedicated this prize to shed light on the distinguished efforts and achievements of companies and organizations in the fields of public relations and customer service across all



industries from both the public and private sectors. The event also featured a number of workshops about the strategies of public relations and customer service targeted at employees of ministries and organizations.

The judging committee - responsible for selecting the winners - consisted of local and international PR and Customer Service experts, and evaluated the participating entities as per the highest international standards. The standards included serving customers while meeting their needs, distinguished

social contributions, excellent media presence, and more.

During December 2016, Zain proudly received four titles as part of the fourth Advertising Creativity Award. The award, organized by the Arab Media Forum, recognized Zain's "National Day TVC - Ya Bilady", "Ramadan TVC - Live in Peace", "Eid TVC - Let's Sing", as well as the company's corporate sustainability contributions. Zain also participated in a Public Relations and Marketing discussion panel that came as part of the

Advertising Creativity Award. The awards Zain received today showcase its distinguished public relations and media involvement, and further strengthens the company's role as a leading private sector company launching several public relations and marketing campaigns all year round. Zain will continue supporting this very important field which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole, whether through traditional or modern media tools.

News

in brief

Kuwait Army begins enrolling martyrs' sons

KUWAIT: Enrollment in the military began for sons of military personnel who had fallen as martyrs, missing and participants in Arab wars and Kuwait's liberation operation, the army chairmanship of staff declared yesterday. Others entitled for registration were sons of those who had served in the military for 30 years, those registered in the 1965 census and military servicemen who concluded the service ahead of August 2nd, 1990. This initiative has been taken in response to instructions by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to honor the personnel who had defended the national soil and sacrificed for the homeland. —KUNA

Kuwait backs resolution condemning settlements

KUWAIT: Kuwait has expressed support for a proposed resolution forwarded by the Palestinian delegation to the 136th Inter-Parliamentary Union's conference denouncing a bill by the Israeli Knesset that legalizes settlements in the West Bank. The Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation, taking part in the IPU conference, has expressed backing for the Palestinian-presented draft resolution, during sideline coordination meetings of the Gulf and Islamic groups, said MP Rakan Al-Nisf, head of the Kuwaiti Parliamentary Caucus, taking part in the event. —KUNA

Kuwaiti youth win Geneva exhibit prize

GENEVA: Winning two gold prizes by the Kuwaiti team in the International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva represent Kuwaiti youth's determination and creativity in the field of science, said senior Kuwait official. The Kuwaiti team of high school youth competed against others from China and Japan, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and international organizations Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim said yesterday. The event is an opportunity for Kuwaiti youth to share experience and boost their skills, he added. Kuwaitis have already won several prizes in the same event within the past few years, said Ghunaim. —KUNA

KFH ROLLS OUT FOREIGN CURRENCIES ATM AT AIRPORT



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has introduced a foreign currencies ATM machine at the airport branch in collaboration with K-Net in efforts to meet customers' aspirations by offering them the best banking services and the most convenient banking experience as per highest standards of quality.

"This ATM enables KFH and non-KFH customers to withdraw up to 4 different currencies; Dollar, Euro, Dirham and Riyal with a maximum limit of USD/Euro 1,000, or Dirham/Riyal 5,000 for any single withdrawal transaction," said Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at KFH Waleed Mandani.

He added in a press release that having the ATM machine installed at Kuwait International Airport helps customers to avail this innovative service and purchase



Waleed Mandani

their foreign currency, indicating the Foreign Currencies ATM gives consumers access to the currency latest foreign exchange rates.

Mandani reiterated KFH's keenness to offer best services to customers while adding value to the banking experience by introducing services characterized by innovation, accuracy, security and efficiency manners. He said that such service is of a great importance to customers as it is available 24/7, noting that KFH enjoys a huge ATM network spanning different areas in Kuwait. The bank has recently launched special ATMs for the blind in some of its branches. KFH works tirelessly to constantly enhance its services and security systems to ensure delivering the best customer service.

ABK LAUNCHES DEBUT \$500 MILLION SENIOR UNSECURED BOND ISSUE

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced yesterday the successful debut issue from its recently established \$1.5 billion Euro Medium-Term Note (EMTN) program. The Bank is issuing a first Tranche benchmark of \$500 Million under the program, which is being jointly lead managed and arranged by Citibank, HSBC and National Bank of Abu Dhabi. This is the debut bond issue for ABK and the first since its acquisition of Piraeus Bank - Egypt in 2015, and it has drawn strong interest from investors in SE Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

Commenting on the launch, Michel Accad, ABK's Chief Executive, said: "ABK is the first

Kuwaiti issuer to launch a bond following Kuwait's recent successful debut sovereign bond, which has allowed investors to price off the sovereign yield curve. Our plan is to use the proceeds of the issue to further diversify our funding sources and to better match the tenor of our assets through longer-dated liabilities."

Moody's Investors Service (Moody's) has assigned a provisional senior unsecured foreign-currency rating of A2 to ABK's EMTN program, in line with ABK's long-term deposit ratings of A2. ABK is listed by Global Finance as one of the world's Top 50 safest banks and one of the Top 10 safest banks in the Middle-East.



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) received three awards during the second edition of Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service Prize, which was organized recently by Kuwait's Public Relations Association. It received the 'Best Bank in Social Media', 'Best Phone Service' and 'Best Website' awards.

SPECIAL REPORT

LANGUAGE BARRIER STILL STANDS BETWEEN EXPATS AND THEIR RIGHTS

TWO LAWYERS RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT KUWAIT FAMILY LAW

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

KUWAIT: They did not mind waiting more than 40 minutes before an English seminar on Kuwait family law began at the TIES Center. A few men and some more women had shown up looking for answers. They did not want to be identified, so photography was not allowed during the talk. They were all overwrought due to their constant calls for redress in courts.

The language barrier and legal ignorance are the main reasons why some expats are easily deceived and robbed of their rights, even by the people closest to them. After all, the law does not protect dupes. Unfortunately, it is hard in Kuwait to find a detailed English-language translation of the personal status and family law, unlike trade-related laws that aim to attract foreign investors and help them easily navigate the system.

So what can happen if things get messed up between you and your spouse? Two lawyers from Al-Adwani law firm took out some time and spoke to Kuwait Times to raise



Attorney Najmah Brown

awareness about the family law in Kuwait. "Lawyers working in the office in all disciplines, along with the managing director of the international department attorney Najmah Brown and I, handle family issues and criminal and commercial cases. We are currently focusing on the new law of creating the court of law no.12/2015 and law no. 51/1984 of personal status," said attorney Atyab Al-Shatti.

Being stuck

Brown, an American lawyer, has



Attorney Atyab Al-Shatti

dealt with a raft of commercial and corporate cases. "On the personal side, a lot of the questions I have been getting from expats are about employment and family issues, because they are the cases that are lost most. They are probably stuck in a position where no one is there to defend them," she added.

It is everyone's responsibility to educate themselves - all individuals have to keep up with the latest updates with regards to a country's laws and regulations before falling

into trouble. "Many problems could have been avoided if everyone knew their rights and obligations. The government and the media of Kuwait are also responsible to educate people of all groups, faiths and languages. The communication gap is immense," asserted Shatti.

In Kuwait's conservative and discreet society, it is seen as shameful to publicly address family conflicts. So the firm was willing to share the presentation they made during the seminar in order to spread the benefit. "I have some friends who should have attended, but they did not want anyone to witness them coming to our seminar on family law," said Brown.

The enforcement of the family law in Kuwait is determined by the nationalities of married couples and their faith. If a Kuwaiti woman is married to a non-Kuwaiti, the law will be applied. But if both are non-Kuwaitis, then the law of the land to which the husband belongs to shall be applied in Kuwaiti courts. Sunni and Shiite courts also differ in their legal opinions and legislation. Correspondingly, marriage and

divorce among non-Muslims are not resolved by Islamic law.

In a maze

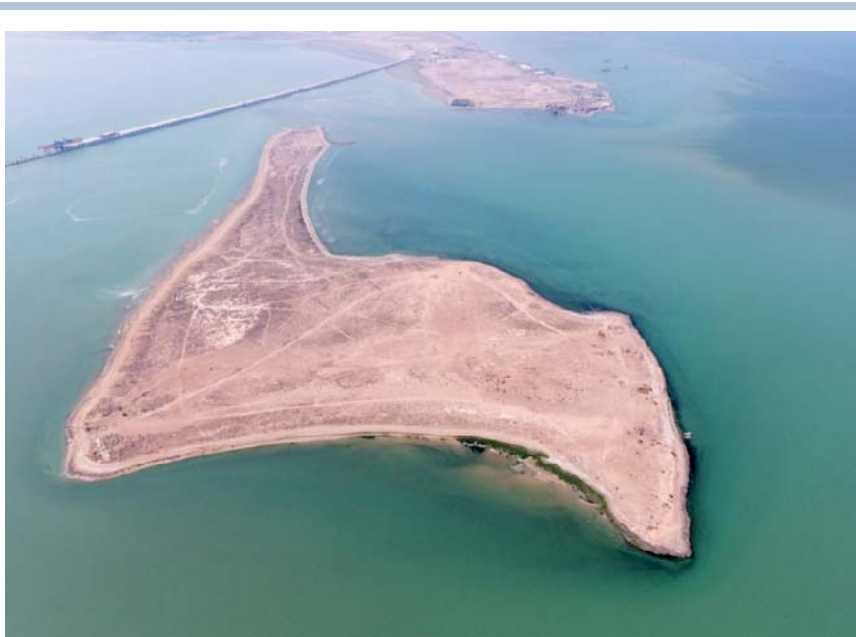
Due to these complexities, expatriates find themselves in a maze, especially when they cannot get a translator in the family courtroom. "There is no directory to serve non-Arabic speaking expats to help them find an attorney who speaks their language. At the same time, as far as I know, not every law firm has an English-speaking attorney. In fact, a great deal of our business comes by word of mouth," said Brown.

"In felony cases, a translator is present before an accused individual, but people find it difficult to find a translator in matters of personal status, which creates a big misunderstanding as a consequence. Of course, Kuwaiti law requires the presence of a translator, but when it comes to reality, they are hard to find!" noted Shatti.

During their seminar, Shatti and Brown reviewed the most common issues faced by expatriates in Kuwait, such as visitation and travel

rights, divorce and child custody, in addition to getting expenses and nationality according to the Sunni and Shiite doctrines. They stressed the importance of getting advice from lawyers and not from unauthorized persons. Given the demographic makeup of the country, where expats outnumber nationals two to one, they are predisposed to fill the courts due to a lack of legal awareness. Hence, full language communication is necessary to give everyone their rights.

Visitation, travel rights, divorce and child custody most common issues facing expats



KUWAIT: An aerial view of Um Al-Namil island. — KUNA

DIVERS REMOVE HARMFUL MATERIALS AROUND ISLAND

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti divers have cleared up two tons of discarded fishing nets and other environmentally harmful items clung to surrounding of Um Al-Namil island, a natural reserve located within Kuwait Bay.

The divers who carried out the mission, in coordination with personnel from the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (PAAFR), used small and light boats to reach the island, surrounded by shallow waters, said Walid Al-Fadhel, chief of the Kuwaiti divers of

the Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF). They have scrambled into action amid high tide, lifting the huge nets that included many perished fish and sea creatures, in addition to plastic and wooden pieces. "Environment in and around the island this year looks sound because of the fishing and camping ban within the bay," he said yesterday. The 568,000-square-meter island, the fourth largest Kuwaiti island, is a stopover for a large number of migratory birds. — KUNA



Kuwaiti divers clean up the Um Al-Namil island.



KUWAIT: This file photo was taken during a ceremony held by KOTC to celebrate receiving the first crude oil tanker 'Kazimah'. — KUNA

KOTC: 60 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN OIL FIELD

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Tankers Company (KOTC) is celebrating 60 years of achievements since being established in April of 1957 by a group of investors believing that oil will be the main source of income in Kuwait for many years to come. According to KOTC, the government became a partner to KOTC in 1976 with a 49 percent share capital, thereby providing a strong and vital boost to its development, according to KOTC.

Three years later, in June 1979, in conformity with plans to bring all its oil operations, from the well to the ultimate consumer, under one corporation, the government acquired full control of the Company's capital. When Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) was established in January 1980, KOTC assumed responsibility for the transportation sector of KPC.

Two years after its establishment in 1959, KOTC took delivery of the first crude oil tanker 'Kazimah' with a total capacity of 49,000 metric tons. It was the vanguard of oil tanker flying the Kuwaiti flag and in those days it was considered a super tanker. By 1975, the fleet had been expanded to transport over one million metric ton of crude oil, but due to the expansion of refinery capacity in Kuwait, product tankers were also acquired along with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) carriers. By 2001 the fleet reached 25 vessels of different sizes and purposes which had deadweight capacity of 3.2 million metric tons. The fleet reached its maximum number in 1993 with 38 vessels and capacity of 4.1 million metric tons. In the last decade, KOTC modernized and developed its fleet by building new tankers and scrapping the very old ones.

In line with the company's mission and strategy to maintain a high standard fleet to cater for KPC's requirements, the Fleet New Building Projects Group (FNBPG) handles all issues pertaining to fleet renewal projects. KOTC's tankers are considered one of the most environment friendly vessels, with systems to reduce oil consumption and gas emissions. — KUNA



KOTC crude oil tanker Al-Rigga.



KOTC crude oil tanker Bubyan.

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: The new expansion of the National Assembly's building. — KUNA

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 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

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 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Eighth prize
 - Canon Camera PSD 30 BLUE + Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Ninth prize
 - Canon Camera IXUS 180 BLACK + free Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Tenth prize
 - Canon Camera IXUS 180 BLACK + free Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

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CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY: AN OCCASION TO STIR CREATIVITY

KUWAIT: Writers, illustrators, and publishers, and all other parties involved in children's literature mark today the International Children's Book Day (ICBD), an opportunity to stir creativity of all. Since 1967, on or around Danish Hans Christian Andersen's birthday, April second, the ICBD has been marked annually by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), a non-profit organization that promotes children's literature and encourages young people to read. It was founded in Zurich, Switzerland, and has about 70 member countries, which are called National Sections.



Jordanian publisher Munis Hattab.

The main aim of marking the day is to inspire love of reading and to call attention to children's books. The occasion also recognizes the power of reading and the role of books in education and development of children. In separate interviews, a host of specialists in children's literature emphasized the significance of the occasion, to prompt further interest in writing for children.

Literature is a major branch of human knowledge, representing an artistic and imaginary embodiment of culture in linguistic structures, former Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Kuwait University (KU) Professor Siham Al-Furaih said. This definition also applies to children's literature, she added. According to Al-Furaih, children's literature is different from writing for adults, since it cares for the needs and capabilities of the young, playing an important role in forming a child's character.

It helps a child gain the values, orientations and other elements of culture, as well as promoting their thinking and imagination, she noted. All that is written for the children should match their capabilities, and the phases of the mental, psychological and social development, she said. Those who think that writing for the children is an easy task are mistaken, Furaih, who is also head of the National Society for Child Protection, said. It could be so for the reader, but for the author, a real hard job. Children books' author Heba Mandani, said that she loved reading stories since an early age.

Mandani recalled a story when she was still very young, as her grandmother once promised to buy her a toy, but instead the girl asked for a story. The old woman, apparently to encourage her to read, bought the young Mandani then many of them. At a time when children's are, less eager to read these days, compared to using social networking for example, Mandani said: "Let the book be an integral part of your daily life. The more you read, the more proud those around will be of you." On the occasion of the ICBD, efforts must be intensified to promote children's literature, said children's poet Mohammad



Former Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Kuwait University (KU) Professor Siham Al-Furaih.



Children books' author Heba Mandani.

Jamal Amro, Jordanian, said. Amro, editor-in-chief of the Jordanian Ministry of Culture's Wesam magazine, was in Kuwait recently to attend a festival on generations of the future, organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). He is also head of the children's literature committee at the Jordanian Writers Society. He called for establishing an umbrella that brings together children's writers in the Arab World to care for their affairs and organize their dealings with the other parties involved in the industry.

"As we mark the ICBD with our partners in the



Tunisian children books' author Wafaa Al-Mezghni.

children's book industry, we hope we can offer better Arabic books with international specification and criteria to meet the expectations of the young generation," Jordanian publisher Munis Hattab said. This will encourage children to be good readers, and prepare them for the future, he added. April second is a historical day for the world's culture, Tunisian children books' author Wafaa Al-Mezghni. The ICBD is a major occasion for writers, painters and publishers in the industry to discuss the relevant issues of children's literature, said Mezghni, who is also a researcher in children's literature.

Meanwhile, Syrian artist Nour Al-Touba, residing in Germany, said that the ICBD should be a "pleasing and a motivating" occasion to celebrate writing for the young. Touba said that the day has a special importance for him, since he realizes and highly evaluates the elevated status of books, as well as children's love to texts and drawings. — KUNA



Jordanian children's poet Mohammad Jamal Amro.

WEEKLY SUMMARY OF KUWAIT'S HUMANITARIAN ACTION ACROSS THE WORLD

KUWAIT: Seeking to mitigate suffering of people affected by global wars and conflicts, Kuwait - a country honored by the UN as an International Humanitarian Center- has continued to offer aid to people in several countries throughout the week.

Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) last Sunday launched a campaign to collect donations for Yemeni people affected by the ongoing war in the country. The campaign aimed to ease living conditions for Yemenis, as there are over 18 million Yemenis affected by the war and more than two million children suffering from lack of food and medical care.

Yemen is facing one of the worst famines in the world, said KRCS' Chairman of Board of Directors Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, calling on philanthropists and organizations to contribute to the donation campaign held at KRCS' headquarters. Last Monday, the KRCS continued for the second consecutive day its campaign to collect donations for people affected by the ongoing war in Yemen. This campaign came in support of Yemen to tackle the worst hunger crisis in the world due the current war in this country, according to a recent report by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Head of the Public Relations Department at KRCS Khaled Al-Zaid said.

He described the response to the campaign as "good," calling on Kuwaitis to increase their donation, noting that the campaign will continue online for a month. Last Thursday, the health committee of the Kuwait Relief Society has provided 55 tons of medical supplies and a number of ambulances to some governorates. In Lebanon, the Kuwaiti International Center for Qualitative Education, an affiliate of the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), on Sunday held its first forum.

Up to 30 charity schools where about 13,000 Syrian refugee children are taught, took part in the forum that brought together the teaching staff and principals. Representative of Kuwait Embassy's in Lebanon Mohammad Al-Khaldi attended. Talking on the sideline of the event, Khaldi lauded efforts by the center, which is better known as the Kuwaiti Charitable Studies' Center, for supporting thousands of Syrian children in Lebanon, securing them opportunities for good education. The qualitative education center offers through its schools in Lebanon, mainly in the north, a real elevated style for backing the Syrian refugees, especially children, preparing them for a better future, he added. Since the center's establishment in 2013, it has realized remarkable achievements, with schools rising from only eight serving 8,000 children in 2013, to 30 teaching 13,500 students now, Khaldi said.

Up to 46,000 students have graduated from these schools through the years. In Kuwait, the KRCS last Monday distributed, in cooperation with the Kuwait Awqaf Public Foundation, purchasing vouchers for nearly 2,000 needy families in the country. Director of the Local Aid Department in the KRCS Maryam Al-Adsani stressed the society's keenness to support the needy families in the country. Adsani said that the KRCS has distributed the purchasing vouchers to help the needy families face the burdens and responsibilities of life. She explained that the list of beneficiaries and needy families have been identified as well as the value of the vouchers based on a mechanism set by the KRCS.

As for Somalia, the Direct Aid Society launched Wednesday a relief aid campaign for the country, through its local branches and electronic media sites, in order to combat famine that threatens the lives of Somali people.

The campaign aimed at collecting KD 500,000 (around \$1.65 million) for digging big water wells at Somali villages to meet their needs for at least 10 years. The first stage of this campaign collected KD 300,000 (around \$900,000) to deliver 15,000 food baskets for about 90,000 Somalis.

The second stage gathered KD 200,000 (around \$660,000) to build eight health centers. In a statement to KUNA, the Society's General Director Dr Abdullah Abdulrahman Al-Sumait said the collected money would be spent on a number of

projects to save the lives of Somalia people who are suffering from severe drought and famine. He added that the Society would start the implementation of the projects as of next week. In Turkey, the Kuwait Zakat House distributed on Friday aid to Syrian refugees in the Turkish city of Kilis. The Zakat House team delivered financial aid and other essential items to patients and others injured in the Syrian war, during a visit to several hospitals in the city, head of the team Abdulrahman Al-Turkait said. The team also visited poor families in neighboring areas on the Turkish-Syrian borders. The Zakat House had launched several campaigns to aid Syrian since the war broke out in 2011, said Al-Turkait. The campaigns target those inside Syria and also in neighboring countries. The aid items included food, medical

equipment, clothes and financial aid to provide proper education for Syrian children.

Also in Turkey, Kuwaiti volunteers have launched a fresh humanitarian campaign aiming at alleviating the suffering of Syrian refugees in the country. The program, provided by an International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) team of volunteers, included the distribution of food parcels to 200 Syrian refugee families, cleaning utensils to another 200 families and shopping coupons to 300 families at a refugee camp in Turkey's southern Sanliurfa City, the team leader Nasser Al-Bassam said. The Kuwaiti aid team visited Syrian families at Al-Karama camp in Sanliurfa and called on sick refugees in the city, he added.

The program also involved humanitarian aid to 100

orphans, in addition to psychological help to 400 Syrian refugee children, Al-Bassam pointed out. Meanwhile, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi Friday praised cooperation between the UNHCR and the State of Kuwait for addressing global humanitarian crises. Grandi was speaking after emerging from a meeting with the State of Kuwait Permanent Delegate at the UN and International Organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim. The UNHCR commissioner said his discussions with the senior Kuwaiti envoy dealt with preparations for the donors' conference for Syria, due in Brussels in April, as well arrangements for another convention for Yemen, scheduled in Geneva in late April.—KUNA

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OOREDOO WINS 1ST PLACE IN MENA DIGITAL AWARDS

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, earned the first place in the MENA Digital Awards event that was held in Dubai last week. The award came in the Best Performance in a Digital Advertising Campaign category for the company's digital campaign for Shamel, its leading post-paid plan. Ooredoo was the only winner from Kuwait, in an event that saw attendance from some of the MENA region's top companies and advertising agencies.

The award jury included a group of elite CEOs, founders of global brands and innovators in marketing, advertising and media from America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Attending on behalf of Ooredoo was Talal Al-Fassam, Ooredoo's advertising manager.

Ooredoo used TV Sync, a method that enables a marketer to synchronize their above-the-line TV advertising with different digital channels. When a TV ad ran for Ooredoo Kuwait, it triggered a display ad and videos on tablets, mobiles and desktops - scooping up second-screens, driving incremental reach and delivering relevant messages about the brand to consumers when they were most receptive.

Ooredoo reiterated in a statement to the media that it is always looking for opportunities to deliver its message in a way that stands out and can reach a wider audience, using digital platforms to reach a wider audience as opposed to resorting to traditional media.

Ooredoo launched Shamel in last year to change the standards of post-paid benefits, giving customers advantages that truly enrich their experiences. Shamel packages give customers more flexibility, allowing them to freeze contracts up to three months a year while traveling. Customers can also enjoy unlimited local voice calls on Ooredoo network, a feature included in all packages.

They can also transfer contracts at any time and carry forward unused Internet data to the following month, which will provide customers with more freedom to use the web. Customers can also get the latest device from Ooredoo, even if they have existing contracts, which allows them more freedom and flexibility in use.



KIB SPONSORS HALA RAMADAN EXHIBITION

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced its sponsorship of the Hala Ramadan Exhibition for the fourth consecutive year, which is taking place in 360 Mall from March 29th to April 2nd, 2017. Coming under the umbrella of the bank's comprehensive social responsibility program, the sponsorship aims to support the projects and initiatives of young local talents.

The exhibition will feature a number of young, creative, and talented small business owners, showcasing a

collection of their products and projects. It will also present a diverse range of Ramadan products, with the Holy Month fast approaching.

Meanwhile, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at the Bank, Nawaf Najia, stated: "KIB constantly seeks to sponsor activities and initiatives that support small business owners in the community. This reflects the bank's ongoing commitment to its social responsibility program which targets the youth segment, and its

efforts to connect and engage with this segment to identify their interests and cater to their needs."

Additionally, KIB strives to engage closely with its customers at various social events. For that reason, a team from KIB will be present at a booth in the exhibition, and will be prepared to answer all questions related to the bank's products and services, as well as its new campaigns and offers that are designed to meet the various needs of all segments of the population.

Al-Anbaa

A KUWAITI TIKKA SKEWER

By Saad Al-Mo'tesh

Most, if not all of you have heard or used the expression of "tidy lies are better than confused truth." It is a piece of advice usually given to somebody wishing to tell a story or demand something regardless of his or her right in getting it. I have often used such sayings in my writings. Therefore, I will use movies as an example today as I compare between two of the world's most widely watched film production industries; Hollywood and Bollywood.

We all believe and interact with American movies that show an actor flying in the sky or catching a plane and saving the entire world at the very last moment. We also believe that an American hero or star is capable of killing three people at once with one bullet and that his gun fires 59 rounds. On the other hand, we totally reject believing that an Indian movie star can hold a plane and prevent it from flying using a sun drying clothes line, shake the ground beneath criminals or hit six of them with one spear at a time, having it go through them as if they were 'tikka on a barbecue skewer.'

American movies know how to sell their lies and have viewers react to and believe them, whereas the Indian ones that use as much lies are incapable of convincing viewers, and therefore often become the butt of people's jokes. Since we in Kuwait have lawmakers who wish to pass some laws, they should learn their lessons from those movies and tidy them up to be convincing for everybody, and not to be used for personal reasons. So, beware of what you are trying to impose on Kuwait before the entire Kuwaiti society throws its spear at you making a 'tikka skewer' out of you all, even without using an onion or a tomato on it.—Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

MUBARAKIYA GOODS TO PAY OFF DEFICIT

By Abdulmohsen Jamal

The recent strike in Mubarakiya market because of the so-called increase of the state property revenue is but another example of the failure of privatization and its negative socio-economic impact on Kuwait. It was similar to what happened when gas stations were privatized, as a result of which dozens of Kuwaiti employees were laid off, or when the asphalt factory was privatized, after which bad quality asphalt was used in road maintenance projects, in addition to turning Kuwait International Airport into a shopping mall as a result of bad privatization steps, which created countless security problems and chaos.

The Mubarakiya incident highlights the government's inconsistency concerning economic reforms as well as decision-makers' focus on the weak to collect money instead of doing so with those who have been benefiting the most from the country's wealth. For example, once fuel prices were increased, files of disabled citizens were re-examined to find a missing KD 300,000. They also went after widowed and divorced women to cut down their allowances, and fixed smart water and electricity meters to force families to bear extra financial burdens at a time when many countries, including European states, refused to install such meters. Meanwhile, those responsible for economic reform are still incapable of spotting the real cause of waste and squandering in the country.

The problem is that the owners of Mubarakiya market shops, who mainly rely on selling popular attire items, are the ones who will pay the price of the general budget deficit, while those causing

waste and promoting extravagant spending patterns in shopping malls by selling thousands-worth ladies purses, watches and accessories do not even pay simple taxes, not to mention shopping mall owners themselves who pay the government modest amount and then rent the place for hundreds times as much per square meter.

During a parliamentary session, MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari spoke about deals worth billions of dinars for arms and weapons the country might never need. Millions are spent by some sovereign bodies on gifts. The same is happening in the oil sector where millions are being wasted on manipulated tenders such as that of the oil pipes and others. Other millions are being wasted through the state's public tenders as well as tender change orders that act like Ali Baba's cave for those who have the access code. Government-owned farms and industrial land plots are only given to the lucky ones, whereas the prices of medicine and medical equipment purchase tenders are so exaggerated compared to those in other regional countries.

The above are the real spots of waste that, if controlled, would be enough to completely pay off the budget deficit; in addition to taxing remittances. Those are the real solutions to the problem of deficit the government claims we suffer from. That should also be followed by restructuring national economy and creating other sources of national income without using economic reform slogans to liquidate the country and sell its assets for the cheapest prices, including heritage-related ones.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

MAN ARRESTED FOR POLICE IMPERSONATION, THEFT

KUWAIT: A Syrian man was arrested in Salmiya for multiple robberies and impersonating a police detective, said security sources. Case papers indicate that several expats reported being robbed by someone dressed in a dishdasha, who stopped them claiming to be a police detective before he robbed them. One of the victims, a 57-year-old Asian running a laundry, reported that the suspect stopped him and asked for his ID, then pretended to check on him on his mobile phone and claimed he was wanted. The suspect asked the man to get in his vehicle, and on the way robbed KD 360 from his wallet, pushed him from the vehicle and threw the empty wallet out. The suspect is facing many charges.

Kidnap and rape

A citizen was arrested for forcing a mentally-disturbed citizen to join him in abducting a Filipino from Salmiya. He took him to an isolated area in Abdullah Mubarak where he beat him, robbed his tablet and KD 30 and sexually assaulted him before dumping him on the street. The victim reported the matter, giving detectives a full description of the suspect and his vehicle.

Drug abuse

A citizen and a Syrian were arrested for driving their vehicle on the wrong side of the road, said security sources, noting that on stopping them, detectives found the two under the influence of drugs with a hashish joint and two bags of ice. Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti drug-addict was arrested in Bayan for committing several robberies by breaking open vehicles and stealing their contents. Security sources said the suspect had been unemployed after he was dismissed from work. He also told detectives that he usually sold the items he stole to buy drugs.

Smuggling


A citizen was arrested on arrival at Kuwait International Airport with a piece of hashish and two cans of beer. On asking the passenger, who was already drunk, about the items found in his luggage, he said he brought them for his own use. A case was filed.

Multiple charges

A citizen was arrested when he drove his vehicle undetected through Nuwaiseeb land border exit in an attempt to head to Saudi Arabia. Security sources said Saudi authorities stopped the suspect and returned him to Kuwait to face several charges including illegal departure, damaging public property, attempting to murder security agents and driving under the effect of alcohol.

Search for intruder

A female citizen reported that she was awakened in the middle of the night by noises in her bedroom, to see someone standing by her bed with a knife in his hand. The girl added that the unidentified suspect threatened to slit her throat if she made any noise, before he fled the house. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress. — Translated from the Arabic press



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ANNUAL CELEBRATION AT SAQR SPECIALIZED CENTER

KUWAIT: In keeping with the national celebrations of the State of Kuwait, an annual celebration was held at the Saqr Specialist Center. Director of the Capital Region of Health Dr Fatima Al-Assoumi, Head of Health Care in the Capital Region Dr Amani Al-Saqabi, Head of Al-Saqr Specialized

center including Saud Al-Rashed, Dr Hamad Al-Tuwajri, Hussein Al-Qahtani, Ahmed Mansour, Salah Al-Seif, Walid Al-Duwaisan and Ahmed Bishara. The event also featured honoring the center's donors and ideal staff members, as well as an exhibition featuring participation from food supplement and medical equipment companies. Also, a marathon was held for students of Ahmad Meshari Al-Adwani School at Kazma Club in Al-Adailiya.



Sudan's war creates a new lost generation

TERROR THREATS TRANSFORM UIGHUR HEARTLAND INTO SECURITY STATE



TUNIS: Photo shows the abandoned headquarters of ousted Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's Constitutional Democratic Rally party (RDC) in central Tunis. The make-over of the former RDC headquarters is nearly complete and it will soon be operational - hosting three ministries. —AFP

TUNISIANS IRKED OVER CIVIL LIBERTIES

ACTIVISTS FUME OVER 'OPPRESSIVE AND BACKWARD' LAWS

TUNIS: Tunisian activists say they are frustrated by the slow progress on reforms to improve civil liberties six years after an uprising calling for more freedoms in the North African country. The 2011 revolution that toppled longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali ushered in a new era of freedom of expression and the creation of dozens of civil society groups and political parties. But activists say the law still contains "oppressive" and "backward" provisions inconsistent with a 2014 constitution guaranteeing freedom of conscience, protection of privacy, and equality between men and women.

Since the uprising, Amna Guellali of Human Rights Watch says, Tunisian civil society has more openly been tackling issues that were

previously taboo such as drugs and homosexuality. But they have made limited headway in terms of legal reform, as they face "a huge amount of resistance" from politicians and parts of the population, she says. "We feel like we're going round in circles... It's frustrating," Guellali says. President Beji Caid Essebsi has categorically refused to support decriminalizing homosexuality, which is still punishable by three years in prison.

And discrimination against women remains rife, particularly in matters of inheritance, despite Tunisia being viewed as a regional pioneer in women's rights. In December, the government said it wanted to amend a law that allows men who carry out sexual acts with girls

under the age of 15 to avoid prosecution if they marry their victims. But parliament has yet to do so, or to approve a wider law to curb violence against women. And in recent years hundreds of young Tunisians have been jailed for smoking cannabis under a law from Ben Ali's era imposing a mandatory one-year prison sentence for narcotics use.

Legal overhaul

Rights lawyer Ghazi Mrabet, who has campaigned against the anti-narcotics law, says political horse-trading causes these laws to stall in parliament. The reforms face opposition from conservatives "in all parties, not just among the Islamists", he says. Wahid Ferchichi, of the Adli

association for the defense of individual liberties, says that a complete overhaul of Tunisia's legal system is needed.

As laws like the one to stop violence against women address fundamental rights issues, they should "lead to the reform of the penal law, personal status law and labor law", he says. Ferchichi believes lawmakers are wary of backing new legislation on controversial issues out of "fear of not winning the next elections". Walid Larbi, from the Beity association, says the proposed reforms threaten the "all-Tunisian, all-Muslim" image that the country's society has of itself. But there is some progress. Tunisia has amended a law so that women no longer need permission from their husband to travel

abroad with their children. Essebsi has also announced measures to limit the number of prison terms for cannabis use. Even publicly discussing civil rights is a huge achievement, campaigners say. "We're starting public debates, and that's extraordinary," says Hajer El-Kefti from Euromed Rights. "Before we never talked about homosexuality, or about a Tunisian woman marrying a non-Muslim," she says. "Before you couldn't even say 'zatla' on television," adds Mrabet, using a slang word for cannabis. In their latest campaign, rights groups have called on authorities to scrap a ban on Tunisian Muslim women marrying non-Muslims. Kefi says she expects criticism. "But we'll keep up the fight," she says.—AP

WITNESS ACCOUNT HIGHLIGHTS THE DANGERS OF TEXTING WHILE DRIVING

HOUSTON: A witness says the driver of a pickup truck that collided with a church minibus in rural Texas, killing 13 people, acknowledged he had been texting while driving - highlighting the dangers of sending messages on smartphones while behind the wheel. Texas Department of Public Safety Sgt Conrad Hein wouldn't comment Friday on whether texting might have played a role in the Wednesday collision on a two-lane road about 75 miles west of San Antonio, near the town of Concan. But officials have said the truck driver appeared to have crossed the center line.

Jennifer Morrison, the investigator in charge of the team from the National Transportation Safety Board, would only say that distracted driving will be among the issues investigated. The witness, Jody Kuchler, a 55-year-old self-employed welder said he and his girlfriend were driving back to their home in the nearby town of Leakey when he came across a truck that was driving erratically across the road. "He kept going off the road and into oncoming traffic and he just kept doing that," said Kuchler, who first shared the account of what happened with the San Antonio Express-News.

Kuchler, who followed the truck for at least 15 minutes, said he called the sheriff's offices for both Uvalde and Real counties and told them "they needed to get him off the road before he hit somebody." Kuchler said he witnessed the crash and afterward, he checked on both the bus and the truck and was able to speak with the driver of the truck, who the Department of Public Safety has identified as 20-year-old Jack Dillon Young, of Leakey. "He said, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I was texting.' I

said, 'Son, do you know what you just did?' He said, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry,'" Kuchler recalled.

Statewide ban

Texas is unusual in that it has no statewide ban on texting while driving. Dozens of cities across the state prohibit the practice, but local ordinances may not have applied in the rural area where Wednesday's crash occurred. Laws in 46 other states ban sending or reading email, using apps or engaging in other use of the internet

while driving. The Republican-controlled Texas Legislature approved a statewide ban in 2011 but it was vetoed by then-Gov. Rick Perry, who characterized such prohibitions as government micromanagement and said educating drivers was the key to deterrence. A similar proposal passed the Texas House a few weeks ago but has yet to make it to a Senate floor vote.

The wreck on Wednesday occurred along a curve in the road where the speed limit is 65 mph, according to Department of Public Safety officials.

The bus occupants - members of First Baptist Church of New Braunfels in Texas - were returning from a three-day retreat in Leakey, about 9 miles from where the crash happened. Twelve people on the bus died at the scene, authorities said. Another died at a hospital. One bus passenger remains hospitalized in serious but stable condition, according to the church. Young, the driver of the pickup, also remains hospitalized.

Wearing seat belts

The number of motor vehicle deaths in the US last year topped 40,000 for the first time since 2007, according to the National Safety Council. The number of vehicle crash deaths in Texas rose 7 percent last year to 3,464, slightly higher than the national rise. One-in-10 driving fatalities in 2015 were caused by some kind of distraction, the US Department of Transportation said. Morrison said most, if not all, of the bus occupants in the Texas crash - who ranged in age from 61 to 87 - were wearing seat belts. The driver and front-passenger seats had three-point lap-and-shoulder belts while the rest of the seats behind had lap belts only, she said.

Three-point seat belts are always preferable to lap belts because they hold the upper torso in place and help prevent head injuries, said automotive safety advocate Joan Claybrook. One of the problems with lap belts only is that in a frontal impact crash, people will remain in their seats but their upper bodies will go forward and their heads can strike the back of the seat in front, she said. —AP



TEHRAN REJECTS US TERROR ALLEGATION, BLAMES SAUDI

DUBAI: Iran rejected an allegation by US Defense Secretary James Mattis that it was "the primary exporter of terrorism" and said yesterday that the main source was US ally Saudi Arabia. "Some countries led by America are determined to ignore the main source of Takfiri-Wahhabi terrorism and extremism," foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi was quoted by Iran's state news agency IRNA as saying.

He was referring to hardline Sunni Muslim groups and Saudi Arabia's official Wahhabi school of Islam. Saudi Arabia denies backing terrorism and has cracked down on jihadists at home, jailing thousands, stopping hundreds from travelling to fight abroad and cutting militant finances. Shiite Muslim power Iran and Saudi Arabia, bastion of Sunni Islam and a close US ally, are longstanding religious and political arch rivals and often accused each other of backing terrorism. Relations are fraught as they back each other's foes in regional wars such as in Yemen, Iraq and Syria.

"Giving a wrong address when referring to the roots and the financial and intellectual resources of terrorism is a main reason for a lack of success by international anti-terror efforts," Ghasemi added. Ghasemi was reacting to remarks by Mattis on Friday when he was asked about comments he made in 2012 that the three main threats the United States faced were "Iran, Iran, Iran." "At the time when I spoke about Iran I was a commander of US Central Command and that (Iran) was the primary exporter of terrorism, frankly, it was the primary state sponsor of terrorism and it continues that kind of behavior today," Mattis told reporters. —Reuters

WHY IS MADURO STILL IN POWER IN VENEZUELA?

CARACAS: With his popularity battered by food shortages, economic chaos and rampant crime, it is hard to understand how Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has clung to power. What is keeping the socialist leader in place as his country teeters on the brink of collapse? And when, if ever, will Venezuela reach the tipping point? Here is a look at the levers of power in Venezuela, and how Maduro retains his grip on them.

Military

Maduro's opponents urged the military to take a stand for democracy this week after the latest twist in the crisis, when the Supreme Court seized legislative power from congress. But Maduro is a master at keeping the army on his side. The power of the Venezuelan Armed Forces—already vast under late president Hugo Chavez, a former officer—has only grown under his protégé Maduro. Eleven of Maduro's 32 ministers are current or retired officers. The military controls food production and distribution, plus a string of state-run companies in oil, television, banking and other powerful industries. Maduro "has bought their loyalty," said political analyst Benigno Alarcon. The government allegedly cares little what the generals do with their power. "There are reports that various (officers) have close ties to

drug trafficking and other criminal enterprises," said Michael Shifter, president of the Inter-American Dialogue research institute.

Institutions

Since Chavez came to power in 1999 and declared a socialist "revolution," his movement has taken over nearly all the country's institutions. "Chavistas" dominate the courts, the media and state oil company PDVSA. When Maduro's party lost legislative elections in 2015—forcing it to share power for the first time—the outgoing legislature named 13 new judges to the 32-member Supreme Court. The "Chavistas" have virtually taken over the broadcast media, buying up independent TV networks. "Maduro does his utmost to silence independent media outlets," watchdog group Reporters Without Borders said last year. Maduro also wields control over the world's largest oil reserves through PDVSA—where he is reportedly about to name an even stauncher loyalist as chief executive, Oil Minister Nelson Martinez.

Divided, jailed opposition

Maduro also benefits from opposition infighting. The main opposition, the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), is an unwieldy coalition of some 30 parties. They tend to the center-right, but span

the entire political spectrum. They have struggled to settle on a strategy. And when they rise up in protest, the authorities often throw them in jail. One notable example is hardline Maduro opponent Leopoldo Lopez, who is serving a 14-year sentence on charges of inciting unrest at protests in 2014.

Hunger and fear

The opposition has meanwhile struggled to get Venezuelans to take to the streets. Seven in 10 Venezuelans disapprove of Maduro, according to pollster Venebarometro, but often they are too busy standing in line to buy scarce food. There is also residual fear from violent protests of the past. In 2014, 43 people died in clashes. Heavily armed police, troops and pro-Chavez militants are regularly present at protests. For some Venezuelans, especially the poor, there is lingering loyalty to "Chavismo" for spreading the wealth in the oil boom years. Others no longer have the energy to care. "I don't support either side," Yandry Diaz, 18, who works in a shoe shop said. "What they want is to have us in the street, fighting and killing each other so that they can hold power."

This is Latin America

Venezuela's crisis has the rest of Latin America increasingly worried. Yet the



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro speaks during an appearance in Caracas.—AFP

region has done relatively little to pressure Maduro so far. That is partly because of Venezuela's largesse with its oil wealth. For years Chavez and Maduro sold cut-rate crude to regional allies in Petrocaribe, a 17-nation club—though hard times have taken their toll on the flow. Maduro is also the current poster boy for a fiery brand of anti-US rhetoric that unites the Latin American left, which loves to hate what it calls the domineering neighbor to the north. Regional pressure is increasing, howev-

er, as right-wing governments have come to power in former allies Argentina, Brazil and Peru.

Weak international response

The international community has largely stood by. The most prominent intervention was by Pope Francis, who convinced the government and opposition to sit down to talks in November. They sputtered and then collapsed—further dividing the opposition and buying Maduro more time.—AFP

S SUDAN'S WAR CREATES A NEW LOST GENERATION

BIDI BIDI: Six-year-old Santo proudly wears a Harvard T-shirt as if he has just been accepted into the elite institution, but its warped lettering, layers of dirt and gaping holes say more about the young refugee's future. After fleeing South Sudan's three-year civil war, Santo and his family have found themselves in the bleak Bidi Bidi settlement in northern Uganda, among hundreds of thousands of people who make up the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis.

Santo's father, Godfrey Moro, described desolate conditions for his son: no school, no electricity or running water, a shortage of food and little respite from the sweltering sun. As Moro spoke to The Associated Press, the young boy gnawed at his own hands to keep himself entertained. "The war has affected these children in so many ways," Moro said. South Sudan is known for its "lost boys," roughly 20,000 orphans who trekked across southern Sudan in the 1980s during the region's struggle for independence.

Three decades later, young Santo is part of another lost generation of children whose new nation, barely older than themselves, has been ripped apart by fighting. As UN officials warn of ethnic cleansing, their data create a harrowing portrait of innocence lost: More than 200,000 children are at risk of death

caused by a lack of food. More than 17,000 have been child soldiers for the government or various rebel groups. And UN officials say they are increasingly worried about children killing themselves in crowded UN-run displacement sites across South Sudan under grim conditions.

South Sudanese officials acknowledge the challenges. "Schools are left in ruins, some occupied by warring forces, death of innocent people is rampant," Michael Lopuke, an undersecretary at the ministry of education, said in an email. Joyce and Florence are two teenage girls in the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement where more than 270,000 people have arrived since July, when fighting erupted again in South Sudan's capital. Each girl lost her parents during ethnically targeted killings in September. Each found a welcoming foster family in Moro and his wife and children.

When asked why the adults had been fighting back home, Joyce struggled to explain the intricacies of a war that has upended her life. "I don't know," she said shyly. The two girls are part of a growing population of children left orphaned by the civil war. Roughly 25 percent of the students in the Bidi Bidi settlement are orphans, according to Amanda David, a head teacher at one of the newly created schools.—AP



CARACAS: A Venezuelan government supporter scuffles with National Guard personnel in riot gear during a protest in front of the Supreme Court in Caracas on March 31, 2017.—AFP

AFTER OUTCRY, VENEZUELA'S MADURO ANNOUNCES REVIEW OF 'POWER GRAB'

A RARE INSTANCE; PRESIDENT BACKING AWAY

CARACAS: Venezuela's president urged the Supreme Court yesterday to review a decision stripping congress of its last powers, after the move to nullify the lawmaking body set off a storm of criticism from the opposition and foreign governments. It was a rare instance of President Nicolas Maduro appearing to back away from a controversial move. The announcement came just hours before the opposition hoped to mount a major protest in Caracas against what it had called an attempted coup. Maduro made the address after an emergency Friday night meeting of the National Security Council that was boycotted by congress leaders.

The embattled socialist president announced that the council was supporting a review by the court "with the goal of maintaining institutional stability." "April is starting on a good step. Constitutional victory!" Maduro with a grin, surrounded by a dozen officials after the emergency meeting. Opposition leaders were quick to condemn the announcement as a ploy that did little to alleviate the crisis. Some said Saturday's protests would go ahead regardless. "Let's be absolutely clear," said Freddy Guevara, first vice president of the National Assembly. "A revision of a decision that leaves everything like before doesn't resolve a coup."

'Political lynching'

The three-hour meeting capped an extraordinary day in which Venezuela's chief prosecutor and long-time loyalist of the socialist government broke with the Maduro administration and denounced the court ruling. Luisa Ortega Diaz said it was her "unavoidable historical duty" as the nation's top judicial authority to decry the ruling against the opposition-controlled National Assembly as a "rupture" of the constitutional order. "We call for reflection so that the democratic path can be retaken," she said to the loud applause of aides around her. Maduro convoked the National Security Council seeking to calm the political uproar, though at least one key member refused to attend. About a dozen officials were present at the session, but among those notably absent was congress president Julio Borges, who said the meeting was no more than a circus act created for a convenient photo opportunity by the same person the opposition blames for the country's troubles. "In Venezuela the only dialogue possible is the vote," Borges said. Maduro, dressed in black and waving a small blue book containing the Venezuelan constitution early in the televised meeting, likened the international condemnation of this week's Supreme Court decision to a "political lynching."

On Friday, troops from the National Guard fired buckshot and swung batons at students protesting in front of the Supreme Court. A few people were arrested and some journalists covering the demonstration had their cameras taken. A few small protests popped up elsewhere in the capital. Larger demonstrations were expected Saturday in

what opposition leaders hoped would be a big turnout to denounce Maduro and call for elections.

"We all have to get out - for the dignity of our country, the dignity of our children and the dignity of Venezuela," Borges said in urging Venezuelans to join in protests. The Supreme Court ruled late Wednesday that until lawmakers abided by previous rulings that nullified all legislation passed by congress, the high court could assume the constitutionally assigned powers of the National Assembly, which has been controlled by the opposition since it won a landslide victory in elections in late 2015. Friday brought a second day of condemnations of the ruling by the United States and governments across Latin America. The head of the Organization of American States likened the decision to a "self-inflicted coup" by the leftist Maduro, and the United Nations' top human rights official urged the high court to reverse its decision.

The OAS announced that it would hold an emergency meeting at its Washington headquarters Monday to discuss the situation in Venezuela. Opposition leaders, long-marginalized during the past 17 years of socialist rule, called on other public officials to follow Ortega Diaz's example in repudiating the court's ruling. Some urged the military, the traditional arbiter of political disputes in Venezuela, to defend the constitution drafted by late President Hugo Chavez. "You have a new opportunity to show the country and international community if you are with the dictatorship or want

your children and grandchildren to grow and live in a country where there's democracy and liberty," said David Smolansky, a Caracas area mayor.

Right-wing, fascist

The normally ever-present Maduro was conspicuously silent during much of the two days of turmoil, but then he went on state TV to argue that Venezuela's institutions are operating normally. Alluding to criticism of the court's ruling, he said it is the government's "right-wing, fascist" opponents who are attempting to break the constitutional order, but said his foes would be left with "their cold champagne, uncorked." Still, Maduro also called for renewed dialogue between the government and the opposition, saying that is the only path to resolving Venezuela's political crisis. "I'm ready with whoever is willing," he said.

Colombia, Chile and Peru withdrew their ambassadors over the ruling. "This clearly destroys the most important pillar of any democracy, which is popular representation," Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said. The South American trade bloc Mercosur, which suspended Venezuela in December, called an emergency meeting for Saturday in Argentina. OAS will hold a special session Monday, Secretary General Luis Almagro said. Its two other meetings this past week ended with 20 governments led by the US and Mexico voicing deep concern but no concrete actions to hold Maduro accountable.—AP

BRAZIL COURT TO DECIDE WHETHER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS VALID

BRAZILIA: Brazilian President Michel Temer already has a world of trouble to deal with and next week a court could in theory annul his presidency altogether. Temer is widely expected to find a way to escape this. But the mere fact that a court is considering such a thing shows the depths of uncertainty in Latin America's biggest country as it wallows in a huge corruption scandal and a two-year recession. The issue dates back to 2014 when Temer was vice president on the winning ticket of leftist Dilma Rousseff's reelection to the presidency.

They are accused-as are swaths of other politicians-of taking undeclared campaign funds from corrupt donors. The Supreme Electoral Court's job is to rule on whether the election was fatally compromised. Deliberations will begin Tuesday and are scheduled to run through the week. If the court decides to annul the 2014 results, new elections would be organized or the country's highly discredited Congress would pick an interim leader. Many analysts think the government will succeed in fending off this doomsday decision. However, the case highlights the dizzying fall of Brazil from its days as an emerging markets powerhouse and increasingly respected international player up until around 2010.

Brazil is still traumatized by last year's impeachment of Rousseff for illegal government accounting practices, bringing Temer, her conservative coalition partner, to power. Since he took over, Temer has been plagued by rock-bottom approval ratings and a wave of corruption allegations against his allies. Despite his unpopularity, Temer says he will push through far-reaching austerity reforms to fix the broken budget and serve out the rest of Rousseff's original term until scheduled

elections at the end of 2018. First he has to survive next week.

'Total calm'

Many think he will manage. "There's total calm. The president has time on his side, because there are many legal options," said a government source, who asked not to be named. Temer's center-right PMDB party and allied parties control Congress and they have the backing of big business. There is little appetite for yet another abrupt change of president just when economic reforms are underway. One way of kicking the can down the road would be if defense lawyers succeed in asking for more time to answer the case. The court itself may decide it needs more time to study the huge quantity of evidence. Another option is that the court could decide that Rousseff and Temer did take illegal donations but that the evidence does not support annulling their victory. It is also possible that the court will rule to scrap Rousseff's victory, while finding Temer not guilty and able to carry on.

Even better for Temer, "the court may rule the accusation is unfounded and leave everything as it is. It's entirely feasible because the president (of the court) Gilmar Mendes has worked to bring this about," said law professor Michael Mohallem, at the Getulio Vargas Foundation in Rio de Janeiro. "There are major possibilities that this will happen," he said. Brazilian media report that the judge overseeing the case, Herman Benjamin, will recommend full sanctions against Rousseff and Temer, with new elections. However, Temer has another card up his sleeve: He picked a new judge for the court Friday and will fill another vacancy in May, with a third opening up in September.—AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Demonstrators take part in a national protest against the social welfare reform bill introduced by the government of President Michel Temer, which seeks to extend the years of contributions and raise the minimum age for retirement.—AFP

JUSTUS ROSENBERG: COLLEGE PROFESSOR, SAVIOR OF JEWS

NEW YORK: If it weren't for his blond hair and blue eyes, Justus Rosenberg may have never lived to tell the tale of his little-known role in helping hundreds of artists and other intellectuals escape Nazi-occupied France. The journey of this man—who still teaches at Bard College in upstate New York at age 96 after a decades-long professorial career—is a fascinating one that landed him France's highest honor this week. Rosenberg is believed to be the last surviving member of an anti-fascist smuggling network set up by Varian Fry, a journalist dubbed America's Schindler.

Fry headed to the southern French city of Marseille in 1940 with just \$3,000 and a list of about 200 people to try to save. In the end, he shepherded to safety about 2,000 people via the American-sponsored Emergency Rescue Committee, including artists Marc Chagall, Andre Breton and Max Ernst. Rosenberg, who was just 19 at the time but looked younger and sported stereotypically "Aryan" features despite his Polish Jewish background, was the perfect courier for Fry's network.

He delivered messages to refugees and searched for possible routes for safe passage, including through Spain. Rosenberg later served with the French Resistance and the US Army. Through his wartime actions and his continued fight against hate today, Rosenberg is a "living reminder of where history can take us if we lose our vigilance as informed and engaged citizens," French Ambassador Gerard Araud said Thursday in handing him the Legion of Honor in New York.

But this short, grey-bearded man doesn't portray himself as a hero. "It really was more of an adventure at the time. It was very romantic," Rosenberg told AFP in a recent interview, his eyes shining brightly as he spoke in French. "Afterwards, yes, I realized. But I did always wonder, why were we only helping the intellectuals, why not ordinary people too? Don't they also have the right to live? It was very selective." He arrived in France after leaving his hometown, the Free City of Danzig, now known as Gdansk, in Poland. A top student, he was excluded from his school by anti-Jewish laws, so his parents sent him to Paris in 1937 to complete his studies.—AFP

ONCE-BOOMING GUN INDUSTRY NOW RECALIBRATING

WEBSTER: President Donald Trump promised to revive manufacturing in the United States, but there's one once-burgeoning sector poised to shrink under his watch: the gun industry. Fears of government limits on guns - some real, some perceived - led to a surge in demand during President Barack Obama's tenure and manufacturers leapt to keep up. Over the decade ending in 2015, the number of US companies licensed to make firearms jumped a whopping 362 percent. But sales are down and the bubble appears to be bursting with a staunch advocate for gun rights in the White House and Republicans ruling Congress. "The trends really almost since Election Day or election night have been that gun sales have slacked off," said Robert Spitzer, political science department chairman at State University of New York at Cortland.

"When you take away Barack Obama and you give the Republicans control of both houses of Congress, which is extremely friendly to the gun lobby, then the political pressure subsides. And that surely is at least a key part of the explanation for the drop-off in sales." The pendulum swing is not lost on employees of outfits such as Battle Rifle Co, a small enterprise tucked into a nondescript strip mall outside

Houston, with a storefront section featuring cases filled with handguns and walls lined with assault rifle-style long guns. The manufacturing floor and its eight employees, all veterans of the military or law enforcement, occupy the back.

"President Obama was the best gun salesman the world has ever seen," said production manager Karl Sorken, an Army veteran and self-described liberal who voted for Obama and notes the change for the industry under Trump is a topic of conversation in the shop. "You might have people who were more inclined to buy because they were worried they might not be able to later. That's going away for sure," he said. "But by the same token, the shooting sports in this country are going to explode because they're not going to be as worried or restricted about how they can shoot, where they can shoot."

'Assault weapons'

There are nearly 10,500 gunmakers in the country, many of them founded since 2000, said Larry Keane, senior vice president and general counsel for the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Experts say many are drawn to long guns, in part because sales for them rose after a Clinton-

era ban on "assault weapons" expired in 2004 and politicians' threats to restrict them drove demand. At the same time, shooting sports grew in popularity, and returning veterans sought out weapons with which they became comfortable in Iraq and Afghanistan.

From 2004 to 2013, sales of all handguns - pistols and revolvers - increased nearly fivefold, according to industry figures. Sales of rifles tripled in that timeframe. Battle Rifle took shape in the middle of that surge, formed in 2010 after its founder Chris Kurzadkowski ventured into his garage to build his police officer son a rifle from scratch. Now, the retail store in the front of his shop has a cozy seating area, a TV and coffee with such names as AK-47 Espresso Blend. The craftsmanship happens out back, where the all-male crew brings a love of long guns, the Second Amendment, precision and a bit of artistry to creating custom-made rifles.

Battle sells about seven each week. Prices range from around \$700 to as much as \$4,000, depending on accessories, specifications and custom paint jobs. Some 60 percent of its weapons are sold to police officers. Country music and conservative talk radio waft through the cavernous shop



TEXAS: An AR-15 style rifle manufactured by Battle Rifle Co is displayed in Webster, Texas. — AP

where guns are made and used ones repaired. The ribbing among the tight-knit group is constant, but when it turns serious, the men describe their work as something that transcends simple labor. "Our forefathers realized what tyranny does and if you

don't have a way to protect yourself from tyranny then you become a subject," said ammunition expert Jamey Spears, who spent five years in Texas law enforcement until he was shot during a raid on a Dallas crack house. — AP



ATLANTA: Crews work on a section of an overpass that collapsed from a large fire on Interstate 85 in Atlanta. — AP

THREE ARRESTED IN ATLANTA FIRE UNDERNEATH INTERSTATE BRIDGE

ATLANTA: Three people have been arrested in connection with the raging fire that collapsed a portion of Interstate 85 a few miles north of downtown Atlanta, crippling a major traffic artery in a city already known for dreadful rush-hour congestion. Deputy Insurance Commissioner Jay Florence said Friday evening that Basil Eleby faces a charge of criminal damage to property, and Sophia Bruner and Barry Thomas each were charged with criminal trespass. "We believe they were together when the fire was set and Eleby is the one who set the fire," Florence told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Florence would not discuss how the fire was started or why, saying those details would be released as the investigation progresses. The fire broke out Thursday afternoon in an area used to store state-owned construction materials and equipment, sending flames and smoke high into the air. Dozens of firefighters battling the roaring blaze beneath the roadway moved safely out of harm's way amid telltale signs the roadway was breaking apart from the intense heat. "They heard the cracking of the concrete," Atlanta Fire Chief Joel Baker said.

"They could see concrete was flying all over the place toward firefighters." Firefighters shut down the roadway before it fell and retreated safely without injury. Experts in structural engineering said fires on highways and bridges rarely burn long enough or hot enough to cause a complete collapse - but it has happened. Intense heat can compromise even steel-reinforced concrete, said Lauren Stewart, director of the Structural Engineering and Materials Laboratory at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

"With fires, especially fires that burn for long periods and with high heat, you can see structures, anything from buildings to bridges, can have their material properties degrade," Stewart said. It's happened before. In 1996, a fire in a big pile of tires beneath I-95 in Philadelphia left a span too weak to handle cars, forcing authorities to shut down

4 miles of the busy East Coast route for repairs. Andy Herrmann, a retired partner with the New York-based engineering firm Hardesty & Hanover, said there have also been a few instances of gasoline trucks crashing and causing intense heat that damaged overpasses.

Herrmann said concrete will undergo severe cracking at about 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit and start disintegrating at higher temperatures. Building roads to withstand such heat would be prohibitively expensive, he said. "We have limited dollars for maintaining our bridges," Herrmann said. "This is such a rare thing to occur." The highway collapse in Atlanta forced commuters Friday to find different routes to work or to use mass transit. Things won't be back to normal for months, said Russell McMurry, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation.

McMurry told a news conference Friday that 350 feet of highway will need to be replaced in both directions on I-85, which carries about 400,000 cars a day through Atlanta and is one of the South's most important north-south routes. He said repairs will take "at least several months." Traffic was bumper to bumper Friday on streets near the closed stretch of highway. Amelia Ford picked a new route to drive to work and said it took her 45 minutes to travel 3 miles from her Atlanta home to the nearest open on-ramp to the interstate.

McMurry said his department stored coils of plastic conduit, used in fiber optic networks, beneath the span but insisted they were noncombustible. US Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao promptly released \$10 million for the initial repair work, and the Federal Highway Administration promised more in emergency repair funds. Officials gave no estimate of how much the job would cost. Built in 1953 and renovated in 1985, the collapsed span scored a sufficiency rating of 94.6 out of 100 in its last inspection in 2015, said Natalie Dale, a spokeswoman for the Georgia DOT. — AP

TWO MONTHS ON, A TRUMP SUPPORTER MIRE IN DOUBT

OWEGO: He traveled from rally to rally with his guitar in tow, crooning pro-Donald Trump tunes and hailing the then Republican candidate as the answer to the US heroin epidemic that took his son's life. Though his songs earned him the moniker "the Trump troubadour," these days Kraig Moss has stopped singing for the president: the US leader's push for a health bill that would have restricted access to opioid addiction treatment for thousands of people left the 58-year-old mired in doubt.

When Moss strums his guitar now, it's to sing sorrowful ballads in memory of his son Rob, who died of a heroin overdose in 2014 at the age of 24. Trump "is the one that pioneered the idea that we have a heroin epidemic in this country," Moss said. "I feel on that subject very let down because that's what drove me in order to want to do everything I did; make all of the sacrifices I did to follow him around."

Moss had stopped making mortgage payments so he could trail the Trump campaign; now he is about to leave his house in the small upstate New York town of

Owego for a mobile home. But he said he has no regrets: "I'm not ashamed of what I did, mostly because I know I've gotten at least one person, one young adult to stand up at a party and probably say, 'You know what? That stuff kills - I'm out of here.'" "I know there's young adults that have that attitude now because of the talks that we have had."

Potential for change?

Despite his disappointment in the first two months of Trump's tenure, Moss says he thinks the president "still has potential." "He's got to come down to real life and... remember the little people who got him into office," Moss said. But the former construction worker wonders what Trump - who cast himself as a hardline dealmaker who alone could uplift America - can really get done from the White House. "I'm concerned that the same complications that presented itself through health care will present themselves with the immigration and the same complications might arise with his business plans." — AFP

TRUMP BRANDS RUSSIA PROBE A 'WITCH HUNT'

EX-AIDE SEEKS IMMUNITY

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has blasted a probe into his team's ties to Russia as an opposition "witch hunt," defending his former top aide Michael Flynn's decision to ask for immunity in the case. Trump's ex-national security advisor, whose links to Russia are one focus of the sprawling investigation, has sought protection in exchange for his testimony to the FBI and congressional committees. Flynn's lawyer said in a statement Thursday that his client has "a story to tell, and he very much wants to tell it, should the circumstances permit."

But two key committees in the probe, the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, both suggested the immunity proposal was premature. Trump nevertheless encouraged Flynn's move in a tweet that appeared to lay down a challenge. "Mike Flynn should ask for immunity in that this is a witch hunt (excuse for big election loss), by media & Dems, of historic proportion!" Flynn's offer to testify under protection from prosecution suggests he has more to reveal about the Russia affair.

He could be a key witness as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Congress seek to determine whether Trump advisors colluded with Russia's interference in last year's presidential election. But Adam Schiff, the senior Democrat on the House panel, said there was "still much work and many more witnesses and documents to obtain before any immunity request from any witness can be considered." "We should first acknowledge what a grave and momentous step it is for a former national security advisor to the president of the United States to ask for immunity from prosecution," Schiff said. NBC News also quoted unnamed officials as saying the issue was not on the table at the Senate committee "at the moment."

Close Trump advisor

A close advisor to Trump's 2016 campaign, Flynn was forced to step down from his White House job in February after misleading the vice president about conversations he had with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak after the election. He is also in focus over receiving \$33,000 from Russian television RT to attend a 2015 gala in Moscow where he sat with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and \$530,000 from Turkey for lobbying services. But Flynn is not the only member of Trump's advisors to have had contacts with Russia during the campaign. Investigators want to know whether there was any collusion between them and Moscow's concerted effort last year to hurt Trump's Democratic election rival Hillary Clinton. What Flynn could tell investigators is unknown. US prosecutors can offer a suspect immunity in exchange for information that can incriminate others in a case, particularly larger figures. Asking for immunity, said criminal lawyer Mark Bennett on Twitter, is "a reasonable stance for someone to take even if she hasn't done anything wrong - especially where... the grand jury's investigation appears to have political overtones."

Tactical move?

Alex Whiting, a Harvard Law School professor writing on the Just Security website, said Flynn's offer to testify in exchange for immunity was "not a serious offer," suggesting it was rather a tactical move. A real offer to the FBI would never have gone public in this way, he noted, given that it would have to involve Flynn negotiating to provide very serious evidence against powerful figures, including possibly the president. "The fact that Flynn and his lawyer have made his offer publicly suggests that he has nothing good to give the prosecutors."

Instead, he said, it was more likely an effort by Flynn to protect himself from Justice Department prosecution, by first obtaining immunity from one of the bodies in Congress probing the Russia affair. Conceivably, one of the Republican-dominated committees could do that to protect Flynn. Critics assailed the president over his tweet, noting that during last year's campaign, Trump said in a speech that "if you're not guilty of a crime, what do you need immunity for?" Asked by journalists Friday if Trump thought Flynn was guilty of something, White House spokesman Sean Spicer said the president just wants Flynn to testify. "He thinks Mike Flynn should go testify and do what he has to do to get the story out," Spicer said. — AFP



Mike Flynn arrives for a news conference in the East Room of the White House in Washington. — AP

NY MAYOR PLEDGES TO SHUTTER INFAMOUS RIKERS ISLAND PRISON

NEW YORK: Rampant violence, aging jails: The notorious Rikers Island prison complex could fade into history after New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, in a political about-face, backed a plan Friday to close it. "We had to do a lot of work to figure out a path that actually could achieve this goal," said Mayor Bill de Blasio as he announced the commitment, which he was previously reluctant to make. "For a long time I have said publicly it was a noble idea but I did not see how it was attainable under the conditions we were facing," he said at a news conference.

The Democratic mayor, who is running for re-election this year, said it became clear that "we that had to adjust the time line if we were going to be honest about it - that a decade was the minimum in which it could be done. That was the breakthrough." For years many New York officials and legal experts have been calling for the closure of the huge complex, which shares its name with the island in the East River where it is located. The site sits between the city's boroughs of Queens and the Bronx. The first jail there dates back to 1935. Rikers Island is one of the best-known prisons in the United States, along with Sing Sing in New York state and San Quentin in northern California.

Tupac and Strauss-Kahn

Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols and the rapper Tupac Shakur have slept in its cells. So has then-managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who was briefly detained in 2011 after a hotel maid accused him of attempted rape. The lawyer for the high-flying French IMF chief asked for his transfer, pointing to the prison's bad reputation. "For too long, Rikers Island has stood out as a symbol of injus-

tice in our city and as a stain on our criminal justice system," said Melissa Mark-Viverito, the speaker of the City Council and longtime critic of the prison, at the news conference. "Its legacy of systemic violence and abuse has been a blemish on New York City for decades," she added.

The first prison on the island dates back to 1935 and the complex now sees almost daily violence. In September, six guards were sentenced to several years imprisonment for assaulting an inmate. And some 80 percent of the prisoners at Rikers are stuck there without a criminal conviction as they await trial. Until now, de Blasio, who is up for re-election in November, has tried to improve its functioning by boosting staff training and limiting the use of solitary confinement.

Falling crime

De Blasio said that he could now envision a long-term plan for the prison closure because New York's crime rate has dropped. The number of deaths and shootings fell in 2016 to their lowest level since the early 1990s. Detainee numbers on Rikers have effectively dipped by 18 percent since 2013, according to recent statistics, from a daily average of 11,696 prisoners to 9,756 in 2016, and 9,362 in March. The mayor said that the decline would likely continue, with a target of reducing the number of inmates to 5,000 over the next five years. But he acknowledged that the city cannot close Rikers without opening new, smaller prisons in New York neighborhoods. And he said the long-term plan would require commitment from his successors. Though public opinion polls now indicate de Blasio is well-placed to win a second four-year term in November, the idea of putting prisons in neighborhoods could raise hackles among New Yorkers. — AFP



NEW YORK: People walk by a sign at the entrance to Rikers Island in New York City. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio has said that he agrees with the fundamentals of a plan to close the jail complex on Rikers Island within 10 years. — AFP

FRANCE'S MACRON PREACHES HOPE TO THE GRITTY SUBURBS

SAINT-DENIS: From across France they came to meet the man who has promised, if elected president in May, to "emancipate" immigrant families and free them from the gritty high-rises that ring French cities. The excitement was palpable as a microphone was passed through a hall in the tough Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, where a hundred high achievers gathered this week to share their stories of against-the-odds success with centrist maverick Emmanuel Macron.

For two hours the 39-year-old candidate listened to, and fielded questions from entrepreneurs, bankers, journalists and civil servants with the kind of names—mostly Arab or west African—that in France often see a CV pushed to the bottom of the pile. "I'm happy," Khadija Moudnib, the 39-year-old deputy mayor of the western Paris suburb of Mantes-la-Jolie said. "Usually politicians come to the suburbs when they're burning and then disappear again."

Tonight we're not here to talk about those who burn cars. Most people here have masters degrees. Theirs are the stories that need to be highlighted. Macron, who is running neck-and-neck with far-right leader Marine Le Pen in polls for the first round of the election on April 23, has promised to bring France's storied "banlieues", or suburbs, in from the cold with a two-pronged approach that stresses equality and entrepreneurship.

Addressing Thursday's gathering held next to the Stade de France national stadium, he vowed to reduce class sizes in tough neighbourhoods, name-and-shame employers that discriminate against people on the basis of their origins, and promote micro-financing for suburban businesses. The blue-eyed philosophy graduate, who studied at France's top finishing school before becoming a civil servant and then a Rothschild investment banker before he leaped into politics may seem an unlikely champion of the downtrodden. Trade unions have accused him of promoting a race to the bottom by declaring that an Uber driver working up to 70 hours a week—one of the few jobs readily available to low-skilled suburban youths in France—had more "dignity" than someone without work.

But his unabashedly pro-business approach has played well in immigrant communities, seen by some as more empowering than the paternalism of the left. Taking to the floor at the event, Moudnib hailed Macron—an economic liberal who is on the left on social issues—as a role model. "You've been accused of earning

a lot of money at Rothschild but in the suburbs we want to be like you!" she told him, drawing laughter and applause. "In France we have a unique characteristic," Macron replied. "We don't like failure and we don't like success."

'Back on track'

The failure to break into France's traditional big parties was what brought Aziz Francois Ndiaye to Macron's door. The US-trained Senegalese-born entrepreneur told AFP his overtures to various politicians—like his many job applications—went unheeded, until he contacted Macron's En Marche movement, which put him in charge of campaigning in the western Paris suburbs.

"My life got back on track," the affable father-of-two said. While Macron's optimism may have infected Ndiaye, many in suburbs battling high unemployment and radicalization remain unmoved. In central Saint-Denis, a Communist-run town of around 100,000 where the ringleader of the 2015 Paris attacks Abdelhamid Abaaoud hid before being killed in a police siege, the mood on a sunny spring afternoon was muted. In a sign of the lingering jihadist threat, soldiers in fatigues patrolled the street outside the town's imposing 12th century basilica and police vans lined the main square on two sides.

Sitting on a bench outside the basilica—final resting place of a long line of French kings and queens—retiree Michel Castellote said he would abstain in the May 7 election run-off if forced to choose between Macron and Le Pen. Polls show that Macron would easily beat Le Pen in such a duel but Castellote, a supporter of radical leftist candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon, said he could not bring himself to back the former businessman. "He doesn't know the suburbs," said the 76-year-old, complaining of the closure of many traditional shops in Saint-Denis—replaced by halal butcheries, Arab bakeries and Chinese clothing stores.

Several other people interviewed by AFP said they planned to abstain from both rounds of the election, turned off by political scandals and a litany of broken promises. But butcher Mohammed Hemmar said he was ready to put his trust in the man bidding to become the youngest president in France since World War II. "We'll try Macron this time, to see what the young people can do," Algerian-born Hemmar, 47, said as he rang up sales in his blood-splattered apron. "He's got the stature of a president, he speaks well and he inspires confidence." — AFP



ASUNCION: Photo shows the damages in the Congress building, set on fire by demonstrators protesting against the approval of a constitutional amendment for presidential reelection yesterday. — AFP

ANGRY PROTESTERS STORM PARAGUAY CONGRESS OVER CONTROVERSIAL BILL

RIGHT-WING PRESIDENT SEEKS ANOTHER TERM IN OFFICE

ASUNCION: Furious protesters stormed Paraguay's legislature, ransacked lawmakers' offices and set fires after senators approved a law allowing the country's president to be re-elected. The unrest late on Friday left about 30 people injured, including three lawmakers, according to firefighters and an opposition senator. Right-wing President Horacio Cartes is seeking to reform the constitution to let him run for office again in an election in 2018 after his current term ends. Paraguay is still recovering from the 35-year-long dictatorship of general Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989). To chants of "Dictatorship never again!" hundreds of protesters clashed with riot police and broke into the congress building, battering down entrances and fences and shattering windows.

Once inside, the demonstrators ransacked the offices of lawmakers who backed the reform and started fires, television images showed. Flames could be seen coming from large parts of the building. Police used mounted units and water cannon to try and disperse the rioters. Calm was restored around midnight on Friday (0400 GMT

Saturday) at the building, where large numbers of police remained on alert. Cartes' allies in the upper house of the legislature passed the bill on Friday, sidestepping resistance from opponents who say it clears the way for dictatorships.

'Barbarians'

The vote took place in the Senate offices as the main assembly hall was occupied by senators from the opposition Liberal Party which opposes the reforms. Opposition senator Luis Wagner said those injured included Senate speaker Roberto Acevedo, lawmaker Edgar Ortiz, who was hit in the mouth by a rubber bullet fired by police, and Efrain Alegre, who lost to Cartes in the 2013 presidential elections. Acevedo has challenged the bill in the Supreme Court, arguing it is unconstitutional.

The measure was scheduled to be considered Saturday in the lower house Chamber of Deputies, where the president has a majority. But after the rioting Chamber president Hugo Velazquez announced that the vote was postponed, and said he was shocked by the violence.

"I hope that calm and harmony will return," Velazquez said in a televised message. Since 1992 Paraguay has banned re-election in an attempt to avoid a return to dictatorships such as that of Stroessner. By removing the ban, the reform will also allow left-wing former president Fernando Lugo to run again for office. He held power from 2008 to 2012. If it is approved by the two houses, the measure is expected to be put to a referendum within three months.

The opposition condemned the move as a "parliamentary coup" and called for "resistance." "It is a dictatorial plan by Horacio Cartes with the complicity of Ferdinand Lugo," said Senator Carlos Amarilla. Cartes labeled the demonstrators "barbarians", and blamed the violence on "a group of Paraguayans embedded in politics and the media aimed at destroying democracy and political and economic stability." "Democracy is not won or defended by violence," he said on his Twitter account. "We continue to live in a state of law and we must not allow barbarians to destroy the peace, tranquility and welfare of the people." — AFP



MARSEILLE: Men hold up a sign during a demonstration yesterday against French presidential election candidate for the En-Marche movement Emmanuel Macron, on the sidelines of his campaign rally in Marseille. — AFP

PHASED APPROACH: HOW TO READ EU BREXIT GUIDELINES

BRUSSELS: European Council President Donald Tusk sent draft Brexit negotiating guidelines to leaders of Britain's 27 EU partners yesterday, hoping to agree them on April 29 so that negotiations on British withdrawal can begin. These are key points of the 8-page draft, seen by Reuters:

'Phased approach'

If "sufficient progress" towards agreeing the terms of an "orderly withdrawal" on March 29, 2019, is made in a first phase of talks starting in early June, the EU27 could launch talks on how a long-term future free trade relationship could work, the draft says. That represents a compromise between the position of EU hardliners, who want no trade talks until the full Brexit deal is agreed, and British calls for an immediate start. Tusk told reporters the EU could assess as early as this autumn if progress was "sufficient". But it is unclear how it will arrive at that judgment. If leaders need unanimity, some could block trade talks. Eastern states with many expats in Britain may want more certainty on their rights, while western powers are more keen on talking about trade.

Transitional arrangements

Britain could have a few years after March 2019 when it does not have to give up all benefits of membership, to ease the shift for people and businesses. But in that case it would have to accept EU rules, e.g. on free migration, and submit to supervision by the European Court of Justice and other EU authorities. "Any such transitional arrangements must be clearly defined, limited in time, and subject to effective enforcement mechanisms," the draft says.

Sticking together

The EU 27 will stick together against British efforts to divide and conquer and is prepared to play hardball against Prime

Minister Theresa May's threat to walk out without a deal. Brussels thinks Britain needs a deal more than the EU. "The Union will act as one. It will be constructive throughout and will strive to find an agreement. This is in the best interest of both sides. The Union will work hard to achieve that outcome, but it will prepare itself to be able to handle the situation also if the negotiations were to fail."

No dumping

Free trade will be a good outcome but Britain should not expect to get that if it seeks competitive advantages for its companies by state subsidies or by tearing up EU environmental or labour standards or setting itself up as a tax haven. "Any free trade agreement should be balanced, ambitious and wide-ranging. It cannot, however, amount to participation in the Single Market or parts thereof, as this would undermine its integrity and proper functioning. It must ensure a level playing field in terms of competition and state aid, and must encompass safeguards against unfair competitive advantages through, inter alia, fiscal, social and environmental dumping."

Rights and benefits

Britain cannot have a better deal outside than inside the EU that would be a slippery slope to others leaving the Union. Tusk welcomes May's acknowledgement she cannot "cherry pick" single market membership without accepting freedom of movement for EU workers but warns against her suggestion that Brussels open technical talks on trade in specific sectors. "Preserving the integrity of the Single Market excludes participation based on a sector-by-sector approach. A non-member of the Union, that does not live up to the same obligations as a member, cannot have the same rights and enjoy the same benefits as a member." — Reuters

PERU SEEKS AID TO COPE WITH EXTREME FLOODS

LIMA: Peru needs more international aid to help hundreds of thousands of people cope with continuing floods and mudslides that have killed more than 100 people and torn apart much of the country's infrastructure, the transportation minister said Friday. Minister Martin Vizcarra told Reuters that the government will likely award reconstruction contracts in August or September, once heavy rains and the current crisis have subsided.

Peruvians displaced by raging rivers and landslides still need bottled water, canned food, tents, toilet paper, medicine and other basics to survive coming months, Vizcarra said. Peru has distributed 4,000 tonnes of aid so far, most of it donated by Peruvian families and companies and institutions, but another 4,000 tonnes will likely be needed in coming months, Vizcarra said.

Local donations were tapering off as raging rivers and mudslides continue to slam parts of Peru. "Every family, company has a limit to what it can give," Vizcarra told Reuters in an interview. "But people are going to be in need for a long time. There are families that have nothing." He noted that Peru prefers goods that could be distributed immediately to cash donations. A railway used to transport zinc and copper concentrates from mines in central Peru to port will likely take another two weeks to become operative, Vizcarra said. The government will likely hold public tenders for "packages" of projects — such as bridges needed in a region — to ensure a swift recovery.

So far, more than 200 bridges and more than 2,000 kilometers of highway have been wiped out, Vizcarra said. Scientists in Peru now expect the localized version of El Nino that appeared suddenly off of Peru's coast this year to stretch into May, though April rains should not be as intense as the downpours still battering the northern coast. The United States said Thursday that it had allocated more than \$775,000 to help Peru, about half of China's donation of \$1.5 million to the Andean country. Economists in Peru have put the cost of reconstruction at more than \$6 billion — more than 3 percent of gross domestic product. — Reuters



PIURA: Local residents cross swollen flooded streams to recover their belongings from their homes in small villages close to the city of Piura, in northern Peru yesterday. — AFP



BERLIN: People attend a pro-Europe demonstration in Berlin. — AFP

ON SUNDAYS, GERMANS IN 'ODE TO JOY' FOR EUROPE

BERLIN: Fed up with eurosceptics hogging the headlines and political debate, a growing number of Germans are going on the march to express their fervor for the European Union. So-called Pulse of Europe rallies are taking place in many cities every Sunday in support of the European project, buffeted by Brexit and anti-EU parties in France, the Netherlands, Italy and Austria. "Populism is rising strongly. These protests are a way to make a stand against that," said retiree Nicole Schacht. "I grew up with Europe and I believe in Europe." On Sunday, 6,000 people gathered at Berlin's Gendarmenmarkt square at the statue of poet Friedrich Schiller, whose poem "Ode to Joy," set to music by Beethoven, is the EU's anthem.

Families with prams, young students and well-dressed retirees brandished the EU's blue flag with the ring of yellow stars and listened intently to speakers. Those taking the microphone championed how the EU had changed their lives, from post-World War II reconciliation to the Erasmus university exchange program. "We've had the European treaties for 60 years, for 60 years we have been free. We have to defend that," cried one speaker, Daniel Winter, 39. "We can't bring to power those blond-haired characters called Le Pen, Boris Johnson or Donald Trump who want to end all that."

Not irreversible

The idea of taking a stand in favor of Europe was born a day after Trump's election in the United States, when Frankfurt lawyer Daniel Roeder and his wife Sabine decided to organize a small rally. With

Germany heading for September elections when the anti-Islam and anti-euro populist party AfD could win seats for the first time, Roeder said he could not settle for "protesting only when it's too late". That November Sunday in Frankfurt, they numbered just 200. The week after the group swelled to 500, then 2,000, then 5,000, and in Berlin, now 6,000.

The number is small compared with far bigger rallies in German history. But it is a remarkable increase for a movement that, just four months ago, began with a turnout of couple of hundred. Supporters say the rise points to a depth of feeling that may command political clout. "These are people who grew up with European integration and have the fundamental conviction that the movement is irreversible. That conviction has been shaken," columnist Sandra Eckert wrote in the Frankfurter Allgemeine daily. Smaller numbers are also congregating elsewhere in "Pulse of Europe" rallies, including Paris, Strasbourg, Lisbon and Toulouse.

In Britain, too, pro-EU feeling is strong among the 48 percent of the population who last June voted to stay in Europe. Last Saturday, tens of thousands marched in London to mark the EU's 60th birthday, just four days before Prime Minister Theresa May formally launched the process to exit the bloc. But pro-EU sentiment in Germany is especially strong, and this is no accident. After Nazism left Germany ostracized by the rest of Europe, the European project allowed the country to rejoin the fold of civilized nations as an equal. The European idea has thus earned the allegiance of a post-war generation of Germans. — AFP

BROTHERS RECOUNT INDIAN MOB ATTACKS

GREATER NOIDA: The Amalawa brothers were wandering through a mall in a New Delhi suburb when the phone rang with warnings from a friend: Hurry home, mobs of Indians are attacking Africans across the area. The brothers, Nigerians who came to India to seek better education and work opportunities, rushed out and tried to hail an autorickshaw, just as a mob of Indian men saw them and ran toward them. The Amalawas ran back inside the mall but dozens of screaming men followed them. Precious Amalawa hid inside a changing room but Endurance got dragged out.

"They attacked him with bricks, sticks, belts," 23-year-old Precious said Friday as he sat, still stiff with shock and fear, in their apartment. Endurance's body was dotted with medical staples - on his temple, his cheek and both arms. Precious' arms were covered in cuts and bruises from when the mob chased him from his hiding place by shoving sharp objects through the changing room's thin walls. The violence started March 24 when a teenage boy disappeared in Greater Noida, outside New Delhi, and angry relatives claimed he'd been killed by his Nigerian neighbors.

Rumors about cannibalism

A mob of people began searching the area for Africans, with some accusing kidnappers of eating the boy. The boy returned home yesterday morning. He died later that day of what police said was a drug overdose. Five men who had been charged with kidnapping and murder were let go within hours because police could find no evidence. But rumors about cannibalism swirled and mobs

began to attack Africans across the suburb. The last attacks were reported Wednesday. There were reports of mobs pulling Africans out of taxi cabs and autorickshaws and assaulting them.

In shaky cellphone videos of the attack on the Amalawa brothers last Monday afternoon, more than a dozen men can be seen brutally beating Endurance with whatever they could lay their hands on - one man smashed a large metal trash can repeatedly on his torso and head. Another man used a collapsible metal chair to hit the cowering man as he lay on the ground. The snap of leather belts can be heard. One man even attempts a selfie with the violence in the background. Endurance, 21, wouldn't talk about the attack at all as he sat, still tense with fear, in the sparsely furnished apartment.

The African Students' Association in India asked Africans across the capital to remain alert and especially warned those living in Greater Noida from stepping out at all. "All African Students Studying in Greater Noida are hereby instructed to stay at home as the situation remains volatile," the statement said. The association has been arranging food and water for African students in Greater Noida as most of them hide at home.

Police say they have arrested five men for attacking the brothers and are searching for others. Police patrols in the area have been increased after India's foreign minister asked that the local government ensure the safety of Greater Noida's African population. Tens of thousands of Africans in live and study in India, and newly built suburbs like Greater Noida especially draw students because they are home to several sprawling private



GREATER NOIDA: African students greet each other after Friday prayers in Greater Noida, India. Tens of thousands of Africans live and study in India, and newly built suburbs like Greater Noida especially draw students because they are home to several sprawling private universities. But prejudice and racism are near-constants for Africans in the country. —AP

universities. But prejudice and racism are near-constants. Skin color and appearance are used to place people in India's strict social order, and stereotyping of all African men as drug dealers and women as prostitutes is prevalent. Landlords shun Africans in all but the poorest neighborhoods and charge them unusually high rent.

And gang assaults are not uncommon. "We face street aggression, abuses. We also face difficulty in getting accommodation, we face difficulty in naturally integrating with the local community," said

Samuel Jack, the president of the African Students' Association of India. "I just give you an example. I have Indian friends in my school, I have never visited their house and they have never ever decided to ask me: Where do you live? Can I come and see you?" The sufferings Africans experience daily go largely unnoticed, and Africans, most of whom are young students, also hesitate to complain and draw attention to themselves. That changed when a Congolese student was killed in a dispute over hiring an autorickshaw in New Delhi last year. —AP

KASHMIRIS INCENSED AS INDIAN TROOPS MAKE KIDS DO SITUPS

SRINAGAR: The 11-year-old boy set out for a stroll with a friend in the main city of the disputed region of Kashmir. It was a sunny spring day, and quiet, during a general strike and after anti-India protests and clashes had subsided with no injuries reported. But Wednesday's walk quickly became traumatic, Mir Mehran recounted, as he and his friend were stopped by Indian paramilitary soldiers who mocked them and questioned why they were out walking and then punished the boys in the street.

"They asked us to hold our earlobes and do situps for 10 times. As we were doing so, they laughed at us," Mehran said after photographs began circulating and sparked outrage among local Kashmiris. The other boy quickly did the situps and then ran away, but Mir said he was too terrified and waited until the soldiers allowed him to go. He said that later that evening, "I was thinking they could have killed me or done something else. I was scared."

Seeing Kashmiri residents doing calisthenics on the side of the road was common in the 1990s, as government forces sought to humiliate people as a way of dissuading any support for armed rebels fighting against Indian rule in the disputed Himalayan territory. As the rebellion was crushed, Indian soldiers mostly stopped using public situps as a form of punishment. So when photos appeared on social media showing the skinny boy in a red sweater forced to sit, squat and crunch awkwardly while surrounded by armed soldiers in riot gear, Kashmiris were outraged. Some called the episode "shameful"; one person said it represented Indian "subjugation at its peak."

Mehran's father was relieved Mir's experience wasn't worse, but is still appalled as he explains that such acts reinforce residents' mistrust of Indian troops. "This is wrong and tyrannical against a child," said Mohammed Qayoom Mir, a clerk in a government office. "They spare neither elders nor children. Thank God they made him do only situps and didn't beat him up." Most people in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir favor its independence or a merger with neighboring Pakistan, which also administers a part of the territory across a heavily militarized de facto border through the mountains. Since 1989, at least 70,000 people have been killed in an armed uprising and ensuing Indian military crackdown.

"A child being humiliated by soldiers, this is a devastating sight for any parent," said rights activist Khuram Parvez in a message posted on Facebook. Rights groups have long accused Indian forces of using systematic abuse and unjustified arrests. The Indian government has acknowledged the problem exists, but denies it is part of a wide strategy to intimidate residents and that such allegations are meant to demonize troops. India's paramilitary force said it would investigate the incident. "We'll check out and identify the troops. If there has been any wrongdoing, action will be taken," said spokesman Bhavesh Chaudhary of India's Central Reserve Police Force. He did not elaborate on what sort of action might be taken. —AP



KASHMIR: Kashmiri villagers watch from a mosque during the funeral procession for rebel Tauseef Ahmed Wagay at Kanjkul village in Yaripora, in south Kashmir's Kulgam district. — AFP



BEIJING: Cyclists ride past a mural depicting Beijing city landmarks in a former industrial area that has been converted to an arts district in Beijing yesterday. —AP

TERROR THREATS TRANSFORM UIGHUR HEARTLAND INTO A SECURITY STATE

MUSLIMS IN XINJIANG FACE RESTRICTIONS ON ISLAMIC DRESS

KASHGAR: Three times a day, alarms ring out through the streets of China's ancient Silk Road city of Kashgar, and shopkeepers rush out of their stores swinging government-issued wooden clubs. In mandatory anti-terror drills conducted under police supervision and witnessed by Reuters on a recent visit, they fight off imaginary knife-wielding assailants. Armored paramilitary and police vehicles circle with sirens blaring. China says it faces a serious threat from Islamist extremists in this far Western Xinjiang region. Beijing accuses separatists among the Muslim Uighur ethnic minority there of stirring up tensions with the ethnic Han Chinese majority and plotting attacks elsewhere in China.

A historic trading post, Kashgar is also central to China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) Initiative, President Xi Jinping's signature foreign and economic policy involving massive infrastructure spending linking China to Asia, the Middle East and beyond. China's worst fears are that a large-scale attack would blight this year's diplomatic setpiece, an OBOR summit attended by world leaders planned for Beijing in May. State media say the drills, and other measures such as a network of thousands of new street-corner police posts, are aimed making everyone feel safer.

But many residents say the drills are just part of an oppressive security operation that has been ramped up in Kashgar and other cities in Xinjiang's Uighur heartland in recent months. As well as taking part in drills, shopkeepers must, at their own expense, install password-activated security doors, "panic buttons" and cameras that film not just the street outside but also inside their stores, sending a direct video feed to police. For Uighurs like the owner of an online multimedia company facing one of Kashgar's main streets it is not about security, but mass surveillance.

"We have no privacy," said the business owner who, like almost everyone Reuters spoke to in Kashgar, did not want to give his name. "They want to

see what you're up to." A Chinese security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters the new security measures in Xinjiang were not politically motivated, but based on fresh developments and intelligence. He declined to elaborate. The Xinjiang government and the State Council Information Office, which doubles as the Communist Party spokesman's office, did not respond to requests for comment. China routinely denies pursuing repressive policies in Xinjiang, and points to the vast sums it spends on economic development in the resource-rich region. Xinjiang's gross domestic product last year rose 7.6 percent, above the national average.

Religious re-education

Since ethnic riots in the regional capital Urumqi in 2009, Xinjiang has been plagued by bouts of deadly violence. The incidence of attacks reported in state media have actually declined markedly, both in frequency and scale, since a spate of bombings and mass stabbings in Xinjiang and southwestern Yunnan Province in 2014. But Chinese state media say the threat remains high and the Communist Party has vowed to continue what it terms its own "war on terror" against spreading Islamist extremism. In Xinjiang, this can also be seen at weekly flag-raising ceremonies that Uighurs, a Turkic-speaking people who formed the majority in Xinjiang before an influx of Han Chinese, are required to attend to denounce religious extremism and pledge fealty under the Chinese flag. At one such event witnessed by Reuters in Hotan, a former Silk Road oasis town 500 km southeast of Kashgar, more than 1,000 people filed onto an open-air basketball court where Party officials checked their names against an attendance list and inspected their dress and appearance. "Best you take this off or I'll send you to re-education," said one female official, pulling back the black hijab worn by a middle-aged Uighur woman to

expose her forehead and hair. Hotan authorities offer 2,000 yuan (\$290) rewards for those who report "face coverings and robes, youth with long beards, or other popular religious customs that have been radicalized", as part of a wider incentive system that rewards actionable intelligence on imminent attacks.

Xinjiang lawmakers this week approved legislation extending a prohibition on "abnormal" beards and the wearing of veils in public places across the whole region. The new rules came into force yesterday. This month a video purportedly released by the Islamic State group showed Uighur fighters training in Iraq and vowing that blood would "flow in rivers" in China.

'Grid-style' surveillance

The architect of the anti-terror drills and other new measures in Xinjiang is Chen Quanguo, appointed Communist Party boss in the region in August in what analysts said was an implicit endorsement of his hard-line management of ethnic strife in neighboring Tibet. Chen has made his mark swiftly, culminating last month in what state media described as mass "anti-terror" rallies across Xinjiang's four largest cities involving tens of thousands of paramilitary troops and police. One of Chen's most visible initiatives has been to build thousands of what the authorities call "convenience police stations" across Xinjiang and hire some 30,000 new officers to man them. They are present on almost every intersection in Kashgar, typically just hundreds of meters apart, in what Chen calls a "grid-style social management" system he pioneered in Tibet. Local state media have praised the initiative as a new benchmark in community-based policing. Critics, including Uighur and rights groups, say the real purpose of the convenience police stations is to spy on the population. Citizens are encouraged to use the stations to charge their mobile phones, have a cup of tea or shelter from the elements. —Reuters

News

In brief

Cargo ship missing

SEOUL: A South Korean cargo ship has gone missing in waters off Uruguay after making a distress call, Seoul's foreign ministry said yesterday. The Stella Daisy with eight South Korean and 16 Filipino crew members on board disappeared Friday after sending a text message that it was sinking, the ministry said. "It remains unknown whether the crew escaped to safety," a ministry official was quoted as saying by Yonhap news agency. A search operation by Uruguayan coast guards was underway, it added. The Stella Daisy is a large ore carrier (VLOC) that can carry more than 260,000 tons.

17 missing in landslide

JAKARTA: Seventeen people were missing and feared buried after a landslide struck Indonesia, the national disaster agency said yesterday. The landslide hit Banaran village in Ponorogo district, East Java yesterday morning, damaging up to 30 houses. "There are conflicting reports about the number of people missing, but based on the data from the field we are searching for 17 people," national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purno Nugroho said. The local disaster agency along with the military, police and volunteers were evacuating the area. Indonesia is often hit by landslides. Twelve people including three children died in a landslide on the holiday island of Bali last February. In September, almost thirty people died in devastating floods and landslides in Garut, West Java.

Body remains found

TUCSON: Police have found the remains of a six-year-old girl who went missing from her bedroom in Tucson nearly five years ago. Tucson Police Chief Chris Magnus said Friday that police found the remains of Isabel Celis in a rural area of Pima County about a month ago "not by happenstance." The remains were identified through an independent, out-of-state lab, Magnus said. "Obviously this is not the ending that any of us had hoped for, but this is also not the ending of the case. We are working this case very aggressively as we would with any case involving the death of a child," he said. Celis was last seen April 20, 2012, when she was six years old. Her father reported her missing the next morning after finding she was not in her bedroom. Police never named any suspects, but they said they found "suspicious circumstances around a possible entry point" in the home. Police and volunteers conducted exhaustive searches and even renewed a door-to-door effort to find the girl 18 months after her disappearance.

Boko Haram kidnaps 22

KANO: Boko Haram Islamists have abducted 22 girls and women in two separate raids in northeast Nigeria, residents and vigilantes said. In the first attack on Thursday, the jihadists raided the village of Pulka near border with Cameroon where they kidnapped 18 girls. "Boko Haram fighters from Mamman Nur camp arrived in pickup vans around 6:00 am and seized 14 young girls aged 17 and below while residents fled into the bush," a Pulka community leader said. "They picked four other girls who were fleeing the raid they came across in the bush outside the village," said the community leader who asked not to be named for fear of reprisals. According to the official, the attackers were loyal to the faction headed by Abu Musab Al-Barnawi, the son of Boko Haram founder Mohammed Yusuf. Barnawi was appointed last year by the Islamic State group to replace leader Abubakar Shekau, who had pledged allegiance to the Middle East jihadist group in 2015.

Qaeda claims bombing

SANAA: Al-Qaeda has claimed responsibility for a recent deadly attack on a government building in southern Yemen, which involved a suicide bombing. Al-Qaeda's Ansar Al-Shariah arm in a statement identified the suicide bomber as Abu Amer Al-Hadrami, saying he had rammed his explosives-laden car into the gate of the local government building in the provincial capital of Lahj on Monday. Officials said at the time that six soldiers and four civilians were killed in the bombing and an ensuing gun attack by jihadists. Security forces killed the assailants, including three who were wearing explosive belts. The online Al Qaeda statement acknowledged the death of three militants "who controlled the building for three hours" before being killed, in addition to Hadrami. The statement said the attack was carried out "to avenge martyrs" killed in raids by security forces, and those "tortured to death in prisons." It did not refer to the many US air strikes which have targeted members of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in southern Yemeni towns in recent months.

INDIAN HIGHWAYS RUN DRY AFTER COURT LIQUOR BAN

NEW DELHI: Thousands of liquor outlets along India's national and state highways closed after a Supreme Court order kicked in yesterday in an attempt to reduce drunken driving on the world's deadliest roads. The top court set the April 1 deadline in December barring liquor shops from operating within a range of 500 meters from India's highways, where 17 traffic accident deaths occur every hour. On Friday the court dismissed a slew of petitions seeking a reprieve on the ban, including from state governments which had sought more time to implement the order. However, the court extended the ban to pubs, bars and restaurants near highways, with the government estimated to lose billions of rupees in taxes.

Last year the court told the government not to renew existing licenses after March 31 and banned issuance of fresh licenses in the prohibited area. It also ordered the removal of all liquor banners and advertisements from such routes. India, which has a network of 250,000 kilometers of national and state highways, tops the world's deadliest roads. Nearly 150,000 people were killed in 2015, according to the ministry of road transport and highways. Of those, 6,755 deaths were caused due to drunken driving, the ministry said.

The government has launched fresh initiatives to make roads safer, including revamping infrastructure and proposed stringent laws. Under a new proposed law drunken drivers would be fined rupees 10,000 (\$154) up from 500 (\$7) and handed jail terms ranging from three to six months. Harman Singh Sidhu of Arrive Safe NGO, one of the petitioner's in the liquor ban said that it was a historic ruling that had led to the closure of nearly 48,000 liquor shops. "It is certainly going to save lots of lives and bring awareness to the public about this health hazard," Sidhu said. India owns just one percent of the world's vehicles but accounts for 15 percent of global traffic deaths, according to the World Bank. — AFP

SUU KYI'S GOVERNMENT FACES FIRST TEST AT MYANMAR POLLS

YANGON: Aung San Suu Kyi's government faced its first test at the ballot box yesterday in by-elections around Myanmar seen as a barometer for growing disillusionment with her party's first year in power. The euphoria that surrounded the democracy icon's landslide electoral win in 2015 has ebbed as her party struggles to push through promised reforms. Discontent is particularly acute in ethnic minority areas where many see Suu Kyi as working too closely with the military, which ran the country for 50 years and still controls key levers of government.

With only 19 seats up for election, the poll is unlikely to alter the balance of power in a government firmly dominated by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. But the voting may offer a glimpse of the public's view on the NLD's first year in office—a rocky 12 months marked by a surge in border unrest and disappointing economic gains. Hundreds of voters lined up outside polling stations on the outskirts of Myanmar's commercial capital Yangon yesterday, though the scenes lacked the fanfare and enthusiasm of the historic 2015 election.

Chit Min, from Dagon Seikkan suburb said many of his friends decided not to vote this time around. "But I am sure the NLD will win again," he added. The party will face its toughest challenge to the north in Shan State, where tens of thousands have been displaced by recent fighting between the army and ethnic insurgents. "There are many victims of war here and other ethnic areas now," said Sai One Leng Kham, an upper house MP from the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy. "Sometimes (the NLD) works without any understanding of

what's going on on the ground."

Ethnic politics

In strife-torn Rakhine State on Myanmar's western coastline, the party will face a strong challenge not only from the local Arakan National Party but also the military-backed USDP. The USDP led the transitional government that took over from the junta in 2011, but was trounced in elections four years later that swept the NLD to power. To the south in Mon, the NLD is facing a backlash over the naming of a new bridge after Suu Kyi's father that many see as a symbol of the party's disregard for minorities. Myanmar's economic and political elite, including the NLD, have long been dominated by the majority Bamar ethnicity. "Now more people think MPs from ethnic parties should be in parliament," said local Nyan Soe, who was among tens of thousands who protested over the bridge. "The NLD has not been good for ethnic people since it took power."

Suu Kyi herself is constitutionally barred from campaigning while in office. But she came out to defend the NLD's record while also conceding that progress in some areas had been slow—in a rare national address to mark her administration's one year anniversary on Thursday. "We have had to face many daunting challenges," she said, admitting the NLD had "not achieved the level of development that people have expected". But she stressed that her party was dedicated to rebuilding the impoverished nation and that this process would take time. "I believe most people are becoming increasingly aware that they do not have to live in fear of the government anymore," she added. "I see this as progress."—AFP



BEENLEIGH: Submerged cars are seen at the flooded Beenleigh train station carpark yesterday. — AFP

AUSTRALIAN FLOODS STILL RISING WITH TWO DEAD, FOUR MISSING

FOUR PEOPLE MISSING IN QUEENSLAND

BEENLEIGH: Flooded rivers were still rising yesterday in two Australian states with two women dead and four people missing after torrential rains in the wake of a powerful tropical cyclone. Queensland police warned that the Logan River, which runs through Beenleigh south of Brisbane, would only hit peak flood levels during the afternoon while further north the city of Rockhampton was also facing a serious threat. Commissioner Ian Stewart warned there was "still a major risk to the community around Logan and further south caused by that flooding situation."

Rockhampton, with a population of over 80,000 on the Fitzroy River, was expected to suffer flood levels not seen for a century and Stewart urged residents in low-lying areas to leave. "By Wednesday, we will be at peak flooding in Rockhampton," he said. "It will be a gradual rise, so I encourage people to move now." Queensland police tweeted "we currently have four people missing... that we have serious concerns about," including a 77-year-old man. Tens of thousands of people have been evacuated from a string of towns in Queensland and New South Wales as the floods move south towards Ballina, cutting roads.

Grim scene

Others have tried to stick it out to save their properties. The scene was grim along the Logan river. Casey Bently, a 47-year-old mechanic from North Maclean appeared visibly upset as she looked at her house, submerged to the roof. "We got as much out as we could in the short time that we had," she said. "People have lost everything. I'd only just finished renovating the house, and it is all gone again now." Nearby a calf was stuck in a tree as a man in a kayak paddled out to see if it was alive. Dozens gathered to watch but by the time two people on jet skis arrived to help the calf only to discover it was dead.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull called on residents in affected areas to exercise caution. "In many parts of the country you will see floodwaters continuing to rise over the next days," he told reporters. "This is a very dangerous time in these flooded areas. I want to say to everybody who is affected by these floods - do not go into flooded waters. Do not cross flooded roads." Category four Cyclone Debbie hit northeastern Australia on Tuesday between Bowen and Airlie Beach ripping up trees and causing widespread damage that is still being assessed.

It was downgraded to a tropical low as it

tracked southeast still packing high winds and dumping huge amounts of rain all down the east coast to Sydney and beyond before blowing out over the Tasman Sea. Police on Friday found the body of a woman who disappeared in floodwaters near Murwillumbah just south of the Queensland border. And a 64-year-old woman, whose vehicle was swept off a causeway on a property in Gungal, in the Hunter Valley south of Sydney was also found dead Friday. Lismore, south of Murwillumbah was among the worst flooded towns on Friday with Tweed Heads, Kingscliff and Murwillumbah also subject to evacuation orders. In areas further north where the cyclone made landfall, water and power were still being restored. Bowen, Mackay and the Whitsunday islands bore the brunt of the cyclone and nearly 40,000 homes were waiting to be re-connected. The military has mobilized 1,300 soldiers for the clean-up with helicopters and planes deploying to restore infrastructure and supply emergency food, water and fuel. The Insurance Council of Australia declared the Queensland and northern NSW regions disaster zones, adding that the damage bill could top Aus\$1 billion (US \$770 million).—AFP



YANGON: Voters leave a polling station after casting their votes in a by-election in Dagon Seikkan township, eastern Yangon yesterday. — AFP

SPORTS, RASPBERRIES, BUT NO SEA: 5 THINGS ABOUT SERBIA

BELGRADE: Serbia, which will elect a president today, is forever marked by the Balkan wars of the 1990s that have since deprived it of direct access to the sea. Here are several things to know about Serbia, a candidate country for the European Union that remains a close ally of Moscow. It is a country proud of its national identity and also populated by a number of minorities, a small country in love with sport and good food.

Yugoslavia to independence

Serbs are like the Swiss and Paraguayans in that they have to travel abroad to vacation on a coast. Since Serbia's split with Montenegro in 2006, the Balkan country no longer has direct access to the sea. Seven ships from its military fleet sail the rivers, notably the Danube. Communist Yugoslavia, born at the end of World War II, was made up of six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia. Following the death of its autocratic leader Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the Yugoslav federation found itself in deep political and economic crisis in the decades that followed, with Slovenia and Croatia declaring independence in the early 1990s. Montenegro followed some 15 years later, before Serbia's former southern province Kosovo, populated by an ethnic Albanian majority, declared independence in 2008, almost a decade after the war that ended with a three-month NATO bombing campaign in 1999, forcing Serbia to withdraw its troops from the breakaway territory. With troops in the surrounding countries, NATO remains highly unpopular with Serbs who have not forgiven the bloc for the bombings.

Divided country

Serbia is a candidate for membership in the European Union, its main economic partner. But the EU has seen its popularity fall since the start of negotiations with the country in 2014. Some Serbs prefer the closeness they have

with Russia, the big Orthodox Slav brother. They are grateful for Moscow's support, including in the United Nations, and in its refusal to recognize Kosovo's independence. Walking along Knez Mihajlova, the main pedestrian street in Belgrade, one can find Western banners and shops wedged next to ones offering T-shirts with portraits of people less popular in the West: Vladimir Putin, World War II Chetnik leader Dragoljub Draza Mihajlovic, former Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic on trial for genocide at a UN war crimes tribunal, and Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb nationalist whose assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 sparked World War I.

A patchwork of nationalities

According to the 2011 census, Serbs account for 83 percent of the population and most of them are Orthodox Christians. But there are also about two dozen minorities living in the country including Croats, Roma, Albanians, Hungarians and Slovaks. Roman Catholics and Muslims make up two of the other largest religious groups. About 7.1 million people live in Serbia but there are several million more in the diaspora: Vienna is considered the second-largest Serbian town in the world. Serbs also live in significant numbers in Toronto, Chicago, Paris and even Australia. They also make up significant minorities in neighboring countries Bosnia, Montenegro and Croatia. Some 120,000 Serbs live in Kosovo.

The raspberry state

Serbia is an agricultural country, notably the world's number one exporter of raspberries. In 2016, exports came to around 125 million euros (\$134 million), according to the statistics bureau. But that's not nearly enough for an economic recovery that has been long and painful after being hard hit by the international sanctions imposed for Serbia's role in the 1990s Balkan wars. —AFP



ORASAC: Luka Maksimovic, otherwise known as Ljubisa Beli Preletacevic, addresses supporters as he stands on a monument of Karadjordje, the leader of the 1804 Serb uprising against Ottoman Turks, in the village Orasac, near Belgrade, Serbia. — AP

THREE KILLED; BANGLADESH TROOPS RAID MILITANT DEN

DHAKA: Three people including a woman were killed when Bangladesh security forces stormed an Islamist militant hideout yesterday, police said, as the Muslim-majority nation fights to contain a wave of extremist attacks. The incident was the latest battle against militants in recent days, which have involved hostage-taking, deadly explosions and gunfights at multiple hideouts in several locations in northeastern areas of the country.

Yesterday's assault saw a SWAT team enter a duplex in Moulvibazar town that they had surrounded since Wednesday, pitting police against what they believe is a new militant faction. The head of the counter-terrorism unit Monirul Islam told reporters that it was not clear if the people they discovered dead inside had died from police fire, or if they had blown themselves up.

Police said those inside were from a new wing of an extremist group that the government has blamed for a wave of deadly attacks targeting foreigners and religious minorities in recent years, including an attack last year on a Dhaka cafe where 22 people, mostly foreigners, were killed by armed terrorists. The Islamic State group has taken credit for the bomb attacks but the government has rejected the claim and instead blamed the banned homegrown Islamist organization, Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Eight people, including women, were found dead after a police raid earlier this week in a nearby house, which is owned by the same person as the property in yesterday's incident—a British citizen of Bangladesh-origin. Last week army commandos stormed a five-storey building in the nearby city of Sylhet to free dozens of hostages, triggering a violent three-day stand-off. At least four militants died and another six people, including two police officers, were killed when two bombs went off near a crowd watching the operation.

One of the explosions fatally injured the intelligence chief of Rapid Action Battalion—the elite force which has been at the forefront of the country's fight against Islamist militancy—a big blow to the security forces. "One of the bodies (found in Moulvibazar town) was of the man who most possibly led the Sylhet bomb attacks," Islam said. Since the Dhaka cafe attack, security forces have launched a nationwide crackdown on Islamist extremist groups, killing around 65 suspected militants. —AFP



BELGRADE: A group of migrants from Afghanistan pose for a photograph near the central bus station in Belgrade. — AFP

STRANDED IN SERBIA, MIGRANTS ENDURE 'ODYSSEY OF VIOLENCE'

BELGRADE: Driven back by police batons and snarling dogs, or beaten and robbed by the smugglers they relied on, migrants caught in Serbia have regularly been victims of violence as they struggle to reach Europe. About 8,000 migrants have been trapped in the country since the European Union closed its borders, hoping to block the so-called Balkans route taken by hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

But migrants continue to cross the region in smaller numbers—a few hundred a day—often with the help of traffickers. "I could not imagine that European police could be so violent," Najim Khan, a 21-year-old mason from Pakistan, said in a Belgrade park. The claims from migrants as well as aid groups are dismissed by the authorities: Croatia says there is "no proof" of abuses, Hungary says it acts "with respect to human dignity," and Bulgaria says it has looked into every claim "but they were never confirmed." Kkan, who arrived from Bulgaria a few weeks ago, says that one evening, the police burst into the squat where he was staying in Sofia.

"They beat us, took us to a police station and then to a closed centre. They beat us again during transfers," he said. Once in Serbia, he tried to reach the European Union despite the increased patrols at Hungary's border, but his group was quickly spotted by the Hungarian police. "They made us lie on our stomachs, in a line. They ran on our backs, laughing. They were throwing beers in our faces," Khan said. "They took our cell-

phones and broke them. They did not take our money." In early March, medical aid group Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) denounced the violence against migrants, calling it a "ritual of brutality... designed to stop people from trying to cross again".

'Maybe they wanted money'

"The militarization of the EU borders has led to a staggering increase in violence, especially along the Balkans," said Andrea Contenta of MSF, which has set up a clinic in Belgrade. "More than half of our patients have experienced violent events during their journey." Rados Djurovic, of the Asylum Protection Centre in Serbia, said migrants "complain mostly about violence suffered in Hungary, where they were bitten by dogs, hit brutally, causing broken bones."

Many also complained about abuse in Croatia, but the situation was better in Serbia, where the police have been given clear instructions, according to an aid worker who declined to be named. Contenta added that although smugglers were responsible for some of the assaults, "the vast majority of our patients reported alleged violence perpetrated by state authorities, mainly by EU member states such as Hungary, Bulgaria and Croatia."

Attal Shafihullah, a 16-year-old Afghan, said he had experienced both. One night Shafihullah and three comrades were intercepted by the Bulgarian police as they tried to leave Serbia. "Sometimes they let you go," he said. "Other times not." —AFP

SLOW TRAIN COMING: DYLAN IN SWEDEN..

Continued from Page 1

Mikael Timm, a culture reporter at the public Swedish Radio, thinks Dylan wants the meeting to be strictly private to avoid a situation that could spiral out of his control, especially after a series of "humiliating press conferences" in the 1960s. "He obviously wants to communicate but realized he doesn't need to be exposed to aggressive and offensive press conferences," Timm told AFP.

Dylan was set to perform concerts yesterday and today in Stockholm, the first stop on a long-planned European tour for his latest album of cover songs "Triplicate". It is unclear if the meeting was to take place before or after the two shows, as the Academy has been tight-lipped. But Ake Jonsson, a loyal fan who's seen Dylan perform 75 times, hopes the enigmatic music icon will at least mention the Nobel during his concert. "It would be interesting if he talked about the Nobel prize. He's barely said (anything) during concerts these past years," Jonsson told Swedish public broadcaster SVT.

The 75-year-old Dylan will not give his traditional Nobel lecture during the meeting, the only requirement to receive the eight million kronor (\$891,000) that comes with the prize. He has until June 10 to deliver his lecture, which could be anything from a short speech to a performance, a video broadcast or even a song. Failing that, he risks losing the prize money. "The Academy has reason to believe that a taped version will be sent at a later point," Danus said on Wednesday, without specifying an exact date.

The songwriter of "Blowin' In The Wind", "Hurricane" and "Mr Tambourine Man" was honored "for having creat-

ed new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition," the Nobel committee said when the award was announced last October. "Not once have I ever had the time to ask myself, 'Are my songs literature?'" Dylan said later in a thank-you speech read aloud by the US ambassador to Sweden during the December Nobel ceremony in Stockholm, which he skipped due to "pre-existing commitments".

While Danus, a fervent Dylan fan, has defended her choice and that of her peers, Scottish writer Irvine Welsh, author of "Trainspotting", mocked the prize "awarded by senile hippies". Dylan kept silent for weeks after he was announced as the winner and when he was asked at the time why he did not respond to the Academy's calls, he told the Daily Telegraph: "Well, I'm right here." His mysterious reaction even provoked Academy member Per Wastberg to call him "impolite" and "arrogant".

"If you want something to go towards a certain direction, then (Dylan) will go towards the opposite direction," Martin Nystrom, a music critic at the Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter, said. "He's very unpredictable," Nystrom told AFP. Dylan later apologized for not being able to attend the ceremony and expressed surprise over being chosen for an honor given to literature heavyweights like Ernest Hemingway and Albert Camus. "If someone had ever told me that I had the slightest chance of winning the Nobel Prize, I would have to think that I'd have about the same odds as standing on the moon," he added. Armed with a harmonica and an acoustic guitar, Dylan confronted social injustice, war and racism, and recording an astonishing 300 songs in his first three years. — AFP

COLOMBIA MUDSLIDES KILL AT LEAST 112...

Continued from Page 1

The disaster is of "large proportions," he added. Putumayo Governor Sorrel Aroca called the development "an unprecedented tragedy" for the area. There are "hundreds of families we have not yet found and whole neighborhoods have disappeared," he told W Radio. Carlos Ivan Marquez, director of the National Disaster Risk Management Unit, told AFP the mudslides were caused by the rise of the Mocoa River and tributaries. The rivers flooded, causing a "big avalanche," the army said in a statement. Some 130 mm of rain fell Friday night, Santos said.

"That means 30 percent of monthly rainfall fell last night, which precipitated a sudden rise of several rivers," he said. He promised earlier on Twitter to "guarantee assistance to the victims of this tragedy, which has Colombians in mourning." "Our prayers are with the victims and those affected," he added.

The authorities activated a crisis group including more than 100 local officials, military personnel, police and rescuers to search for missing people and begin removing mountains of debris, Marquez said. Mocoa, a town of 40,000 people, was left without power or running water. "There are lots of people in the streets, lots of people dis-

placed and many houses have collapsed," retired Mocoa resident Hernando Rodriguez, 69, said by telephone. "People do not know what to do... there were no preparations" made for such a disaster, he said. "We are just scarcely realizing what has happened to us."

Several deadly landslides have struck Colombia in recent months. A landslide in November killed nine people in the southwestern rural town of El Tambo, officials said at the time. A landslide the month before killed 10 people in the north of the country.

Photos posted on Twitter by the air force showed neighborhood streets filled with mud and damaged houses while videos on social media showed residents searching for survivors in the debris and struggling to move through waist-high water overnight. Herman Granados, an anesthesiologist at the local hospital, said he arrived early yesterday morning and worked throughout the night on victims. He estimated there were at least 300 people injured and said the hospital doesn't have a blood bank large enough to deal with the magnitude of the crisis and was quickly running out of supplies. He said some of the hospital workers came to help even while there are own relatives remained missing. "Under the mud," he said, "I am sure there are many more." — Agencies

IRAN HARDLINERS FEELING EMBOLDENED

Continued from Page 1

The administration, meanwhile, has implemented additional US sanctions against Iran over its ballistic missile program. US Vice President Mike Pence reiterated Sunday that the Trump administration "has put Iran on notice", and will not tolerate Iranian efforts to "destabilize the region and jeopardize Israel's security." The warning first came in February after Iran test-fired a ballistic missile.

Hardliners are also hoping to capitalize on voters' pocketbook anxieties, including Rouhani's failure to significantly alleviate poverty and Iran's longstanding double-digit unemployment rate. Officials say some 11 million of the country's 80 million people are living below the poverty line. Iran has been freed of crippling economic sanctions and secured multibillion-dollar deals with Boeing Co. and Airbus for hundreds of passenger planes as a direct result of the nuclear deal.

But many average Iranians say they are still waiting for the deals' benefits to trickle down. They include Houshang Lotfi, a 43-year-old welder in Tehran who has turned to selling cheap toys on the street because of a lack of jobs. "I know Rouhani did a lot to save our country from hassles but I am still selling toys," he said. "Streets are not my place. I must work in an industrial field."

Other hardliners considering running include Hamid Baghaei, who is an ally of former controversial president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad; former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili; Tehran mayor Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf and cleric Ebrahim Raisi, a close ally to Supreme Leader

Ali Khamenei. The crowded field means multiple hardliners - who belong to the conservative "principalist" camp in Iranian politics - could end up running, as was the case in 2013.

That could help ensure the re-election of Rouhani, whose 2013 win as a relative moderate surprised those who had assumed another hard-liner would replace his firebrand predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Rouhani rode to victory by beating his nearest two rivals, who split the headline vote. "If principalists' choice is to send various candidates to the field, they - in practice - open the road for reformists. The choice will keep principalists in the margin of power for another four-year term," said a commentary in the semi-official news agency Fars, which is close to hard-liners and the Guard.

Those running formally register their candidacies during a five-day period beginning April 11. They must then be vetted by the Guardian Council, a constitutional watchdog, which will announce who is approved to run by April 27. Rouhani has not said yet that he will run, but he is widely expected to do so. Incumbents typically announce their candidacies late to keep their rivals guessing. However he has pushed voters to go to the polls.

A Tehran-based political analyst, Saeed Leilaz, predicted that Rouhani would win the election with a weak majority "The sphere is yet not polarized and this leads to lower turnout. So Rouhani will be a president with a weaker majority." Rouhani won the 2013 presidential election with nearly 51 percent from a turnout of about 38 million. Approximately 52 million are eligible to vote this year. — AP

WASHINGTON 'REBOOTS' EGYPT TIES AFTER YEARS...

Continued from Page 1

society groups and the release of American-Egyptian Aya Hejazy. The US administration official said Washington will approach rights issues in a "private, more discreet way". It will also push for the release of Hejazy, who ran an NGO for homeless children and has been detained since 2014 on human trafficking charges. Her verdict is expected on April 16.

Over the past three years, Sisi has met a trickle of delegations from American think-tanks and other groups, drumming home the importance of supporting him. Cairo had demanded Western countries take a tougher stance on Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood movement, something Trump's administration has suggested it could consider. "Beyond Sisi being thrilled that Trump replaced Obama, and the opportunity to turn a page, this is Egypt trying to reassert itself in a more central way to US Middle East strategy," said Issandr El-Amrani, the International Crisis Group's North Africa director.

Egypt - one of two Arab countries to have a peace treaty with Israel - had traditionally played a central role in US regional alliances, in return receiving \$1.3 billion in annual military aid. Cairo has also mediated between Israel and the Palestinians. Sisi's office said he will broach the issue with Trump, who has confusingly suggested that he is fine with either a two-state or a one-state solu-

tion to the conflict. Sisi's trip comes ahead of Trump's talks on Wednesday with King Abdullah II of Jordan and after a tentative invitation to Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas to visit. "We are going to be discussing the general outlines of our approach with the Middle East peace process," the US official said on Friday.

Although Sisi may be delighted about having Trump's ear, he may yet be disappointed. "The focus (for Trump) is on areas where Egypt has little relevance, like Iraq and Syria," Amrani said. Egypt is part of the international coalition against the Islamic State group, but is bogged down fighting the militants' franchise in the Sinai Peninsula, where they have killed hundreds of soldiers and policemen.

Western officials who requested anonymity say Egypt is primarily interested in advanced military hardware it believes Western countries are withholding. Cairo also wants conventional equipment that Washington believes is not useful for a counter-insurgency campaign. But it remains unclear whether Trump, who wants to downsize foreign aid and cut the State Department's budget, will maintain current financing to Egypt. The US administration official said Washington wants to "fully support" Egypt. But "the discussions about the details of the budget process and how that's going to be allocated with the input from the Department of State is still an ongoing process," he said. — AFP







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• Kuwait 1 (The New str.) • Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower) • Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.) • Hawalli 2 (Bin Khaldon str.) • Shuwalkh (4th Ring road) • Al-Rai (4th Ring road) • Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.) • Farwaniya (Behind police Station) • Fahsheel (Opp. General Parking) • Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op) • Alport (Departure Hall)

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Focus

SECURITY RISKY CARD FOR UK IN BREXIT TALKS

From sharing intelligence after terror attacks to pursuing cross-border criminals, security is a potential bargaining chip for Britain in the Brexit negotiations - but one that must be played carefully, analysts say. Prime Minister Theresa May warned the European Union on Wednesday that failing to reach a new trade deal once Britain leaves the bloc could damage cooperation against crime and terrorism. The government denied it was a threat, saying it was simply fact that unless Britain agreed to continue its security cooperation projects, including with law enforcement agency Europol, then it would leave them after Brexit.

Charles Grant, director of the Centre for European Reform, said that in the tough talks ahead with the EU, "Britain's strongest card is its contribution to European security". Malcolm Chalmers, of the RUSI military think tank, made a similar point - although he warned against playing it too strongly. "The temptation to use the UK's 'security surplus' - its role as the leading West European military and intelligence power - as a bargaining chip should be resisted," he said in a January briefing paper. "The UK's contributions to European security can, however, help to remind other EU states of the strong interests and values that they will continue to have in common."

Anand Menon, professor of European studies at King's College London, said on Thursday that May's tone suggested she was trying to play to the eurosceptic press. "There was a positive way of doing this... of saying exactly the same thing in a way that makes us sound like we're all pointing in the same direction," he said. British opposition politicians seized on the suggestion that May was playing politics with security - just one week after an attack on parliament that left four people dead.

"National security too important to use as bargaining chip in Brexit trade negotiations. PM's threat is dangerous," tweeted Yvette Cooper, the Labour chairwoman of the House of Commons' home affairs committee. Her warning was echoed by the European Parliament's chief Brexit negotiator, Guy Verhofstadt, who said that "citizens' security was far too serious a subject".

'Make Britain less safe'

May stressed she wanted to negotiate continued access to information sharing schemes in the EU - and she herself has previously warned that reducing cooperation would make Britain less safe. As well as Europol, Britain makes use of the European Arrest Warrant (EAW), which speeds up extradition requests, and the Passenger Name Directive, which allows potential criminals to be tracked on flights across the continent. In 2015, Britain also joined the Schengen Information System (SIS II), an EU-wide database of real-time alerts which is particularly useful in tracking suspected foreign fighters returning from Syria and Iraq.

"These are practical measures that promote effective cooperation between different European law enforcement organizations, and if we were not part of them Britain would be less safe," May said last year, when she was still interior minister. London received 48,766 requests through the EAW between 2010 and 2015, according to the National Crime Agency, while it was used 1,424 times by Britain. One of those was Hussain Osman, who was arrested in Italy in 2005 after trying to stage a repeat of the London suicide bombings in July that year, which left 52 people dead. Britain's current interior minister, Amber Rudd, said Britain was the top contributor to Europol and "if we left Europol, then we would take our information... with us". But the agency's British director, Rob Wainwright, warned last year that if it left, Britain would become a "second-tier member" without direct access to data.

'NATO capability'

Brexit will not affect the way Britain shares intelligence in the "Five Eyes" partnership - the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand - nor its leading role in the US-led NATO military alliance. But Professor Iain Begg, research fellow at the London School of Economics, said that NATO membership in particular could be used as leverage with some of the smaller EU states. "Security is also the hard security of NATO, where one of the bargaining chips UK does have to play is its NATO capability," he told AFP. Britain is in the process of deploying 800 troops to Estonia, and also has 150 in Poland to reassure them in the face of Russian aggression. "That's where Britain can say to a country like Estonia, you back us on some of the things we're demanding in the (EU) exit negotiations and we'll be much more accommodating to you about pushing NATO to locate troops on the Estonian-Russian border," Begg said. — AFP

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Washington Watch

WHAT 'LAND DAY' MEANS

By Dr James J Zogby

March 30, 1976 was a transformative moment in Palestinian history. On that day, Palestinian citizens of Israel organized and implemented a nation-wide strike to protest the Israeli government's plans to confiscate thousands of acres of Palestinian-owned land in the Galilee region. The confiscations were designed to provide for the expansion of the Jewish population in the Galilee - since Israeli leaders were concerned that the composition of the region had remained overwhelmingly Arab.

Confiscations were nothing new. In the three decades between the founding of their state in 1948 and 1976, Israel had seized 1,500,000 acres of Palestinian owned land - about 1/3 of the land mass of the State of Israel - much of it from Palestinians who had been expelled in 1948. But it was this effort to Judaize the Galilee that proved to be "the straw that broke the camel's back". The Arabs said "enough" and had the organizational wherewithal to act. The strike, which was called "Day in Defense of the Land", was planned as a peaceful demonstration of Palestinian resolve and was restricted to the all-Arab villages and towns. It was a success in terms of participation since in both its planning and execution it involved tens of thousands - workers, shopkeepers, and students, men and women, alike.

The success was muted, however by the violence used by the Israeli police against the demonstrators, as part of their effort to stifle any and all forms of Arab resistance. After declaring protests illegal and attempting to place curfews on Arab towns and villages, Israeli forces brutally responded to the country-wide mobilization, killing six and injuring over 100 Arab citizens. Since that day, on every following March 30th, Palestinians world-wide have commemorated the theft of land and the deaths of the demonstrators with Land Day events. The impact of Land Day was important on several levels. In the first place, Arabs and Palestinians in the diaspora became aware of and inspired by their brethren in Israel. Before the 1976 events, these Palestinians were either unknown or dismissed by the broader Arab World. The poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, Tawfiq Zayyad and Sameh Al-Qassem was known by some, but the reality of the community from which they had emerged was not.

Witnessing their steadfastness, the level of organization they demonstrated, and the genius of their tactics proved inspirational to many Arabs. In one fell swoop, the Palestinian citizens in Israel went from being unknown to being respected as an integral part of the Palestinian community. In succeeding years, Land Day commemorations spread from Israel to the territories occupied in 1967, the refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan, and Palestinian communities across the globe.

Palestinian identity

Not only had the rest of the Arab World been cut off from the community inside Israel, the Palestinian Arabs of Israel had also been cut off from their compatriots. Israel had made a determined effort to erase their culture and attachment to their Arab heritage. They were forced to study Hebrew and learn an Israeli version of their history. In this way Israel had hoped to mold them into a submissive community. Land Day, and the region's reaction to it, strengthened their Palestinian identity and their feeling of connection to their broader nation.

Land Day also served, in other more concrete ways, to further empower and embolden the Palestinian citizens of Israel. While maintaining that as citizens of the state they deserved justice and equality, Land Day accelerated their identification as part of the Palestinian community. They were the indigenous inhabitants of that land and the remnant of the Palestinian nation that had been dispossessed and dispersed among the nations. And so they saw their defense of the land as an action on behalf of their entire people.

This had long been a theme of the Palestinian poets in Israel. They wrote of their deep roots and love of the land. They lamented the hundreds of Palestinian villages that had been destroyed by Israel and spoke longingly of their refugee compatriots who sought to return. While their poetry was known throughout the community in Israel and had helped to shape the consciousness of a generation, the political empowerment of the Palestinians in Israel had been inhibited by a combination of state repression and the difficulties they experienced as a traditional and oppressed people who had been forced to adapt to the Israeli system and transform themselves into a modern political force. Land Day changed that.

Israel had banned the creation of Arab political parties

and for two decades applied a notorious system of repressive laws to regulate Arab political activity. It was significant that the first effort at creating a political party was called "al Ard" ("The Land"). In short order, Israel banned the party and expelled its founders. During this period the only political vehicle available to the Palestinian citizens of Israel was Rakah. Though officially Communist, Rakah had become the substitute nationalist party for the Arab population. It was through Rakah that Tawfiq Zayyad had been elected to the Knesset and Mayor of Nazareth. And it was Zayyad and his party that provided a major organizational impetus for Land Day.

Politically mature

Today, the Palestinian Arabs in Israel have continued to politically mature. They have formed a number of political entities that have coalesced into the "Joint List". They now have 13 seats in Israel's Knesset and with increased voter mobilization are poised to increase their numbers to 15 in the next election. As they have become more of a political force, Israel has stepped up its policies of repression, land confiscation, and Judaization. There are new Israeli efforts to remove Palestinian bedouin from the Negev and from areas around what they call "Greater Jerusalem" - to make way for more Jewish settlements. And the same policies they used to colonize the land in Israel are being used more extensively in the West Bank. It was no accident that on this Land Day, the Netanyahu government announced the building of a major new settlement in the occupied land. But as Land Day 2017 has made clear, as the repression continues, so does the resistance.

With hope for a two-state solution all but extinguished, the future trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appears to be best captured by spirit Land Day. It is the continued resistance of an occupied indigenous people fighting for justice and rights against an aggressive and repressive occupier. Soon the Palestinians will be the majority population in the land of Israel/Palestine. Israel is digging a deep hole for itself and as the cycle of repression and resistance continues, the outcome of this conflict will be decided either by a transformation of political culture of the occupier or an end of the resistance of the occupied. I, for one, don't see the Palestinians surrendering.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

WHITE HOUSE-SPY AGENCIES RELATIONSHIP CHANGED

The White House's handling of intelligence reports on the Russia investigation has been labeled unorthodox and, to the Democrats, suspicious. But when it comes to Donald Trump's relationship with his spy agencies, that's par for the course. Since taking office, Trump has challenged the integrity of intelligence officials, moved to exert more control over US spying agencies and accused his predecessor of using government spy craft to monitor his presidential campaign.

This week, Trump's White House is facing allegations that it funneled secret intelligence reports to a top Republican investigating his campaign's possible ties to Russian officials as well as Moscow's interference in the 2016 election. The approach appears to be based, at least in part, on the White House's anxiety over the Russia investigations, which threaten to seriously weaken his presidency. It also reflects a deep distrust of the intelligence community among his political advisers, including government newcomers who have never dealt with classified information or covert programs.

"It reveals a chasm of ignorance about how stuff is done," said Michael Hayden, the former head of the CIA and National Security Agency. Trump, with the backing of political advisers Steve Bannon and Jared Kushner, initially sought to put Wall Street billionaire Stephen Feinberg in charge of a review of the intelligence agencies. An early iteration of the review explored eliminating the Office of the

Director of National Intelligence, the umbrella agency created after the Sept 11, 2001, attacks to streamline and coordinate intelligence.

Officials say they viewed the agency as an unnecessary and bloated bureaucracy that can manipulate or distort information. But the review was recalibrated after Dan Coats - who was confirmed earlier this month as Trump's intelligence director - vigorously complained about being undermined in the midst of his confirmation hearings, according to US officials. Coats is now leading the review, though it does not include potentially scrapping the office he now runs, according to the officials.

"This is going to be more on the 'trim and optimize' as opposed to 'dismantle,'" said L. Roger Mason Jr, an executive with the nonprofit Nobilis and a member of the Trump transition team that focused on the national intelligence directorate. Trump's White House has looked for other ways to seize the reins. Officials have expressed an interest in having more raw intelligence sent to the president for his daily briefings instead of an analysis of information compiled by the agencies, according to current and former US officials. The change would have given his White House advisers more control about the assessments given to him and sidelined some of the conclusions made by intelligence professionals.

One official said the focus on accessing more raw intelligence appeared to be more of a priority under the short tenure of Michael Flynn, who was ousted as national

security adviser after less than one month on the job. He was replaced by H. R. McMaster, an Army lieutenant general who was expected to exert more control over the NSC but has found himself struggling to overcome skepticism among Flynn holdovers who have the ear of Bannon.

Flynn protege

Earlier this month, CIA leaders raised concerns with McMaster about an intelligence director on his staff. McMaster moved to replace him, but the staffer, Ezra Cohen-Watnick, appealed to Bannon and Kushner, who got Trump to intervene to save his job. Cohen-Watnick was a protege of Flynn, having worked for him at the Pentagon's intelligence shop. Now the NSC's senior director for intelligence programs, Cohen-Watnick is one of about a dozen people in the White House with access to a full range of classified information, including details of US covert programs. His position also gives him the ability to request intelligence products from agencies.

On Thursday, The New York Times identified Cohen-Watnick as one of two White House staffers who helped House intelligence chairman Devin Nunes view secret reports. A US official confirmed Cohen-Watnick had access to the kind of intelligence materials, but maintained he did not play a role in helping the congressman access the documents. The official pointed instead to the other official named in the New York Times report, Michael Ellis, a

White House lawyer who previously worked for Nunes on the House committee.

Cohen-Watnick has privately expressed suspicion to colleagues over whether Ellis could have been responsible for some of the leaks that had been troubling the new administration in its first few weeks in office, according to an administration official. The current and former officials insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the sensitive matters. Nunes said the materials he saw showed the "troubling" extent to which information about Trump and his associates' communications was spread around the government in the waning days of the Obama administration. His public declarations came days after Trump officials privately suggested to reporters that they focus on that same topic, a signal that the California congressman and the White House may have been working in tandem.

The White House also said the information validated Trump's remarkable and unproven claim that President Barack Obama wiretapped his New York skyscraper, though Nunes disputed that conclusion. Stephen Slick, who served in the CIA and NSC for three decades, said intelligence agencies go to "extraordinary lengths" to safeguard the privacy of Americans. He said officials "have no incentive to see intelligence reports they gather and distribute for national security purposes become fodder in domestic political disputes." — AP

PIQUE RESTED FOR GRANADA TRIP

BARCELONA: Gerard Pique will join Lionel Messi on the sidelines for Barcelona's return to La Liga action today at Granada after being left out Luis Enrique's 18-man squad yesterday. Pique played in both Spain's wins over Israel and France during the recent international break. However, it was his post-match comments in Paris in midweek that grabbed the headlines as he launched a fresh dig at rivals Real Madrid, saying he didn't like Madrid's "values." The centre-back evoked tax fraud cases against Barcelona teammates Neymar and Lionel Messi and claimed that Real had "pulled strings" to avoid punishment for their players in similar circumstances. Pique's is more being protected by Enrique as a booking today would rule him out of Sevilla's visit to the Camp Nou on Wednesday. Messi is suspended, whilst Arda Turan and long-term absentee Aleix Vidal miss out through injury. Barca trail Madrid by two points at the top of La Liga, but Real also have a game in hand. — AFP



AL-FOUDARI ELECTED DEPUTY CHIEF OF ARF

CAIRO: Kuwait Sea Sports Club (KSSC) Secretary General Khalid Al-Foudari has been elected Deputy Chairman of the Arab Rowing Federation (ARF) for Asia. During a meeting in Cairo yesterday, the ARF's General Assembly re-elected Khalid Zin-Eddin as a chairperson. Libya's Nour-Eddin Al-Krikshi was elected ARF Deputy Chief for Africa. Talking to KUNA, Al-Foudari expressed pleasure and pride for the assembly's confidence, saying that the choice reflects Kuwait's distinct status in sea sports, rowing in particular. He added that the assembly approved that Kuwait would host an Arab rowing championship early in 2018. Meanwhile, Al-Foudari said that the Kuwaiti rowing team continue intensive preparations for the 2017 Asian Rowing Championships due in Thailand in September, and later the Arab one in Tunisia. — KUNA

JEPKOSGEI SMASHES THREE WORLD RECORDS

PRAGUE: Kenya's Joyciline Jepkosgei broke the world half marathon record as well as the 10km and 15km marks at the Prague Half Marathon on the way to winning the IAAF Gold Label Road Race in one hour, four minutes and 52 seconds yesterday. The 23-year-old, who was competing in just her fifth half marathon, clocked splits of 30:05 and 45:37 to improve the 10km and 15km world records. "I didn't know I would break the world record today," said Jepkosgei, whose previous best time was 1:06:08 in this year's Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon. "I only wanted to improve my time. This is a surprise for me. The conditions were good for me because I'm used to training at this time of day, in the morning." Defending champion Violah Jepchumba of Kenya finished second in 65:22, with Fancy Chemutai third. Jepkosgei was pushed to her limits by Jepchumba as the pair were separated by one second at the 10km mark, both well inside the previous record of 30:21 set by Paula Radcliffe in 2003. However, Jepkosgei began pulling away from Jepchumba as her lead grew to three seconds at 15km and she crossed the line with 64:52 on the clock to shave 14 seconds from the world half-marathon record set this year by compatriot Peres Jepchirchir. — Reuters



FIGURE SKATING

RUSSIA'S MEDVEDEVA RETAINS WORLD TITLE TO EMULATE KWAN

HELSINKI: A performance full of grace and technical wizardry proved that Evgenia Medvedeva will be the woman to beat at next year's Winter Olympics as the Russian soared above her rivals to retain her title at the world figure skating championships.

Friday's triumph with a world record total of 233.41 points made her the first woman since American Michelle Kwan in 2001 to win back-to-back world titles and enhanced her reputation as a skating phenomenon since she has now claimed 10 titles in a row. No one came close to ending her run on Friday as she romped to victory by a margin of 15.28 points over Canadian Kaetlyn Osmond. The 17-year-old made it a clean sweep of world records as her free skate score of 154.40 was also an all-time best.

Osmond and team mate Gabrielle Daleman captured their first world championship medals by finishing second and third respectively.

Osmond, who scored 218.13, and Daleman (213.52) produced the performances of their lives to earn Canada their first women's medals at the worlds since Joannie Rochette won a silver in 2009. It was also the first time Canada had won two podium places in the women's competition. The 21-year-old Osmond credited her success to "aiming for excellence rather than aiming for perfection" but her skating skills were no match for the poise or artistry that Medvedeva brings to the ice.

SPARKLING PERFORMANCE

Wearing a sparkling grey and pink dress, the Russian appeared to have grown wings as she floated through her free skate, beautifully executing all of her 11 jumps to the haunting melodies of the 'Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close' film soundtrack.

The balletic style of her jumps, where she twirls her arm above her head as she spins through the air, adds another dimension to the flawless presentation of her routines and she had fans purring as she opened with a soaring triple flip-triple toe loop combination.

The "oohs" and "ahhs" grew louder and louder before reaching ear-splitting levels as she whirled around in a blur for her final Biellman spin. Among those giving her a standing ovation was Daleman, who was waiting to go on the ice next. "I applauded her as she's such a beautiful and amazing skater and I respect her so much as a skater. To see her score was absolutely amazing... but at the same time it was motivating for me as the crowd



HELSINKI: Gold medalist Evgenia Medvedeva of Russia celebrates with her medal on the podium after the women's Free Skating event at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships in Helsinki, Finland on Friday. — AFP

was lifting you up," said the 19-year-old.

American Karen Chen was fourth, while Japan's Mai Mihara was left to wonder what might have been had she not messed up her short skate as she surged from 15th to fifth in the overall standings following an exquisite long programme on Friday. "I was so happy to be able to perform the best Cinderella program of the season. I was almost crying," said the Japanese Four Continents champion.

UTTER DESPAIR

Russia's Anna Pogorilaya did burst into tears - but those she shed were of utter despair. The 2016 bronze medallist suffered a total meltdown on Friday as she fell - over, and over and over again. When she crash landed for the third time -

following a triple loop - she simply lost the will to pick herself up and comically slid backwards across the ice on her bottom.

Somehow she got back on her feet for the final few seconds of her routine but once her nightmare was over, she collapsed on to her knees and bent over to hide her face from the crowd who had started to chant her name.

But there was no hiding the fact that a score of 111.85 for the free skate had dropped her from fourth to 13th. Despite Pogorilaya's ordeal, Medvedeva's win meant Russia, along with Canada and the US, secured the maximum three spots in the women's competition at next year's Winter Olympics. Japan, however, lost a place and will have to make do with sending two skaters to Pyeongchang. — Reuters



HELSINKI: (L-R) Silver medalist Japans' Shoma Uno, Gold medalist Japan's Yuzuru Hanyu and Bronze medalist Boyan Jin of China pose after the men's free skating event at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2017 in Helsinki yesterday. — AFP

JAPAN'S HANYU BACK TOP WITH SECOND WORLD GOLD

HELSINKI: Olympic champion Yuzuru Hanyu hit four quadruple jumps in a record score to snatch a second career gold in style at the world figure skating championship yesterday.

The 22-year-old, so close to gold in the last two world championships, led a Japanese one-two ahead of Shoma Uno with China's Jin Boyang taking bronze as Asia swept the men's podium for the first time ahead of the 2018 Winter Olympics.

Hanyu had been trailing in fifth after the short programme, but pulled out a best-ever score in the free skate to reclaim the title he won in 2014.

Bears and gifts rained down on the ice after his performance at a capacity-packed Hartwall Arena in Helsinki and he wiped tears from his eyes as he watched his scores appear. "After the short programme I was so disappointed and down, but the fans and team helped lift me," said Hanyu, who scored 321.59 points.

In the high-quality field the top three all hit four quads with 19-year-old Uno achieving 319.31 for his first world medal and Jin, 19, taking his second straight bronze with 303.58. "I could hear the crowd roaring me on, not just the many Japanese in the crowd but everybody supporting me was very impressive," said Hanyu.

"I demonstrated everything I was capable of, my whole package. I wanted to do five quads but did not have enough energy." Two-time defending champion Javier Fernandez of Spain went into the free-skating final in the lead but dropped to fourth after falling during an error-strewn skate to an Elvis selection. "I have to take this as a positive thing heading into the Olympic season," said 26-year-old Fernandez.

"Maybe it means there won't be so much pressure. I kind of knew how Yuzuru had skated and it added some pressure on me." Hanyu had to settle for silver for the

past two worlds behind Toronto training partner Fernandez, with the Japanese superstar last year throwing away a 12-point lead to finish runner-up to the Spaniard. This time the situation was reversed with Hanyu over 10 points adrift of five-time European champion Fernandez going into the final day of competition.

But the Japanese pulled out a superb free skate to the music of Joe Hisaishi's "Hope and Legacy" about Finnish nature, nailing his best performance of the season and a record 223.20 points.

"I have very warm memories about Finland as I won my first international competition here when I was a kid," recalled Hanyu after improving on his own world-record score in the free skate at the 2015 Grand Prix final by 3.72 points.

BURNING AMBITION

Uno-decked out in a black matador jacket with red trim-also achieved a career best for his presentation to Astor Piazzolla's "Buenos Aires Hora Cero".

But the former world junior champion's overwhelming ambition remains to better his talented team-mate. "I have practised so hard. My only motivation was to surpass Yuzuru," said the teenager. "I feel I don't have the complete package yet so I just want to keep practising." "This gives me confidence going into the Olympic season that I can do quads and skate clean."

Former three-time world champion Patrick Chan of Canada finished fifth after the 26-year-old Olympic silver medallist fell during his programme.

US champion Nathan Chan-the first skater to land five quads in a free skate at nationals-attempted six but fell on two.

The competition concludes yesterday with Canada's Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir bidding for a third ice dancing gold after 2010 and 2012. — AFP

AHEAD OF OLYMPICS, FIGURE SKATING IS ABOUT BIG JUMPS

HELSINKI: At next year's Winter Olympics, it won't just be the snowboarders who are focused on getting big air. As freestyle snow events increasingly pack the program, the venerable sport of figure skating - which will mark 110 years at the Olympics in 2018 - is increasingly all about the biggest jumps, too.

The world championship men's free skate yesterday was a celebration of the quad - a high-risk, high-scoring jump with four rotations and a clean, elegant landing. In theory, at least. US national champion Nathan Chen went for a record six quads in one performance, though more isn't always better, as he found after falling on two quads and finishing sixth. Winner Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan landed all of his four cleanly.

As recently as 2010, US skater Evan Lysacek was able to win Olympic gold without a single quad. On Saturday, the best skater without a quad was 12th. "The sport is changing. It's very different from when I won worlds in 2011," three-time world champion Patrick Chan, a comparative veteran at age 26, said Saturday. Big jumps mean extra injury risk, so Chan and his rivals increasingly train less but smarter.

"My body can't keep up, my legs start feeling heavy, they don't recover fast enough," Chan said. "It's like 60 percent, 70 percent recovery-focused now, my training. It used to be 70 percent physical training, on-ice training, off-ice training. So I kind of had to flip the page."

Jumping on ice is fraught with risk, and some skaters fear their sport's existing tendency to cause long-term health problems is getting worse as the jumps get bigger and more frequent.

In his seventh world championships, Michal Brezina was skating with an ankle injury which required medical treatment almost as soon as he left the ice. He's previously had knee and hip surgery.

"It brings a challenge to your health because it's like you're defying gravity," he said, reeling off a list of major injuries suffered by star skaters like Chen and two-time world champion Javier Fernandez. "I think we all have long-term consequences already."

There's no way that any of these guys have not had an injury. Quads aren't on the menu in women's skating - not yet, anyway - but quad throws have become a staple for the top pairs. With female skaters rotating four times after being thrown from a partner's arms, that carries more than a little risk.

Skaters are still looking to push the boundaries. Newly crowned world champion Hanyu mused that he "would like to try" a quad axel, which needs four-and-a-half rotations due to its forward takeoff, though he doubts he could do it in competition. The wilder reaches of the imagination risk overtaking the International Skating Union rulebook. "Scientifically someone told me that five rotations in the air is a possibility," Hanyu said. "The ISU don't even have a score for that yet." — AP



NEW DELHI: Pusarla Venkata Sindhu of India returns a shot against Sania Nehwal of India during the women's single badminton match at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2017 at the Siri Fort Sports Complex in New Delhi on Friday. — AFP

BADMINTON

SINDHU SETS UP TITLE CLASH WITH MARIN

NEW DELHI: India's PV Sindhu yesterday stormed into the final of the India Open badminton tournament to set up an exciting women's singles title clash with top-seeded Carolina Marin in New Delhi.

Sindhu, 21, served past second-seeded Sung Ji Hyun of South Korea 21-18, 14-21, 21-14 in the semi-finals that lasted one hour and 16 minutes at the Siri Fort Sports Complex.

The lanky Sindhu, who outplayed her senior compatriot Saina Nehwal in the quarter-finals, has slowly emerged as India's star shuttler. Sindhu displayed admirable maturity against world number four Hyun in the last-four encounter, as she fought back after losing the second game in front of a raucous home crowd.

Earlier third-ranked Marin, 23, had an easy

semi-final outing to outplay Japan's Akane Yamaguchi, seeded fourth, 21-16, 21-14. In men's action, third-seeded Viktor Axelsen of Denmark eased past Hong Kong's NG Ka Long Angus 21-12, 21-13 to book his berth in the Superseries final. Axelsen, ranked fourth in the world, will meet seventh-seeded Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, who beat Danish player Anders Antonsen 21-17, 21-14. — AFP

PREVIEW

CUBS ON NEW MISSION, INDIANS, RED SOX RE-LOAD

NEW YORK: The World Series champion Chicago Cubs are on a new mission in 2017, aiming to end another drought by repeating as Major League Baseball's best with another Fall Classic crown in the season starting today. The long-suffering Cubbies turned the baseball world upside down last season, ending North American pro sports' longest wait for a championship by getting to the winners' circle for the first time in 108 years.

Now the Cinderellas are favorites to win again and become the first repeat champions since the New York Yankees made it three in a row in 2000. The Cubs help kick off the six-month regular season on Sunday with an Opening Night contest against long-time rivals the St. Louis Cardinals.

Cleveland's Indians, who took the Cubs to extra innings of a climactic Game Seven to decide MLB's championship, top a bunch of worthy contenders

standing in their way. Taking over the dubious honor of replacing the Cubs as the longest suffering franchise since their last championship, the Indians made a bold move for a first title in 69 years by signing former Blue Jays slugger Edwin Encarnacion to a three-year \$65 million deal. Along with the expected return to health of talented outfielder Michael Brantley and rotation members Carlos Carrasco and Danny Salazar at full strength, the Tribe are clear favorites to win the American League Central again.

Cleveland may need all those edges, however, with the Boston Red Sox expected to be an American League postseason force from the East. Boston's blockbuster deal with the White Sox brought them dazzling left-hander Chris Sale to join a rotation that includes reigning AL Cy Young winner Rick Porcello and former winner David Price, although he will miss the start of

the season due to injury. The Red Sox will be without slugging designated hitter David Ortiz, who retired, but Boston still boast a dangerous lineup that may get a boost from a slimmed down Pablo "Kung Fu Panda" Sandoval at third base. The AL West looks competitive with a Texas rivalry looming between the Rangers and the fortified Houston Astros, both looking for their first World Series triumph.

Houston showed they mean business by adding catcher Brian McCann and veteran outfielders Carlos Beltran and Josh Reddick to a youthful roster featuring young stars Jose Altuve, Carlos Correa and the emerging Alex Bregman.

and centerfielder Dexter Fowler, who signed with NL Central rivals St. Louis.

To fill the Chapman void, Chicago dealt for Kansas City closer Wade Davis to mop up for their impressive starters Jon Lester, Jake Arrieta and Kyle Hendricks.

Chicago is banking on the further development of their brilliant young infield of third baseman/NL Most Valuable Player Kris Bryant, shortstop Addison Russell and second baseman Jorge Baez to continue their reign.

Opposition could come from the NL East, where a lively race is expected between the pitching rich Mets and underachieving Nationals.

The NL West once again could boil down to the old Dodgers-Giants rivalry which remains as intense in California as in days of yore when the franchises resided in Brooklyn and New York's borough of Manhattan. — Reuters

CUBS CLOSER

The Cubs lost Cuban fireballing closer Aroldis Chapman, who returned to the Yankees as a free agent,

BASEBALL

ENCARNACION, GOMES HOMER IN INDIANS' SPRING FINALE

PHOENIX: Edwin Encarnacion was signed to a \$60 million, three-year contract this offseason to provide power in the middle of the Cleveland Indians' lineup.

It took a little while this spring, but he's finally given his new bosses an up-close look at what he can do. Encarnacion hit his first homer with the Indians in their final spring training game and Cleveland beat the Arizona Diamondbacks 9-4 on Friday night.

"He has such a nice swing. He wanted 40 at-bats and he got 50 (plate appearances)," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "He knows himself so well. He's ready."

Encarnacion had at least 34 homers and 98 RBIs in each of the past five seasons with the Toronto Blue Jays. He finished the spring with a .311 average and five doubles in 19 games, but the shot off Arizona starter Robbie Ray was his only home run.

Yan Gomes also homered off Ray, who is scheduled to start the fourth game of the season for the Diamondbacks, next Thursday against San Francisco. Gomes ended his night with a second RBI, a sacrifice fly in the sixth inning that gave the Indians a 5-4 lead. Ray struck out five over four-plus innings, allowing three runs, three hits and two walks. He departed after giving up a leadoff triple to Yandy Diaz in the fifth. Diaz later singled in one of five Indians' runs in the sixth. Diaz, informed on Thursday that he will open the season in the majors, hit .458 in 20 spring games.

David Peralta and Yasmany Tomas hit doubles for the Diamondbacks in the fourth inning, Tomas driving in Peralta with two outs. Peralta ended the spring batting .322.

Catcher Jeff Mathis, on his 34th birthday, was charged with three passed balls in the sixth. "We wanted to get through today healthy," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said. "By and large it was a good spring for us. We accomplished a lot ... we really feel like this team is ready to compete today (opening day)." Cody Allen struck out all three Arizona batters he faced in the third. Bryan Shaw finished the spring with another rough outing, giving up multiple runs for the fourth time in eight appearances. Shaw surrendered three earned runs on three hits and two walks in his inning, the fifth.

Indians outfielder Michael Brantley got

Friday off, but he will be with the team for the season opener against Texas tomorrow. That's a good sign that he will be ready to play on opening day after coming back from shoulder surgery and associated setbacks.

Brantley hit .385 in eight spring training games, playing in the past three before Friday in an effort to get him ready for the opener.

THE FINAL TWO

The only roster spots in question for Arizona before Friday night were backup outfielder and a reliever. Jeremy Hazelbaker was told he'd made the opening day roster, and the Diamondbacks optioned right-hander Silvino Bracho to Triple-A Reno after the game, clearing the way for Andrew Chafin to win the final bullpen job. "It was a very tough decision," Lovullo said of the reliever competition. "We like the idea of having a second lefty in the bullpen." Hazelbaker can play all three outfield positions, Lovullo said, and Chris Owings, who will see the bulk of his playing time at shortstop, will play a little right field. Chris Herrmann and Daniel Descalso, two other reserves, can play left field and various other positions. Nick Ahmed will make "a number of starts" at shortstop, Lovullo said, when Owings isn't playing there or is in the outfield.

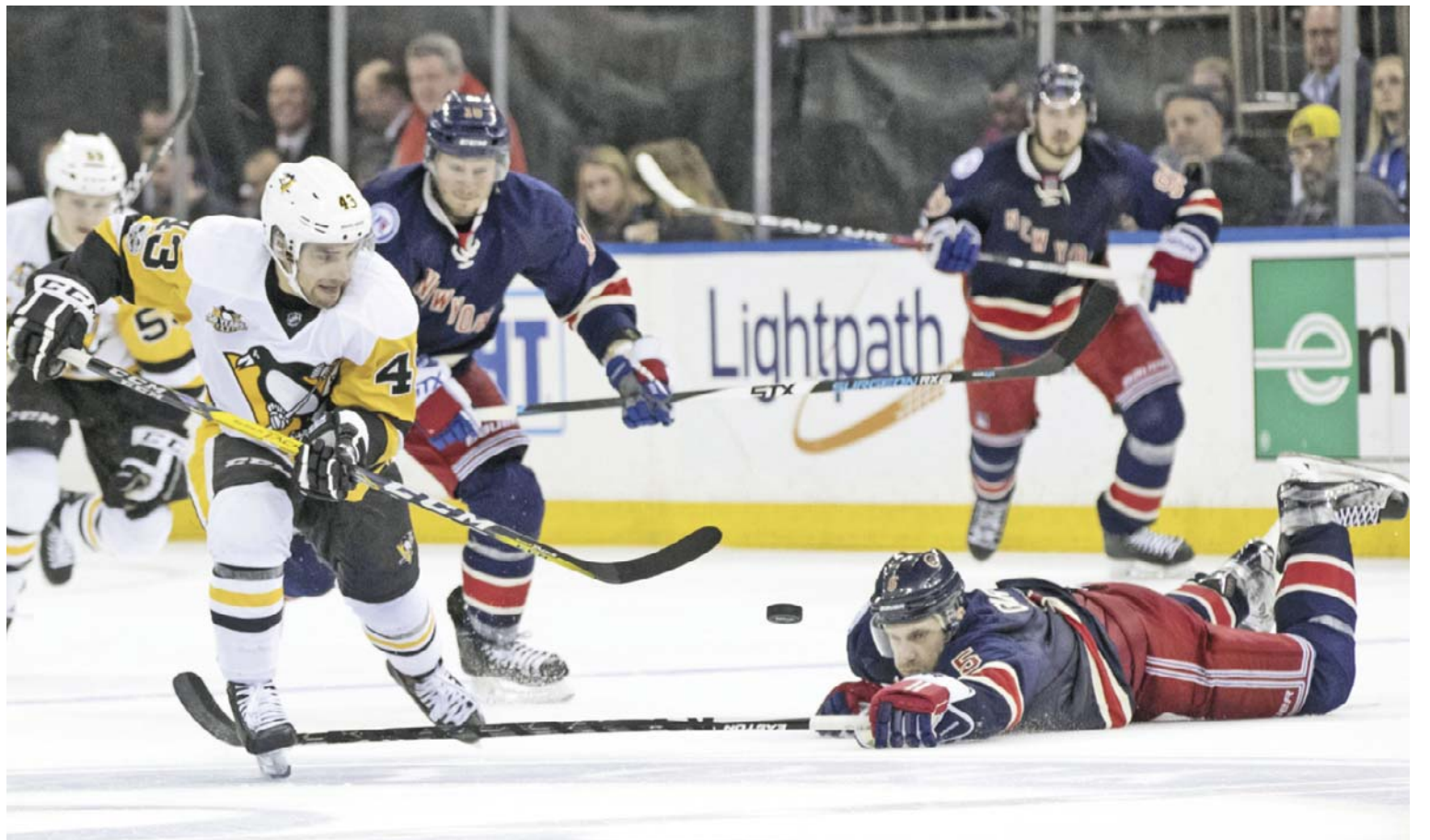
FOR STARTERS

The Diamondbacks' opening day is today against the San Francisco Giants. Arizona is 6-3 in its last nine openers and will start the season at home in Chase Field for the sixth straight season and eighth time in the last nine years.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Indians OF Brandon Guyer was hit by a pitch in the back in the sixth inning, but stayed in the game. The Diamondbacks put RHP Jake Barrett and LHP Steve Hathaway on the 10-day disabled list with shoulder inflammation.

Indians: Cleveland starts the season tomorrow in Arlington, Texas, against the Rangers. Corey Kluber is set for his third straight opening day start. Diamondbacks: Arizona opens the season today at home against the Giants. Zack Greinke faces San Francisco lefty Madison Bumgarner. — AP



NEW YORK: Pittsburgh Penguins left wing Conor Sheary (43) controls the puck as he skates past New York Rangers defenseman Dan Girardi (5) during third period of an NHL hockey game, Friday, at Madison Square Garden in New York. The Penguins won 4-3 in a shootout. — AP

NHL

FLAMES BEAT SHARKS 5-2 TO CLINCH PLAYOFF BERTH

CALGARY: Calgary Flames scored three goals in the second period en route to clinching their first playoff berth in three seasons with a win over Sharks at the Scotiabank Saddledome on Friday night. After Johnny Gaudreau opened the scoring in the first period, Sean Monahan, Matt Stajan and Alex Chiasson added goals in the second to send the Flames on their way. Sam Bennett added an empty-net goal, while goalie Brian Elliott made 36 saves for the Flames, who moved to within one point of the Sharks for third place in the Pacific Division. Bennett and Chiasson finished with a goal and an assist each, while Kris Versteeg and T.J. Brodie each had two assists.

PENGUINS 4, RANGERS 3 (SO)

Phil Kessel and Sidney Crosby scored in a shootout as Pittsburgh slipped past New York at Madison Square Garden to move within one point of the Columbus Blue Jackets for second place in the Metropolitan. When Bryan Rust scored to make it 3-1 with 11:10 left in the game, the Penguins looked well on their way to a convincing win. But Rick Nash cut the lead in half two minutes later and Chris Kreider tied the score at 3 with 11.6 seconds left and goaltender Henrik Lundqvist on the bench for an extra skater. The Rangers had a golden opportunity to win the game in overtime when Kevin Klein and Michael Grabner led a three-on-none charge, but Penguins goaltender Matt Murray, who stopped 32 shots, pushed across to rob Grabner after Klein made a late pass to the right side.

AVALANCHE 2, BLUES 1 (SO)

Calvin Pickard had 27 saves through overtime and two in the shootout as Colorado beat St. Louis. J.T. Compher scored in regulation and Matt Duchene and Nathan MacKinnon had shootout goals to help the Avalanche end a seven-game losing streak. Jake Allen stopped 31 shots and Ryan Reaves had a goal the Blues, who clinched a playoff spot despite the loss.

ISLANDERS 2, DEVILS 1

New York kept its slim playoff hopes alive with a victory over New Jersey at Barclays Center, however captain John Tavares had to be helped off the ice with 3:14 remaining in regulation after getting tangled up with the back of the net and a Devils player. Though Islanders coach Doug Weight termed the injury "lower body," Tavares was clutching the back of his left leg in the hamstring area. The win snapped a three-game losing streak for the Islanders, and moved them within four points of the idle Boston Bruins for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference with five games to play.

BLACKHAWKS 3, BLUE JACKETS 1

Artemi Panarin scored two goals and Patrick Kane had three assists as Chicago cruised to a win over Columbus. Marian Hossa also scored as Chicago secured its second 50-win regular season in franchise history. Four games remain as the Blackhawks chase the franchise record of 52 wins (2009-10). Captain Nick Foligno scored the lone goal for the Blue Jackets, who have tallied only nine goals in their past six games. Columbus finished the month with a 10-4-2 record.

NHL results/standings													
Los Angeles 2, Vancouver 0; Arizona 6, Washington 3; Colorado 2, St. Louis 1 (SO); Calgary 5, San Jose 2; Chicago 3, Columbus 1; NY Islanders 2, New Jersey 1; Pittsburgh 4, NY Rangers 3 (SO).													
Western Conference													
Central Division						Ottawa	41	26	9	197	199	91	
Chicago	50	21	7	237	199	107	Toronto	37	24	15	233	222	89
Minnesota	45	24	8	249	196	98	Boston	41	30	6	220	203	88
St. Louis	42	28	7	215	203	91	Tampa Bay	38	29	9	215	213	85
Nashville	39	27	11	227	213	89	Florida	33	33	11	199	222	77
Winnipeg	36	35	7	233	247	79	Buffalo	32	33	12	193	221	76
Dallas	31	35	11	207	244	73	Detroit	31	34	12	192	229	74
Colorado	21	53	3	152	259	45	Metropolitan Division						
Pacific Division						Washington	51	18	8	251	176	110	
Anaheim	42	23	12	206	190	96	Columbus	49	20	8	237	177	106
Edmonton	43	25	9	228	198	95	Pittsburgh	47	19	11	263	219	105
San Jose	43	28	7	210	194	93	NY Rangers	46	26	6	248	210	98
Calgary	44	30	4	217	210	92	Carolina	35	27	14	202	214	84
Los Angeles	37	33	7	187	189	81	NY Islanders	36	29	12	224	235	84
Vancouver	30	38	9	173	225	69	Philadelphia	37	32	8	206	225	82
Arizona	28	41	9	188	250	65	New Jersey	27	36	14	175	226	68
Eastern Conference						<i>Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).</i>							
Atlantic Division						Montreal	44	24	9	214	190	97	

KINGS 2, CANUCKS 0

Jarome Iginla scored his 625th career goal and Jonathan Quick stopped 35 shots for the shutout as Los Angeles kept its slim playoff hopes alive. Tyler Toffoli also scored for the Kings, who trail Nashville by eight points for the final wild-card playoff spot in the Western Conference. Each team has five games remaining. Iginla's goal tied him with Joe Sakic for 15th all time. It also was the 101st game-winning goal of his career. Quick, who missed 59 games this season with a groin injury, recorded his second shutout of the season and 44th of his career.

COYOTES 6, CAPITALS 3

Louis Domingue made a career-high 45 saves to win for the fourth time in five March starts to help Arizona end Washington's six-game winning streak. Christian Dvorak and Alex Burmistrov each had two goals and Josh Jooris and Peter Holland added goals as the Coyotes snapped a four-game losing streak. Nicklas Backstrom, Daniel Winnik and Justin Williams scored for the Capitals, but Braden Holtby allowed six goals on 24 shots. Holtby had been 3-0-0 in three previous starts against Arizona with a 1.31 GAA and a .950 save pct. — Reuters



MONTREAL: Pittsburgh Pirates' Adam Frazier, right, is tagged out at home by Toronto Blue Jays catcher Russell Martin during fifth inning exhibition baseball game action, in Montreal, Friday. — AP

RUGBY

STEVENSON SPARKS CHIEFS REVIVAL OVER BULLS

WELLINGTON: A piece of individual brilliance by Shaun Stevenson sparked a Waikato Chiefs revival to maintain their unbeaten record with a 28-12 victory over the Northern Bulls in Hamilton yesterday.

The Bulls evoked memories of their past glory days when they stunned the Chiefs to lead 9-3 at half-time and continued to apply pressure after the resumption.

But with 30 minutes to play, Stevenson received the ball near the 10-metre mark, stepped around his opposite Jamba Ulengo, kicked ahead and won the race for the ball to score in the corner. It started a three-try, 25-point spree which earned the Chiefs a bonus point to give them 24 points out of a possible 25 from five games.

"Coming off the bye we were eager to start well but it didn't transpire that way. The first 40 was pretty disappointing and when we review it I think there'll be a few hard truths," captain Aaron Cruden said.

"But that second 40 was really for the fans. They came out to see an exciting brand of footy and I think we produced that in the second half." It was another disappointing finish for the Bulls, who last won in Hamilton in 2010, the same year they last held the

Super title. This year they are now one from five but captain Adriaan Strauss felt they are showing improvement. "At times we showed some excitement, and some intent but the execution at vital times and pressure moments is not there yet. But we're working on it," he said. In the first half, the Bulls dominated possession and worked the Chiefs around the ground.

But they were unable to cross the line, and for all the pressure they applied their only points came from three Handre Pollard penalties. Cruden landed one penalty for the Chiefs but with two other potential shots at goal they opted for the line out drive and lost the ball on both occasions.

The game turned with Stevenson's try in the 50th minute with Cruden's conversion putting the Chiefs ahead for the first time.

Cruden landed a further two penalties and Pollard one to push the Chiefs out to a 16-12 lead before the Chiefs stepped up a gear in the last 10 minutes with tries to Damian McKenzie and Atu Moli.

The Chiefs head to South Africa to play the Stormers next week while the Bulls are in Tokyo to play the Sunwolves for the second time in three weeks. — AFP



MARTINSVILLE: Clint Bowyer, driver of the #14 Haas Automation Ford, practices for the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series STP 500 at Martinsville Speedway yesterday in Martinsville, Virginia. — AFP

OLYMPICS

NO OLYMPIC ULTIMATUM FROM LA 2024 CHIEFS

LOS ANGELES: The head of Los Angeles's bid for the 2024 Olympics ruled out issuing an ultimatum to the International Olympic Committee on Friday, taking a veiled swipe at rival city Paris as the battle for the Games heats up.

LA 2024 chairman Casey Wasserman told AFP in an interview that IOC moves to explore the possibility of awarding both the 2024 and 2028 Summer Games at the same time at a vote in September were "absolutely right." But while Wasserman argued forcefully that Los Angeles was the best candidate for 2024, he stopped short of issuing an ultimatum.

Paris co-chairman Tony Estanguet had warned last week that it was "now or never"

for the French capital, and that if the city's tilt at 2024 was not successful "we will not come back for 2028."

"Now or never sounds like an ultimatum to me," Wasserman told AFP at his Los Angeles office. "I have been in business a long time. I never had a successful relationship or partnership with any entity by issuing an ultimatum. "We will not issue an ultimatum."

Wasserman was speaking amid intense speculation concerning the race for 2024, which will be decided at an IOC vote in Lima on September 13.

The IOC is looking at the option of awarding two Olympics at once in order to capitalise on the Paris and Los Angeles bids at a

time when fewer and fewer cities are willing to take on the financial and logistical responsibilities of staging an Olympic Games. "It's exactly the kind of idea and strategic initiative the IOC should be thinking about," Wasserman said.

"But if you take a step back, if you look at the strategic rationale, it points to the importance and the necessity of LA going first."

'CALM AND STABILITY'

LA's bid, which would require no major infrastructure projects or venue construction, making use of existing facilities, offered the prospect of "calm and stability" for the Olympic movement, Wasserman said.

"No political interference, tremendous

support from our citizens, no capital projects, no budget overruns. That's LA. And that calms and creates stability," Wasserman said.

Pressed on whether there was any scenario in which Los Angeles officials may consider staging the games in 2028, Wasserman said the city remained focused only on 2024.

"No-one's a candidate for 2028. I think that's a hypothetical and it's not worth discussing. The IOC's got a process. We've had no conversations with the IOC about that process. We don't know what their intent is," he said. "We don't know what their approach is going to be, so for anyone to comment on 2028 is premature."

There had also been no discussions with the IOC about the possibility of a joint

2024/2028 award. "They've not reached out to us. Other than the public statements they've made, we've had nothing," he said.

With the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics mired in corruption allegations, and questions raised about white elephant venues which have been left to rot, the stakes for the IOC could not be higher as it ponders its choice for 2024. Wasserman said the Olympic movement was at a "turning point".

"The next host of the Olympics had better get it right. I don't think the Olympic movement wants to be put in a position of having seven more years of the kind of challenges they have had in the past," Wasserman said. "The Olympics deserves better, the movement deserves better." — AFP

CRICKET

SRI LANKA WINS 3RD ODI TO DRAW SERIES

COLOMBO: Seam bowler Nuwan Kulasekara took 4-37 after Thisara Perera hit a rapid 52 to propel Sri Lanka to a 70-run win over Bangladesh in the third one-day international yesterday and a 1-1 draw in the three-match series.

Put into bat by Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza, Sri Lanka made 280-9 in its 50 overs. In reply, Bangladesh was bowled out for 210 in 44.3 overs. Shakib Al Hasan hit 54 off 62 balls and Mehedi Hasan scored 51 off 71. Kulasekara struck in the first over of Bangladesh's chase and two more early wickets put the tourists under too much pressure to fully recover.

Kulasekara opened his account by having Tamim Iqbal (4) caught and bowled. Iqbal had survived earlier in the over when both wicketkeeper Dinesh Chandimal and captain Upu! Tharanga fielding at first slip failed to react to a sharp change.

Sabbir Rahman was caught behind without scoring, leaving Bangladesh on 10-2. Fast bowler Suranga Lakmal trapped Mushfiqur Rahim lbw for a duck as the tourists sank to 11-3.

Shakib and Soumya Sarkar quickly added 77 runs for the fourth wicket and threatened a fightback. Sarkar hit a six and three boundaries for his 44-ball 38. It ended when he was deceived by a flighted,

sharp-turning delivery from off spinner Dilruwan Perera and got stumped by Chandimal. Three quick wickets followed and Bangladesh fell to 127-7. Hasan's half-century offered late resistance but couldn't prevent the inevitable.

Earlier, Kusal Mendis made a cautious 54 to top score for Sri Lanka before Perera's 40-ball knock helped overcome a mid-innings setback to reach a challenging total.

Bangladesh captain Mortaza chose to field after winning the toss at Sinhalese Sports Club and Sri Lanka opens Danushka Gunathilaka and Tharanga got off to a good start, scoring 76 off 65 deliveries for the first wicket.

Gunathilaka made 34 off 38 balls before being caught by Mahmudullah Riyad off spinner Hasan. Tharanga departed, having scored a run-a-ball 35, after being bowled by seamer Taskin Ahmed to make it 87-2.

Both Chandimal (21) and Milinda Siriwardana (12) were run out. Mendis needed 76 deliveries for his 54 - his ninth one-day international half-century. He was caught behind off fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman. Perera hit a six and four boundaries. Mortaza took 3-65 for Bangladesh. Bangladesh won the first match by 90 runs and the second was abandoned due to rain. — AP



KEY BISCAYNE: Nick Kyrgios of Australia stretches for a shot against Roger Federer of Switzerland in the semi finals at Crandon Park Tennis Center on Friday in Key Biscayne, Florida. — AP

TENNIS

FEDERER BEATS KYRGIOS TO REACH MIAMI FINAL

KEY BISCAYNE: Roger Federer's season of resurgence took another thrilling turn Friday night when he won a three-tiebreaker semifinal against Nick Kyrgios at the Miami Open.

Federer failed to convert two match points in the second-set tiebreaker but finished off the flashy, unpredictable Kyrgios an hour later, 7-6 (9), 6-7 (9), 7-6 (5). "It's great winning this way," Federer said. "It could have gone either way. It was a nail biter." When Federer hit a service winner on the final point, Kyrgios angrily whacked his racket three times against the hard court. Federer patiently waited until the Aussie was done before triumphantly swatting a ball into the stands. Kyrgios then gave his racket a fling as the crowd boomed before sharing a warm, weary exchange with Federer at the net.

Federer saved two match points in his quarterfinal win over Tomas Berdych. Now he's in the final today against Rafael Nadal, 13 years after their first career encounter, also at Key Biscayne.

"My biggest rival," Federer said. "It feels like old times." Said Nadal: "I'm just excited to play against Roger always. He's a big challenge for me, and I think for everybody." There will be a first-time Miami Open women's champion when Caroline Wozniacki plays Johanna Konta later.

Federer won Key Biscayne in 2005 and 2006 and hasn't been to the final since. But the 18-time Grand Slam champion is on the rise again at age 35. He's 18-1 this year, his best start since

2006, including titles at the Australian Open in January and at Indian Wells two weeks ago, and has won 10 matches in a row.

None was more harrowing than the latest victory. A sellout crowd was firmly in Federer's corner, and the big-hitter Kyrgios played the role of unpopular spoiler brilliantly. He drew jeers every time he took his frustration out on his racket, received code violations for swearing and slow play, and complained about the fans when they shouted during a rally in the tiebreaker.

And then there was Kyrgios' high-wire game, including huge groundstrokes that forced his opponent to play some dazzling defense.

"I showed a lot of fight," said Kyrgios, who was seeded 12th and sought a berth in his first ATP Masters 1000 final. "Obviously I'm an emotional guy. I had some ups and downs, a bit of a roller coaster. Ultimately I thought I put in a good performance. I thought the crowd would have enjoyed it."

PAYBACK

Federer had no complaint about Kyrgios' fiery behavior. "Crowds jump on it pretty quickly, but it makes for a good atmosphere at the end of the day, so it's not all that bad," Federer said. "I think he's good for the game."

Federer rallied from a break down in the first set, and overcame two set points in the first tiebreaker. He didn't face a break point in the

final two sets. Kyrgios' final risky shot backfired - a 128-mph second serve sailed long for a double fault. That gave Federer his third match point - the last one he needed. The victory was payback for Federer after Kyrgios overcame two match points to win their only other meeting, at Madrid in 2015. That match also was a three-setter with three tiebreakers. "You don't often play three breakers in a match," Federer said. "It's nice to win those. Winning breakers is always such a thrill." Nadal was so eager to reach the Key Biscayne final that he ran out of his shoe. Chasing a shot in the second set of his semifinal, Nadal lost his right sneaker - and the point. But he quickly regained his footing and beat unseeded Fabio Fognini 6-1, 7-5. Nadal is 0-4 in finals at Key Biscayne, losing in 2005, 2008, 2011 and 2014. He's playing in the tournament for the 13th time, making it his longest title drought at any event. "Winning here would be something great, and an important title I haven't won," Nadal said.

The crowd chanted Fognini's first name in an attempt to get the Italian going after a slow start, and flying footwear did the job. Fognini hit a drop shot to cause the sneaker malfunction, laughed at length while Nadal retied his shoe and played better after that. Nadal said he also lost a shoe while practicing recently, the only other time he can remember it happening to him. "Strange," he said. "Maybe I need to tie it stronger." — AP

SCOREBOARD

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka: Scoreboard yesterday after Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh by 70 runs in the third one-day international at Sinhalese Sports Club to draw the three-match series 1-1:

Sri Lanka Innings		Bangladesh Innings	
DGunathilaka c Riyad b M Hasan	34	Tamim Iqbal c and b Kulasekara	4
Upu! Tharanga b Ahmed	35	S Sarkar st Chandimal b D Perera	38
Kusal Mendis c Rahim b Mustafizur	54	S Rahman c Chandimal b Kulasekara	0
Dinesh Chandimal run out	21	Mushfiqur Rahim lbw b Lakmal	0
Milinda Siriwardana run out	12	S Al Hasan c Gunathilaka b D Perera	54
Asela Gunaratne c Riyad b Mortaza	34	Mosaddek Hossain b Prasanna	9
Thisara Perera c Ahmed b Mortaza	52	M Riyad c Chandimal b Lakmal	7
S Prasanna c Riyad b Mustafizur	1	Mehedi Hasan c Tharanga b Kulasekara	51
Dilruwan Perera c Iqbal b Mortaza	15	Mashrafe Mortaza c and b Prasanna	16
Nuwan Kulasekara not out	1	Taskin Ahmed c Gunaratne b Kulasekara	14
Suranga Lakmal not out	2	Mustafizur Rahman not out	1
Extras: (for 9 wickets)	19	Extras: (2lb, 14w)	16
Total: (for 9 wickets)	280.	Total: (all out) 210.	
Overs: 50.		Overs: 44.3.	
Fall of wickets: 1-76, 2-87, 3-136, 4-161, 5-194, 6-216, 7-230, 8-275, 9-277.		Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-10, 3-11, 4-88, 5-111, 6-118, 7-127, 8-155, 9-209,10-210.	
Bowling: Mashrafe Mortaza 10-0-65-3 (5w), Mustafizur Rahman 10-0-55-2 (1w), Mehedi Hasan 10-1-49-1 (1w), Taskin Ahmed 8-1-50-1 (10w), Mahmudullah Riyad 1-0-5-0, Shakib Al Hasan 8-0-41-0, Mosaddek Hossain 3-0-13-0.		Bowling: Nuwan Kulasekara 7.3-0-37-4, Suranga Lakmal 8-0-38-2 (4w), Dilruwan Perera 10-1-47-2 (6w), Thisara Perera 2-0-14-0, Asela Gunaratne 2-0-16-0, Seekkuge Prasanna 10-1-33-2 (4w), Milinda Siriwardana 5-1-23-0.	
		Result: Sri Lanka won by 70 runs.	



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan team members celebrate their team's victory over Bangladesh in the third one-day international cricket match in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday. — AP

ASHWIN AND VIJAY TO MISS IPL, KOHLI OUT

MUMBAI: India's bumper 13-test home season has taken a big toll on its players with a host of them set to miss at least part of the Indian Premier League with injuries.

Royal Challengers Bangalore will be without captain Virat Kohli for at least the initial phase of the Twenty20 tournament as the India skipper recovers from a shoulder injury that forced him to miss the series-sealing final test win over Australia in Dharamsala. "His recovery will be assessed in the second week of April to determine an exact return to play date for IPL 2017," the Indian cricket board (BCCI) said in a statement. South African AB de Villiers will lead the side in Kohli's absence. Bangalore, who have already lost Australia paceman Mitchell Starc to injury, will also be without Lokesha Rahul for the entire tournament, with the India opener

likely to undergo surgery on his left shoulder. Rahul's India opening partner Murali Vijay, who plays for Kings XI Punjab, will undergo wrist surgery and is expected to miss the April 5-May 21 tournament.

India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin will sit out the entire campaign for Rising Pune Supergiant as he recovers from groin pain, the BCCI said. Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja and paceman Umesh Yadav will both miss the start of the tournament for Gujarat Lions and Kolkata Knight Riders respectively. Jadeja has problems with his spinning finger, while fast bowler Yadav has right hip and lower back soreness. A number of India's test cricketers played through pain during the home season which included a 3-0 whitewash of New Zealand and a 4-0 defeat of England in a five-match series. — Reuters

GOLF

TIGER WOODS WON'T PLAY THE MASTERS

WASHINGTON: Tiger Woods announced Friday he had lost his battle to be fit for the Masters, saying he was "not tournament ready" for the first major of the year and did not have a timetable for his return. Woods, whose 14 major titles include four Masters green jackets, has not played since withdrawing from the Dubai Desert Classic on February 3 with ongoing back spasms.

He made his comeback in December after missing all of the 2015-16 season in the wake of back surgery.

But his return has run aground, with the 41-year-old withdrawing from the Genesis Open in Los Angeles in February, the Honda Classic and the Arnold Palmer Invitational in March.

He even cancelled a planned press conference at the Los Angeles tournament, saying doctors had advised him to "limit all activities" as he tried to get his balky back on track.

"Unfortunately, I won't be competing in this year's Masters," Woods said on his website. "I did about everything I could to play, but my back rehabilitation didn't allow me the time to get tournament ready. "I'm especially upset because it's a special anniversary for me that's filled with a lot of great memories. I can't believe it's been 20 years since I won my first green jacket."

Woods's historic 1997 victory at Augusta National, when he was 21 years old, was a watershed for golf. He became the first black golfer to win a major, the youngest to capture the



DUBAI: In this Feb. 2, 2017, file photo, Tiger Woods reacts on the 11th hole during the first round of the Dubai Desert Classic golf tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Woods won't play in the Masters for the third time in the last four years, announcing Friday night, on his website. — AP

Masters and he shattered records in winning by 12 strokes with an 18-under par total. Woods won his second Masters in 2001, completing the "Tiger Slam" of four major championship victories in a row.

NO TIMETABLE FOR RETURN

His 2002 victory made him the first back-to-

back winner since England's Nick Faldo in 1989 and 1990. Woods last won the Masters in 2005, and his announcement on Friday marks the third time in four years that he will miss the tournament. He sat out the 2014 Masters with a back injury, finished 17th in 2015, then missed last year as part of his 15-month post-surgery absence from competition. His last major title came at the 2008 US Open, and the 2015 Masters marks the last time Woods made the cut at a major.

Promoting his book about his 1997 Masters victory, Woods said on television's Good Morning America program in March that he was unable to train enough to prepare for the rigors of playing four rounds at a major event. But he indicated on Friday he continues to work toward a return to competition.

"I have no timetable for my return, but I will continue my diligent effort to recover, and want to get back out there as soon as possible," said Woods, whose 14 major titles are second on the all-time list to the 18 of Jack Nicklaus.

His 79 career PGA titles are three shy of Sam Snead's all-time record. Woods said that he would be in Augusta, Georgia, to attend the pre-tournament Champions Dinner. "Augusta National has been a very important place to me and my family for over 20 years, and while I'm disappointed, it will be good to be back there Tuesday," Woods said. — AFP

MESSI BEHAVIOUR ON PITCH 'IMPECCABLE', SAYS LUIS ENRIQUE

BARCELONA: Barcelona coach Luis Enrique defended the integrity of his team's talisman Lionel Messi yesterday after the Argentine was hit with a lengthy ban from international football for insulting an assistant referee.

Messi was handed a four-game suspension by FIFA on Tuesday for the incident during Argentina's 1-0 win over Chile in a World Cup qualifier, forcing him out of his side's 2-0 defeat by Bolivia. Messi is suspended for Barca's La Liga game at Granada on Sunday after collecting five yellow

cards in the league season, although he has only committed seven fouls in the campaign, receiving the majority of the bookings for dissent. "Those numbers are incredible, he is super respectful towards referees and he never causes controversy," Luis Enrique told reporters yesterday.

"We should appreciate that especially when you consider he is the best player in the world, he is always under pressure and with everyone watching his every move. His behaviour is impeccable."

Luis Enrique also confirmed that defender Gerard Pique has been rested for the trip to struggling Granada, who are seven points adrift of safety, but said neither absentee would tempt him to alter his side's new 3-4-3 formation. "It won't affect our style of play because we can use the same system irrespective of who is available and we will because we believe it's the best system for us," he added. Barca trail leaders Real Madrid by two points in the standings and have played a game more

than Zinedine Zidane's side, who host Alaves today four hours before Barca's game.

Messi is the top scorer in La Liga with 25 goals and has scored nine times in his last seven appearances in all competitions for Barca, who have dropped five points in the three games he has sat out this season.

"Of course we would love to be able to count on Messi today but the good thing is that he gets to rest and that will serve him well," Luis Enrique said. — Reuters

SOCCER

RANOCCHIA BOOSTS HULL'S SURVIVAL PROSPECTS

 Hull City	2
 West Ham	1

KINGSTON UPON HULL: Hull's bid for Premier League survival received a huge boost as Andrea Ranocchia's late header clinched a dramatic 2-1 victory against West Ham yesterday. Marco Silva's team trailed to Andy Carroll's 50th Premier League goal early in the first half at the KCOM Stadium.

But Andy Robertson levelled after the interval and Ranocchia completed Hull's spirited fightback with the winner five minutes from full-time. Third bottom Hull are now level on points with 17th-placed Swansea, who play their game in hand against Middlesbrough today. West Ham have lost their last four games and are on a six-match winless run dating back to February 4. Robert Snodgrass is still Hull's top league scorer with seven goals despite joining West Ham in January, and the Scottish midfielder was jeered by his old

club's fans whenever he had possession. Snodgrass almost silenced the taunts when he rose to meet a cross in the opening moments, and although his header was straight at Hull goalkeeper Eldin Jakupovic, West Ham's pressure was rewarded in the 18th minute. Aaron Cresswell's cross was misjudged by Hull defender Curtis Davies and Carroll controlled on his chest before slotting home from close-range. Manuel Lanzini came close to doubling West Ham's lead when he cut inside from the left and drilled a powerful effort that Jakupovic pushed away. Hull were woeful in the first half and Tigers boss Marco Silva sent on Kamil Grosicki for Davies at the interval. It was an inspired move as Grosicki set up Robertson's 53rd minute equaliser with a clever pass to the Scottish defender, who surged clear to fire past Darren Randolph for the first Premier League goal of his career.

Silva's side poured forward in search of a second goal, which should have arrived when Alfred N'Diaye shot against a post from eight yards before Grosicki blasted wide from the rebound. The Tigers kept pressing and in the 85th minute they were rewarded when Grosicki's corner found Ranocchia and the Italy defender guided his header into the far corner to spark wild celebrations. — AFP



HULL: West Ham United's Andy Carroll scores his side's first goal of the game, during the English Premier League soccer match between Hull City and West Ham United, at the KCOM Stadium, in Hull, England, yesterday. — AP



OAKLAND: Houston Rockets' Sam Dekker (7) and Golden State Warriors' Draymond Green, right, fight for the ball during the first half of an NBA basketball game Friday, in Oakland, California. — AP

BASKETBALL

JAMES SCORES 34 AS CAVALIERS STOP SLIDE WITH WIN OVER SIXERS

CLEVELAND: LeBron James scored 34 points, Kyrie Irving dropped 24 and the Cleveland Cavaliers ended a turbulent and troublesome March with an easy 122-105 win over the injury-weakened Philadelphia 76ers on Friday night. James made 14 of 22 shots in 30 minutes as the Cavs ended a three-game losing streak and won for just the third time in eight games to end the month 7-10. It's been an alarming stretch for the NBA champions, who are running out of time to get tuned up for the postseason. But against the lowly Sixers, Cleveland regained some of its swagger before heading into April when the real fun begins. Kevin Love added 18 points and 10 rebounds as the Cavs won their ninth straight over the Sixers. Richaun Holmes and rookie Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot scored 19 apiece for Philadelphia, which only dressed nine players after shutting down Jahlil Okafor and Robert Covington for the remainder of the season with knee injuries.

CELTICS 117, MAGIC 116

Isaiah Thomas scored 35 points, Jae Crowder had 18 and the Boston Celtics rallied to beat the Orlando Magic to maintain their slim lead over Cleveland atop the Eastern Conference. Boston's Al Horford made two free throws with 1:22 left for a one-point lead, and then Orlando missed three shots down the stretch, including a driving layup attempt by Elfrid Payton with two seconds left. The Celtics (49-27) entered with a half-game lead over the Cavaliers, who won easily against Philadelphia to preserve that margin. Horford and Jaylen Brown each scored 12 points, and Boston won for the fifth time in six games. Aaron Gordon scored 20 of his 32 points in the first half and had 16 rebounds, while Evan Fournier scored 20 points for the Magic. Payton dished out a career-high 15 assists and flirted with a triple-double, getting 12 points and nine rebounds.

WARRIORS 107, ROCKETS 98

Stephen Curry scored 24 points, Klay Thompson had 20 and the Golden State Warriors got key plays down the stretch from just about everybody, using a big fourth quarter to hold off the Houston Rockets. Andre Iguodala's left-handed drive and layup tied it with 7:07 remaining and he finished with 14 points, five rebounds and five assists. Ian Clark hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 5:58 to play before Matt Barnes delivered a clutch basket in a game with a playoff feel. James Harden had another tough shooting night for Houston, held to 17 points while going 4 for 18 from the floor and 2 of 9 from beyond the arc. He also had 12 rebounds and eight assists. JaVale McGee contributed 13 points and a season-best five blocked shots off the bench in a 10th straight win for the Warriors, who are determined to earn the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference.

PELICANS 117, KINGS 89

DeMarcus Cousins had 37 points and 13 rebounds in his first game against the Kings, and the New Orleans Pelicans routed Sacramento. Cousins had downplayed his first meeting with the team that drafted him in 2010 and traded him away this February, but his play looked inspired. He tied a career-high with five 3-pointers and executed a tricky, crowd-pleasing, cross-court bounce pass during a fast break. Anthony Davis added 19 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks for the Pelicans, who led by as many as 32 en route to their eighth victory in 11 games. Pelicans first-round draft choice Buddy Hield, who was part of the Cousins trade, had 13 points for Sacramento, while Ben McLemore had 15 points. Cousins, who also finished with four assists and two blocked shots, received a standing ovation from many fans when he checked out of the game for the final time with a little more than three minutes left.

SPURS 100, THUNDER 95

Kawhi Leonard scored 27 points, and the San Antonio Spurs rallied from 21 points down in the third quarter to beat the Oklahoma City Thunder. The Spurs never led until the final minute. LaMarcus

Aldridge's dunk with 20.7 seconds left put the Spurs up 96-95. Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook drove to the hoop, but Aldridge blocked his shot. Leonard then drove the length of the floor, scored and was fouled. His free throw with 5.8 seconds left put the game out of reach. Westbrook had 32 points, 15 rebounds and 12 assists for his 39th triple-double of the season. He needs two more to tie Oscar Robertson's single-season record of 41 set during the 1961-62 season. Pau Gasol scored 17 points for San Antonio, which was coming off a 110-98 home loss to Golden State on Wednesday in which the Spurs blew a 22-point lead.

GRIZZLIES 99, MAVERICKS 90

Mike Conley scored 28 points, Zach Randolph added 22 points and 12 rebounds, and the Memphis Grizzlies clinched a playoff spot with a 99-90 victory over the Dallas Mavericks. Memphis' win, coupled with Denver's loss at Charlotte earlier Friday night, earned the Grizzlies their seventh straight postseason berth. But Memphis had to weather a 3-point shooting rally in the closing minutes. Dallas made six of its first nine 3-point attempts in the final frame, a jumper by Wesley Matthews cutting Memphis' advantage to 94-90 with just over a minute left. But Dallas could get no closer, dropping its fourth straight. Troy Daniels finished with 21 points for Memphis, shooting 7 of 12 from outside the arc. Six Mavericks finished in double figures, led by 13 points each from Dirk Nowitzki, Matthews and J.J. Barea. Matthews also had seven assists, and Nowitzki grabbed 12 rebounds.

HORNETS 122, NUGGETS 114

Kemba Walker had 31 points, and the Charlotte Hornets preserved their slim playoff hopes with a win over the Denver Nuggets. The Hornets shot 17 for 26 on 3-pointers, including 7 for 12 in the fourth quarter. Charlotte trailed by eight entering the fourth, but scored 12 straight points to take control. Walker ignited the run with a long 3-pointer and then scored on a drive and drew a foul. Kaminsky, who had 22 points, and Belinelli each had three 3s in the fourth quarter as Charlotte outscored Denver 36-20. Nikola Jokic led Denver with 26 points and 13 rebounds.

RAPTORS 111, PACERS 100

DeMar DeRozan scored 40 points and the Toronto Raptors rolled to their seventh straight home win over the Indiana Pacers. DeRozan was 11 of 26 from the floor to register his 30th game of 30 points or more this season, tying Vince Carter's 2000-01 franchise mark. It was also DeRozan's sixth

40-point game of the season. Jonas Valanciunas had 16 points and 17 rebounds for his team-leading 28th double-double, while Serge Ibaka added 15 points and 12 rebounds. Paul George led the Pacers with 28 points, while Jeff Teague added 19, but they were unable to prevent Indiana from its fifth loss in its last six games. The Pacers' last regular-season win in Toronto came on March 1, 2013.

KNICKS 98, HEAT 94

Kristaps Porzingis scored 22 points, Courtney Lee added 20 and the New York Knicks led nearly the entire way in beating the Miami Heat. Justin Holiday scored 12 for the Knicks, who played without Carmelo Anthony (back), Derrick Rose (knee) and Lance Thomas (hip). It was only the fourth win in the last 15 games for New York. Goran Dragic scored 22 points and Hassan Whiteside had 17 points and 16 rebounds for Miami, which missed 15 of its final 16 attempts from 3-point range. Even with the loss, Miami (37-39) held onto the No. 7 spot in the Eastern Conference standings because No. 8 Indiana (37-39) also lost. The Heat and Pacers are just a half-game ahead of No. 9 Chicago.

BUCKS 108, PISTONS 105, OT

Khris Middleton hit a 3-pointer with 40.7 seconds left in overtime, rookie Thon Maker scored a career-high 23 points and the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Detroit Pistons. Middleton hit the 3 from the right wing after Maker tipped an offensive rebound right back to his teammate to save a crucial possession that started with a Middleton miss from nearly the same spot behind the arc. It was a thrilling end to the month for the Bucks, who moved into fifth place in the Eastern Conference after going 14-4 in March. Tobias Harris scored 23 points to lead the Pistons in a game of wild swings. Detroit trailed by 18 in the first quarter, then led by 10 in the fourth quarter before the Bucks finished with a flourish.

JAZZ 95, WIZARDS 88

Rudy Gobert had 16 points and 10 rebounds, Gordon Hayward scored 19 points and the Utah Jazz beat the Washington Wizards. The teams traded baskets throughout the fourth quarter. There were six ties, and neither team led by more than four until the final 33 seconds. Hayward got hot late after struggling much of the night and led an 11-4 run that gave the Jazz an 85-80 edge. Washington never led again, and Bradley Beal's turnover with 35 seconds left allowed Utah to close out the game from the free-throw line. Hayward scored 10 points in the fourth quarter and also had seven rebounds and four assists for the night. Beal led Washington with 27 points. — AP

BRITOS NETS FIRST GOAL TO DEEPEN SUNDERLAND WOES

 Watford	1
 Sunderland	0

WATFORD: Miguel Britos scored his first goal in English football as Watford beat Sunderland 1-0 Saturday to nudge the basement club nearer relegation from the Premier League. Defeat at Vicarage Road left Sunderland seven points from safety, with just nine league games remaining.

The northeast side had kept the game goalless for nearly an hour when Uruguay defender Britos broke the deadlock in the 59th minute. After the ball had bounced around the box and hit the crossbar, a leaping Britos headed the ball down and into the goal to the delight of the home crowd.

Sunderland goalkeeper Jordan Pickford made several fine saves to deny M'Baye Niang and Abdoulaye Doucoure. But his lone resistance could not pre-

vent Watford recording their first win in five matches, a result that put daylight between the Hornets and the relegation zone.

By contrast, Sunderland have not even scored in their last five games and even the return of Jermain Defoe, on target for England in their 2-0 win over Lithuania in a World Cup qualifier, could not stop the rot.

Pickford was tested early on, palming a Niang shot to safety before producing a brilliant diving save to turn Doucoure's follow-up over the crossbar.

Stefano Okaka missed a glorious chance to put Watford in front but his free header sailed over the crossbar, before Etienne Capoue curled a shot wide. Watford lost the experienced Younes Kaboul to a hamstring injury shortly before the break.

Pickford made another good save to deny Niang again and, from the ensuing corner, Craig Cathcart headed straight at the Black Cats keeper.

The deadlock was finally broken just before the hour mark with a scrappy goal.

Okaka met Tom Cleverley's corner with a header which Sunderland forward Fabio Borini unintentionally headed onto his own crossbar. — AFP



Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Swansea City v Middlesbrough	15:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Arsenal v Manchester City	18:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Sevilla FC v Gijon	13:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Real Madrid v Alaves	17:15	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Valencia v La Coruna	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Granada v Barcelona	21:45	beIN SPORTS HD 3
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Torino FC v Udinese Calcio	13:30	beIN SPORTS HD 4
ACF Fiorentina v Bologna FC	16:00	beIN SPORTS HD 7
AC Chievo Verona v Crotone	16:00	beIN SPORTS
Genoa CFC v Atalanta	16:00	beIN SPORTS HD 8
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Ingolstadt v Mainz 05	16:30	beIN SPORTS HD 6
Bayer 04 v Wolfsburg	18:30	beIN SPORTS HD 5
FRENCH LEAGUE		
AS Monaco v Saint Etienne	13:00	beIN SPORTS
Stade Rennes v Lyonais	16:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6
Montpellier v Toulouse	18:00	beIN SPORTS HD 7
Nantes v Angers	18:00	beIN SPORTS HD 7
Lorient v Caen	18:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6
OGC Nice v de Bordeaux	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD
Citta di Palermo v Cagliari	16:00	beIN SPORTS HD 10
Pescara v AC Milan	16:00	beIN SPORTS HD 4
SSC Napoli v Juventus FC	21:45	beIN SPORTS HD 4

NBA results/standings

Golden State 107, Houston 98; Utah 95, Washington 88; San Antonio 100, Oklahoma City 95; Milwaukee 108, Detroit 105 (OT); Memphis 99, Dallas 90; New Orleans 117, Sacramento 89; NY Knicks 98, Miami 94; Cleveland 122, Philadelphia 105; Boston 117, Orlando 116; Toronto 111, Indiana 100; Charlotte 122, Denver 114.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Boston	49	27	.645	-	Utah	47	29	.618
Toronto	46	30	.605	3	Oklahoma City	43	32	.573
NY Knicks	29	47	.382	20	Portland	37	38	.493
Philadelphia	28	48	.368	21	Denver	35	40	.467
Brooklyn	16	59	.213	32.5	Minnesota	30	44	.405
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	48	27	.640	-	Golden State	62	14	.816
Milwaukee	40	36	.526	8.5	LA Clippers	46	31	.597
Indiana	37	39	.487	11.5	Sacramento	29	47	.382
Chicago	36	39	.480	12	Phoenix	22	54	.289
Detroit	35	42	.455	14	LA Lakers	21	54	.280
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Washington	46	30	.605	-	San Antonio	58	17	.773
Atlanta	39	36	.520	6.5	Houston	51	25	.671
Miami	37	39	.487	9	Memphis	42	34	.553
Charlotte	35	41	.461	11	New Orleans	33	43	.434
Orlando	27	49	.355	19	Dallas	31	44	.413

PREVIEW

FIGHT FOR EUROPA LEAGUE SPOTS INTENSIFIES IN SPAIN

MADRID: Away victories by Eibar and Athletic Bilbao intensified the fight for Europa League spots in the Spanish league yesterday.

Eibar ended a four-match winless streak by defeating Villarreal 3-2. Takashi Inui scored what turned out to be the winning goal. Athletic won 2-1 at last-placed Osasuna with goals by Aritz Aduriz and Inaki Williams.

The results left four clubs within five

points or less of fifth-placed Villarreal. Fifth place is the first to reward teams a place in the Europa League. The sixth-placed team will also play in the Europa League, and the seven-placed side may earn a spot if Barcelona defeats Alaves in the Copa del Rey final in May.

Villarreal and Real Sociedad have 48 points each, Athletic moved to 47, and Eibar to 44. Espanyol reached 43 after a late come-from-behind win over Real Betis on

Friday. Atletico Madrid, which plays at Malaga later Saturday, was fourth, two points behind third-placed Sevilla, which hosts Sporting Gijon today.

Leader Real Madrid and second-placed Barcelona also play today. Madrid has a two-point lead and a game in hand.

VILLARREAL 2, EIBAR 3

Inui scored his first goal of the season in the 77th minute to seal Eibar's come-from-

behind win a Villarreal. Roberto Soriano put the host ahead early, then Eibar rallied with goals by Pedro Leon in the 48th and Enrique "Kike" Garcia in the 54th. Soriano closed the scoring in the 89th. Villarreal loudly complained of the penalty call that led to Eibar's opener, as well as of a non call for a hand ball the other way just a few minutes later. "The controversial calls distracted us," Villarreal coach Fran Escriba said. "The referee's decisions influenced the flow of

the match. We lost concentration."

OSASUNA 1, ATHLETIC BILBAO 2

Osasuna's winless streak in the league reached 21 games after the setback against Athletic. The promoted club hasn't won since a game at Eibar in the eighth round. Aduriz put Athletic ahead in the 12th with his 100th league goal for the Basque club, and Williams added to the lead in 44th. Osasuna's lone goal was scored by Sergio Leon in the 79th. — AP

SPURS SINK BURNLEY TO KEEP TITLE HOPES ALIVE

	Burnley	0
	Tottenham	2

BURNLEY: Tottenham breathed fresh life into the Premier League title race as Eric Dier and Son Heung-Min inspired a 2-0 win over Burnley at Turf Moor yesterday.

With Chelsea surprisingly losing 2-1 at home to Crystal Palace, Mauricio Pochettino's second placed side closed the gap to seven points on the leaders to set up an enthralling last six weeks of the season.

England international Dier opened the scoring midway through the second half and South Korea forward Son sealed the points soon after. Spurs arrived in Lancashire trying to catch Chelsea while also stealing a march on Manchester City, who do not play until



BURNLEY: Burnley's English defender Michael Keane (R) jumps for the ball with Tottenham Hotspur's Dutch striker Vincent Janssen (C) during the English Premier League football match between Burnley and Tottenham Hotspur at Turf Moor in Burnley, north west England yesterday. — AFP

today, as the race to secure Champions League qualification gathers pace and they departed with both targets still in reach.

Without star striker Harry Kane, injured in their FA Cup quarter-final win over Millwall last month, question have been asked about Tottenham's potency and urgency up front.

But Dele Alli has been in lethal form recently and so Spurs looked to him and Vincent Janssen to damage Burnley. However, early on in this contest, Spurs had little interest in getting forward and opted to start the game with five at the back, hoping to douse any early Burnley attacks.

Fortunately for them, few were forthcoming as both sides struggled to find any momentum in the first half. The opening period remained woeful until Spurs finally awoke close to the half hour mark as Alli squandered a glorious opportunity.

UNTRUBLED

After putting Christian Eriksen through on goal down the left wing, Tom Heaton saved Eriksen's low drive but parried right into the path of Alli, who blasted over when it appeared far easier to slide the ball into the empty net. Burnley became more direct and dangerous, although Hugo Lloris remained relatively untroubled in the Spurs goal.

Spurs were not helped by the loss of Victor Wanyama and Harry Winks - the latter stretchered from the pitch after colliding with firstly Stephen Ward and then an icebox close to the Burnley dugout.

After the restart, both sides seemed more sprightly and direct and Janssen rifled one low shot at Heaton, who did well to block that effort and the rebound which fell at the feet of Moussa Sissoko.

Soon after, Ben Davies also forced Heaton into a decent save as Spurs looked to twist the knife. After 66 minutes, their superiority was handsomely rewarded as Dier slotted home from six yards out after react quickest to a loose ball in the area following a corner.

That goal gave Spurs the confidence and freedom to pour forward at will as they looked to put the result beyond doubt, something they managed to do with aplomb with 13 minutes remaining.

Alli, as fast and threatening as always, produced a fine ball for Son who could not miss from six yards out, slotting into an empty net as Heaton scrambled across. A fascinating end to the Premier League season could now be in store if Spurs remain as determined and as impressive as they were here. — AFP

English Premier League table

LONDON: English Premier League table after yesterday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Chelsea	29	22	3	4	60	23	69	Leicester	29	9	6	14	35	47	33
Tottenham	29	18	8	3	57	21	62	West Ham	30	9	6	15	41	54	33
Liverpool	30	17	8	5	64	37	59	Burnley	30	9	5	16	31	44	32
Man City	28	17	6	5	54	30	57	Crystal Palace	29	9	4	16	38	47	31
Man Utd	28	14	11	3	42	23	53	Swansea	29	8	3	18	36	63	27
Arsenal	27	15	5	7	56	34	50	Hull	30	7	6	17	28	59	27
Everton	30	14	8	8	52	33	50	Middlesbrough	28	4	10	14	20	33	22
West Brom	30	12	8	10	39	38	44	Sunderland	29	5	5	19	24	51	20
Stoke	30	9	9	12	33	44	36	Note: Top four qualify for Champions League; teams finishing fifth to seventh qualify for Europa League; bottom three relegated to Championship.							
Southampton	28	9	7	12	33	36	34								
Bournemouth	30	9	7	14	42	54	34								
Watford	29	9	7	13	34	48	34								

COUTINHO SPARKLES IN LIVERPOOL DERBY TRIUMPH

	Liverpool	3
	Everton	1

LIVERPOOL: Philippe Coutinho starred as Liverpool responded to Everton's threat to their Champions League aspirations with a commanding 3-1 victory in the 228th Merseyside derby yesterday.

Spectacular first-half strikes from Sadio Mane and Coutinho kept Jurgen Klopp's men on course for a top-four finish, either side of Everton defender Matthew Pennington's first Premier League goal. Divock Origi added a third mid-way through the second half just three minutes after replacing the injured Mane as Liverpool, for a few hours at least, soared to third in the Premier League table.

For Everton, it was a grim extension of their miserable record at Anfield, where they last won in 1999, while Liverpool completed a first double of derby wins since 2010-11.

Everton came into the match in good form, with just one defeat in 12 league matches since Mane's 97th-minute goal secured Liverpool a 1-0 win in December's reverse fixture at Goodison Park.

Victory for Everton at Anfield would have reduced the gap between the side to just three points-down from 14 at Christmas-but

that never looked likely. Mane opened the scoring just eight minutes in with a special goal. He spun neatly around his Senegal teammate Idrissa Gueye's slide challenge on the halfway line, played a neat one-two with Roberto Firmino and then carried the ball across the Everton penalty area on a diagonal run. With Everton retreating fatally, he let fly with a low shot that left Everton goalkeeper Joel Robles powerless.

It might have been worse for the Blues after 19 minutes when Everton's youthful right side retreated again. This time Coutinho was the beneficiary, unleashing a shot that Robles punched up into the air, with captain Phil Jagielka heading the ball away as it dropped towards goal. It was a shock when Everton got back on terms in the 28th minute and the identity of the goalscorer was even more of a surprise.

GLEEFUL PENNINGTON

Young defender Pennington had not featured in an Everton line-up since last May, let alone score a goal. But having come in for leg break victim Seamus Coleman, he was the beneficiary when Leighton Baines's first corner of the afternoon created panic in the Liverpool penalty area.

Jagielka headed on, Ashley Williams challenged Coutinho inside the six-yard box and the ball broke loose for a gleeful Pennington to pounce in front of the Kop. He celebrated with the relish of a young man who had never scored a top-flight goal before. But derbies can be cruel occasions. — AFP



MUNICH: (L-R) Augsburg's defender Christoph Janker, Bayern Munich's striker Thomas Mueller and Augsburg's Serbian midfielder Gojko Kacar vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match between Bayern Munich and FC Augsburg in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

BAYERN WINS 6-0 TO KEEP 13-PT LEAD IN BUNDESLIGA

BERLIN: Bayern Munich enjoyed another big Bundesliga win as it pursues a fifth straight title while Borussia Dortmund was held to a 1-1 draw at Schalke in the Ruhr derby yesterday. Robert Lewandowski scored a hat trick and set up another two for Bayern to rout Augsburg 6-0 at home, maintaining its 13-point lead over Leipzig with eight games remaining.

Bayern, which has only lost once in 26 league games, didn't have to work too hard for its 20th win with Augsburg opting to rest several players for its relegation battle with Ingolstadt on Wednesday. Lewandowski broke the deadlock early on, stopping the unchallenged Thiago Alcantara's perfectly placed cross with his first touch and then turning to smash the ball in convincingly with his second touch. Thomas Mueller struck the post shortly afterward but didn't have to wait long for his third league goal of the season, scored from close range after Lewandowski whipped the ball in. Minutes after Dortmund striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang claimed his league-leading 24th goal in Gelsenkirchen, Lewandowski claimed his 23rd, firing inside the left post after holding off a defender. The Polish striker then set up Thiago with his heel before completing his hat trick and matching Aubameyang's tally with a header.

A long ball from Jerome Boateng set up Mueller for his second, though the Germany forward went straight off for treatment following a bad challenge from Christoph Janker, who was booked off. Augsburg dropped to the relegation play-off spot. Eintracht Frankfurt hosted Borussia Moenchengladbach later.

SCHALKE 1, BORUSSIA DORTMUND 1

The 150th competitive Ruhr derby ended badly for Schalke, denied what looked a clear penalty in injury time after Marc Bartra stopped the ball with his arm. Schalke coach Markus Weinzierl was sent to the stands for his protests. Dortmund had the better of a hard-fought first half with more shots on goal before Aubameyang finally broke the deadlock early in the second half.

Ousmane Dembele timed his pass perfectly for Shinji Kagawa to beat the offside trap and the Japan midfielder unselfishly laid the ball off for Aubameyang's simple finish. The Gabon striker pulled on a mask - as he has done before - and prompted a furious reaction from Schalke fans with his celebrations.

Thilo Kehrer got them smiling again with the equalizer in the 77th, firing inside the left post for his first Bundesliga goal after Leon Goretzka dragged the ball back.

LEIPZIG 4, DARMSTADT 0

Leipzig bounced back from three games without a win by consolidating second place. The promoted side is four points ahead of third-placed Hoffenheim and five ahead of Dortmund in the last qualification spot for the Champions League.

Bottom side Darmstadt looks doomed, now 14 points from safety. Naby Keita hammered a volley inside the far post after Emil Forsberg's initial effort was deflected to get the scoring underway, and Forsberg scored midway through

the second half. Quick-fire goals from Willi Orban and Keita again after Sandro Sirigu was sent off put the result beyond doubt.

FREIBURG 2, WERDER BREMEN 5

Bremen took another giant step toward safety with its fifth win in a six-game unbeaten run to move three points clear of the relegation zone. Max Kruse struck against the run of play against his first Bundesliga club to give Bremen an early lead and Thomas Delaney doubled the advantage just before halftime.

Freiburg coach Christian Streich responded with three changes at the break but Delaney grabbed his second, after being set up by Kruse, early in the second half. Former Bremen striker Nils Petersen pulled one back on the rebound after Felix Wiedwald saved his penalty, before Fin Bartels sealed it with his heel with some 20 minutes remaining. Vincenzo Grifo scored Freiburg's second before Delaney completed his hat trick.

HAMBURGER SV 2, COLOGNE 1

Hamburg also scored a big win in its battle against the drop, with Lewis Holtby's late winner dragging the side out of the relegation zone to 13th, a point clear of Augsburg. Bobby Wood set up Nicolai Mueller to get the home side off to a good start but Milos Jovic equalized for Cologne minutes later.

Cologne 'keeper Timo Horn made two huge saves before Holtby scored what could be a vital goal for Hamburg's survival. — AP

MAN UNITED'S TOP-FOUR HOPES HIT BY STALEMATE

	Man United	0
	West Brom	0

MANCHESTER: Jose Mourinho's fears that a gruelling schedule could prove problematic for Manchester United were confirmed in a drab 0-0 draw against West Bromwich Albion yesterday.

The first of nine fixtures to come in April ended with United having to settle for a draw at Old Trafford for the eighth time in the Premier League this season. Without six key players due to injury and suspension, it was a sign that United's taxing campaign may finally be catching up with them as they attempt to secure a place in next season's Champions League. United remain fifth, four points behind fourth placed Manchester City, who face Arsenal today. United's first half domination was near total although, for all their possession, the home side failed to force goalkeeper Ben Foster into a noteworthy save.

Anthony Martial came closest to a breakthrough, just before the half hour, when he rose powerfully at the far post to meet a Jesse Lingard

cross with a strong header that flew over the crossbar. But, with Albion often packing all 11 players well inside their own half, United lacked the inspiration to break down Tony Pulis' disciplined side.

It might have been a different story had Lingard succeeded with a ninth minute shot that flew over after a committed run by Martial saw the ball deflected to him. And Martial also came close on 19 minutes after Michael Carrick sparked another wave of attacks by squaring to Lingard who moved the ball to his French team mate for a shot which curled just wide. Eric Bailly also almost capitalised after Hal Robson-Kanu stumbled as he attempted to clear a Henrikh Mkhitaryan corner and, as the club's record goalscorer Wayne Rooney watched from the United bench, Mourinho's side struggled to break the deadlock.

FRUSTRATIONS

As the half-time whistle blew, Carrick and Martial protested loudly to referee Mike Dean, the latter pointing to a lump on his face that appeared to be the result of a challenge in the final minute from West Brom's Craig Dawson.

Dean waved the players away and took no action, however, as United supporters echoed their players' frustrations by booing the referee off the pitch. There was a first moment of genuine concern for United on 51 minutes.

Dawson's run to the right-hand by-line ended

with the defender pulling the ball back for former United midfielder Darren Fletcher whose shot was charged down by Bailly.

United responded quickly, with Martial setting up Mkhitaryan who was crowded out only for the ball to break kindly to Marouane Fellaini who threaded a shot through a crowded area but wide of the goal. The game was finally opening up and Fellaini's pass set up Martial for a low 25-yard shot which missed the right-hand post by inches.

A rare Albion error, from a misplaced pass from Gareth McAuley, let in Mkhitaryan but his attempt to chip over Foster lacked power and the keeper was able to reach out and save.

And Foster was again called into action, this time from a ferocious 25-yard shot from Rashford which forced the Albion number one into an impressive and acrobatic flying save.

By now, United supporters had long been calling for the introduction of Rooney and received their wish on 74 minutes when he was brought on to replace Mkhitaryan.

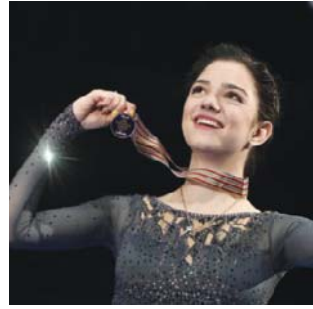
But Rooney made little impact as, Rashford, again from long range, sent a low shot just wide and then the youngster forced Foster into a magnificent save from a 25-yard free-kick.

In between, there was one more moment of anxiety for United as Fletcher's long-range shot was fumbled by De Gea who was relieved to see the ball strike the bar and rebound to safety. — AFP

Sports

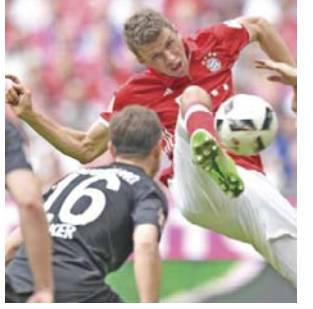
Medvedeva retains world title to emulate Kwan

15



Bayern wins 6-0 to keep 13-pt lead in Bundesliga

19



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STEVENSON SPARKS CHIEFS REVIVAL OVER BULLS

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LONDON: Chelsea's N'Golo Kante, right, vies for the ball with Crystal Palace's Wilfried Zaha during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Crystal Palace at Stamford Bridge stadium in London yesterday. — AP

SOCCER

ZAHA, BENTEKE STUN LEADERS CHELSEA

	Chelsea	1
	Crystal Palace	2

LONDON: Chelsea's march towards the Premier League title was stalled as goals from Wilfried Zaha and Christian Benteke earned Crystal Palace a shock 2-1 victory at Stamford Bridge yesterday.

Defeat ended Chelsea's run of 13 successive home wins and enabled second-place Tottenham Hotspur to cut their lead to seven points with nine games remaining.

Antonio Conte's side had taken the lead through Cesc Fabregas's fifth-minute effort, but the visitors hit back first through the outstanding Zaha, four minutes later, and then Benteke.

The visitors then held on to claim a fourth successive win that strengthened their bid to avoid relegation. Sam Allardyce had warned his side would have to score first if they were to have any chance of getting something out of this game.

On that basis, the Palace manager must have feared the worst when Fabregas put the home side ahead. Eden Hazard had been doubtful for this game, having sat out the trip to Stoke City and both of Belgium's matches last week with a calf problem. But the winger quickly confirmed he was back to his best by tormenting Palace right-back Joel Ward before drilling in a low cross that was

turned home at the near post by Fabregas.

The signs were ominous for Allardyce's men, whose improved recent form has owed more to resilient defensive work rather than their attacking prowess. Had Chelsea been allowed to settle and establish their superiority after taking the lead, Palace's confidence might have started to fade. Instead, Allardyce's side struck back quickly through Zaha, who has been a constant threat during Palace's recent upturn. Like Hazard, the Palace winger found himself the subject of debate last week, in Zaha's case over his decision to commit his international future to Ivory Coast and not England.

NERVELESS BENTEKE

England manager Gareth Southgate expressed disappointment about his defection to the land of

his birth, prompting angry responses from Zaha's agent and Steve Parish, the Palace chairman.

Zaha, though, showed his focus was entirely on club matters when he revived Palace's hopes with a superb individual effort.

The former Manchester United winger drifted past two Chelsea defenders before placing a shot across Thibaut Courtois after being released by Benteke's flick from Ward's cross.

Two minutes later, Palace took control of the game after the Chelsea defence was again found wanting. This time Benteke led a breakaway after winning the ball in the Palace half, advancing deep into Chelsea territory before benefiting from a fortunate ricochet after being challenged by David Luiz. The ball rolled into the path of Zaha, who had time and space on the left of the Chelsea box to

play a return pass to Benteke, who produced a nerveless finish, lifting the ball over the prone Courtois. The onus was now on Chelsea to force their way back into the game and Conte's side inevitably dominated possession for the remainder of the first half. They were unable, however, to find a way through the combination of Palace's determined defenders and goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey.

The Wales international produced a succession of fine saves, including one with his legs to repel Costa's volley. The pattern of play was maintained in the second half, with Chelsea enjoying an even greater share of possession. But Palace still had chances to extend their lead, with Zaha denied by a good Courtois save before two Yohan Cabaye free-kicks almost led to a third goal. — AFP

TENNIS

KONTA BEATS WOZNIACKI FOR MIAMI OPEN TITLE

MIAMI: Johanna Konta defeated Caroline Wozniacki 6-4, 6-3 to win the Miami Open yesterday - the biggest title won by a British woman in 40 years.

Konta, who had never won an elite WTA premier mandatory event, will move to number seven in the world rankings with the victory.

She began superbly, breaking to love in the opening game before Wozniacki swiftly broke back to level at 2-2. After another break each, the Briton took advantage of two double-faults from the Dane to break to 5-4 and serve out for the set.

There was a similar pattern to the start of the second set, with the pair exchanging breaks in the first two game. The key moment came when Konta broke to go 4-3 up, with a little help from the net cord.

Konta then broke again, with a lob on match-point, to secure the biggest win of her career and the best by a British woman since Virginia Wade won Wimbledon in 1977. — AFP



KEY BISCAYNE: Johanna Konta of Great Britain holds the winner's trophy after defeating Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark after the Women's Final on Day 13 of the Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Center yesterday in Key Biscayne, Florida. — AFP

SHAKESPEARE FAIRYTALE CONTINUES AS FOXES WIN

	Leicester City	2
	Stoke City	0

LEICESTER: Craig Shakespeare became the first Englishman to win his first four matches as a Premier League manager after reigning champions Leicester City moved closer to top-flight survival with a 2-0 victory at home to Stoke City yesterday.

Victory saw Shakespeare join some of football's most high-profile coaches Portugal's Jose Mourinho, Italy's Carlo Ancelotti, the Netherlands' Guus Hiddink and Spain's Pep Guardiola in an exclusive club.

Wilfred Ndidi's long-range rocket and Jamie Vardy's latest goal saw the Foxes triumph at their King Power Stadium, with victory taking Leicester to 33 points, just three behind Stoke, who kicked off in ninth place. January signing Ndidi scored his first Premier League goal in style while England striker Vardy grabbed his fourth goal in as many games.

For all the controversy over Leicester's decision to sack title-winning manager Claudio Ranieri, there is no denying their resurgence under Shakespeare. This result means that with two more games to

play before their Champions League quarter-final against Atletico Madrid, the Midlands club could be all but safe from relegation before the next chapter of their European adventure. The first chance fell to Leicester in the seventh minute after midfielder Danny Drinkwater lofted a dangerous free-kick into the Stoke goalmouth.

It was flicked on by Robert Huth and took two deflections to the feet of Yohan Benalouane, who was deputising again at centre-back for injured captain Wes Morgan. But he fired a cross-shot across the face of goal and wide of the far post.

Leicester almost led in the ninth minute after Stoke captain Ryan Shawcross was booked for a crude challenge on Demarai Gray. The resultant free-kick was delivered by Christian Fuchs onto the head of Huth, whose goal-bound effort was cleared off the line by Erik Pieters. Gray recovered from his heavy blow and might have put the hosts in front in the 24th minute when his long-range shot flashed just wide. But it was an unlikely goalscorer who put Leicester ahead in the 25th minute.

NDIDI'S STUNNING STRIKE

Nigeria's Ndidi collected a square pass from Danny Simpson and unleashed a fabulous right-footed shot that bent into the top corner of Lee Grant's net from 25 yards.

Gray was tormenting Stoke with his quick footwork and a fabulous trick in the 34th minute took him away from Glen Johnson and forced Shawcross

into a desperate block. The resulting corner found its way to Shinji Okazaki, whose overhead kick from 15 yards looped just over.

January signing Saido Berahino had been quiet for Stoke but he had a sight of goal 10 minutes from half-time when he collected a neat pass by Ramadan Sobhi and sent a tame shot at Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel. But the hosts posed the greater threat and Grant had to make a smart save to keep out a 20-yard drive from Riyad Mahrez.

The second Leicester goal arrived just 76 seconds into the second half as Stoke were punished for failing to start quickly after the interval.

Simpson was given room on the right to cross, Johnson was caught napping at the far post and Vardy crept in to volley home. Mahrez should have put the victory beyond doubt for Leicester in the 64th minute when he raced forward to meet a cross by Vardy after an electric break by the striker.

But the Algerian's effort was too close to Grant, who saved well. A rare Stoke break then ended with Marko Arnautovic crossing for substitute Peter Crouch, but the former England man side-footed wide. Arnautovic had the ball in the net 20 minutes from time but he was denied by an offside flag.

Vardy could then feel aggrieved not to be given the chance for a second goal when he won a towering header and found Mahrez before bursting into space for a return pass, only for Mahrez to try a shot that flew wide. — AFP

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on bearish sentiment

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Chevrolet Alghanim
brings 2017
Corvette GS Z26

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FUTURE OF ASIAN LUXURY CARS, ELECTRIC VEHICLES ON DISPLAY

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NEW YORK: An H&M store window advertises a sale, in New York. The Commerce Department issues its February report on consumer spending, which accounts for roughly 70 percent of US economic activity. —AP

IVANKA, HUSBAND BENEFITTING FROM BUSINESS EMPIRE

ETHICS FILINGS BY WHITE HOUSE REVEAL ASSETS OF SENIOR STAFF MEMBERS

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka and her husband Jared Kushner have held onto real estate and business investments valued in the hundreds of millions while working government jobs, according to ethics filings released late Friday by the White House.

The disclosures came in a mass document release showing the wealth and financial assets of scores of senior White House staff members at the time they began government work. Ivanka Trump's stake in the Trump International Hotel, located blocks from the White House, is one source of income that could represent a conflict of interest.

Critics have noted that interest groups or foreign governments could stay at the luxury hotel to get in the administration's good graces. The White House documents show that Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, who are both officially close advisers to the president, are still getting income from holdings valued at between \$240 million and \$740 million.

Ivanka Trump—who just days ago announced she would officially enter a federal role as an unpaid adviser to the US president—will hang on to her stake in the Trump International Hotel. According to her husband's disclosure the hotel stake is worth between \$5 million and \$25 million. Between January 2016 and March 2017 she



WASHINGTON: In this file photo Ivanka Trump, the daughter of President Donald Trump, and her husband Jared Kushner, senior adviser to President Donald Trump, attend a news conference with the president and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in the East Room of the White House in Washington. —AP

made between \$1 million and \$5 million in rent or royalties from the hotel, the documents showed.

Kushner was recently tapped by his Republican father-in-law to lead a new White House office that aims to use business ideas

to help streamline the government, according to the Washington Post.

The 36-year-old is a senior adviser to Trump with far-reaching influence over domestic and foreign policy. Kushner left high-level positions at more than 200 entities related to his family's real estate business, according to the documents, but will continue to reap benefits from many holdings related to the business empire he ran with his father.

Bannon, Cohn assets

The White House disclosures included information on the assets of Gary Cohn the former president of Goldman Sachs who heads the White House National Economic Council and Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's chief strategist. Cohn reported assets of between \$253 and \$611 million, and income in 2016 of up to \$77 million.

Bannon's most important asset is his private consulting firm, valued at between \$5 million and \$25 million. He also had rental real estate valued at up to \$10.5 million, and up to \$2.25 million in the bank.

Bannon reported \$191,000 in consulting fees earned from the conservative outlet Breitbart News Network, which he formerly headed, as well as more than \$125,000 for work at the data firm Cambridge Analytica, which worked for the Trump campaign, and more than \$61,000 in salary for a conserva-

tive nonprofit group. The Trump administration is considered one of the wealthiest in US history Bloomberg estimates his cabinet and senior staff are worth some \$12 billion.

No Trump divestment

Since being elected president, Donald Trump's vast business empire has been scrutinized by ethics experts who say it poses major conflicts of interest. Before taking office in January Trump said he would formally hand "complete and total" control of his business empire to his adult sons, Don Jr and Eric, in a bid to avoid conflicts of interest - but he would not divest from his business holdings.

The Trump Organization, whose network of hotels, golf clubs and luxury residential towers stretches across 20 countries, is not listed on the stock market, and thus releases no public statistics. Trump has thus far refused to release his tax returns, meaning little is known about the extent of its interests.

Don Jr, 38, and Eric, 32, are Trump's eldest sons from his first marriage. They are currently executive vice presidents in the Trump Organization. Trump's personal lawyer Sheri Dillon promised that the new president would "build in protections" to show that his actions "are for their benefit and not to support his financial interests." —AFP

SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW FM WANTS RADICALLY CHANGED ECONOMY

PRETORIA: South Africa's new finance minister, Malusi Gigaba, signaled a swing to the left yesterday, saying "we need to radically transform the South African economy" while pledging to maintain fiscal stability. Gigaba also said during a televised news conference that he was committed to protecting South Africa's cherished investment-grade credit ratings, which analysts have said are threatened after the removal of his predecessor Pravin Gordhan.

Radical economic change in the political language of South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) means the redistribution of wealth, land and opportunity to the black majority. "The ownership of wealth and assets remains concentrated in the hands of a small part of the population. This must change," Gigaba said. ANC



South African Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba

administrations since Nelson Mandela's in 1994 have promised to spread prosperity and the government has made strides, including the construction of 4.5 million housing units for the poor and the erection of a social welfare system that puts food on the tables of the

most vulnerable. But South Africa remains one of the world's most unequal societies, riven by glaring income disparities, an official jobless rate of 26.5 percent, and widespread poverty. The economy is barely growing and inflation threatens to reignite. President Jacob Zuma, who faces a growing backlash from within his own party after electoral setbacks and missteps that included a fiasco that threatened the payment of social grants to 17 million, has taken a more populist tone on the economy.

Zuma on Saturday spoke about "our stated commitment to advance radical socio-economic transformation" at the launch of a housing project in his home province of KwaZulu Natal.

Zuma has also recently said he wants to change the constitution to

expropriate farmland, which remains mostly in white hands, without paying compensation to the owners, raising fears of the land grabs that wrecked Zimbabwe's economy. Analysts have said such populism is aimed at the ANC's rural political base.

Political challenges

Such an agenda could face challenges from more moderate elements in the broad tent that is the ANC, and ratings downgrades would significantly raise the government's borrowing costs, restricting its ability to pursue radical policies. Gigaba acknowledged the political challenges he faces. Zuma's sacking of the widely-respected Gordhan shook South African markets on Friday, undermining his authority and threatening to split the ANC. —Reuters

CHINA MANUFACTURING GROWS ONLY MODESTLY

BEIJING: China's manufacturing activity expanded slightly in March, independent figures showed yesterday, suggesting steady but slowing growth in the world's second-largest economy. The figures compare with an official reading Friday hinting that a years-long growth slowdown in China may be easing, though concerns remain about the outlook for world trade in light of US President Donald Trump's protectionist policies. Investors closely watch the private Caixin Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) an indicator of conditions at small manufacturers-as a sign of the country's economic health each month.

The figure came in at 51.2 for March, down from 51.7 in February but still among the highest seen over the past four years. A PMI figure above 50 marks growth while anything below points to contraction. The Chinese financial magazine said the one-year outlook for growth

remained strong and jobs were cut at a marginal pace. However, it added that more manufacturers showed cautionary attitudes toward inventories and new export sales increased at their weakest pace in three months. "Overall, the Chinese manufacturing economy continued to improve, but signs of a weakening have started to emerge ahead of the second quarter," Caixin analyst Zhong Zhengsheng said in a joint statement with data compiler IHS Markit.

"Downward pressure may further increase." On Friday, official figures focusing on larger factories and mines came in at 51.8, slightly beating the 51.7 forecast in a Bloomberg News survey and up from the previous month's 51.6. Beijing has said it wants to reorient the economy away from debt-fueled investment towards a consumer-driven model, but the transition has proved bumpy, leading to the slower growth readings in recent years. —AFP

Message from the Chairman

CBK PRESENTS 2016 BUSINESS RESULTS

In the name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Our valued shareholders,
On behalf of the Board of Directors of Commercial Bank of Kuwait, I have the pleasure to present a synopsis on the Bank's 2016 business results. The financial statements enclosed herewith contained all details, information and statements required by the law and the regulatory instructions along with some other issues peculiarly outlined and highlighted by the Bank. We hope to shed light on issues of concern for our valued shareholders and the other stakeholders of the Bank.

First: Highlights on the Main Points & Notes as Contained in Financial Statements

The Bank's financial statements clearly reflect the positive outcome of the conservative approach adopted by the Bank's Management since mid-2014. This approach resulted in a significant improvement in assets quality and helped the Bank to enhance its position to avert and overcome the expected risks; the Bank's Management was cognizant of its nature. Kuwait economy continued to see a state of instability due to dwindled oil prices over the past years and which negatively affected the State's revenues, but the Bank managed to address such impacts on its position owing to this conservative approach that underpinned the Bank's assets quality and helped to achieve an increase in its profitability.

Total assets

The Bank's total assets of KD 4,125.3 million at the end of 2016 increased by KD 87.9 million (2.2 percent) compared to KD 4,037.4 million at the end of 2015. It is worth mentioning that the Senior Management's decision taken in 2014 to restructure the Bank's assets & liabilities in order to improve assets quality, the income generated from these

assets has yielded good results as reflected in the improving profitability margins across business divisions, particularly Treasury & Investment Division and International Banking & Syndication Division.

Loans & Advances

The Bank's total loans portfolio of KD 2,250.5 million as at the end of 2016 was lower by KD 47 million (2 percent) compared to KD 2,297.5 million at the end of 2015. This decrease was driven from the Bank's continued strategy targeting improvement of the loans portfolio quality and off-loading non-performing loans from the Bank's records without waiving off any of the Bank's legal rights.

Off-loaded Debts (Loans)

The accumulated balance of off-loaded loans since 2010 amounted to KD 685.8 million as at the end of 2016 (off-loaded loans amounted to KD 258 million during the last four years where recovered loans amounted to KD 93.8 million during the same period). This figure is usually not published in the financial statements. The Bank continues initiating the required procedures towards the debtors who obtained such loans so that the Bank can recover the largest possible amount of such loans. It is very important here to mention that the percentage of the non-performing loans to total loans portfolio stood at 0.5 percent at the end of 2016 (compared to 0.9 percent at the end of 2015) which is the best in Kuwait banking sector.

Provisions

Over the past years, the Bank adopted a



CBK Chairman Ali Mousa Al-Mousa

conservative approach for building up the required provisioning base (general or specific). The Bank continues with this approach which primarily aims at hedging against customers' defaults or impairment of the Bank's investments, thus solidifying the Bank's balance sheet to avert any potential risks that may arise in the future. The Bank's provisions amounted to KD 141 million and the provision coverage ratio for NPL stood at 1175.8 percent.

Income & Profitability

● Total Fees and commissions income amounting to KD 37.4 million as at the end of 2016 was 9.4 percent higher than KD 34.2 million at the end of 2015.

● Total interest income amounting to KD 120.1 million at the end of 2016 increased by KD 11.7 million (10.8 percent) compared to KD 108.4 million as at the end of 2015.

● Total operating income amounting to KD 140.3 million at the end of 2016 increased by KD 4.1 million (3 percent) compared to KD 136.2 million for the last year. The net profit amounting to KD 50.4 million (33.8 fils per share) as at the end of 2016 was 9.1 percent higher than KD 46.2 million (30.9 fils per share) as at the end of 2015.

● Return on Assets (ROA) stood at 1.2 percent and Return on Equity (ROE) stood at 8.9 percent at the end of 2016 compared to 1.1 percent and 8.5 percent respectively as at the end of 2015. As such, the accumulated retained earnings carried forward to the next year amounted to KD 165.2 million with an increase of KD 13.1 million (8.6 percent) at the end of 2016 compared to KD 152.1 million at the end of 2015.

Shareholders' Equity

The Bank's shareholders' equity amounting to KD 580.7 million at the end of 2016 increased by KD 23.3 million (4.2 percent) compared to KD 557.4 million at the end of 2015.

Capital Adequacy & Leverage Ratios

The capital adequacy ratio stood at 17.9 percent at the end of 2016 compared to 18.4 percent at the end of 2015 and this ratio comfortably exceeds the ratio mandated by the regulatory authorities represented by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Furthermore, leverage ratio stood at 11.2 percent and liquidity coverage ratio reached 142 percent at the end of 2016 and these ratios comfortably exceeds the minimum requirements set by the Central Bank of Kuwait as per its instructions issued in this regard.

Second: Future Outlook

The negative economic developments posed by the falling crude oil prices that started from the end of 2014 revealed the importance of this commodity and its substantial impact on Kuwait economy on the back of Kuwait's total reliance on oil revenues.

Due to deteriorating oil prices, the State's budget deficit started to shift into a structural deficit that may continue for coming years. Furthermore, the corrective actions to remedy the same will have social consequences apart from economic ones represented in shrinking growth rates in non-oil sectors.

The price trend of oil in the year 2017 is unpredictable as these prices will be contingent on a set of factors, namely supply & demand, the prices of alternative energy especially renewable energy such as solar & wind energy as well as energy efficiency & the rapid technological advancement in transportation in addition to the political tension seen in the Middle East and the

persistent unstable situation in the Gulf region since long time. The uncertainty surrounding the predicted oil prices is reflected in the high degree of divergence on Brent Crude oil prices predictions during the year 2017 where crude oil prices forecasting centers expect that oil prices will reach USD 50 per barrel and other economists expected that oil prices may reach USD 70 per barrel whilst other pessimistic observers anticipated that oil price will reach USD 30 per barrel.

IMF country report "Kuwait: Selected Issues" dated 16/12/2016 which contained professional consultation is alarming oil exporting countries. The report explained that the oil prices expected to persist near the present levels and the absence of reforms over the medium term (2016 - 2021) will reduce growth rates from 5.4 percent to 3.2 percent and this will be reflected in the reduced non-oil sector growth. The report also highlighted the urgency of significant structural reforms to boost productivity and to create a dynamic private sector which can absorb the growing national labor force.

In view of the above, the Bank is cautiously monitoring the changes & developments which the year 2017 will bring to the region, since it is regarded as a year of economic variables that will impose volatile & tough economic conditions that the region has to cope with. In conclusion and on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Bank's shareholders, customers, employees, all other stakeholders and regulatory authorities represented by the Central Bank of Kuwait. I wish all the success and progress to all the parties.

Ali Mousa Al-Mousa
Chairman

WARBA BANK EARNS 'BANK OF THE YEAR - KUWAIT 2016' AWARD

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, Kuwait's best investment bank and corporate consultancy institution, earned the "Bank of the Year - Kuwait 2016" Award from The European. This award is another valuable addition to the group of awards the bank has earned last year, and comes as a testament to its exceptional performance and fast growth, in addition to the distinguished financing solutions and innovative investment tools with high returns that it offers to investors.

Warba Bank's selection for the award was based on its achievements in corporate governance standards, diversified banking products, and special customer service; in addition to its social responsibility efforts. The European's annual awards program nominates companies via digital voting. A panel of judges with long experience in various fields helps a team of researchers guaranteeing quality in the selection of the winners.

The magazine's awards' program was designed to provide detailed analysis of the best performance of companies in all economic sectors.

In regard of this award, Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanim, CEO of Warba Bank, said: "We at Warba Bank are proud to earn the "Bank of the Year - Kuwait 2016" Award from a prestigious magazine such as The European. It is a new addition to the series of awards that the bank has earned in 2016 in recognition for its great achievements in all business units.

We consider these awards as a confirmation of the bank's distinguished performance." He added: "We promised our clients in the beginning of 2016 that Warba Bank will achieve positive results by the end of the year, and we successfully managed to keep our promises. The results exceeded expectations as net profits grew by 158 percent to reach KD 2.575 million."

In addition, Warba Bank achieved remarkable success in covering the initial underwriting of sukuk issued with a value of KD 250 million, and that by five folds. Its sukuk marketing tour included regional and international capitals, and the sukuk were recently listed in Nasdaq Dubai, while they will soon be listed in the

Irish stock market. As all of Warba Bank's indicators are growing, and to support this growth, it recently cooperated with a major international consultancy company to adopt a five-year strategic plan (2017-2021) that seeks to make Warba Bank a leader in Islamic banking services and consultancy services in Kuwait, in addition to offering advanced digital retail services for individuals.

Al-Ghanim further noted that Warba Bank continues its notable performance in 2017 as a bank that offers distinguished solutions. It is currently preparing a series of innovative solutions that will be revealed soon to help establish a new creative era in the Islamic banking industry characterized with presenting interactive services and flexible financing solutions that meet clients' needs and aspirations.

Warba Bank earned several awards in 2016 including: "Best Investment Bank in Kuwait", "Best Corporate Consultancy Institution", "Fastest Growing Bank in the Arabian Gulf, Middle East and North Africa", and "Fastest Growing Bank in Kuwait" from the Banker Middle East. Furthermore, it also received the "Best Company in the Arab World" award from Forbes Middle East. These awards came in recognition of the bank's achievements in the Islamic banking sector despite its relative young age.

Additionally, its ability to achieve remarkable results is reflected by its financial data and main performance indicators, as well as its fast approach and quality performance in financing and innovative services it provides in this field.



MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS' OPENS ITS 12TH SHOWROOM IN HAIL, SAUDI

HAIL, Saudi Arabia: Malabar Gold & Diamonds' one among the BIG 5 jewellery retailers globally has extended its presence in KSA by opening a new showroom in Lulu Hypermarket, Salehia Plaza, Hail on Wednesday, 29th March, 2017. Khalid Al-Saif - Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Hail inaugurated Malabar Gold & Diamonds' 12th showroom in KSA in the presence of Shamlal Ahamed - Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Abdul Salam KP - Group Executive Director, Malabar Group, Waseem M Al-Qantani, Gafour Edakkuni, Regional Director, other dignitaries, management team members, well-wishers and guests. By opening its new showroom in Hail, the total number of showrooms of Malabar Gold & Diamonds will jump to 174 globally. The company will also open a

new showroom in the KSA soon at Lulu Hypermarket - Al-Hassa.

This new outlet unveils a significantly large collection of traditional as well as contemporary designer jewellery. The exquisite range of collections in the new outlet can hold you spell-bound with their awe-inspiring beauty and classic designs. Like all their other outlets, this outlet also will exhibit a wide range of diverse and trendy designs in gold (18K, 21K & 22K), IGI certified diamonds and precious gem jewellery from Italy, Singapore, Bahrain and India.

The launch of new showroom will be celebrated exhibiting the finest collection of gold and diamonds in addition to offering exciting promotions for their customers. Celebrating the launch, the outlet will offer special promotions on purchase of diamond &

gold jewellery. Customers who spend SAR 3000 on diamond jewellery will get 2 gold coins free & customers who spend SAR 3000 on gold jewellery will get 1 gold coin absolutely free. Customers can also avail zero deduction exchange offer on 22K old gold exchange. These offers are valid until 15th April, 2017. The branded jewelry segment of Malabar Gold & Diamonds is renowned globally for their flawless craftsmanship and impeccable style. The exclusive brands available at Malabar Gold & Diamonds includes Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewelry, Era - Uncut Diamond jewelry, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Divine - Indian Heritage jewelry, Precia - Gem jewelry and Starlet - Kids jewelry. Malabar Group has established its presence in the KSA market in a surprisingly short span of time.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.767
Indian Rupees	4.688
Pakistani Rupees	2.908
Srilankan Rupees	2.008
Nepali Rupees	2.921
Singapore Dollar	219.850
Hongkong Dollar	39.288
Bangladesh Taka	3.802
Philippine Peso	6.084
Thai Baht	8.865

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.428
Qatari Riyal	83.867
Omani Riyal	793.009
Bahraini Dinar	810.810
UAE Dirham	83.136

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.400
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.795
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.226
Tunisian Dinar	135.920
Jordanian Dinar	429.880
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.034
Syrian Lira	2.176
Morocco Dirham	31.043

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	305.150
Euro	332.610
Sterling Pound	383.880
Canadian dollar	229.870
Turkish lira	85.240

Swiss Franc	310.590
Australian Dollar	234.200
US Dollar Buying	303.950

GOLD	
20 Gram	254.250
10 Gram	130.050
5 Gram	65.870

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.050
Canadian Dolla	228.661
Sterling Pound	384.957
Euro	333.164
Swiss Frank	303.987
Bahrain Dinar	809.090
UAE Dirhams	83.459
Qatari Riyals	84.677
Saudi Riyals	82.238
Jordanian Dinar	431.785
Egyptian Pound	16.945
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.009
Indian Rupees	4.701
Pakistani Rupees	2.909
Bangladesh Taka	3.827
Philippines Peso	6.074
Cyprus pound	166.022
Japanese Yen	3.736
Syrian Pound	2.423
Nepalese Rupees	3.915
Malaysian Ringgit	69.880

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.795
Thai Bhat	9.819
Turkish Lira	84.986

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.378174	0.388174
Czech Korune	0.004081	0.016081
Danish Krone	0.039884	0.044884
Euro	0.320938	0.329938
Norwegian Krone	0.031655	0.036855
Romanian Leu	0.084694	0.084694
Slovakia	0.009155	0.019155
Swedish Krona	0.030217	0.035217
Swiss Franc	0.298900	0.309900
Turkish Lira	0.078427	0.088727
Australia		
Australian Dollar	0.225249	0.237249
New Zealand Dollar	0.208345	0.217845
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224248	0.233248
Georgina Lari	0.138028	0.138026
US Dollars	0.301500	0.305900
US Dollars Miint	0.302000	0.305900
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003464	0.004048
Chinese Yuan	0.042881	0.046381
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037317	0.040067
Indian Rupee	0.004098	0.004786

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002662	0.002842
Kenyan Shilling	0.003055	0.003055
Korean Won	0.000263	0.000278
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065612	0.071612
Nepalese Rupee	0.002959	0.003129
Pakistan Rupee	0.002728	0.003018
Philippine Peso	0.005989	0.006289
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.213535	0.223535
South African Rand	0.016998	0.025498
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001640	0.002220
Taiwan	0.009783	0.009963
Thai Baht	0.008549	0.009099
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.804039	0.812539
Egyptian Pound	0.014991	0.020899
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000197	0.000257
Jordanian Dinar	0.425366	0.434366
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020095	0.044095
Nigerian Naira	0.001266	0.001901
Omani Riyal	0.787345	0.793025
Qatar Riyal	0.083129	0.084579
Saudi Riyal	0.080407	0.081707
Syrian Pound	0.001296	0.001516
Tunisian Dinar	0.130662	0.138662
Turkish Lira	0.078427	0.088727
UAE Dirhams	0.081779	0.083479
Yemeni Riyal	0.000994	0.001074



The Nissan 8th annual aftersales award ceremony

NISSAN AL-BABTAIN THANKS ITS LOYAL CUSTOMERS

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Nissan vehicles in the State of Kuwait, celebrated the successful partnership of its key customers during the "Nissan 8th Annual Aftersales Award Ceremony". An exquisite evening, held at the Crown Plaza Hotel, on March 29th, 2017.

The "Nissan 8th Annual Aftersales Award ceremony" was held to recognize and the partnership and support of customers towards the "NISSAN" brand and Al-Babtain Group, in their journey to success on Kuwait roads.

The "Nissan 8th Annual Aftersales Award ceremony" was attended by Al-Babtain Group Chief Operating Officer - Mohammad Shalaby, Nissan Gulf (NGF) Aftersales Director - David Graves along, with his team, as well as business community leaders from different industries, senior officials, government officers and Nissan vehicle owners. Celebrating the success Nissan loyal customer winners from different categories.

Awareness

Al-Babtain group Chief Operating Officer - Mohammed Shalaby said "The continuous support, confidence, trust and loyalty of our customers towards our products, services and people, empowered this partnership and today we celebrate our success. We are building further on future partnerships with different businesses. We look forward to achieving many more accomplishments in the future through various business opportunities that will bring value to the Kuwaiti Market."

In addition, Nissan Gulf (NGF) Aftersales Director - David Graves, announced that Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), for the third year in a row, ranked first in the Customer Satisfaction (CS) Survey



Al-Babtain Group Chief Operating Officer, Mohammad Shalaby

amongst the top automotive dealerships in Kuwait. Awards were presented for different categories, which covered, Best Fleet Customers, Best Nissan Genuine parts wholesale and retail Customers, Best Insurance Companies, and Best independent workshop segment of the market who contributed to the growth and success of the organization.

An important emphasis was made during the Nissan awards night, to spread awareness to all Nissan vehicles owners that there are many fake products now available



Nissan Gulf (NGF) Aftersales Director, David Graves

in the market which are identical in appearance and hard to differentiate, but extremely risky when used due to poor quality and unreliability. Therefore, all vehicle owners should always support the purchase of genuine parts and always ensure that their vehicles are serviced at authorized Service Centers.

Today, Nissan Kuwait has the largest Aftersales Service and Parts Network in the State of Kuwait with 9 Service Centers and 12 Parts Outlets. Nissan aftersales took many

new initiatives to spread awareness during 2017 through digital marketing, local campaigns and spreading messages through several platforms.

Nissan Al-Babtain also celebrated the gold medals received during the Nissan's regional skills contest that was held in Dubai where Nissan Al-Babtain received the Gold Medal for the Nissan Service Technicians Excellence Competency & the Nissan Parts Executives Excellence Competency Contest. In 1948, late Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain established a small automotive business. Today Al-Babtain Group is a conglomerate organization located in the State of Kuwait.

Al-Babtain Group integrated honesty, integrity and dedication in all aspects of the business. The Group has established strongholds in the local, regional and international market. Al-Babtain Group experienced continuous success throughout the past 60 years. The contemporary and flexible management approach, aligned with the long term vision and well-studied strategies are the key factor for the groups' success. Al-Babtain Group businesses include; Automotive, Information Technology, Investment, Real Estate, Finance and Industrial.

The Group has licensing rights for some of the world's leading brands, international corporations and distributes a wide variety of products & services. Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Company (AABC) core business is automotive services. With the great success this business has built, AABC is also the main distributor for several well renowned brands. The Group is currently the official agent and distributor for the Japanese and European (French) vehicles, Nissan, Infiniti, Renault and Citroen in the State of Kuwait.

AHMADIAH CONTRACTING



KGL



YUSUF AL GHANIM & SONS BUMPER TO BUMPER



NISSAN BEST CO-OPERATIVE CUSTOMER PARTS

MISHREF CO-OP SOCIETY



SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY					SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %	Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	22,043,802	1.70%	1,126,320	0.83%	OIL & GAS	943.98	998.19	-5.43%	20.92%
BASIC MATERIALS	4,735,394	0.36%	1,874,226	1.38%	BASIC MATERIALS	1,319.82	1,340.94	-1.58%	31.35%
INDUSTRIALS	73,338,661	5.64%	15,319,462	11.28%	INDUSTRIALS	1,784.17	1,669.86	6.85%	32.75%
CONSUMER GOODS	23,934,632	1.84%	2,784,292	2.05%	CONSUMER GOODS	1,150.92	1,156.90	-0.52%	2.30%
HEALTH CARE	99,123	0.01%	36,714	0.03%	HEALTH CARE	1,521.19	1,481.14	2.70%	22.24%
CONSUMER SERVICES	22,401,419	1.72%	1,821,751	1.34%	CONSUMER SERVICES	938.91	962.97	-2.50%	1.55%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	49,502,934	3.81%	7,515,189	5.53%	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	668.55	638.85	4.65%	5.09%
BANKS	143,286,756	11.02%	46,006,675	33.87%	BANKS	938.28	967.57	-3.03%	12.07%
INSURANCE	718,824	0.06%	58,760	0.04%	INSURANCE	1,089.60	1,118.83	-2.61%	9.59%
REAL ESTATE	478,307,263	36.79%	27,432,526	20.20%	REAL ESTATE	1,071.55	1,103.51	-2.90%	23.14%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	480,310,930	36.94%	31,625,207	23.29%	FINANCIAL SERVICES	761.64	788.01	-3.35%	27.57%
TECHNOLOGY	1,573,062	0.12%	212,364	0.16%	TECHNOLOGY	793.12	812.55	-2.39%	30.63%

BOURSA KUWAIT RETREATS ON BEARISH SENTIMENT

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the red zone. The Price Index closed at 7,029.43 points, down by 0.20 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index decreased by 2.66 percent after closing at 413.27 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 933.84 points down by 3.04 percent. Furthermore, the week's average daily turnover decreased by 16.19 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 27.16 million, whereas trading volume average was 260.05 million shares, recording a decrease of 31.33 percent.

Boursa Kuwait three indices underperformed last week and none of it was able to record gains by the end of the week, to close in the losses area on the weekly level, as a number of stocks of different sectors were subject to quick sale for profit operations that directly put pressure on the indices and limited its increases, also the market was affected by the random purchasing operations that targeted some cheap stocks of tempting prices, which caused some reaction witnessed by the trading activity during some sessions of the week, however was not enough to pull the indices' performance to close in higher levels than the previous week.

The market initiated its first session of the week with limited losses to the three indices, affected by the selling pressures and the profit collection operations executed on many leading and small-cap stocks, especially after the increases realized over about 8 sessions, in addition to the random purchasing operations executed on some low-priced stocks, which caused a fluctuated trading activity, where the value increased by 16 percent and the volume grew by 8.75 percent, however the deals dropped by 2.35 percent. On the second session of the week, the three market indices continued its grouped decline to close in the red zone, affected by the continued strong selling and the speculative operations on a number of listed stocks to build new financial positions, in parallel with a slowed trading activity compared to the previous session.

On the mid-week session, the Boursa indices recorded mixed performance, whereas the Price Index was able to compensate its previous losses, to end the session at 7,051.84 point, its highest level in more than two years, specifically since 18 November 2014 session, supported by the active speculative operations executed on the cheap stocks after it reached tempting purchasing levels, however, the selling pressures and the profit collection operations that the leading stocks were subject to, pushed the Weighted and KSX-15 indices to close in the red zone, and caused the trading activity to fluctuate.

Wednesday's session witnessed a noticeable drop in the Boursa's performance, as the Price Index declined steeply by 43.73 point to close at 7,008.11 point level by the end of the session, to lose by this all its gains realized since the beginning of the week, affected by the continued profit collection operations that targeted the small and cheap stocks, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices decreased for the fourth consecutive session, in light of the selling pressures that the leading and heavy stocks were subject to, especially in the Financial Services and the Banks sectors.

On Thursday's session, the three market indices were able to redirect its downward performance to close in the green zone, compensating by this some of its losses recorded during the previous week's sessions, as a result to the random purchasing operations that concentrated on

the small-cap stocks, in addition to the speculative selling operations executed on some leading stocks and the stocks that did not disclose its 2016 financial results as at end of Thursday, fearing of banning such stocks from trading, whereas the number of deals executed during the session increased by 24.92 percent.

Moreover, Boursa Kuwait lost around KD 900.77 million of its market cap during the last week, as the total market capitalization for the listed companies in the primary market reached about KD 27.17 billion, down by 3.22 percent of its value at a week earlier, where it reached around KD 28.02 billion. On an annual level, the market cap gains reached 6.73 percent since the beginning of the current year, compared to its level at end of 2016, where it reached then around KD 25.41 billion.

By the end of last week, the number of companies that disclosed its 2016 financial results reached about 152, representing 85.39 percent of the 178 total listed companies in the primary market, with KD 1.66 billion in net profits, up by 3.12 percent of the same companies results for 2015, where it was KD 1.63 billion. Also, the number of companies that recorded growth in its EPS reached 81 company, while 69 company recorded losses in its EPS compared to 2015, and 33 company declared losses for the financial year 2016. For the annual performance, the Price Index ended last week recording 22.29 percent annual gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the Weighted Index increased by 8.73 percent, and the KSX-15 recorded 5.52 percent growth.

Sectors' Indices

Nine of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the red zone, while the other three recorded increases. The Oil & Gas sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 5.43 percent to end the week's activity at 943.98 points. The Financial Services sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 3.35 percent, closing at 761.64 points, followed by the Banks sector, as its index closed at 938.28 points at a loss of 3.03 percent. The Consumer Goods sector was the least declining as its index closed at 1,150.92 points with a 0.52 percent decrease.

On the other hand, last week's highest gainer was the Industrial sector, achieving 6.85 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,784.17 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Telecommunication sector's index closed at 668.55 points recording 4.65 percent increase. The Health Care sector came in third as its index achieved 2.70 percent growth, ending the week at 1,521.19 points.

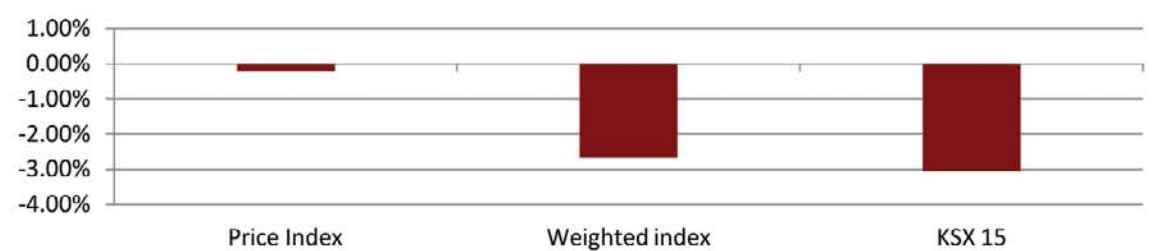
Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 480.31 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 36.94 percent of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 36.79 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 478.31 million shares.

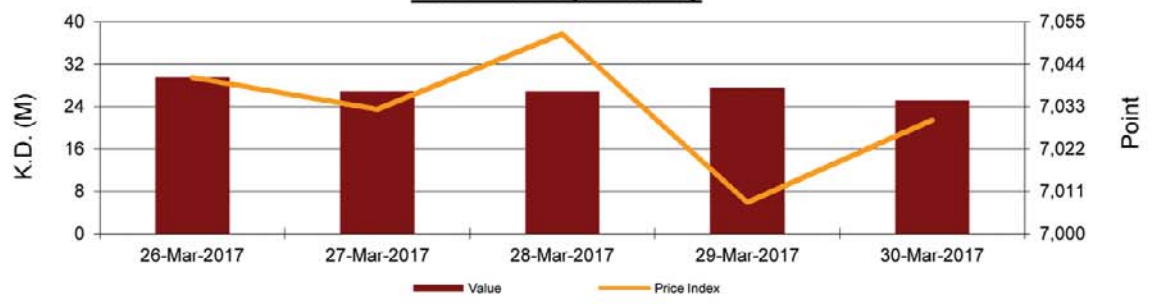
On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 46.01 million or 33.87 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approximately KD 31.63 million representing 23.29 percent of the total market trading value. —Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES				
		Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15
Weekly	Last week	7,029.43	413.27	933.84
	Previous week	7,043.46	424.56	963.15
	Change (Point)	-14.03	-11.29	-29.31
	Change (%)	-0.20%	-2.66%	-3.04%
Annual	Last year	5,748.09	380.09	885.02
	Change (Point)	1,281.34	33.18	48.82
	Change (%)	22.29%	8.73%	5.52%

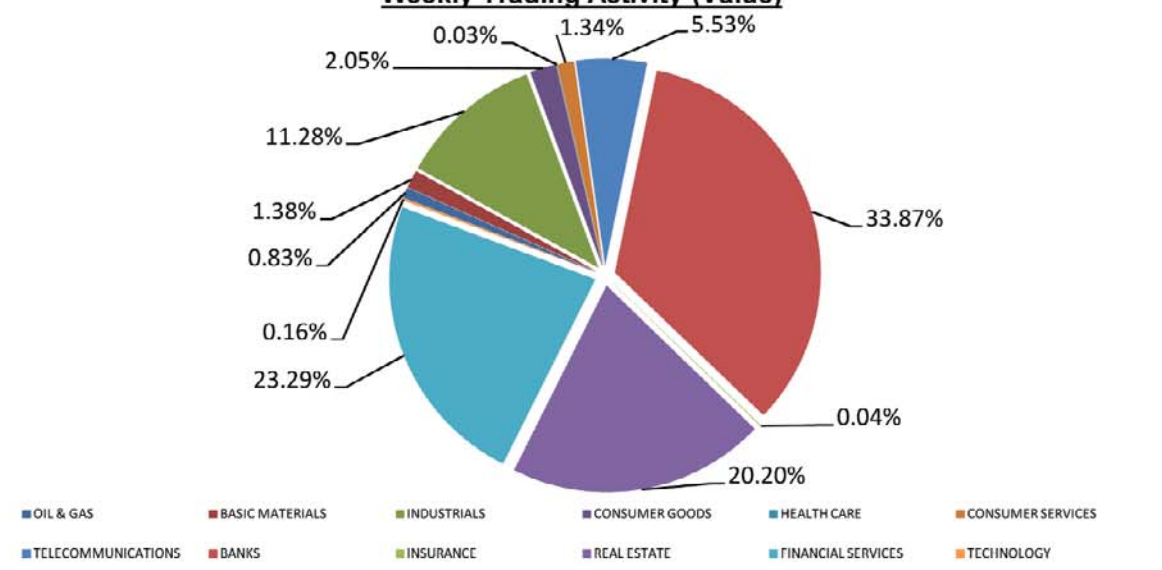
Indices Weekly Performance



Last Five Days Activity



Weekly Trading Activity (Value)



MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	1,300,252,800	1,893,494,858	-31.33%
Value (K.D.)	135,813,487	162,039,943	-16.19%
Deals	29,209	34,934	-16.39%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
27,116,770,078	28,017,538,173	-3.22%	6.73%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
NCCI	130.00	90.00	40.0	44.44%
AMWAL	104.00	77.00	27.0	35.06%
EQUIPMENT	600.00	475.00	125.0	26.32%
KBMMC	128.00	102.00	26.0	25.49%
KCPC	184.00	150.00	34.0	22.67%

STOCKS END Q1 WITH SOLID GAINS AFTER DAY OF LISTLESS TRADING

NEW YORK: Wall Street closed out a solid quarter Friday with a day of listless trading that ended on a soft note. The Standard & Poor's 500 index notched its best three-month stretch since the fourth quarter of 2015. The Nasdaq composite turned in its best quarter since the end of 2013.

The S&P 500, Nasdaq and the Dow Jones industrial average ended the day down slightly, with financials companies posting the biggest decline. Real estate companies led the gainers. Trading was largely subdued, suggesting portfolio managers looking to bolster their end-of-quarter performance had made their moves earlier in the week, said Quincy Krosby, market strategist at Prudential Financial. "The market has performed very well," she said.

The Dow slid 65.27 points, or 0.3 percent, to 20,663.22. The S&P 500 lost 5.34 points, or 0.2 percent, to 2,362.72. The Nasdaq fell 2.61 points to 5,911.74. The index hit an all-time high on Thursday.

Small-company stocks fared better than the rest of the market. The Russell 2000 index picked up 3.57 points, or 0.3 percent, to 1,385.92. Three stocks rose for every two that fell on the New York Stock Exchange. Bond prices edged higher. The 10-year Treasury yield fell to 2.39 percent from 2.42 percent late Thursday. The major stock indexes got off to a downbeat start Friday and spent much of the day wavering between small gains and losses

as investors weighed several corporate deals and new economic data on consumer spending and inflation. The Commerce Department said consumer spending kept rising in February, though gains in the last two months have been slow. Meanwhile, an inflation gauge closely watched by the Federal Reserve increased 2.1 percent in February compared to a year ago, a five-year high.

The latest economic data followed positive reports on consumer confidence, housing and economic growth earlier this week, which have added to the market's expectation for stronger first-quarter corporate earnings.

Valuations

"The market is moving ahead into the second quarter with valuations that are high, but the expectations are that the first-quarter earnings season will confirm the valuations," Krosby said.

All told, the S&P 500 index ended the first three months of this year with a gain of 5.5 percent, the Nasdaq posted a gain of 9.8 percent and the Dow climbed of 4.6 percent. The Russell 2000 ended the quarter with a gain of 2.1 percent, its fourth quarter of growth in a row. Investors bid up shares in companies with better-than-expected earnings Friday. Industrial products company DXP Enterprises jumped \$5.13, or 15.7 percent, to \$37.87, while BlackBerry surged \$1.03, or 11.1 percent, to

WALL STREET WEEKLY MARKET REPORT



NEW YORK: Trader Michael Conlon works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Friday. Stocks are moving higher in early trading on Wall Street after the government reported solid job gains in the US in February.—AP

\$10.30. NantHealth didn't fare as well. The health care information technology company slid 2.7 percent after it reported disappointing fourth-quarter revenue. The stock shed 13 cents to \$4.96. Auto dealership companies were among the decliners Friday. AutoNation fell \$1.20, or 2.8 percent, to \$42.29. CarMax slid 84 cents, or 1.4 percent, to \$59.22. Traders cheered several corporate deals.

Mixed

TRC vaulted 46 percent after the engineering and consulting services company agreed to be bought by a unit of the investment firm New Mountain Capital for \$17.55 a share, or \$365.5 million. The stock climbed \$5.50 to \$17.45. Shares in FMC also got a lift after the company agreed to buy part of DuPont's crop protection business. At the same time, DuPont will buy FMC's health and nutrition unit. DuPont also gets \$1.6 billion, mostly in cash. Antitrust regulators in Europe wanted DuPont to make the sale as part of its combination with competitor Dow Chemical. FMC jumped \$8.09, or 13.2 percent, to \$69.59. DuPont shares fell \$1.31, or 1.6 percent, to \$80.33.

Major indexes overseas were mixed Friday. In Europe, Germany's DAX rose 0.5 percent, while France's CAC 40 gained 0.7 percent. The FTSE 100 index of leading British shares fell 0.6 percent. In Asia, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng each fell 0.8 percent. —AP



DES MOINES: Des Moines Water Works CEO Bill Stowe stands in the Nitrate Removal Facility at the Water Works treatment plant in Des Moines, Iowa. For years the utility that supplies drinking water to the state's capital city has spent millions of dollars to rid its water supply of pollutants that run off farm fields. —AP

FARMERS TO PLANT RECORD LOW WHEAT ACRES, MOST SOYBEANS EVER

DES MOINES, Iowa: The amber waves of grain are about to turn into bean pods as farmers report they'll plant millions of acres in soybeans instead of wheat this year as a global glut of the grain has made it unprofitable to grow. In its annual prospective plantings report released Friday, the US Department of Agriculture said wheat acres will be the lowest on record this year at 46.1 million acres and soybean planting will be at a record high of 89.5 million acres. The United States has more than 1 billion bushels of surplus wheat in storage and the oversupply has driven wheat farmers in several states including Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and South Dakota to shift previously planted wheat acres to soybeans. "The big trend there is that wheat is grown in just about every continent around the world except Antarctica so those acres elsewhere have increased dramatically. The US has lost production to the rest of the world," said Todd Hultman, a grain market analyst for DTN, an Omaha, Nebraska-based agriculture market data provider. He said wheat overproduction caused prices to collapse and made production unprof-

itable. Good growing weather for wheat worldwide for four consecutive years has been a contributing factor, he said. Corn has experienced a similar trend leading farmers to cut corn acres 4 percent from last year to 90 million, the USDA report said. If this year's planting weather favors soybeans and more acres are shifted out of corn, this could be the first year since 1983 that farmers planted more acres in soybeans than corn. Soybeans have produced large harvests too, but it is a hot commodity around the world with demand highest in China where soybean meal feeds pigs, cows and fish in a culture increasingly seeking to eat more meat. The record global demand has maintained more favorable prices for soybeans making them more profitable to grow than corn or wheat, said Chad Hart, an agricultural economist at Iowa State University. It all shouldn't change much at the grocery store except that plentiful grain and soybean supplies lead to low livestock feed prices which help keep the cost of producing beef lower. Friday's report is based on a survey of farmers and is the first indication for the year of planting intentions. —AP

Weekly KSE Statistics				
Key Parameters	Current	Previous	Chg.	%
Volume (Million Share)	1,296.19	1,877.69	(581.50)	-31.0%
Value (KD Million)	135.68	161.50	(25.82)	-16.0%
Deals ('000)	29.01	34.40	(5.39)	-15.7%
Market Cap (KD Bln)	28.22	29.11	(0.89)	-3.1%

Market Movers			
Advance	Decline	Unchanged	Not Traded
35	103	24	16



KUWAIT EQUITIES COME UNDER SELLING PRESSURE

KFH Capital Weekly Market Report

KUWAIT: The KSE Indices witnessed a negative week as indices decreased this week. The KSE price index closed at 7,029.43 a decrease of 0.20 percent down 14.03 points compared to the previous week. As the MUDX witnessed a decrease this week of 3.01 percent to close at 650.84 for the week. Moreover, the market blue-chip index the KXS15 closed on a decrease of 29.31 points down 3.04 percent during the week to close at 933.84. The reported weekly volumes were 1,296.19 million shares compared to 1,877.69 million shares in previous. Among the major contributors, the Financial Services Sector (contributing 36.79 percent) witnessed 476.24 million shares of trading compared to 648.14 million shares in the previous week, while Real Estate Sector (contributing 36.95 percent) witnessed 478.30 million shares of trading compared to 831.13 million shares in the previous week. The overall Market Cap witnessed a decrease this week as it stood at KD 28.22 billion down 3.1 percent on weekly basis. As for the blue chips, National Bank of Kuwait - NBK (Mcap - KD 3.90 billion) saw its market cap decrease by 5.7 percent during the week. However, Mobile Telecommunication Co. - Zain (Mcap - KD 1.96 billion) saw its market cap decrease by 1.09 percent during the week. Ahli United Bank - AUB (Mcap - KD 1.48 billion) saw its market cap decrease by 12.80 percent during the week. On

Most Active Stocks	Current Week ('000 Share)	Prev. Week ('000 Share)	Chng.	% Total Mkt	YTD-Turnover	Price Stats- Weekly		
						Current	Prev.	Chng.
Aayan Leasing & Investment Co. @	85,031	119,551	-28.9%	6.56%	152.3%	0.046	0.050	-9.0%
Kuwait Real Estate Co. @	80,401	82,662	-2.7%	6.20%	49.4%	0.066	0.075	-12.0%
Sokouk Holding Co. @	74,714	73,183	2.1%	5.76%	119.8%	0.047	0.051	-8.8%
Manazel Holding Co. @	72,653	105,837	-31.4%	5.61%	157.1%	0.055	0.055	0.0%
Al Tameer Real Estate Investment Co. @	65,973	41,485	59.0%	5.09%	176.3%	0.037	0.036	2.8%

Top 3 Gainers	C. Mkt Cap	Pr. Mkt Cap	Change %	% Total Mkt	Price Stats- Weekly	
					Current	Previous
National Consumer Holding Co. @	11.70	8.10	44.44%	0.041%	0.130	0.090
Kuwait Building Materials Manufacturing @	3.88	3.09	25.49%	0.014%	0.128	0.102
Kuwait Co. For Process Plant Cons. & Cont. @	18.45	15.04	22.67%	0.065%	0.184	0.150

Top 3 Losers	C. Mkt Cap	Pr. Mkt Cap	Change %	% Total Mkt	Price Stats- Weekly	
					Current	Previous
Saibookh Trading Co. @	7.45	8.61	-13.41%	0.026%	0.071	0.082
Credit Rating & Collection @	5.36	6.19	-13.33%	0.019%	0.033	0.038
Ahli United Bank	1,486.08	1,704.22	-12.80%	5.267%	0.218	0.250

the total market breadth, Of the 56 Islamic Companies, 4 advanced while 41 declined during the week. The Islamic universe market cap witnessed its market cap decrease of 3.52 percent to close at KD 7.96 billion. The universe heavyweights Kuwait Finance House - KFH (Mcap - KD 3.05 billion) saw its market cap decrease by 5.97 percent during the week. Boubyan Bank (Mcap - KD 932.64 million) saw its market cap decrease by 12.20 percent this week. Furthermore, Kuwait Telecommunication Co. - VIVA (Mcap - KD 496.44 million) saw its market increase by 10.59 percent during the week.



GOYANG: Models pose with Hyundai Motor's Grandeur Hybrid vehicle during a media preview of the 2017 Seoul Motor Show in Goyang. The exhibition is held from March 31 to April 9 with 27 brands showing their latest cars and concepts. —AP



GOYANG: Models pose with Ssangyong Motor's G4 Rexton, sports utility vehicle or SUV, during a media preview of the 2017 Seoul Motor Show in Goyang. —AP

FUTURE OF ASIAN LUXURY CARS, ELECTRIC VEHICLES ON DISPLAY

S KOREA'S LARGEST AUTO SHOW DAZZLES CAR LOVERS

GOYANG, South Korea: South Korea's largest auto show provides a look at the future of Asian premium cars and electric vehicles, as well as efforts by Asian auto and tech companies to catch up in the field of autonomous driving. The biennial Seoul Motor Show opened on Friday in Goyang, north of Seoul, for a 10-day run. There are 243 vehicles on display. Two are making their world premieres: Hyundai Motor's Grandeur hybrid electric vehicle and Ssangyong Motor's G4 Rexton sports utility vehicle. Eighteen others are making their Asian debuts. Although usually smaller than auto shows in Frankfurt, Detroit or Shanghai, the Seoul Motor Show is nonetheless a place to read auto trends and consumer tastes among trend-setting, tech-savvy consumers in the world's most populous continent. This year's highlight is Kia Motor's first luxury sports sedan, Stinger, which launches a new era for premium sports cars built in South Korea, home to the world's fifth-largest automotive group. Growing interest in environmentally friendly cars among South Koreans will be in the spotlight as well. The show is missing Volkswagen and Audi, after South Korea halted sales last summer of dozens of their diesel car models for using software to cheat emission tests. Here are some highlights of the show.

Kia Stinger

The star of the show is the Stinger, Kia's five-passenger sports sedan. It is Kia's first premium sports car and the first fastback sedan made by any South Korean carmaker. Many see the Stinger as a game changer for Kia, which is seeking to challenge European sports cars and expand in Western markets. Designed in Frankfurt, the rear-wheel-drive sedan is based on its GT concept in 2011. Kia is dis-

playing the Stinger at a booth near Ferrari and Maserati, an expression of the youthful car maker's self-confidence. Of the three Stinger lines, the top tier employs a turbocharged 3.3 liter engine that produces 370 horsepower with a 0-to-62 mph speed of 4.9 seconds. The Stinger goes on sale in South Korea in the spring and will be released overseas during the second half of the year. Pricing hasn't been announced. Kia plans another premium sedan early next year, a large-size sedan.

Hyundai

Hyundai Motor is putting its electric vehicles at the forefront. It is revealing the hybrid electric version of its steady-selling Grandeur sedan which boasts a claimed fuel efficiency of 16.2 kilometers per liter (38.2 miles per gallon). It also is giving a first look at a fuel cell concept car. Hyundai plans to release its second-generation fuel cell electric vehicle early next year.

An executive demonstrated how in the future humans will be able to speak to a device to summon a driverless car to one's door. In 2019, Hyundai, South Korea's largest automaker, plans cars that will allow drivers to remotely turn on the lights or set the temperature inside a house.

Mapping robot and self-driving car

Naver, the parent company of mobile messaging service Line, is investing in autonomous driving technology and says it will use data acquired from it to tackle everyday questions such as the location of the nearest parking spot.

"We are not doing it for cars or auto technology," Naver Labs CEO Song Chang-hyun said. The company, which operates the most-visited web portal in South Korea, one of the few countries in the world not conquered by Google, said its self-driving cars are navigating roads to gain more data

on buildings, streets, traffic and parking so it can make its maps more sophisticated and help people determine things like the location of the least-crowded nearby cafe, or when to take the least crowded bus during a morning commute.

Naver also is demonstrating its M1 robot, which can move around areas that are too small for self-driving cars. The M1, about half the size of a human, can even navigate through the rows of bookshelves in a library.

Ssangyong's second new car since India tie-up

South Korea's smallest carmaker, Ssangyong Motor, is unveiling its second new car since its 2011 tie-up with India's Mahindra Group. The G4 Rexton, a large sports utility vehicle, is Ssangyong's new flagship product since its mini SUV Tivoli put the once-deeply ailing carmaker onto a path to recovery. Thanks to the popularity of the Tivoli and rising demand for sports utility vehicles, Ssangyong posted its first annual income in nine years in 2016. Details about engines, pricing and sales were not announced.

Electric vehicles

About one fifth of the vehicles on display are electric, a sign that automakers are responding to the South Korean government's push for more electric vehicles. South Korea plans to increase the proportion of environmentally friendly vehicles in the domestic market to 20 percent by 2020 from just 2 percent in 2015. If it achieves that goal, more than 1 million electric vehicles will be sold in the country by 2020. Jaguar, Honda, Lexus, Toyota and Mercedes-Benz are using the Seoul Motor Show to show their existing electric vehicles, while Hyundai, Kia and Genesis are presenting their plans for plug-in models, fuel cells and hybrid cars. —AP



GOYANG: A man looks at Honda's Clarity Fuel Cell vehicle during a media preview of the 2017 Seoul Motor Show. —AP



CHEVROLET ALGHANIM BRINGS 2017 CORVETTE GRAND SPORT COLLECTOR'S EDITION: GS Z25

A PURE EXPRESSION OF THE CAR'S MOTORSPORTS-BRED PEDIGREE FOR INNER RACE DRIVER

KUWAIT: Sports cars enthusiasts need to wait no more. Chevrolet Alghanim reveals the pure expression of motorsports in the 2017 Corvette Grand Sport Collector's Edition, the GS Z25, now available in Kuwait among 200 only produced in the world.

With only 30 available for the Middle East, the GS Z25's Collector Package boasts new features including the Satin Black Full Length Dual Racing Stripe Package, Blue Fender Hash Marks, Carbon Flash Badge Package, the Grand Sport Black 19" front/20" rear wheels in addition to the 6.2L LT1 V8 engine capable of producing 460 horsepower and 465 lb-ft. of torque for the inner race driver.

The GS Z25 also includes the two-tone Tension Blue leather seating surfaces with microfibre inserts, the Blue custom leather stitch, numbered plaque, the carbon fiber instrument panel trim, the Collector Edition sill plates, an interior brushed aluminum hash marks, seat and steering wheel emblems.

Part of its Grand Sport Range, the Collector's Edition GS Z25 is another master-

piece that reflect the "American muscle" expression created for the Corvette. Corvette continues to hold its throne with the most technologically advanced features and high performance that suit the inner race driver.

The Grand Sport Range comprises as well the GS Z16 and the CFV. The Z16 comes with the Performance Package that includes specific front fender inserts, Z06-style grille; wider rear fenders, front splitter, rockers and wicker bill rear spoiler, 6-piston front and 4-piston rear Brembo brakes, Magnetic Selective Ride Control and electronic Limited-Slip Differential. The CFV comes with the Visible Carbon Fiber Ground Effects Package that includes the visible Carbon Fiber splitter and rockers and a more aggressive rear spoiler. The Grand Sport range comes with a G7Q-Watkins Glen Gray Metallic exterior and 246-Tension Blue interior.

The Grand Sport is one of the Corvette Range cars that comprise six legendary sports cars: Corvette Stingray, Corvette Stingray Z06 and the Corvette Stingray Grand Sport.

In all trims and models, Corvette offers its drivers with the lightest in lightweight chassis technology, magnetic ride control and lightning quick 8-speed transmission with performance shift algorithm, for the avid race driver (also available with a 7-speed manual transmission). The 2017 Grand Sport's dry-sump oil system delivers oil flow through the most extreme cornering, helping Grand Sport deliver a consistently high level of performance.

Chevrolet complete care

Corvette customers receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Complete Care Program is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years.



KIB'S NEW LEARNING STRATEGY PROMOTES GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES

KUWAIT: As part of the Bank's comprehensive approach to promote the growth and development of its employees, the newly-introduced Talent Management Division at Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently launched a revitalized learning strategy, which focuses on significantly boosting the training and development opportunities offered to employees.

Geared towards fostering an atmosphere of knowledge sharing and continuous education, the new learning strategy has led to an exponential increase in the training platforms available to both current and new employees, across all departments and levels. Over the past few months, KIB has launched numerous intensive

training courses and interactive workshop, such as a sign language training course to ensure high-quality service for hearing impaired clients, and a new induction program to equip new hires with a solid foundation for their banking careers. The Bank's Talent Management Division has designed the training courses to enhance employees' skillsets and provide them with the tools needed to offer the highest standard of service to customers.

"As a Bank, we remain committed to investing in our employees and promoting their professional growth and development. We also remain committed to creating a culture of innovation and consistent progression, where our

employees are inspired and motivated to continue providing extraordinary customer service experiences," said Soraya Sarif, Head of Talent Management at the Human Resources Department at KIB. "Within this context, we have revamped our training function into a broader, targeted Talent Management Division and adopted a more focused and proactive learning strategy, to enable us to create and sustain a high-performance culture. To date, we have witnessed positive results and significantly higher engagement levels across all of the Bank's departments."

Sarif further reiterated KIB's ongoing commitment to providing the best career opportunities in the market for promising local talents. He added: "We constantly strive to support the national workforce, actively seeking to attract and nurture young Kuwaiti talents who aspire to a career in the Islamic banking sector. As a testament to our efforts, we are proud to have been recognized as one of the leading private sector entities in the market with regards to nationalization of labor over the past few years."

Sarif concluded: "KIB strives to create a sustainable high performance culture enabling it to cultivate a skilled and motivated workforce. By investing heavily in its talent management activities, KIB is endeavoring to become increasingly performance-centric and service-focused; focusing on promoting open communication, knowledge sharing, collaboration and innovation to foster a culture of excellence from within."



PUERTO RICO SEEKS INVESTMENT TO COUNTER RECESSION THREAT

SAN JUAN: Economists warned on Friday that Puerto Rico's decade-long recession will only deepen if it does not attract investors and stimulate its economy to offset an austere new fiscal plan for the US territory's cash-strapped government. The warning came during a meeting by a federal control board that oversees the island's public finances to explore ways to revive the economy after a nearly decade-long recession.

The austerity measures imposed on the island's govern-

ment "will not in themselves be enough to pull Puerto Rico out of its economic crisis," said board chairman Jose Carrion. "Economic development must be a priority." Economists told the board that the austerity measures could shrink Puerto Rico's economy 4 percent. They said the island needs to reduce its power bills and regain access to the capital markets amid multimillion-dollar defaults on public debt, but warned that the benefits of planned infrastructure and tax reforms will not be seen for five to 10 years.

Economist Gustavo Velez said Puerto Rico needs up to \$8 billion in private sector investment a year to help pull the island out of its crisis as it seeks to restructure some \$70 billion in public debt.

It won't be an easy feat, economist Jose Joaquin Villamil said. "We're not starting from zero, we're starting from below zero," he said. Gov. Ricardo Rossello told the board that he plans to expand the island's manufacturing sector, which represents nearly 50 percent of the GDP, and stimulate its tourism sector,

which represents 7 percent. He also said he expects to privatize some of the 340 services that the government provides, and he urged the US Congress to take action on recommendations presented by a group that it created to help find ways to stimulate the economy.

"If those (recommendations) are ignored ... this entire experiment will be a complete failure," he said of a rescue package approved by Congress last year that included creation of the board. —AFP

KAICO PRESENTS NEW GEELY CAR TO KAPICO FOR HITTING SALES TARGET

KUWAIT: KAICO presented a GEELY car to KAPICO for hitting their sales targets for genuine Mazda Parts in 2016. The car was presented to Hussein K Fawaz, Associate Vice President of KAPICO Group by Ashish Rai Tandon, General Manager, Kuwait Automotive Imports Co WLL (Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar) on 06th March at the Geely Showroom in Rai in the presence of Gopal Krishnan, Parts Manager, KAICO and Mohammed Osman, Geely Brand Manager.

Ashish highlighted that KAICO would like to reward dealers who develop commendable partnerships and co invest with us and the brand for a better reach out to

customers with genuine parts. Dealers who have a larger footprint in the country can serve customers in every geographical location conveniently. They have the confidence that KAICO will back them up with warranty and swift supplies. Gopal mentioned that to serve the vehicles in operation this is a win-win partnership for all stake holders and thanked KAPICO for their support. He hopes that the support will be continuous for the new schemes that will be announced in 2017. KAICO has five dedicated Service and Parts centres in Shuwekh, Ahmadi, Al-Rai, Ardiya and Sharq.



VIVA WINS EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR 'VIP CUSTOMER SERVICE' IN TELECOM SECTOR

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, won the excellence award for "VIP Customer Service" in Kuwaiti telecommunications sector, as part of the second edition of the Kuwait Public Relations and Customer Service Award hosted by Kuwait's Public Relations Association under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Minister of state for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh presented the prize trophy to Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Senior Corporate Communications at VIVA, in recognition of VIVA's Al-Diwan Division efforts in serving

the VIP customers round the clock with best offers and packages to make their life easier and more convenient.

The award comes in line with the vision of HH the Amir on the transformation of Kuwait into a financial and commercial center "Kuwait 2035".

The Kuwait Public Relations Association stated that it has hired international judging committee from inside and outside Kuwait, in addition to a company specialized in statistics in the assessment process of the participants. This award aims to motivate public relations and customer service employees to excel in their work and achieve success.



MICROSOFT ADDRESSES CYBER SECURITY IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



By Islam Al-Sharaa

DUBAI: Microsoft last Thursday brought together industry experts and prominent technology decision-makers at a media event in Dubai, to demonstrate how Gulf-based organizations can use cloud services to protect themselves against cyber-threats. The GCC region has, over the past decade, become a hot zone for cyber-attacks, due to the acceleration of Internet and mobile penetration and relatively high average net worth among its citizenry. In 2017, the popularity of the Internet of Things (IoT) is expected to increase the number of endpoints available to cyber-criminals and hackers, leading to a marked surge in breaches.

As the region's enterprises and public bodies continue to adopt technologies like cloud computing to digitally transform their businesses, Microsoft believes service providers and their customers will need to address the demand for fresh policies and procedures that consider the evolving threat landscape. Cyber-attacks are responsible for widespread disruption and losses in productivity and growth. Global estimates vary, but figures are routinely reported in the range of hundreds of billions of dollars.

One estimate predicts the global cyber-security market to be worth more than \$120 billion in 2017 - a 35-fold increase over the past 13 years - and to reach more than \$1 trillion cumulatively over the next five years. "The threat landscape evolves with the technology ecosystem and so cybersecurity is a top priority for Microsoft," said Mohammed Arif, Windows and Devices

Business Group Lead, Microsoft Gulf. As targets for attacks grow, we expect the number of breach attempts to increase.

The Microsoft cloud incorporates security at every level and in every scenario. We encrypt data to the highest standard, whether at rest or in transit to or from our data centers. Whatever the size or nature of your organization, we can tailor a cyber-security solution that keeps you safe but allows you to operate, meaning security does not get in the way of your growth.

The Dubai event gathered Microsoft experts who discussed the company's security portfolio and the emerging threats and counter-threat solutions in the region. Additionally, representatives from National Bank of Abu Dhabi (NBAD), Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi and Emirates Airlines, participated in a panel discussion about the challenges Gulf businesses face as they try to address the shifts in the threat landscape. Past high-profile attacks across the GCC have propelled cyber-security from the IT office to the boardroom, and it now tops the C-level agenda. The Participants explained how they had adopted Microsoft solutions to help protect their digital assets and employees.

In the past year, Microsoft has taken steps to further strengthen its security platform, with the introduction of services such as Microsoft Cloud App Security, Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (WDATP) and Office 365 Advanced Security Management. Intelligence is at the heart of services such as Azure Security Centre, Microsoft Advanced



Threat Analytics and WDATP. Enterprise-grade security in Windows 10 and the Microsoft Surface range is enabling enterprises to take ownership of their security infrastructure.

Surface Enterprise Management Mode (SEMM) allows users to modify privileges, lock out suspicious sessions, and control hardware configuration and operating system behavior. With the Creators Update, Windows 10 continues to broaden and deepen its security features. The new Windows Defender Security Center, combines security and health options in one place making easier for users to control Windows 10 device security and health options. For enterprise customers, the Creators Update will continue to bring new tools and capabilities that help simplify IT - making it easier to better deploy, manage and support Windows 10 devices - and to help stomp security threats.

Microsoft's SQL Server continues to lead the market, with its advanced data security features and new capabilities for Azure Security Centre (ASC) and Operations Management Suite (OMS). The platform helps organizations protect data, and detect and respond to sophisticated threats across cloud and data-center resources. SQL works together with OMS and ASC to act on real-time intelligence from Microsoft's network of global threat-monitoring and insights, giving customers greater visibility into their own security configuration, as well as insights into potential redundancy in their data.

Office 365 Secure Score is a new security analytics

tool that helps IT professionals assess the strength of their current Office 365 security configuration. Its threat intelligence, available later this year, provides near real-time insight into the global threat landscape, to help customers stay ahead of cyber threats. Many companies in the Middle East are ill-equipped to defend against major cyber-attacks, according to research by Symantec and Deloitte. Their report suggests that more than two thirds of organizations in the region lack the internal capabilities to protect themselves against sophisticated intrusion methods.

Additionally, 70 percent of regional IT decision-makers admit having less than full confidence in their company's cybersecurity policies. But Middle Eastern companies are increasingly rising to the challenges posed by cyber-attacks, expanding their IT departments and promoting greater awareness of threats. Current estimates value the Middle East cybersecurity sector at \$25 billion over the next 10 years, and Microsoft is responding by building a robust ecosystem of security partners across the region.

"As governments and enterprises around the world continue to recognize the cost and productivity benefits of digital transformation, a holistic, managed approach to security has become more critical than ever before," Added Arif. "That is why we are collaborating with partners, customers and governments to combat the region's threat landscape. We want to give businesses and governments peace of mind, so they can focus on doing what they do best - innovating."



NEW YORK: In this file photo, Terry Myerson, Microsoft's executive vice president of the Windows and Devices Group, discusses a Windows 10 update at a Microsoft media event in New York.—AP

WINDOWS UPDATE WILL BRING 3-D, GAME TOOLS AND DOODLING

NEW YORK: A major update to Microsoft's Windows 10 system will start reaching consumers and businesses on April 11, offering 3-D drawing tools, game-broadcasting capabilities and better ways to manage your web browsing. This "Creators Update" also aims to make future updates less disruptive. Microsoft said Wednesday that it will roll out the Creators Update to some 400 million Windows 10 devices worldwide over time.

Though there's no set schedule, devices that came with Windows 10 installed will likely get the update first. That will make it easier for Microsoft to work out kinks for older devices, which are potentially more problematic. Once you get it, here are five things to check out.

Throughout the day, you're likely using your web browser for a variety of tasks - researching a trip, checking the news and, gasp, doing actual work. Having all those websites open at once could prove cumbersome. Windows 10's Edge browser now has a small icon on the upper left corner for setting aside a group of websites. Say, your deadline on a work project is rapidly approaching. Just hit the button to clear out website tabs for your Caribbean getaway.

When you're ready to return to trip planning, hit an adjacent icon to restore those tabs you've set aside. You can set aside multiple groups; the most recent ones appear on top. When things get rough, you can scroll down to check the set of job search sites you set aside weeks ago. Though browsers let you bookmark sites, you probably don't want permanence for trips and short-term projects. Once you restore tabs using the new feature, you'll need to set them aside again when you're done for future access. And tabs won't sync across devices.

Digital doodles

Last year's "Anniversary Update" introduced Windows Ink, the ability to highlight, mark and otherwise doodle on documents with a finger or stylus, provided you have a touch-screen computer. Updated Windows apps for Microsoft's Maps and Photos will let you do more. Though the apps are available separately, getting the Creators Update ensures you have them.

In Photos, you can draw on photos and videos with virtual markers and share your creations with friends. For example, you can circle that guy in the background and call attention to how goofy he looks. For maps, you can mark a specific spot in a park for friends to meet. Technically, you can already do that with web versions of Google, Bing and other maps, so long as you're using the Edge

browser and its doodling function. Microsoft's Maps app offers extras.

For instance, you can have the app calculate the distance of the bike route you're tracing; be sure to first hit the "measure distance" icon (the one with the red diagonal). Ink would have been great for a new e-book feature coming to Windows. Microsoft is now selling e-books through its online store, and books open as a tab in Edge, with no separate app needed. But Microsoft says Ink is disabled on e-books because of publisher restrictions.

Paint, a graphics app Microsoft first shipped with Windows 1.0 in 1985, is getting a major refresh. You can now create images in 3-D. Start by pressing the cube icon at the top. You can create 3-D images from scratch or choose an object, such as a cylinder, a fish or a person. You can get additional models from a 3-D online community called Remix and even share your creations there.

You can add stickers, such as eyes, by tapping the icon to the right of the cube. Play around to get a feel for all the capabilities. Expect lots of trial and error - and frequent use of the "undo" button. 3-D images created through paint will be compatible with 3-D printers and printing services.

Gamers, rejoice

A game mode optimizes the computer for gaming. Other tasks can still run in the background but won't consume as much of the system resources. Game mode is on by default; you can turn it off through a new central location for system-wide game settings (individual games might still have their own settings). Windows 10 also gets a broadcasting service called Beam, which Microsoft bought last year. Before, to share live streaming of game play, gamers had to install and activate Beam or a competing service separately.

Less-annoying updates

Although Creators Update is only the second major update since Windows 10's release in 2015, Microsoft has issued many smaller ones along the way. They often require a restart and can come at inopportune times - such as the start of an important meeting. Users with the Home edition of Windows 10 had no options for postponing updates. Microsoft says it has listened and will give all users the ability to schedule a time or defer updates for three days. This doesn't mean you can avoid updates forever, but it gives you more say over when.—AP

PRIVACY CONCERN RAISED OVER SERVICE APP ON VERIZON PHONES

PRIVACY WATCHDOG DESCRIBES APPFLASH AS SPYWARE

NEW YORK: Is Verizon planning to spy on its customers? You might conclude that it is after reading Verizon's privacy policy on an upcoming AppFlash service, which promises easier access to search and apps on Android phones. The policy says Verizon may share data on features and services you use, along with the list of apps you have installed on your phone, with other Verizon businesses to target ads. The privacy watchdog Electronic Frontier Foundation described AppFlash as "spyware."

Not so fast, Verizon says. In a statement to clarify its intentions, Verizon says users must explicitly grant permission before using AppFlash. Verizon says customers will be able to easily disable the service, and no one will be required to use it. The statement, however, doesn't say exactly what permission Verizon is seeking. The privacy policy says users can control AppFlash's access to your location and contact information, but says nothing about giving control over broader usage data. At most, users can turn off ad tracking on the phone by digging through the settings.

The EFF has since retracted Thursday's blog post, pending further investigation. The group had said AppFlash represents Verizon's intention "to start monetizing its customers' private data as soon as possible." The post came just days after Congress voted to block Obama-era restrictions on what internet-access companies like Verizon could do with information about you. Verizon has gotten heat over user privacy before. Last year, Verizon agreed to pay a \$1.35 million fine over a "supercookie" that federal regulators said followed phone customers on the internet without their permission. The complaints come as Verizon evolves into an advertising business, with the purchase of AOL in 2015 and the upcoming acquisition of Yahoo's inter-



MASSACHUSETTS: This photo shows signage in a Verizon store in North Andover, Massachusetts.—AP

net businesses. Verizon, in knowing what web sites and apps you use, could charge companies more for ads that are targeted to your personal habits. Android phones and iPhones already come with search services similar to AppFlash. The main difference is when people use AppFlash, Verizon gets more data on your interactions and can target ads accordingly.

AppFlash is a Verizon-branded version of Evie Launcher, which people can already get through the Android app store. After installation, one swipe from a phone edge brings up a search bar; one search pulls content from the web and installed apps at once. For instance, after searching for the movie "Beauty and the Beast," Evie offers one-tap access to buy tickets through Fandango or to read reviews through IMDb or Rotten Tomatoes. Verizon says AppFlash will be tested initially on a single phone, LG's K20 V.

Verizon has offered no details on its plans beyond

that, though the app is for Android only and Apple forbids carriers from shipping iPhones with their own apps already installed. While Verizon promises to seek permission, it's not yet known how Verizon will do that and how clear it will be in explaining what's being collected and how it will be used. Evie Launcher does ask permission to access location and contact information, and you can say no. It also asks for permission to replace the regular home screen experience for launching individual apps.

However, Evie says nothing about privacy during the setup; its privacy policy online says personal information such as usage activity and search queries will be collected, but not shared with third parties. For those who use AppFlash, Verizon says data collected may be shared with other Verizon businesses for ad targeting. AOL, which Verizon owns, can place ads tailored web users on many other sites, too.—AP

SOPHOS STUDY FINDS BENEFITS OF INTEGRATED SECURITY IN MEA

DUBAI: Sophos (LSE:SOPH), a global leader in network and endpoint security recently released the findings of a regional study indicating that majority of organizations in Middle East and Africa (MEA) are recognizing the benefits of integrated security especially the concept of linking network firewall and endpoint security for better insights. However, the report revealed that although MEA organizations were unlikely to increase the number of vendors they interact with, they were likely to increase the number of products in use, which highlights that organizations in the region currently do not tend to follow an integrated strategy when it comes to security.

The Sophos-sponsored InfoBrief Synchronized Security Market Analysis - Middle East and Africa, developed by International Data Corporation (IDC), revealed that the MEA countries represented a total security solutions market potential of nearly \$1.89 billion in 2015, which is expected to increase at a CAGR of 9.3 percent to a total of \$2.94 billion in 2020 as per the IDC Worldwide Security Spending Guide, H12016. Close to 42 percent of organizations in the MEA felt "highly confident" of their security posture.

"IT security is a top priority for companies in this region as it can impact uptime and overall service levels. In terms of plans to deploy, there is a major focus on end-to-end coverage with advanced security systems, making it apparent that respondents want to simplify and improve control over securing their organization's assets. This is followed by plans to deploy mobile device security and cloud-specific security solutions."

"MEA's mobile device proliferation is among the highest in the world, making it important to secure devices and content on devices. Increased deploy-

ment of private and public cloud services makes it critical for organizations to integrate security as a part of their cloud strategy," said Harish Chib, Vice President Middle East and Africa, Sophos.

"It is clear from the responses that, in addition to threat landscape complexity, organizations do not have a holistic strategy when it comes to deploying their security solutions. With the increase in sophisticated attacks across the region, companies are now looking for smarter and simpler IT security solutions. The majority of respondents across all four countries agreed with the concept of linking network firewall and endpoint security for better insights. The acceptance is higher among larger enterprise. Synchronized security is the new key for protection against cyber threats," Chib added.

By far the biggest complexity factor found in the study was configuration and management. Respondents in Saudi Arabia and UAE rated this as their biggest concern when it comes to security complexity. In MEA, only 33% of the organizations have a single-vendor strategy with majority of them highlighted their multiple-vendor security environments, with some companies in UAE and KSA indicating in excess of nine vendors - indicative of the level of complexity within their environment.

In addition organizations in MEA indicated having around 1-6 products, while a few were in excess of 13. This variance between the number of vendors and products deployed is indicative of a lack of an integrated view. However, this is likely to change in the future as the majority highlighted of organizations' plan to invest in a centralized security management console over the next 1-2 years, with UAE organizations at the forefront, indicating their intention to invest in the next 12 months.



Harish Chib, Sophos

IS OBAMACARE REPEAL DEAD OR A LEGISLATIVE ZOMBIE?

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's plan to kill Obamacare died last week. Or maybe it didn't. The repeal effort seems to have assumed zombie status - somewhere between dead and alive. This is never-say-die Washington, where big legislative proposals that are in the basket one day can show signs of a pulse and start climbing out the next. It's a fairly common condition in the capital, where politicians who invest enormous political capital in a proposal are loath to let go.

"One of the keys to understanding Washington is to think a little bit like a coroner," says consultant Ari Fleischer, former press secretary to President George W. Bush. "You have to know when something's dead and when something's still kicking, and sometimes it's hard to tell the difference." To say that Trump and Republican congressional leaders are sending mixed signals about the viability of the repeal effort is an understatement.

Last week, when it became clear that House Republicans didn't have enough votes to pass the health-care repeal bill, the White House said Trump had given it his all, left everything on the field, and was ready to move on. Next up: taxes, the president said, without blinking. His son Eric channeled Kenny Rogers' "The Gambler" in praising his father for knowing when to walk away.

"Guess what? We're moving on," the president's son told Fox News on

Tuesday. "The best business people know ... when to hold their cards, know when to fold the cards." That same night, though, the president told a bipartisan gathering of senators, "We're all going to make a deal on health care. That's such an easy one. So I have no doubt that that's going to happen very quickly." Trump spokesman Sean Spicer said Wednesday the president had just been engaging in light-hearted banter.

But it was no laughing matter to plenty of Republicans on Capitol Hill, where conservatives elected on a promise to scrap the law continue to insist that reports of the repeal effort's death are premature. "We don't quit," said freshman Rep. Brian Mast, a Florida Republican who lost both legs after being wounded in Afghanistan.

"That's how we do things on the battlefield; that's how things should be done here." On Thursday, House Speaker Paul Ryan added to the cacophony of conflicting statements when he told CBS that it's time for Plan B, where "we keep talking to each other and figure out how we get to 'yes.'"

For all of that, there is little evidence that leaders are working on a concrete plan to revive the repeal effort. Why not admit that? It could be the emotional attachment to a long-held goal. Or a matter of self-interest. "These are creatures that need public recognition and public validation," says Stephen Wayne, a Georgetown University professor of gov-



WASHINGTON: In this photo, US President Donald Trump speaks at a women's empowerment panel in the East Room of the White House in Washington.—AP

ernment. "When they get behind something and it doesn't go anywhere, or they're embarrassed by it, it's a political failure. It's an ego failure."

Legislative limbo

Framing the situation more charitably, Fleischer offers this: "People in both parties generally have a lot of heartfelt investments in the policies they're pursuing. Particularly for core promises, the formality of declaring it dead is gut-wrenching, so you cling to hope and you don't declare it dead 'til you have no

choice." There are historical examples that demonstrate both the wisdom and folly of refusing to admit defeat. President Ronald Reagan's push for a sweeping tax overhaul package was pronounced dead on Capitol Hill more than once before a bipartisan package won approval in 1986.

President Bill Clinton's push to revamp welfare was declared a failure repeatedly before it came together. His years-long effort to remake the health care system was declared a goner more than once - and really did die. President

Barack Obama's attempts to enact gun control measures after the 2012 shooting of schoolchildren in Newtown, Connecticut, ended with the president acknowledging in 2014 that until there was a fundamental shift in public opinion, "it will not change."

Between the clear victories and defeats lies a netherworld of legislative limbo. Obama's push for big immigration changes stalled after the Senate in 2013 passed a bill with dim prospects of clearing the House, but the idea lived on in people's hopes and dreams. All the discussion of whether immigration reform was dead or alive was a pretty good indication that it was the former.

Obama never explicitly acknowledged the political reality that the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal was dead after Trump was elected. The White House just stopped actively lobbying Congress to pass it. Obama's day-one vow to close the US detention center at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba became increasingly less likely to succeed over his eight years in office. But he never admitted it was a promise unfulfilled until his last full day in office.

Robin Wagner-Pacifi, a sociology professor at the New School for Social Research, said there may be parallels to military surrenders, which fell into disuse in the latter part of the 20th century to be replaced by "conflict resolution or dispute resolution or accords of various kinds that had a much more fuzzy quality to them." —AP

US ENROLLS VOLUNTEERS IN LARGE TEST OF POSSIBLE ZIKA VACCINE

FIRST STEP TOWARDS CONTAINING THE SPREAD OF VIRUS

WASHINGTON: US health officials have begun enrolling volunteers for critical next-stage testing of an experimental vaccine to protect against Zika, the mosquito-borne virus that can cause devastating birth defects in pregnant women. The first volunteer was vaccinated Wednesday at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, as the National Institutes of Health gears up for a two-part study that aims to enroll at least 2,400 people in Texas, Florida, Puerto

ly been to travelers, although mosquitoes spread the virus in parts of southern Florida and Texas last year, where health officials remain on guard. But while Zika largely disappeared from the headlines over the winter, mosquito season is fast approaching - and the risk persists internationally.

"It is imperative that public health research continue to work to contain the spread of the virus," Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious

evaluate 90 healthy adults given different doses to determine the best one. Those volunteers will be tested at Baylor, the University of Miami and University of Puerto Rico. Once the correct dose is picked, the larger part of the study could begin as early as June at those sites and additional ones in the at-risk countries - giving 2,400 volunteers either the experimental vaccine or dummy shots.

Pregnancy risk

Pregnant women can't receive the experimental shots but women of child-bearing age can enroll. All the volunteers will be tracked for nearly two years to see if the vaccine really protects against Zika infection. This is a totally new kind of vaccine. Traditionally, vaccines are made using a dead or weakened virus to train the body's immune system to recognize and fight that infection. In contrast, the DNA vaccine works through trickery.

It's made with a circular piece of DNA carrying genes from the Zika virus that, once in the body, makes particles that resemble Zika enough to alert the immune system but cannot cause infection. The NIH also is testing the safety of some more traditional Zika vaccine candidates, but the easier-to-make DNA vaccine was the first ready to advance to this second stage of human testing. Don't expect a vaccine to be widely available any time soon. If Zika causes lots of illness this year, Fauci said researchers may have clues by early 2018 about how well the shots work - but if natural infections slow, they'll need many more volunteers to get an answer. For most people, Zika causes no symptoms or only mild ones such as fever, aches, an itchy rash or red eyes. But aside from the pregnancy risk, Zika sometimes causes a temporary paralyzing condition called Guillain-Barre syndrome, and there's some evidence that it also may trigger heart problems in adults who previously were healthy. And Zika is likely to become endemic in parts of the Americas, Fauci said. "I'm totally intent on getting this vaccine to the point it can be a usable vaccine." —AP



TEXAS: In this file photo, Dallas County Mosquito Lab microbiologist Spencer Lockwood sorts mosquitoes collected in a trap in Hutchins, Texas, that had been set up in Dallas County near the location of a confirmed Zika virus infection.—AP

Rico and five at-risk countries: Brazil, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica and Peru.

Zika has caused an epidemic of birth defects - including babies with abnormally small heads and brains - in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, and continues to spread to a creeping list of other countries. For the US the risk has large-

diseases, said Friday in announcing the \$100 million study. First-stage safety testing of a so-called DNA vaccine against Zika signaled no side effect concerns, Fauci said - allowing the NIH-created shots to progress to the next stage of testing that will help tell if they really work.

It's a two-part study. First, researchers will

CHINA PLANS PANDA PRESERVE 3 TIMES SIZE OF YELLOWSTONE PARK

BEIJING: China is planning to create a preserve for the giant panda that will be three times the size of Yellowstone National Park in

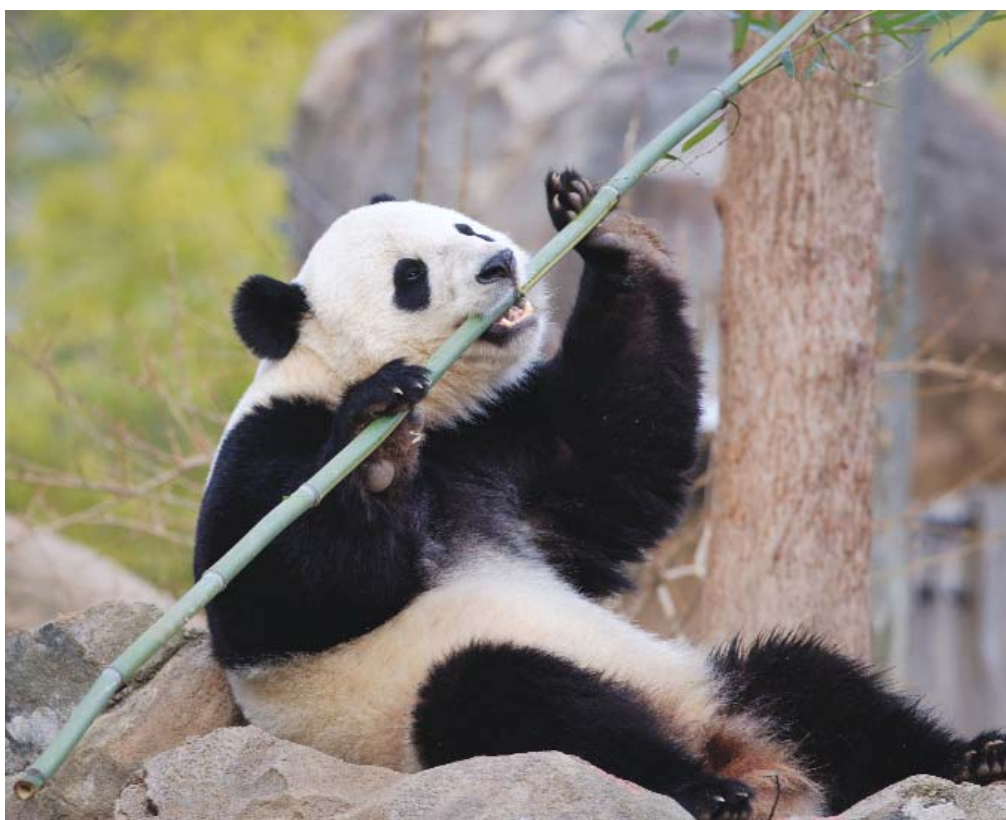
the western US. The panda preserve will link parts of three western provinces to provide an unbroken range for the endangered animals

in which they can meet and mate in the interests of enriching their gene pool, the Xinhua News Agency said Friday. Xinhua said about 170,000 people will have to be moved elsewhere to make way for the 27,134-square kilometer preserve.

Giant pandas are China's unofficial national mascot and live mainly in the mountains of Sichuan, with some in neighboring Gansu and Shaanxi provinces. An estimated 1,864 live in the wild, where they are threatened chiefly with habitat loss, and another 200 in captivity. Residents of the future park area will be offered homes and jobs, some as guides.

Although they had lived in the area for generations, they were disrupting the lives of the pandas with their bamboo harvesting and livestock grazing, Xinhua said. Preservation of the species was further hindered by provincial borders between Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi that enforced different standards on protected land. The new preserve will merge 67 smaller reserves for pandas and protect another 8,000 endangered animals and plants, Xinhua said.

"Unlike nature reserves, the park does not stand alone. China will formulate an overall plan for the national park system. It will be a haven for biodiversity and provide protection for the whole ecological system," Hou Rong, director of the Chengdu Research Base for Giant Panda Breeding in Sichuan province, was quoted as saying. The giant panda preserve will join eight other existing national parks aimed at protecting endangered species and the ecology of land lying at the headwaters of major rivers such as the Yellow and Yangtze.—AP



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, Bao Bao, the beloved 3-year-old panda at the National Zoo in Washington, enjoys a final morning in her bamboo-filled habitat before her one-way flight to China to join a panda breeding program.—AP



SPAIN: In this file photo, the Gran Telescopio Canarias, one of the world's largest telescopes, is viewed at the Observatorio del Roque de los Muchachos on the Canary Island of La Palma, Spain.—AP

SPAIN WILL GET GIANT TELESCOPE IF HAWAII DOESN'T, GROUP SAYS

HONOLULU: An agreement has been reached for a giant telescope to be built in Spain's Canary Islands if it cannot be put atop a Hawaii mountain. Telescope builder TMT International Observatory says Hawaii's Mauna Kea remains the preferred location for the \$1.4 billion Thirty Meter Telescope. But some Native Hawaiians are fighting to keep the telescope off a mountain they consider sacred.

Hawaii's Supreme Court invalidated the

project's construction permit, forcing long-running hearings for a new one. It's unclear when a decision will be made.

The nonprofit TMT on Wednesday said the Canary Islands agreement was a milestone for the embattled project. It wants to start construction next year. The Spanish agency overseeing Canary Islands observatories says the telescope would be good for Spain and the world's astronomy community.—AP



FRANCE: This file photo shows storks standing near the Orangerie Garden lake in Strasbourg, eastern France.—AFP

100 DEAD BALL PYTHONS FOUND IN S FLORIDA HOME

JUPITER, Florida: A South Florida woman has been cited after authorities say they found about 100 dead ball pythons in her home. A Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission report says Jupiter police took the woman into custody for a psychological evaluation Feb 16 when they first responded to her home. She was cited March 13 with animal abandonment and given an April 12 court date.

Authorities say the woman's home was covered in animal feces. Officers found about 30 to 40 plastic bins each containing 2 to 4 dead snakes. Two ball pythons were found alive in an aquarium, and animal control officers removed them from the home. Officers also found alive and removed two dogs, two red-footed tortoises and two parakeets. An adult ball python can grow up to 6 feet.—AP

MANATEES ARE NO LONGER ENDANGERED

MIAMI: Manatees are no longer an endangered species, US officials said Thursday, declaring success after decades of efforts to rebuild the population of the chubby sea cows in Florida and the Caribbean region. The population of West Indian manatees in Florida is now around population of 6,620, "a dramatic turnaround from the 1970s, when just a few hundred individuals remained," said a statement from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Manatees are now considered "threatened," meaning they are protected under the Endangered Species Act but are no longer considered in imminent danger of extinction throughout their range. The decision applies to West Indian manatees, which includes the Florida manatee subspecies, found in the southeastern United States. It also applies to the Antillean manatee, found in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Central America, northern South America and the Greater and Lesser Antilles.

"While there is still more work to be done to fully recover manatee populations, particularly in the Caribbean, manatee numbers are increasing and we are actively working with partners to address threats,"

said Jim Kurth, the US Fish and Wildlife Service's acting director. "Today we both recognize the significant progress we have made in conserving manatee populations while reaffirming our commitment to continuing this species' recovery and success throughout its range."

The proposed downgrade in status for manatees, announced last year, stoked controversy, as some experts warned the long-protected sea cows were still vulnerable to problems like boat collisions, climate change, pollution, and loss of habitat. The decision "will not diminish any existing federal protections that will continue to play a vital role in the recovery of the species," said the Fish and Wildlife Service statement.

"The manatee will also continue to be protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act." Manatees were among the first animals listed on the Endangered Species Protection Act of 1966, along with red wolves, grizzly bears, whooping cranes and American alligators. One of their most famous advocates is "Margaritaville" singer Jimmy Buffett, who co-founded the Save the Manatee Club in 1981.—AFP



CAPE CANAVERAL: This file photo shows a pair of Manatee near Pad 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida.—AFP

EPA REVERSES COURSE ON SAFETY OF PESTICIDE USED ON CROPS

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration won't ban a common pesticide used on food, reversing efforts by the Obama administration to bar the chemical based on findings it could hinder development of children's brains. In announcing the decision late Wednesday, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said that by not banning chlorpyrifos, he was providing "regulatory certainty" to thousands of American farmers that rely on the pesticide.

"By reversing the previous administration's steps to ban one of the most widely used pesticides in the world, we are returning to using sound science in decision-making - rather than predetermined results," Pruitt said Wednesday. In approving the continued use of chlorpyrifos on citrus fruits, apples, cherries and other crops, Pruitt is overriding the scientific findings of his own agency's experts.

Pruitt, a Republican lawyer who took the lead at EPA last month, gave no indication of what process he used to determine chlorpyrifos is safe. Environmental groups accused Pruitt of putting the profits of big business over public safety. "EPA's refusal to ban this dangerous pesticide is unconscionable," said Patti Goldman, an attorney at Earthjustice. "EPA is defying its legal obligation to protect children from unsafe pesticides." Goldman said her group will seek a court

to order to countermand Pruitt's decision. First developed as a chemical weapon prior to World War II, chlorpyrifos has been sold as a pesticide since 1965 and has been blamed for sickening dozens of farm workers in recent years. Traces have been found in waterways, threatening fish, and experts say overuse could make targeted insects immune to the pesticide. US farms use more than 6 million pounds of the chemical each year - about 25 percent of it in California.

No-spray buffer zones

Under pressure from federal regulators over safety concerns, Dow withdrew chlorpyrifos for use as a home insecticide in 2000. EPA also placed "no-spray" buffer zones around sensitive sites, such as schools, in 2012. But environmental and public health groups said those proposals don't go far enough and filed a federal lawsuit seeking a national ban on the pesticide. In October 2015, the Obama administration proposed revoking the pesticide's use in response to a petition from the Natural Resources Defense Council and Pesticide Action Network North America. EPA's subsequent findings relied on three, peer-reviewed human health studies indicating that even minuscule amounts of chlorpyrifos, sold by Dow Chemical, can interfere with brain development of fetuses, infants and children. —AP



CALIFORNIA: In this photo, visitors walk among the poppy bloom at Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve in Lancaster, California.—AP

CALIFORNIA'S DESERT WILDFLOWER EXPLOSION DRAWS RECORD CROWDS

BORREGO SPRINGS: An explosion of wildflowers in California's desert sands is drawing record crowds to see the rare abundance of color called a "super bloom." The natural wonder is thanks to a wet winter followed by warm temperatures in the Anza-Borrego State Park, northeast of San Diego. Wildflower seeds that have been dormant for years in the drought-plagued region have sprouted in mass, producing a spectacular display not seen in 20 years.

An estimated 150,000 people in the past month have converged on Borrego Springs, a town of about 3,500 that abuts the park. Rained wildflowers are springing up in different landscapes across the state and the western United States. In the Antelope Valley, an arid plateau northeast of Los Angeles, blazing orange poppies are lighting up the ground. But the "super bloom" — mass amounts of desert plants blooming at once — has been concentrated in the 640,000-acre (1,000-square-mile) Anza-Borrego State Park.

In California, super blooms happen about once in a decade in a given area. They have been occurring less frequently with the drought. Last year, the right amount of rainfall and warm temperatures produced carpets of flowers in Death Valley. The natural show at Anza-Borrego is expected to roll along through May, with different species blooming at different elevations and in different areas. The state park is California's largest, with hundreds of species of plants includ-

ing desert lilies, blazing stars and the flaming tall, spiny Ocotillo. Deputies were brought in to handle the traffic jams as Borrego Springs saw its population triple in a single day. On one particularly packed weekend in mid-March, motorists were stuck in traffic for five hours, restaurants ran out of food, and some visitors relieved themselves in the fields. Officials have since set up an army of Port-A-Potties, and eateries have stocked up. The craze has been dubbed "Flowergeddon."

Tour groups from as far as Japan and Hong Kong have flown in to catch the display before it fades away with the rising temperatures. Wildflower enthusiasts worldwide track the blooms online and arrive for rare sightings like this year's Bigelow's Monkey flower, some of which have grown to 8 inches (203 millimeters) in height. The National Park Service has even pitched in with a 24-hour wildflower hotline to find the best spots at the state park.

Super bloom

"We've seen everything from people in normal hiking attire to people in designer flip-flops to women in sundresses and strappy heels hike out there to get their picture. When I saw that, I thought, 'Oh no. Please don't go out there with those shoes on,'" laughed Linda Haddock, head of the Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce.

On a recent day, a young woman sat among knee-high desert sunflowers and shot selfies against the backdrop of yellow blooms that

looked almost neon in contrast to the brown landscape. A mother jumped in the air as her daughter snapped her photo among yellow brittlebushes. The blooms are attracting hungry sphinx moth caterpillars that munch through acres. The caterpillars in turn are attracting droves of Swainson hawks on their annual 6,000-mile migration from Argentina.

"It's an amazing burst in the cycle of life in the desert that has come because of a freakish event like a super bloom," Haddock said. "It's exciting. This is going to be so huge for our economy." This year's display has been especially stunning, experts say. The region received 6½ inches (165 millimeters) of rain from December to February, followed by almost two weeks of 90-degree temperatures, setting the conditions for the super bloom. Five years of drought made the seeds ready to pop. Humans also helped.

Park staff, volunteers and female prisoners have been removing the Sahara Mustard plant, an invasive species believed brought to California in the 1920s with another plant, the date palm. Sahara Mustard had been covering popular wildflower areas, said Jim Dice, research manager at the Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center. Sandra Reel and her husband drove hundreds of miles out of their way when they heard about this year's super bloom. "It is absolutely phenomenal to see this many blooming desert plants all at the same time," she said. "I think it's probably a once-in-a-lifetime thing." —AP



CALIFORNIA: In this photo, Zoey Speer, of Temecula, clammers among rocks and blooming desert shrubs in Borrego Springs, California.

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AQUA PARK ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF NEW SEASON

By Nawara Fattahova

The first and most popular water park in Kuwait, the Aqua Park announced the launch of the new season during a press conference held on Thursday at its premises. The park will be open for the public after the winter closure starting from yesterday, every day from 10.00 am - 10.00pm. The 22 years old Park is facing the danger of closure due to a problem over its contract. During the conference new additions and changes were also announced.

"Every year we bring new additions or programs to the Park. We raised the price of the entrance ticket by 500 Fils to be KD 4.750, thus on the other hand, this ticket now includes using the Aqua Trippo slide that was just launched last year, and visitors used to pay KD 1.5 to use it. More slides that were charged separately were added to the ticket as well including the Tornado, Aqua double and others, so the visitor will basically save around KD 2 with the new entrance ticket," stressed Mohammed Khorshid, Managing Director of the Aqua Park during the press conference.

All the utilities are maintained regularly. "Every year we do complete maintenance of the slides, pools, and other facilities. We have completely renewed the floors, ceilings, and other decors. We also renewed the fiberglass of the slides including the painting that cost over KD 60 thousand. Unfortunately we couldn't develop the whole park and add all the new entertainments as we are still facing some problems with the contract," he added.

Aqua Park's contract with the Touristic Enterprises expired in 2014 and is not renewed yet. "I call upon the ministries and public authorities in charge of this issue to solve our problem and let us get a contract for at least 10 years, so we will be able to develop the place. This park is a national landmark that is visited not only by Kuwait residents but also by tourists and visitors from other countries especially the GCC," explained Khorshid.

He has many plans but he is not able to work on it. "There are many slides that I would like to add to the Park, thus due to the contract problem we can't invest in it as we don't feel secure. These slides are very expensive and their cost is around USD 1.5 million. We are willing to invest this amount thus we have to be sure that we can get back our investment. Now we are paying the rent at the court and in and

at moment we might shutdown. So this situation is not encouraging any new investments," he pointed out.

"I call upon HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad to interfere in this case and help us with a solution. When we launched the Aqua Park in 1995, Sheikh Sabah was the Prime Minister and he attended the launching ceremony and cut the ribbon. It's shameful that after 22 years of services that we provided we are treated in this way. The Park can't be compared to the restaurants or small projects that are located at the sea front, as we lay on 62 thousand square meters, and only our infrastructure cost us over KD two million. We were the pioneers in Kuwait and of the whole region with the idea of water park, but today other countries are ahead of us. The game has changed today and we need new technology," stated Khorshid.

The Aqua Park is serving the domestic tourism. "We serve the residents of Kuwait, especially those who are not travelling every year. We hope to be able to invest more in this park after getting a contract. We don't mind paying reasonable increase in rent, but we have to be secured that we have time to return our investments," he further said.

There are many empty spaces at the Aqua Park area that can be used. "We have a 3000 square meters space of empty land that we aim to develop by building a 'Submarine' game, where the visitor will enjoy diving with their family in a car for four people for an underwater tour. This project will cost about USD 3 million, and we are still considering the theme of the decor and figures that will be placed under water. Yet we can't execute it due to the problem with the contract. Furthermore I have a plan to build the 'Snow Dome', thus we didn't get the approval as its 70 meters high, which is not allowed on the seaside," he noted.

The tourism sector is important. "We need to establish a public authority for tourism in Kuwait. The government should be in charge of this sector and not the private sector as it needs to be managed and directed. This authority should include representatives from different institutions including the Municipality, Ministry of Information, and Ministry of Finance. I call upon HH the Amir to help us in establishing this authority for tourism," concluded Khorshid.



AL THURAYA CITY CELEBRATES EARTH HOUR

Crowne Plaza Kuwait Al Thuraya City and Holiday Inn Kuwait Al Thuraya City joined communities around the globe in observing Earth Hour by dimming their lights for an hour on March 25, 2017. Lights were dimmed from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm in the lobbies, reception areas, and in Silk, Crowne Plaza's new signature restaurant, where candles were displayed as an

alternative source of light.

Guests staying at both hotels were also encouraged to switch off non-essential lighting in their rooms for the specified hour. Commenting on the event, Zaid Mashini, Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing highlighted the important role hotels play in preserving and protecting the planet through their day-to-day operations. "We

at Al Thuraya City are proud to support Earth Hour and are committed to taking care of our environment in Kuwait," he added.

Pioneered in Sydney in 2007 as a stand against climate change, Earth Hour has become a global climate change movement uniting hundreds of millions of people worldwide every year. This year, a record of 178 countries participated.

NEW THEATRE GROUP KANA, KUWAIT INAUGURATED ON WORLD THEATRE DAY

A new Malayalam theatre group titled Kerala Arts and Nataka Academy, (KANA) Kuwait was inaugurated on World Theatre Day on March 27 in Kuwait as a new initiative by a group of expat theatre activists. At a small ceremony attended by several expatriate theatre people and art lovers, K G Abraham inaugurated the new academy by lighting the traditional lamp.

Well-known drama director and actor Babu Chakola and his friends initiated the new academy KANA with a view of promoting theatre in Kuwait, producing quality plays and generating awareness about the art form among the Indian community in the country. KANA also officially held its pooja ceremony of its maiden drama 'Abraham' on the occasion. K G Abraham received the script of the play from KANA's patron Adv John Thomas and presented it to its director Babu Chakola.

The theatre activists who attended the ceremony spoke about a new awakening in theatre culture in Kuwait in the last few years. They hoped that KANA will be able to pick up from where the Kuwait Chapter of the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi (KSNA) left off following its dissolution last year. Chakola said 'Abraham', the maiden venture of KANA is a dramacope play based on a Bible story and will be produced on a large canvas brining in a big cast and crew.

KANA's president and actor Kumar Thrithala said the Academy will seek to produce quality plays in Kuwait and organize theatre workshops and training for theatre lovers to build a good theatre culture among the expat community. Other office-bearers of KANA are Jiju Kalayil (Secretary), Idiulla Mathews (Technical Advisor), Punnose Anchery (Program Coordinator), Manju Mathew (Assistant Director) and Reji Mathew (PRO). K P Balakrishnan and Sajeev K Peter will function as advisors of the Academy.



BURGAN BANK, ALTA FITNESS GYM REVEALS SPECIAL PROGRAM TO PREMIER CUSTOMERS

Burgan Bank, the second largest conventional bank in terms of assets, announced today an added value package to its Premier customers whereby they are entitled to a 20 percent discount at Alta Fitness Gym for women and Platinum Gym for men. The latest offers aim at encouraging active living and wellness in society and is in line with an increased consumer demand on fitness related services.

Alta Fitness and Platinum Gyms offer the best-in-class sports equipment and boast exceptional health clubs, where Premier cus-

tomers can enjoy a wide array of benefits. Premier customers registering at any of Alta Fitness Gym for women or Platinum Gym for men can avail this fantastic offer by simply using any of their Premier ATM Card or Platinum Credit Cards.

Keen on delivering superior value to its customers as well as meeting their changing demands, Burgan Bank continues to engage in partnerships that bring together privileges and benefits tailored-made to the Premier customers' lifestyle, while creating a more enjoyable overall banking experience.



EMBASSY OF BELGIUM IN KUWAIT ORGANIZES LECTURES IN EUROPE

By Vittoria Volgare

Multiculturalism in Europe is a reality and not a myth. Immigration is in fact a big success in countries like Belgium where immigrants have become ministers, journalists, teachers, doctors. But no one talks about them because they are just ordinary people and don't attract media's attention. Integration and cultural diversity in Europe where the main topics discussed on Sunday and Monday by Belgian writer of Algerian origin Malika Madi during two conferences, the first at Shaheed Park the latter at Kuwait University.

The author was invited by the Embassy of Belgium in the framework of the Francophone days to discuss her experience as an author and woman of Belgian Algerian origins. The Francophone days also coincided with the first commemoration of the victims of the Brussels attacks of 22/3/16, when young Belgian citizens of Moroccan origin detonated bombs in the airport and in a metro station killing 32 people and injuring many others. "The idea to have someone like Malika Madi to represent Belgium during the Francophone days is very important as she represents the positivity of

diversity", said Ambassador Andy Detaille. Malika Madi was born in the late 60's in Wallonia, the francophone and southern part of Belgium, and she never felt a stranger, on the contrary she has always felt part of the country where she was born. Today she is a writer of success: She has written four novels, different essays, theatre plays and is currently working on a documentary about her origins in a context of migration. She also works in secondary schools in Wallonia and Brussels promoting the debate and raising awareness on issues related to cultural diversity and immigration. Her aim is to bring people from different communities together.

"My parents came from Kabilya and after the independence of '62 they emigrated to work in the mines of Wallonia. Like Malika's father many other immigrants, especially from Italy, Turkey and Morocco, settled massively in Belgium for the same reason. They all arrived with the will of returning to their country of origin and prepared their children to this perspective. The clear majority of second generation immigrants never returned home as planned by their parents. "I am Belgian, I was born in Belgium, I had all my friends there, embraced my Belgian identity and uncon-

sciously merged it with the Algerian one. I had found equilibrium and I really had a problem with the idea of return", Malika explains.

If second generations thought to have solved the identity problems, a rupture within society happened with the 9/11 attacks of 2001. The third generations, at the time just teenagers, felt like the enemy, treated as terrorists. "This third generation is a victim of 9/11 and of the ignorance of people who tend to generalize and consider Muslims as the enemy. Today the same teenagers that witnessed 9/11 are people among 25 and 30 years old who face a conflict of identities."

Second generations like Malika, grew up in harmony with other communities, they were integrated. "My parents always told me to be discreet, to behave because we were just guests in Belgium. We had to be good citizens and students. We grew up with the idea not to revindicate our identity. Third generations, instead, want to revindicate it and tend to victimize themselves. And I find it unjust because we live in a country with its own history", Madi adds. As she works in schools she always tells young people of immigrant origins to stop acting as victims of racism.

Regardless of the differences, the writer thinks that Belgians should work together in order to favor tolerance and defend diversity instead of alienating the communities of second and third generations of immigrants who are not fully integrated. "We have young people in Belgium that are completely cut out from the reality, that don't feel Belgians, as it happens in municipalities like Molenbeek. Situated in the region of Brussels, it became notorious to the media as the city where the terrorists of Paris Brussels came from.

"The first time I went to Molenbeek I had a shock, I found myself in a second Morocco. This is what we did wrong: we lacked vision to integrate these people, politicians never thought that one day these children would become adults and live forever in Belgium, instead they allowed the creation of social ghettos." Therefore, there is an enormous work of education to be done with younger generations which has finally started after the attacks of Brussels of last year. "We need to teach third generations their history and religion. Moreover, we should train our imams to counter the spread of radical ideas and create a European Islam. We don't have to change Islam but we really need to reform it."





KS-PATH, US EMBASSY ORGANIZE CLEANUP DRIVE

By Ben Garcia

Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and Their Habitat (KS-PATH) in collaboration with the US Embassy in Kuwait organized a cleanup drive yesterday at the Sulaibikhat beach front. The event was attended by US Ambassador to Kuwait, Lawrence Silverman along with embassy staff and various nationalities. It was hosted by KS-PATH Executive Director Fatima Al-Sabah being the advocate for the conservation and protection of animals/marine life and its environment. Speaking with the reporters Ambassador Silverman congratulated KS-PATH for their commit-

ment to preserving Kuwait's environment.

"I am very pleased that many Americans are here today to support the clean up drive organized by KS-Path. We really urge everyone to preserve the environment so that the natural habitat of marine life, other animals will be protected and people can enjoy the fresh and clean environment," Silverman said. The US ambassador also calls upon people in this area to exercise restraints in throwing trash of any sorts. "It is really important to preserve the environment that we have, and hope that Kuwaitis and others can also help protect the environment because it's about the future of this land

and for generation of people," he added.

The objective of this clean up drive according to Fatima Al-Sabah is mainly awareness, care and conservation of the environment. "Ecosystem is very important in the economy of Kuwait. In fact, this place is a breeding ground for shrimps and other marine life, if you will not have the restraints on throwing all sorts of plastics out there, you are killing the natural habitat of our marine life here. This place is also a feeding ground for many migratory birds that migrate through Kuwait, we know that we have about 400 species of birds making this place as their sanctuary, so cleaning around this area is very

important to avoid any inconvenience for the animals. We have been taking care of this place for the last six years now and almost every month we visit this place to clean, being part of our commitment to the environment," she said.

KS-PATH is an animal protection and welfare center. It started from pet adoption from farm animals to wild animals. "KS-PATH has become a rehabilitation center for migratory birds, we also have education and marine education programs; this work goes hand in hand with our aim to educate the people on the importance of pet ownership and how to be compassionate and how to show real care towards them," she said.



— Photos by Joseph Shagra



BURGAN BANK SPONSORS CLASSICAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE AT JABER AL-AHMAD CULTURAL CENTRE

Burgan Bank is proud to have been part of the first ever classical music performance at Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre for two complete symphonies by Beethoven and Faure. The Bank's sponsorship of this performance marks a historic moment for Kuwait as it is the first time classical music symphonies are played in full by an orchestra and choir. "Ahmadi Music Group" (AMG), whose

world-standard performance left the audiences astounded, conducted two symphonies at the Music Hall of Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre; world renowned classical pieces of 'Beethoven's Fourth Symphony' and 'Faure's Requiem', with the orchestra and choir performing and bringing out the best of what classical music has to offer. Burgan Bank's support of this historic event is part of its efforts

to spread cultural knowledge, enrich the community, and present the best of worldly arts to Kuwait.

AMG is one of the oldest and largest arts organizations in Kuwait, with concert records that go back to the 1950's. The currently independent organization holds performances across Kuwait. Its aim is to provide opportunities and encourage active musicians and

instrumentalists in Kuwait to perform as well as to take part in their choral works and operas. The bank has been supporting the AMG for four years as part of its investment in entities that contribute to the advancement of society and culture.

It is worth mentioning that Burgan Bank's support to this initiative falls under its full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE'

- Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.

BURGAN BANK SPONSORS RESET FITNESS PROGRAM

Burgan Bank is pleased to announce its sponsorship to "Reset" Fitness Program's first trip to Koh Samui Island in Thailand, a unique and exciting fitness program that focuses on combining travel and wellness, which takes place from April 20 till April 29, 2017. The various activities shall take place at the beach in an appealing and serene environment with the program consisting of nutrition sessions, fitness classes, sportive, men-

tal coaching as well as entertainment activities.

Burgan Bank is firmly committed to raising awareness about health programs and initiatives among young individuals with benefits to one's mind, body and soul. The bank strongly supports RESET Fitness' notion of how social aspects of travelling combined with physical exercise can enhance one's sense of self.

Burgan Bank's latest sponsorship falls under its recently launched full-

fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.



OSN MOVIES
ACTION

- 00:15 Pusher
- 02:00 Snakehead Swamp
- 03:45 Run All Night
- 06:00 Code Of Silence
- 08:00 Survivor
- 10:00 The Throwaways
- 12:00 Run All Night
- 14:00 Forbidden Empire
- 16:00 Blunt Force Trauma
- 17:45 Licence To Kill
- 20:00 San Andreas
- 22:00 Constantine

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:45 Snake Sheila
- 01:10 Snake Sheila
- 02:05 Snake Sheila
- 02:35 Snake Sheila
- 04:40 Snake Sheila
- 05:02 Snake Sheila
- 05:27 Snake Sheila
- 05:49 Gator Boys
- 06:36 Gorilla School
- 07:00 Gorilla School
- 07:25 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 08:15 Gangland Killers
- 09:10 Life At Vet University
- 10:05 Rugged Justice
- 11:00 There's A Rhino In My House!
- 11:55 Bondi Vet
- 12:50 Stranger Among Bears
- 13:15 Orangutan Island
- 13:45 Orangutan Island
- 14:10 Orangutan Island
- 14:40 Orangutan Island
- 17:25 Stranger Among Bears
- 17:50 Orangutan Island
- 18:20 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert
- 19:15 Village Vets
- 19:40 Village Vets
- 20:10 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 21:05 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 22:00 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert
- 22:55 Gator Boys
- 23:50 Gator Boys

BBC FIRST

- 00:55 Eastenders
- 01:30 Poldark
- 02:25 Doctor Who: The Husbands Of

- 03:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
- 03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 04:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 04:40 Ridiculousness
- 05:05 Disaster Date
- 05:30 Framework
- 06:20 Hungry Investors
- 07:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 08:00 Disaster Date
- 08:25 Disaster Date
- 08:50 Ridiculousness
- 09:15 Key And Peele
- 09:40 Disaster Date
- 10:05 Ridiculousness
- 10:30 Impractical Jokers UK
- 11:00 Framework
- 11:45 Impractical Jokers
- 12:10 Lip Sync Battle
- 12:35 Impractical Jokers UK
- 13:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 13:55 Ridiculousness
- 14:20 Framework
- 15:10 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 15:35 Disaster Date
- 16:00 Disaster Date
- 16:23 Impractical Jokers UK
- 16:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 17:20 Key And Peele
- 17:45 Catch A Contractor
- 18:10 Catch A Contractor
- 18:34 Ridiculousness
- 18:57 Disaster Date
- 19:20 Lip Sync Battle
- 19:43 Lip Sync Battle
- 20:06 Key And Peele
- 20:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagel
- 21:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
- 21:30 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 22:00 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 22:25 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show
- 23:15 The Alternative Comedy Experience
- 23:40 The Daily Show - Global Edition

Discovery Family

- 00:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
- 00:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 01:20 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 02:10 Dirty Jobs
- 03:00 Dirty Jobs
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 Ultimate Survival
- 05:30 Ultimate Survival
- 06:20 How It's Made
- 06:40 How It's Made

- 11:40 The Emperor's New Groove
- 13:05 Welcome To The Ronks
- 13:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 13:20 Girl Meets World
- 13:45 Girl Meets World
- 14:10 Girl Meets World
- 14:35 Girl Meets World
- 15:00 Girl Meets World
- 15:25 Jessie
- 15:50 Jessie
- 16:15 Disney Cookabout
- 16:40 Austin & Ally
- 17:05 Eco Club
- 17:10 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:35 Stuck In The Middle
- 18:00 Disney The Lodge
- 18:25 Pocahontas
- 19:55 Welcome To The Ronks
- 20:05 Stuck In The Middle
- 20:30 Bizaardvark
- 20:55 Bunk'd
- 21:20 Shake It Up
- 21:45 Disney The Lodge
- 22:10 Best Friends Whenever
- 22:35 Jessie
- 23:00 Kirby Buckets
- 23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:15 Calimero
- 00:30 Art Attack
- 00:55 Zou
- 01:05 Loopdidoo
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 Calimero
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Art Attack
- 02:30 The Hive
- 02:40 Loopdidoo
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:10 Art Attack
- 03:35 Loopdidoo
- 03:50 Calimero
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:45 Zou
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Loopdidoo
- 06:00 Zou
- 06:15 Calimero
- 06:30 Loopdidoo
- 06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 07:25 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

- 18:55 How Do They Do It?
- 19:20 Venom Hunters
- 20:10 Storage Hunters
- 20:35 Storage Hunters
- 21:00 Supertrucks
- 21:50 The Dark Side Of The Sun
- 22:40 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud

XD

- 06:00 Supa Strikas
- 06:25 Supa Strikas
- 06:50 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
- 07:15 Right Now Kapow
- 07:40 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
- 09:00 Walk The Prank
- 09:25 Prankstars
- 09:50 Walk The Prank
- 10:20 Lab Rats
- 10:45 Walk The Prank
- 11:10 Mighty Med
- 11:35 Walk The Prank
- 12:00 Prankstars
- 12:30 Walk The Prank
- 12:55 Prankstars
- 13:20 Walk The Prank
- 13:45 Prankstars
- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Milo Murphy's Law
- 14:40 K.C. Undercover
- 15:05 Walk The Prank
- 15:30 Atomic Puppet
- 15:55 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 16:25 Right Now Kapow
- 16:50 K.C. Undercover
- 17:15 Future-Worm!
- 17:40 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:10 Star Wars Rebels
- 18:35 Hercules
- 20:10 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 20:20 Kickin' It
- 20:45 Mighty Med
- 21:10 Star Wars Rebels
- 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:45 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
- 22:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
- 22:35 Booster
- 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

EHD

- 00:00 WAGs Miami
- 00:55 WAGs Miami
- 01:50 E! News
- 02:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 04:40 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 06:50 E! News
- 07:20 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 08:10 E! News
- 09:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 09:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 10:45 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 11:35 So Cosmo
- 12:25 So Cosmo
- 13:20 So Cosmo
- 14:15 Botched
- 15:10 Botched
- 16:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 18:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 19:00 E! News
- 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 22:00 Rob & Chyna
- 23:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

food network

- 00:00 Man Fire Food
- 00:30 Man Fire Food
- 01:00 Restaurant Stakeout
- 02:00 Mystery Diners
- 02:30 Mystery Diners
- 03:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 07:00 Chopped
- 08:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 08:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 09:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 10:00 Siba's Table
- 10:30 Siba's Table
- 11:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 11:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 12:00 Man Fire Food
- 12:30 Man Fire Food

H2 HD

- 00:20 Ice Road Truckers
- 01:10 Hunting Hitler
- 02:00 Counting Cars
- 02:25 Car Hunters
- 02:50 American Restoration
- 03:40 Fifth Gear
- 04:30 Storage Wars Texas
- 05:00 Hoard Hunters
- 06:00 Leepu And Pitbull
- 06:50 Shipping Wars

HISTORY

- 00:00 Mega Factories
- 01:00 Megastructures
- 02:00 Monster Fish
- 03:00 Wicked Tuna
- 04:00 Mine Kings
- 05:00 China's Ghost Army
- 06:00 Lawless Island
- 07:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware
- 08:00 Crimes Against Nature
- 09:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 10:00 Filthy Riches
- 11:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
- 12:00 Right Footed
- 13:00 Dog Whisperer
- 14:00 Dog Whisperer
- 15:00 Monster Fish
- 16:00 Wicked Tuna
- 17:00 Top 10 Biggest Beasts Ever
- 18:00 Monster Fish
- 19:00 Wicked Tuna
- 20:00 Top 10 Biggest Beasts Ever
- 21:00 Monster Fish
- 22:30 China's Ghost Army

- 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 13:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 15:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 16:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 16:30 Siba's Table
- 17:00 Siba's Table
- 18:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 18:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 19:00 Man Fire Food
- 19:30 Man Fire Food
- 20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 20:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 21:00 Tia Mowry At Home
- 21:30 Tia Mowry At Home
- 22:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 22:30 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 23:00 Chopped

itv HD CHOICE

- 00:15 Coronation Street
- 00:35 Coronation Street
- 01:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:25 Coronation Street
- 02:45 Coronation Street
- 03:10 Coronation Street
- 03:30 Coronation Street
- 03:55 The Chase
- 04:45 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 05:35 Don't Tell The Bride
- 06:25 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
- 07:35 Surprise Surprise
- 08:35 Gino's Italian Escape
- 09:00 Grantchester Christmas Special
- 10:25 Murdoch Murders
- 11:55 Murdoch Mysteries
- 12:50 5 Star Family Reunion
- 13:45 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
- 15:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 15:55 Don't Tell The Bride
- 16:50 Surprise Surprise
- 17:50 Brief Encounters
- 18:45 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
- 20:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 21:00 Murdoch Mysteries
- 21:50 Midsomer Murders
- 23:20 Brief Encounters

H2 HD

- 00:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 01:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 02:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 02:50 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 03:40 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 04:30 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 05:20 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 06:10 The Universe
- 07:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 08:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 09:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 10:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 11:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 12:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 13:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 14:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 15:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 16:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 17:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 18:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 19:00 Ancient Top 10
- 20:00 Million Dollar Genius
- 21:00 Ancient Aliens
- 22:00 Engineering Disasters
- 23:00 True Monsters

H2 HD HISTORY

- 00:20 Ice Road Truckers
- 01:10 Hunting Hitler
- 02:00 Counting Cars
- 02:25 Car Hunters
- 02:50 American Restoration
- 03:40 Fifth Gear
- 04:30 Storage Wars Texas
- 05:00 Hoard Hunters
- 06:00 Leepu And Pitbull
- 06:50 Shipping Wars



AMELIA ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 07:15 Shipping Wars
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 11:50 Time Team
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 16:00 Leepu And Pitbull
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 18:30 Search For The Lost Giants
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Pawn Stars
- 21:25 Pawn Stars Best Of
- 21:50 Storage Wars: Barry's Best Buys
- 22:40 Counting Cars
- 23:05 Car Hunters
- 23:30 American Pickers
- 14:40 Animals Gone Wild
- 15:40 Wild Indochina
- 16:35 Nature's Greatest Talents
- 17:30 Dr Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 18:25 Hunter Hunted
- 19:20 Animals Gone Wild
- 20:10 Wild Indochina
- 21:00 Nature's Greatest Talents
- 21:50 Dr Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 22:40 Hunter Hunted
- 23:30 Dangerous Encounters

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 01:00 The Odd Life Of Timothy Green
- 03:00 The Haunted Mansion
- 05:00 Monsterville: The Cabinet Of Souls
- 07:00 Cars
- 09:00 A Bug's Life
- 11:00 Monsterville: The Cabinet Of Souls
- 13:00 Alone For Christmas
- 15:00 Hercules (1997)
- 17:00 American Girl: Grace Stirs Up Success
- 19:00 The Game Plan
- 21:00 Beyond The Mask
- 23:00 Hercules (1997)

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 00:30 The Keeping Room
- 02:15 The Fold
- 04:15 Days Of Heaven
- 06:00 Tracks
- 08:00 I'll Follow You Down
- 09:45 Late Bloomers
- 11:30 WarGames
- 13:30 Rosewater
- 15:15 Ironweed
- 17:45 The Theory Of Everything
- 20:00 Masaan
- 22:00 Starred Up
- 23:45 The Kings Of Summer

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- OSN Movies Kids HD
- 01:00 When Marnie Was There
- 02:45 Jock The Hero Dog
- 04:15 The Adventures Of Rocky And Bullwinkle
- 06:00 Sava
- 07:45 Memory Loss
- 09:15 Opps Noah Is Gone
- 11:00 When Marnie Was There
- 12:45 Jock The Hero Dog
- 14:15 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 16:00 Opps Noah Is Gone
- 18:00 Worms
- 20:00 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble
- 21:45 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 23:15 Memory Loss

OSN MOVIES HD NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:30 The Woman In Black 2: Angel Of Death
- 02:15 10 Things I Hate About You
- 04:00 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes S.W.A.T.
- 05:45 Cradle 2 The Grave
- 07:45 Gridiron Gang
- 09:30 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes
- 11:45 Amelia
- 13:45 Ghostbusters
- 15:45 Ghostbusters II
- 17:45 Jurassic World
- 19:45 Snatch
- 22:00 Snatch
- 23:45 Wild Horses

DISCOVERY SCIENCE

- 00:30 The Big Brain Theory
- 01:20 The Big Brain Theory
- 02:10 The Big Brain Theory
- 03:00 The Big Brain Theory
- 03:48 How Do They Do It?
- 04:12 How Do They Do It?
- 04:36 How Do They Do It?
- 05:00 Food Factory
- 05:24 Food Factory
- 05:48 Food Factory
- 06:12 Food Factory
- 06:36 Food Factory
- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 07:26 The Big Brain Theory
- 08:14 The Big Brain Theory
- 09:02 The Big Brain Theory
- 09:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 10:38 The Big Brain Theory
- 11:26 Mythbusters
- 12:14 Mythbusters
- 13:02 Mythbusters
- 13:50 Mythbusters
- 14:38 Mythbusters
- 15:26 Food Factory
- 16:14 Food Factory
- 17:02 Food Factory
- 17:50 Food Factory
- 18:38 Food Factory
- 19:26 Food Factory
- 20:14 Food Factory
- 21:02 Food Factory
- 21:50 Food Factory



SURVIVOR ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- River Song
- 03:25 Eastenders
- 04:00 Line Of Duty
- 05:00 The Musketeers
- 06:00 Doctors
- 06:30 Eastenders
- 07:00 Holly City
- 07:55 Father Brown
- 08:45 Doctor Who
- 09:35 New Tricks
- 10:30 Doctors
- 11:00 Eastenders
- 11:30 Father Brown
- 12:25 Doctor Who
- 13:15 New Tricks
- 14:10 Doctors
- 14:45 Eastenders
- 15:15 Father Brown
- 16:10 Doctor Who
- 17:05 New Tricks
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Father Brown
- 20:00 Scott & Bailey
- 21:00 The Level
- 21:55 The Level
- 22:50 Orphan Black
- 23:40 Doctors
- 07:00 Dick N' Dom Go Wild
- 07:25 Dick N' Dom Go Wild
- 07:50 Awesome Adventures
- 08:15 Awesome Adventures
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 How It's Made
- 09:55 How It's Made
- 10:20 How It's Made
- 10:45 How It's Made
- 11:10 How It's Made
- 11:35 How It's Made
- 12:00 How It's Made
- 12:25 How It's Made
- 12:50 Ultimate Survival
- 13:40 Ultimate Survival
- 14:30 Ultimate Survival
- 15:20 Ultimate Survival
- 16:10 Ultimate Survival
- 17:00 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 17:50 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 18:40 Deception With Keith Barry
- 19:30 Zoltan The Wolfman
- 20:20 Ways To Save The Planet
- 21:10 Curiosity: Nefertiti - Mummy Queen Mystery
- 22:00 What Happened Next?
- 22:25 What Happened Next?
- 22:50 What Happened Next?
- 23:15 What Happened Next?
- 23:40 Destroyed In Seconds
- 07:50 Goldie & Bear
- 08:15 Miles From Tomorrow
- 08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:10 Sofia The First
- 09:35 Doc McStuffins
- 10:00 The Lion Guard
- 10:30 The Lion Guard
- 10:55 The Lion Guard
- 11:25 The Lion Guard
- 11:50 The Lion Guard
- 12:15 The Lion Guard
- 12:45 The Lion Guard
- 13:10 The Lion Guard
- 13:40 The Lion Guard
- 14:05 The Lion Guard
- 14:35 The Lion Guard
- 15:00 The Lion Guard
- 15:30 Sofia The First
- 16:00 Goldie & Bear
- 16:25 PJ Masks
- 16:55 Doc McStuffins
- 17:20 Miles From Tomorrow
- 17:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 18:15 Sofia The First
- 18:45 PJ Masks
- 19:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:25 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:50 PJ Masks
- 20:05 Goldie & Bear
- 20:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 21:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 21:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:25 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:55 PJ Masks
- 23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 23:35 The Hive
- 23:45 Loopdidoo

Disney Channel HD

- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:25 Hank Zipzer
- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:55 Hank Zipzer
- 04:15 The Hive
- 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:25 Hank Zipzer
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 The 7D
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:25 Jessie
- 07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 07:55 Austin & Ally
- 08:20 Rolling With The Ronks
- 08:45 The Zhuzhus
- 09:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 09:35 Elena Of Avalor
- 10:00 Stuck In The Middle
- 10:25 Disney The Lodge
- 10:50 Bunk'd
- 11:15 Bizaardvark

Discovery Channel HD

- 00:45 Gold Rush
- 01:10 Made By Destruction
- 01:35 Made By Destruction
- 02:00 Made By Destruction
- 02:25 Made By Destruction
- 02:50 Made By Destruction
- 03:15 Made By Destruction
- 03:40 Made By Destruction
- 04:05 Made By Destruction
- 04:30 Made By Destruction
- 05:00 Made By Destruction
- 05:30 Made By Destruction
- 06:00 Outback Truckers
- 06:50 Street Outlaws
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 Venom Hunters
- 09:20 Storage Hunters
- 09:45 How Do They Do It?
- 10:10 How Do They Do It?
- 10:35 What On Earth?
- 11:25 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 12:15 The Wheel: Survival Games
- 13:05 How Do They Do It?
- 13:30 Storage Hunters
- 13:55 Storage Hunters

CLASSIFIEDS



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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (30/03/2017 TO 05/04/2017)

Programme	Time	Programme	Time	Programme	Time
SHARQIA-1 AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic DAYLIGHT'S END DAYLIGHT'S END AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic DAYLIGHT'S END	1:15 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	FANAR-2 DAYLIGHT'S END KONG: SKULL ISLAND POWER RANGERS KONG: SKULL ISLAND DAYLIGHT'S END DAYLIGHT'S END	12:00 PM 2:15 PM 4:45 PM 7:15 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE LIFE	10:00 PM 12:05 AM
SHARQIA-2 SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE KONG: SKULL ISLAND	1:00 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:00 PM 11:00 PM	FANAR-3 NAAM SHABANA -Hindi NAAM SHABANA -Hindi GURU -Telugu FRINAAM SHABANA -Hindi GURU -Telugu AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	12:45 PM 3:30 PM 3:30 PM 6:30 PM 6:30 PM 9:30 PM 11:45 PM	AVENUES-1 SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -Arabic SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -Arabic SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -Arabic COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE	1:15 PM 3:15 PM 5:15 PM 7:15 PM 9:15 PM 11:15 PM 1:15 AM
SHARQIA-3 GET OUT GET OUT NAAM SHABANA -Hindi COLLIDE GET OUT GET OUT	12:30 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 7:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	FANAR-4 SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE COLLIDE	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 7:45 PM 9:45 PM 11:45 PM	AVENUES-2 SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM	12:15 PM 2:30 PM 4:45 PM 7:00 PM 9:15 PM 11:30 PM
MUHALAB-1 GET OUT KONG: SKULL ISLAND GET OUT NAAM SHABANA -Hindi GET OUT GET OUT	12:15 PM 2:30 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	FANAR-5 SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM	AVENUES-3 SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM SAFRA 5 NJOOM	12:15 PM 2:30 PM 4:45 PM 7:00 PM 9:15 PM 11:30 PM
MUHALAB-2 SLEEPLESS NAAM SHABANA -Hindi GURU -Telugu NAAM SHABANA -Hindi GURU -Telugu KONG: SKULL ISLAND GURU -Telugu KONG: SKULL ISLAND SLEEPLESS	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 1:30 PM 4:30 PM 4:30 PM 7:30 PM 7:30 PM 10:30 PM 1:00 AM	MARINA-1 COLLIDE KONG: SKULL ISLAND COLLIDE KONG: SKULL ISLAND AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic COLLIDE	1:15 PM 3:15 PM 5:45 PM 7:45 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	360°-1 GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT	12:30 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 9:30 PM 11:45 PM
MUHALAB-3 SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE COLLIDE COLLIDE	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM	MARINA-2 GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	360°-2 COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE	11:45 AM 2:15 PM 4:15 PM 6:15 PM 8:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM
FANAR-1 GET OUT GET OUT LIFE GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT	1:00 PM 3:15 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	MARINA-3 SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE Special Show "SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE" SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM	AL-KOUT.1 SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE GET OUT	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM

Engineering contracting company required

- Steel structure project manager (civil engineer)
10 years' experience
- Work shop manager (production engineer)
7 years' experience
- Steel strut Forman.
7 years' experience
- Executive secretary.
5 year's experience

Email: hr_co_2017@yahoo.com

EMERGENCY
112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

PRAYER TIMINGS

- Fajr: 04:17**
Shorook: 05:37
Duhr: 11:52
Asr: 15:23
Maghrib: 18:07
Isha: 19:25



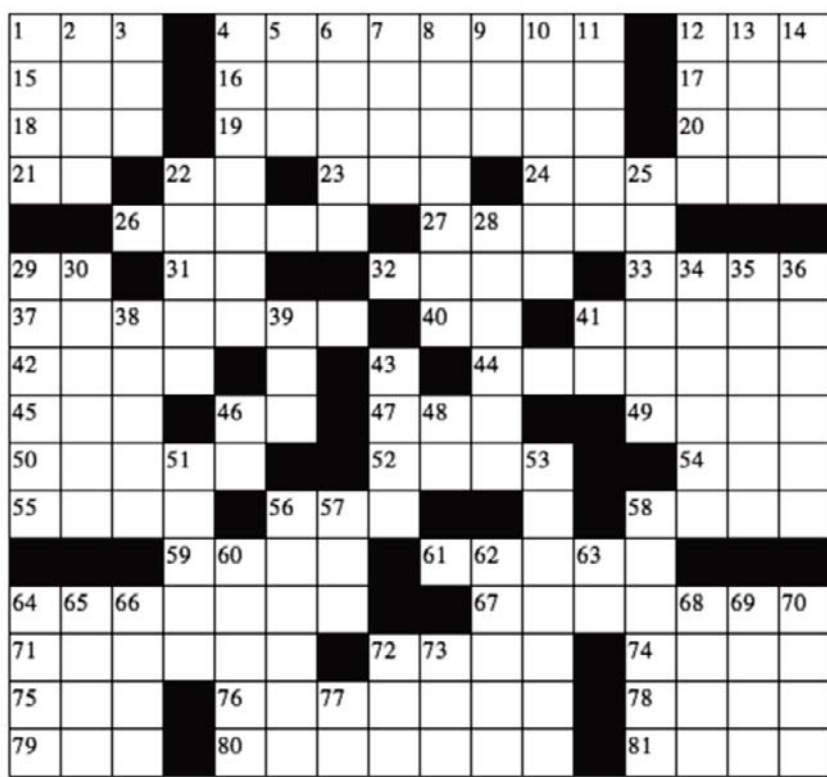
Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 2/4/2017				Departure Flights on Sunday 2/4/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
JZR	125	Bahrain	00:10	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	JZR	124	Bahrain	13:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:55	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:05
KAC	786	Jeddah	01:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:40
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50	KAC	563	Amman	15:40
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	SVK	501	Jeddah	15:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:00
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ETH	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	615	Doha	16:30
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	FDK	802	Damascus	16:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:40	FDB	052	Dubai	17:05
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:50	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
CEB	018	Manila	04:00	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	240	Amman	17:30
KAC	344	Ahmedabad	04:15	KAC	363	Colombo	17:35
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	04:45	KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	SVK	511	Riyadh	18:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
QTR	8511	Doha	05:20	JZR	184	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
BAW	157	London	06:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	KAC	785	Jeddah	19:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	343	Ahmedabad	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	CLX	612	Luxembourg	19:45
KAC	354	BLR	07:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:35
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:10	KAC	353	BLR	20:55
KAC	362	Colombo	09:15	DLH	634	Doha	21:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:30
SVK	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:40
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	203	Lahore	21:45
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:00
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	KAC	155	Istanbul	22:10
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
KAC	522	Al Najaf	11:20	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	JZR	528	Asyut	23:05
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	23:10
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

CROSSWORD 1566



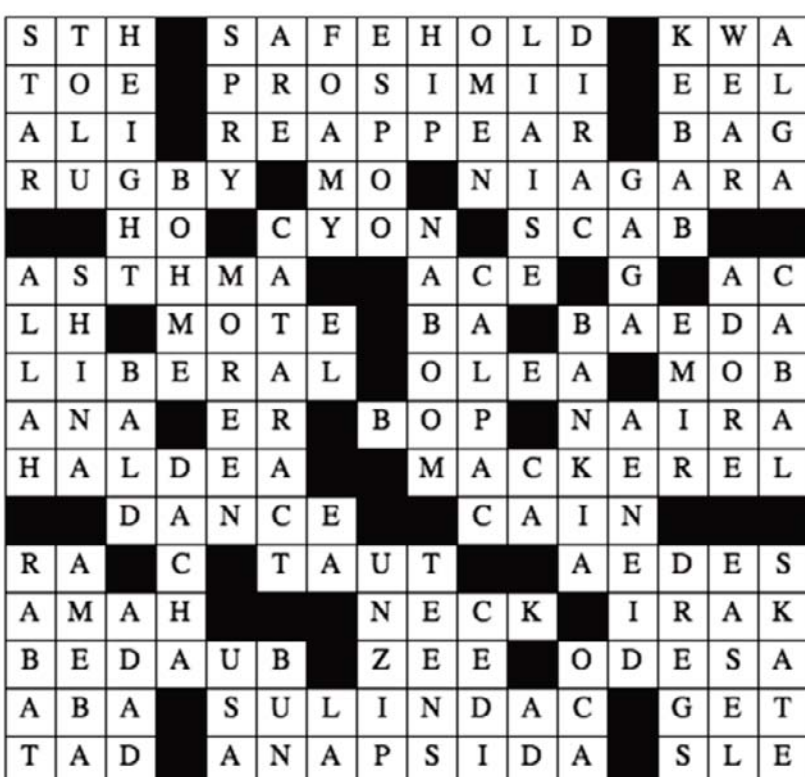
ACROSS

- The residue that remains when something is burned.
- Inability to control the flow of urine and involuntary urination.
- An alliance made up of states that had been Soviet Socialist Republics in the Soviet Union prior to its dissolution in Dec 1991.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- Widespread genus or herbs or soft-wooded arborescent shrubs cultivated for their showy flowers.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- A small piece of cloth.
- Possessing an education (especially having more than average knowledge).
- One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A human limb.
- Small tree of dry open parts of southern Africa having erect angled branches suggesting candelabra.
- A folded part (as a fold of skin or muscle).
- Selected as the best.
- Before noon.
- A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- In or relating to or obtained from urine.
- Pathetically lacking in force or effectiveness.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Bengal or its people.
- Being five more than one hundred fifty.
- A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
- By bad luck.
- A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
- A city in northwestern Syria.
- A bloody and prolonged operation in which American marines landed and defeated Japanese defenders (February and March 1945).
- Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.
- A Hindu prince or king in India.
- A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
- An obsolete kind of container used for distillation.
- (of exocrine glands) Producing a clear aqueous secretion without releasing part of the secreting cell.
- An ancient country is southwestern Asia on the east coast of the Mediterranean.
- A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
- The use of nuclear magnetic resonance of protons to produce proton density images.
- An ancient town on Crete where Bronze Age culture flourished from about 2000 BC to 1400 BC.
- One of a set of small pieces of stiff paper marked in various ways and used for playing games or for telling fortunes.
- A doctor's degree in education.
- Small birds resembling warblers but having some of the habits of titmice.

DOWN

- A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
- A city in northern India.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- An ugly evil-looking old woman.
- Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
- A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
- A small pendant fleshy lobe at the back of the soft palate.
- Any competition.
- A piece of furniture with open shelves for displaying small ornaments.
- (usually followed by 'to' or 'for') On the point of or strongly disposed.
- Conducive to peace.
- Egyptian statesman who (as President of Egypt) negotiated a peace treaty with Menachem Begin of Israel (1918-1981).
- (Greek mythology) The Muse of history.
- The villain in William Shakespeare's tragedy who tricked Othello into murdering his wife.
- A fraudulent business scheme.
- (medicine) Chilly.
- Valuable source of caviar and isinglass.
- At risk of or subject to experiencing something usually unpleasant.
- Small deciduous tree of southern Africa having edible fruit.
- A port city in southwestern Turkey on the Gulf of Antalya.
- A landlocked republic in southern central Africa.
- American inventor.
- English navigator who explored the Arctic while searching for the Northwest Passage (1550-1605).
- A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- Bony flesh of herring-like fish usually caught during their migration to fresh water for spawning.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- A metric unit of volume equal to one tenth of a liter.
- The deep vascular inner layer of the skin.
- Of structural members especially of concrete.
- A spirit believed by Muslims to inhabit the earth and influence mankind by appearing in the form of humans or animals.
- (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
- Type genus of the Caricaceae.
- Having the wind against the forward side of the sails.
- English writer remembered particularly for his novel about Robinson Crusoe (1660-1731).
- A white trivalent metallic element.
- Soft white semisolid fat obtained by rendering the fatty tissue of the hog v.1.
- A town in north central Oklahoma.
- A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
- (British) An informer or spy working for the police.
- (prefix) Within.
- White crystalline compound used as a food additive to enhance flavor.
- The sign language used in the United States.
- In operation or operational.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are much too serious this day but there will be time to adjust around to a little laughter and lighthearted vision for this afternoon. Considering your conscientious efforts this morning, your roommate, cohort or whomever you enjoy spending time with, appreciates any repair work or work you do to save money around the living area. You and this other person can and should show off any artwork you have around the city in establishments that are willing to show your work. You will be very pleased to discover that you have enough art to show as an exhibit. With the work in view, the arrangement or the combinations just may get you a show or a job in an art establishment, museum, display advertisement, etc.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

There are many different levels of symbolism surrounding money; your day seems centered on the symbolisms of money. Perhaps you are involved with the spending or earning of money-whatever the case, there are indications of conflict. A wise decision could be in not making any decisions surrounding money at this time. Your choices could change quite abruptly, so keep notes on what you think you want and look for ways to reach your goals. Being more practical and independent is very important to you. Taking care of the necessary underpinnings of life-health, work and such-becomes a greater preoccupation. Projects surrounding a family tree seem to be the talk of the evening and fun times are enjoyed.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Social involvement, dating and general pleasantries can be enjoyed this whole weekend. This is a great time to refurbish your own energies. You may find yourself unrealistic, in a dreamy mood and at odds with your more pragmatic duties. Take some time off and get outside today-weather permitting, of course. Fishing, bird watching, walking and work or play in the yard or park all lead to a more relaxed and focused you. Later this afternoon you will want to be with your loved ones. Feeling significant within the family group and being popular with your peers are what gives you a sense of belonging-that is what this afternoon is all about. Perhaps some grilled hamburgers outside plus continued conversations and reunions with neighbors would be fun.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may be particularly dynamic and assertive just now. Much energy and drive are available for whatever you want to achieve. You seem to be in demand today and you may have to pick and choose in order to not overwhelm your energies. Perhaps some of these requests can be carried over into tomorrow. Some of your feelings can get out of hand if you are working or playing with a highly emotional person today. Remember to disassociate yourself from the emotions so that you can see and teach the truth. A lot of productive conversations and interaction with others fill out a very enjoyable day. You can expect a sense of support and good will from those around you. This can be an extroverted and inspired time.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may feel like the caged lion you see at the zoo. If you could relax just now and take a deep breath, know that your dreams will be fulfilled-just not exactly on your time schedule. This will be a pleasant period if you take the time to relax completely. Look at this day as a most positive one and blow off your goals for now. Now is the time to dive into some wonderful interaction with friends or loved ones. This evening could be a good time for imagination and creativity when it comes to ideas and thinking. This is a time to cement your ties to others and you make sure they are rock-solid. If your relationships are not solid they are apt to crack under stress. You improve your domestic life by being attentive and sharing center stage with your loved ones.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find yourself reflecting on your own youth or some event from the past. Communication with those around you, especially young people, may become difficult if you do not give them your full attention. Do not respond directly when the cause is trivial, when another resolution would work or when confrontations may be dangerous. This may not be the best time to shop or to choose colors for blending, etc. You may find a high level of energy will help you become caught up in maintaining and caring for household items. Exercise will help to balance your energies as will just being outside this day. There could also be some wonderful opportunities later to enjoy nature and its many inhabitants. A romantic phase begins now.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a favorable time for matters of entertainment, particularly the theater. Spiritual and psychological growth is important to you at this time. You will be thinking of the ways you have changed as you visit with family this day-perhaps a visitor or a new family member is introduced to you now. Your development, however, does not go unnoticed as others compliment you on your progress. If you are married, your marriage seems more steady and secure than ever before. This can be an outgoing and inspired time for you. Your vitality seems to increase with the day and your mind is creative and inventive in ways that will help to integrate a loved one into your plans this evening. You are charming and affectionate.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are learning to identify the need for change in your life. You look for ways to eliminate the things that cause you stress. This is a good time to concentrate on your body so that the stress does not affect your physical wellbeing. Learn how to detoxify, tone and balance. These can be the secrets to your good health. Take this one step at a time and know that everything changes-nothing lasting forever. There is good news today in the financial sector of your horoscope. If you are looking for a new way to increase your income, seek something that will challenge your mind. Your self-assurance is admirable and others may want to follow your particular style. You may find you are a positive and good mentor. A real estate investment is worth your attention.



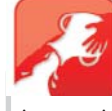
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you take a positive outlook on your life situation, almost everything you try to accomplish will be successful. However, if your attitude is negative, almost everything you strive to accomplish will have negative aspects. Someone could challenge you and it may be difficult for you to remain calm and within control. You can overcome this problem if you look at the situation as a lesson for all involved and not a personal assault. Sympathy and understanding are emotional qualities that grow and help you to become a better person. It's wisdom, not knowledge, which counts most. Good eye-hand coordination and a sustained effort make almost any task run well, whether you are in the workplace or at home. Enjoy the out-of-doors tonight.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You display an urge to be recognized by your family and friends for your hard work and accomplishments. There is a possibility that during this time, your accomplishments will be acknowledged. This might be through an award dinner or just simply a thank you from your friends or family members. After your chores are finished, you might consider setting aside some time to enjoy a hobby or to brush up on a talent that you might have neglected. This is for you to enjoy and for you to excel without pleasing anyone but you; the things that make your heart sing. You might enjoy jazz, flute or some other kind of music and you might enjoy the art of blowing glass. Animals are also a thrill for you; a particular animal makes you smile.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Progress with repairs around the house or working in a garden or helping out with some family situation has positive results at this time. Work, achievement and ambition are the things that mean a lot to you but you also enjoy just hanging out with your friends. If you are not doing that, it is a good day to make a few phone calls for the planning of a get-together. You will not attract new and interesting things to you until there is room for a new thing to come into your life, so clear away the old and get ready for the new. You may find yourself looking for a little romance later or at least enjoying some emotional release. You can appreciate feelings and movement. You might consider an evening of dancing or perhaps a dance movie.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You have a natural sense for communicating with others, especially those younger than yourself. While working with young people, you may have clear thoughts about your own past, good memories. You are energized now, giving you a sense of invulnerability in everything you do. It would be a good idea to check all aspects of a project you are working on now. This will help you discover where your energies can be best applied. This evening you could find yourself being put to good use by your friends. Your thinking process is good, making communications with friends easier. This is a good time to clear the air of any problems. Expressing affection should come easily at this time and can do lots of positive things for your disposition.

WORD SEARCH

St. Patrick's Day

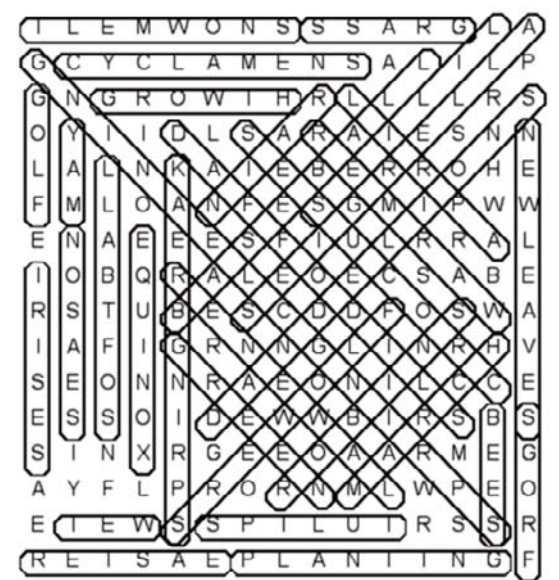
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 34 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| BEER | DANCING | HOLY DAY | POTATOES |
| BELFAST | DUBLIN | IRELAND | SEVENTEENTH |
| BISHOP | EVENTS | IRISH | SHAMROCK |
| CABBAGE | FEAST DAY | LEPRECHAUN | SNAKES |
| CELEBRATION | FESTIVAL | LIMERICK | SODA BREAD |
| CELTIC CROSS | GREEN | MARCH | TRADITION |
| CHRISTIAN | GUINNESS | MISSIONARY | YEARLY |
| CLOVER | HERITAGE | MUSIC | |
| CORK | HISTORY | PARADE | |
| CORNERED BEEF | HOLIDAY | PATRON SAINT | |

Yesterday's Solution

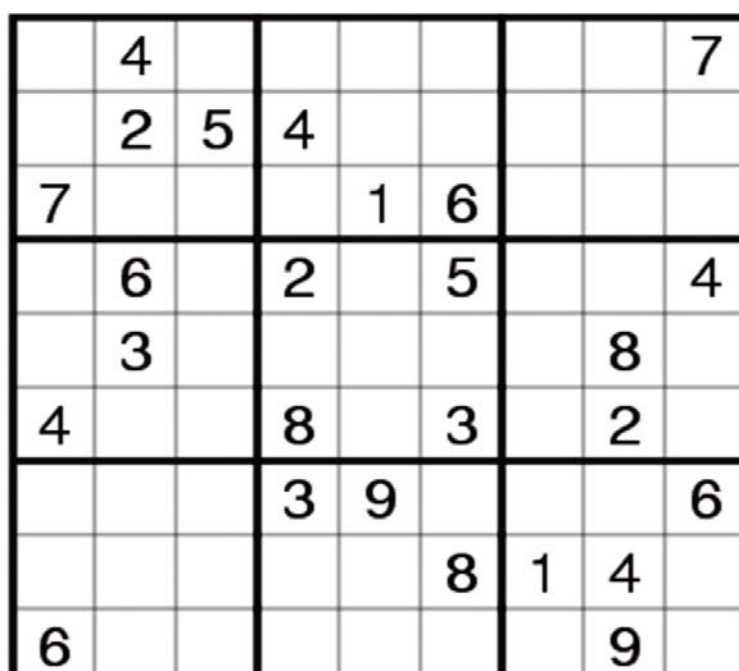
Spring



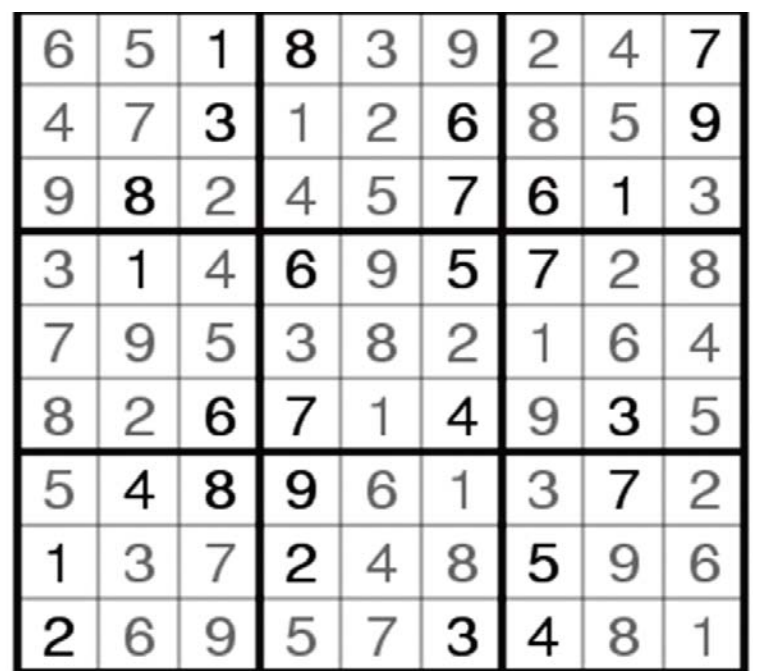
- | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------------|
| ALLERGIES | FROGS | RAIN |
| APRIL | GOLF | RENEWAL |
| BASEBALL | GRASS | ROBINS |
| BEES | GREEN | SEASON |
| CROCUSES | GROWTH | SNOWMELT |
| CYCLAMENS | IRISES | SOFTBALL |
| DAFFODILS | LILIES | SPRING BREAK |
| DANDELIONS | MARCH | SPRING CLEANING |
| EASTER | MAY | TULIPS |
| EQUINOX | NEW LEAVES | WARMER |
| FLOWERS | PLANTING | WET |

The hidden sentence is: APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Clouds will decrease gradually with light variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with mist over some areas .

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate south easterly to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	27 °C	21 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	29 °C	20 °C
ABDALY	29 °C	19 °C
BUBYAN	25 °C	21 °C
JAHRA	30 °C	20 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	26 °C	20 °C
SALMIYAH	26 °C	20 °C
AHMADI	25 °C	21 °C
NUWASIB	29 °C	20 °C
WAFRA	26 °C	19 °C
SALMY	29 °C	16 °C

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.	
Sunday	04/02	Mostly sunny	30 °C	19 °C	VRB-SE 06 - 28 km/h
Monday	04/03	Sunny	31 °C	18 °C	NW 15 - 38 km/h
Tuesday	04/04	Sunny + a chance for dust over open areas	29 °C	17 °C	NW 15 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	04/05	Partly cloudy + a chance for light rain	29 °C	17 °C	NW-VRB 12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:17
Sunrise	05:37
Zuhr	11:52
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:06
Isha	19:24

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	27 °C
MIN. Temp.	20 °C
MAX. RH	75 %
MIN. RH	43 %
MAX. Wind	SE 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

PRIVATE CLINICS



Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohamme Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoubi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Refae	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr. Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Family Doctor	Psychiatrists	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	General Surgeons	Internists, Chest & Heart
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60			
Dr. Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581			
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047			
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0			
Dr. Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581			
Dr. Verginia S. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321			
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539			
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406			
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272			
Dr. Salem soso	22618787			
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044			
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148			
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939			
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300			
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004			
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515			
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446			
Dr. Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3			

Physiotherapists & VD	Rheumatologists:
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees	22666288
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR. Mohammed Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

GOSSIP

Evan Rachel Wood is full of praise for ex-husband

The former couple - who split in 2014 and are now both engaged to other people - have a three-year-old son together and Evan loves co-parenting with Jamie because they are such different people. She told Elle Canada: "My ex-husband's lovely and very British and straightedge. And then our son has got this glam-rock weirdo for a mom. "Bless him. He's a gypsy by proxy because his parents are. He's only three now, but he's starting to understand. He hears one of my songs and he knows that that's me, and he has seen me on TV and he's starting to put the pieces together." Evan also called her young child "profound", admitting that she is learning from him all the time. She explained: "He said something to me that was so profound I wanted to put it on a T-shirt. I was just poking fun at him lovingly one day and I said, 'You're weird,' and he said, 'I'm not weird. I'm playing.' And I was

like, that's the most brilliant thing I've ever heard. I'm not weird, I'm just playing. That's my motto for life from now on." Evan recently moved from Los Angeles to Nashville, Tennessee with the tot because she wants him to have a more normal upbringing. She said: "LA is wonderful, and it has given me so many amazing things, but I've also got a lot of demons here. I was ready to break it up a little bit. I wanted to give my kid some grass to run around on. Again, he's got two actor parents. I was like, 'You don't need to live in LA full-time. Let's go somewhere a little 'normal' for a bit.'" Jamie is now engaged to Kate Mara, while Evan is set to wed bandmate Zach Villa.



Giovanna Fletcher wants more children



The 32-year-old writer-and-presenter already has sons Buzz, three, and Buddy, 13 months, with husband Tom Fletcher, and though they have no definite plans in place to expand their family, she admits she doesn't "want to stop" at two. She said: "I'm hopefully not going to stop at two. I wouldn't say no to expanding our family, but I look forward to whatever comes." The 'Happy Mum, Happy Baby' author can't believe how quickly her sons are growing up and adores watching them together. She said: "Buddy is tottering around. He loves his food, like his brother. He's a real climber. He'll watch Buzz do something and then a couple of hours later he'll have mastered it. He adores his brother - it's so cute seeing them together. "It does feel like time is going really fast but I literally can't remember a time without them. It's a little bit scary now looking at schools for Buzz, it's such a big decision. But it's amazing! I can't wait to see him in his school uniform on his first day of school!" And Buzz is already showing signs of wanting to follow in the footsteps of his father, who is a part of pop band McFly. She told OK! magazine: "Buzz loves music and anything live - he'll literally just sit and watch. "At the moment he loves it, so we'll see where it goes. I wouldn't say no but I don't think I'd be pushy."

Amy Schumer finds famous people 'exhausting'

The 'Trainwreck' star has a close bond with Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence but has no interest in forming a high-profile group of other pals. She insisted: "Famous people are exhausting and too much work to be friends with, other than Jennifer." And the blonde star - who is in a relationship with furniture designer Ben Hanisch - thinks dating another famous person would be "awful". She said: "That sounds awful. I don't think I could be in a relationship like that in the public eye, but so many celebrities date each other so there must be something to it." Despite the personal nature of her comedy, Amy doesn't want to offend any of her loved ones so always checks with them first before she mentions them in any of her material. She said: "I always ask everyone to read it or hear it first and say, 'If you want anything out, just tell me.' I talked about dating a wrestler on Howard Stern's radio show recently and called him first to say 'He's going to ask me' to make sure I had his permission. "Not everything is fair game. I want to make people feel good and I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings or sabotage my own relationships, especially with my family." The 'Snatched' actress is thankful the success of her comedy shows means she can be careful about the movies she chooses to appear in. She told Total Film magazine: "I know the direction I don't want to go in and I can make money doing stand-up, so I'm not going. "How much are they going to pay me to be in this piece of s**t" because I can afford to wait to do things I'm proud of instead."



Naya Rivera is dating David Spade

The 30-year-old actress - who filed for divorce from husband Ryan Dorsey in November, less than two years after they tied the knot - was spotted in a passionate embrace with David, 52, during a recent getaway to Hawaii. A source told Entertainment Tonight that the relationship "is very casual and they had a fun time together. Naya was in Hawaii with a friend and met up with David. They have known each other for a little bit through friends." And eyewitnesses, who saw the couple packing on the PDA, said they appeared to be completely smitten with each other as they frolicked in the pool at the Halekulani Hotel in Waikiki. A source said: "The pair went for a short swim, hugged and had lots of body contact in the pool. They kept to one side of the pool where there was the most covering from prying eyes. Outside of the pool, they sat on lounge chairs and talked animatedly. They spent about an hour poolside together. "They were very happy. They looked pretty comfortable together." Naya and Ryan have son Josey, 18 months, together and she previously insisted Ryan had always been "the one" for her, since they briefly dated in 2010. She said: "I have always kept a flame for him. In between boyfriends or whatever, if I was single for a minute, I would always answer his emails and go see him. He was just kind of always the One." However, the pair announced their split last year and Naya requested primary physical custody of Josey. They said in a statement: "After much consideration, we have made the decision to end our marriage. Our priority is and always will be our beautiful son that we share together. We will continue to be great co-parenting partners for him. We ask for respect and privacy for our family during this difficult time."



Patricia Arquette has praised her late sister



The 47-year-old actress - who was known as Robert before her gender transition - passed away in September 2016 and her sibling Patricia hailed Alexis for being true to herself, despite the implications it had on her career. Speaking to PEOPLE at the Let's Toast the Extraordinary Achievements of Alexis Arquette pre-GLAAD Media Awards dinner, Patricia said: "Alexis was really also very powerful, and strong, and really brave, very brave. "We had a long conversation when Alexis told me that she was transgender, and I said, 'Okay. So what do you do about Hollywood? How will you get work? People are not progressive in Hollywood and it could really negatively impact your career. Are you thinking everything through?' "Alexis was very brave to make that decision. She really wanted to help progress the world and move the world forward. "Alexis was incredibly creative our whole lives. I grew up with Alexis putting on make-up, trying on high heels Alexis was my best friend when we grew up, so I wouldn't change one thing about Alexis." And Patricia is proud of how her sister's bravery and openness helped other people. She explained: "We've gotten so many letters. I've had letters from people all over the world who said their first experience of a trans person was with Alexis. Watching Alexis in 'Last Exit to Brooklyn' - which was Alexis' first movie - she played a trans person in the 1950s which was considered really a crossdresser at that time. That's what people called trans people then."

PARIS HILTON SAYS HER BOYFRIEND IS 'PERFECT'

The 36-year-old DJ and socialite recently started dating 31-year-old actor Chris Zylka after six years of friendship and Paris is sure that he is "the one". She told E! News: "I've never been surer of anything in my life. He's so incredible in every way. We've actually been friends for a really long time, like the past six years. We just now started being serious in the past few months and it's really just changed my life in so many ways and brought so much happiness to my life. I feel so safe and he's so special. We're best friends and we're together every minute. I don't know what else I could ask for. He's perfect for me." And after becoming an aunt last year, when her sister Nicky gave birth, Paris can't wait to have children of her own. She said: "Before I met my niece, [Lily Rothschild], I mostly cared about my business and my brand and traveling and I just thought I'd never have time, but especially after meeting her and me being in such an amazing place in my life and being so happy and in love, I can't wait to [have a baby] one day. It's just the meaning of life to have a family of your own and bring chil-

dren into the world, so I cannot wait to do that one day. "I'm obsessed with her! She's such a beautiful little angel. Every time I see her, she's even prettier and she's going to be walking soon, so it's just been so great to experience all of the love and happiness that she's brought to my sister and her husband's life. I'm so happy for them."



Liam Neeson says it was hard to return to 'Love Actually'

Just six years after Liam took on the role of widower Daniel in the 2003 movie, his wife Natasha Richardson passed away from injuries sustained in a ski accident and Liam has admitted returning to the role to film a mini sequel for Red Nose Day, was bittersweet. He told Entertainment Weekly: "It's 14 years ago now and we've all lived lives. Some of us have died. Oh, my dear old friend [and 'Love Actually' co-star Alan Rickman, God rest him. Some have gotten divorced. I've lost my wife." "And, oh, sure, plenty of times I've thought about this film and my own life. Love Actually, that's the way it is. That's the tapestry of life." Speaking previously about his loss, Liam admitted he threw himself into his work so that the couple's two sons, Michael, 21 and Daniel, 20, would not see him "wallow". Liam, 64, said: "I'm not good without work. I just don't - I just don't wallow too much. You know? And I just didn't want to - especially for my boys - seem to be wallowing in sadness or depression." Liam previously admitted he still struggles to process the loss. He shared: "It hits you. It's like a wave. You just get this profound feeling of instability ... the Earth isn't stable anymore and then it

passes and it becomes more infrequent, but I still get it sometimes. "[Her death] was never real. It still kind of isn't. There are periods now in our New York residence when I hear the door opening, especially the first couple of years... any time I hear that door opening, I still think I'm going to hear her."



GOSSIP

Selena Gomez is 'enjoying her life'

The 'Hearts Wants What It Wants' hit-maker is in a much better place after she took some time out of the spotlight to deal with her anxiety and depression and "loves what she is doing right now". She said: "I'm very honest though in general, I feel like you could be able to see in my face. I love what I'm doing right now. I'm enjoying my life, and I'm getting to do things I'm passionate about with the people that I love." And the 24-year-old singer and actress is "really big" on vulnerability and understands why others may be "scared" to open up and be honest themselves. She added to Entertainment Tonight: "I'm really big on vulnerability. I think people are really scared to be honest with themselves and strength is looked upon as, 'Oh I'm strong, I don't need anything, I can handle everything,' and that's just not the truth. "I think kids especially, with social media sometimes, they just feel

a little claustrophobic, and I don't think their voice is actually being heard. I want people to know that every single life is valuable, that their voice can be heard, and that there are people who are willing to be there for them." Meanwhile, the brunette beauty - who is dating fellow singer The Weeknd - previously confessed her "addiction" to Instagram made her feel awful. She said: "As soon as I became the most followed person on Instagram, I sort of freaked out. It had become so consuming to me. It's what I woke up to and went to sleep to. "I was an addict, and it felt like I was seeing things I didn't want to see, like it was putting things in my head that I didn't want to care about. I always end up feeling like s**t when I look at Instagram. Which is why I'm kind of under the radar, ghosting it a bit."



Shia LaBeouf assault charges are dropped

The 'Nymphomaniac' actor was taken into custody by police following an alleged scuffle with a man at his 'He Will Not Divide Us' livestream anti-Donald Trump protest in New York in January but he will not face further action. TMZ reports that there was not enough evidence to prove that a crime occurred when Shia faced off with another protestor. Police previously claimed that the 'American Honey' star ripped the scarf off a 25-year-old man who interfered with the ongoing demonstration at the Museum of Moving Image, scratched his face and pushed him to the ground. Shia was due to appear in court over the alleged incident on April 7 but that has now been called off. The 'He Will Not Divide Us' art installation was created by Shia along with artists Nastja Sode Rnkk and Luke Turner, with the intention that the live stream would run throughout President Trump's time in office. Veteran actor Jon Voight previously described Shia's proposed four-year protest as "treason". The 'Ray Donovan' star has been a vocal supporter of the controversial new president and singled out the 'Fury' star and singer Miley Cyrus - who attended the Women's March in Los Angeles earlier this year - for not setting a good example. He said: "When you see the young people like Shia LaBeouf and Miley Cyrus, they have a lot of followers, young people are looking at them and what are they teaching? "They're teaching treason, they're teaching going up against the government, not accepting the will of the people on this Presidency and it's a very sad day when I see this."



MEL C FELT REALLY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH SPORT SPICE PERSONA

The 43-year-old singer and songwriter felt the perception of her being a "bolshy, mouthy and aggressive" female in the girl band were characteristics untrue to her real personality because she "hates" confrontation and played the role of the "diplomat" when she was in the group. Speaking about how she was portrayed in the May issue of the Good House Keeping magazine, the 'Wannabe' hitmaker - whose full name is Melanie Chisholm - said: "In the band, there was power in numbers and we egged one another on. As Sporty Spice, I felt I was portrayed as being quite bolshy, mouthy and aggressive and that has never been me. I felt really uncomfortable with this portrayal. When you're in your early 20s, you are trying to figure out who you are anyway. I hate confrontation and, in the band, I was the diplomat. I've

always been very low key and put up with stuff. I just got to a point where I realised it wasn't serving me well. I had to take responsibility for myself." The brunette beauty - who has eight-year-old daughter Scarlet - has admitted although feels she is in the "best shape" she has ever been in, she has started to notice "the wheels falling off a bit", and is feeling the effects of ageing in her body. She explained: "I still feel youthful. I'm in the best shape of my life and I have just made one of the best records of my career." At 39, I thought I was getting better with age. Then I hit 40 and did start to notice the wheels falling off a bit. Just waking up in the morning and taking longer to get going. And it hurts more when I bend down. But I feel lots of positive things, too.

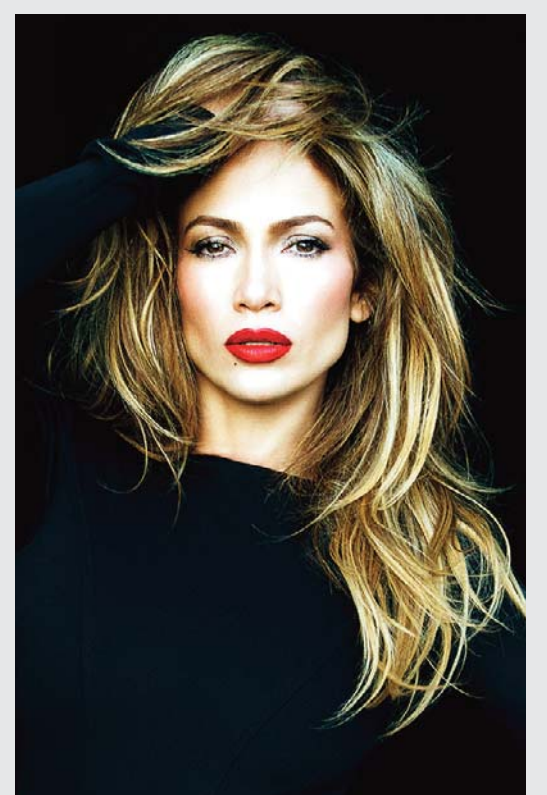
Hart wishes she had 'taken a chance' on Ryan Reynolds

She claims the pair had crushes on each other when they worked on the movie version of 'Sabrina The Teenage Witch' together when they were both 19 but their mutual attraction did not go anywhere because she had a boyfriend. Melissa, 40, told Australia's Studio 10 talk show: "We were smitten and cute. He was adorable. He was a really nice guy. "He wasn't like, the Ryan Reynolds everybody knows these days. You can see in the clip the crazy hair. He was sweet - he was very sweet. "I had a boyfriend at the time. [He] probably would have been a great boyfriend. And I didn't end up with the other guy, so maybe I should have taken a chance!" Speaking previously about their attraction, Melissa admitted they shared a kiss but she ultimately chose her then-boyfriend over the 'Deadpool' hunk, who is now married to Blake Lively. She said: "I chased him down, got in front of his car and just kissed him and then made out with him all night. Then I had to call my boyfriend the next day and explain it. "He came to New York to visit me. But I think he wanted something more but I decided I was going to stick with my boyfriend." Melissa has been married to musician Mark Wilkerson since 2003, and the pair have three sons together - Tucker, four, Braydon, nine, and Mason, 11.



Alex Rodriguez confirms relationship with Jennifer Lopez

The 41-year-old former baseball star recently started dating Jennifer, 47, and during a TV appearance on 'The View', he couldn't resist gushing about her. When asked about their relationship, he said: "It's obvious. "We're having a great time, she's an amazing, amazing girl, and one of the smartest human beings I've ever met and also an incredible mother. "She just likes simple things. I mean, she's a very, very simple person. Loves family. Is a great sister. Is a great daughter." Jennifer has nine-year-old twins Max and Emme with her former husband Marc Anthony, while Alex and his ex Cynthia Scurtis have daughters Natasha, 12 and eight-year-old Ella together. The pair are believed to have met at one of the singer's shows in Las Vegas last month in February and have been inseparable ever since. After a trip to the Bahamas together in early March, Alex jetted to Los Angeles recently, where he was spotted with Jennifer at the Bel-Air hotel. Jennifer and Alex also worked out together at her trainer Gunnar Peterson's gym and spent quality time together at her Bel-Air home. And it has been claimed that things are getting serious between the pair. An insider recently said: "All his friends can tell he really likes J.Lo [but] in the beginning they thought this may just be a fling. Friends are slowly thinking this may actually be a great match. He calls J.Lo his 'lady'. He would wife her up in a heartbeat...she is different than other people he's dated."



Baldwin has admitted he overdosed in his twenties

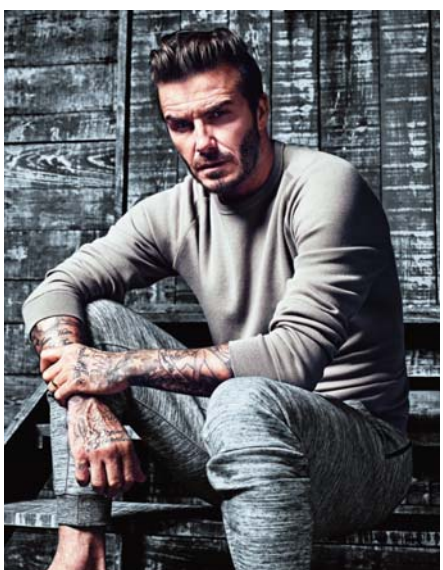
The 58-year-old actor struggled with substance abuse issues over 30 years ago and in his new memoir, 'Nevertheless', he opens up about his close call. Speaking on 'Good Morning America' about the book, he explained: "I think I was one of the people who was lucky that it stuck, and therefore if I didn't get it then, I

think I would've got it eventually." "I know that at that time, what I describe - overdosing on drugs - which I've kept very private for years and years. But, I'm glad I got it when I did because not many people get sober when they're young." In another excerpt from his memoir, Alec revealed he "fell in love" with Tina Fey when he first met her. The star - who has been married to his wife Hilaria since 2012 - first met Tina over a decade ago when she was working as the head writer on sketch show 'Saturday Night Live', and has admitted he was immediately taken by her "smart and funny" persona, and was disheartened to learn she was married. Speaking about the first time he met Tina - who married composer and producer Jeff Richmond in 2001 - Alec said: "When I first met Tina Fey - beautiful and brunette, smart and funny, by turns smug and diffident and completely uninterested in me or anything I had to say - I had the same reaction that I'm sure many men and women have: I fell in love. Tina was then the head writer at 'Saturday Night Live', and I was hosting that week's show.



Beckham pretty amazed with his wife

The 41-year-old retired soccer star is so proud of his wife for achieving so much in "such a short space of time" and thinks it shows how hard she works. Asked who inspires him in the fashion industry, he said: "Obviously, my wife is in the fashion industry and I think what she's achieved in such a short space of time - gained the



respect of the fashion industry in less than 10 years - that's pretty amazing. But I've seen how hard she works, so that is an inspiration as well." And David also looks up to Ralph Lauren, who he has "always respected" for being able to go with change and still stay on top. He added: "I've always respected Ralph Lauren. To change it up and to still be at the top of his game for so many years is incredible. People like that inspire me." During his globetrotting career, David has visited a whole host of countries but feels Hong Kong is a "leader in style". He shared to the April issue of 'Legend' magazine: "Hong Kong has always been one of those leaders in style and in fashion. It changes from week to week, month to month, year to year. There's always something changing. I think Hong Kong is such a great place for so many different reasons. The food is amazing ... "I've walked around Hong Kong and seen amazing-looking businessmen in great suits but I've also seen young kids in very cool clothes. That's something that I think [both places] have in common. You know, I'm 41 years old, but I still like to dress - not too young - but I still like to dress in a pair of jeans, a pair of trainers and a T-shirt." — Bangshowbiz

FEATURES



Steve Greenthal places the wax head of Star Trek character Sulu on its body.



In this Saturday, March 25, 2017 photo, Steve Greenthal adjusts the wax head of Star Trek character Uhura on its body next to a figure of Captain Kirk at the Fullerton Airport in Fullerton, Calif. — AP photos



Steve Greenthal, left, and Chris Liebl work to set up their Star Trek wax figures in a hangar.

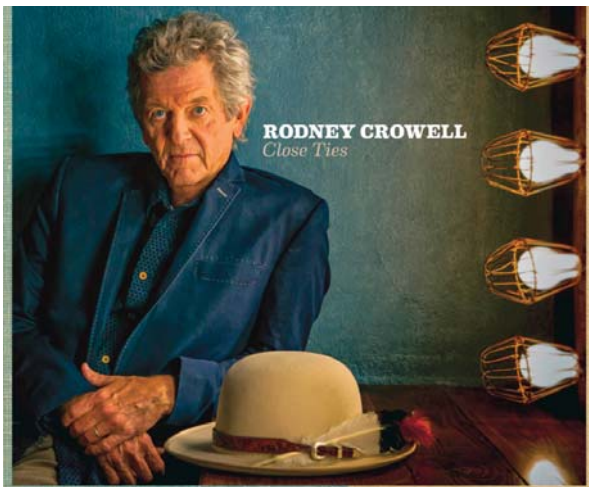
'STAR TREK' WAX FIGURES GETS A NEW MISSION: HELPING MUSEUM

The starship Enterprise has a new five-year mission: to boldly go and raise money to help a quirky museum live long and prosper. The Hollywood Science Fiction Museum recently took possession of life-sized wax figures of all seven crew members from the original "Star Trek" TV series, including Capt. Kirk. The figures and a replica of the Enterprise bridge had spent a decade in storage. "This is kind of a holy grail of Trek fandom," museum founder Huston Huddleston said in an online museum video. The figures were crafted for the Movieland Wax Museum, a Buena Park tourist attraction. Around 10 years ago, the defunct museum auctioned off its contents, including the figures that had drawn generations of Trekkies. "As far as anyone knew, it was lost," Huddleston said Wednesday of the Trek tableau. "It was either in a rich person's house and never seen again, or it was destroyed...nobody knew." In fact, the intrepid crew had been rescued.

Hatching a plan
At the museum auction, Steve and Lori Greenthal ponied up \$40,000 for Kirk, Spock, Sulu, Uhura, Dr. "Bones" McCoy, Chekov and Engineer Scott. They wanted to keep the set from being broken up. "We took them home and put them in our dining room," Lori told the Orange County Register. Steve didn't like the way their life-like eyes stared. "We put paper bags over their heads," he said.
Steve called a buddy, Chris Liebl of Anaheim, and they hatched a plan to make money from the figures. Liebl offered to pay half the purchase price and together they spent another \$40,000 building a 20-by-30-foot mockup of the Enterprise bridge, complete with sound effects from the TV show. They took the set to Las Vegas for a 40th Star Trek anniversary gathering and sold about 800 photographs of people posing with the figures. George Takei, who played Sulu, and Nichelle Nichols,

who portrayed Uhuru, even stopped by to pose with their alter egos. But the venture didn't make money and the setup was cumbersome. So the figures eventually were dismantled and the wax heads and hands placed in cold storage. The bridge set was stored in a hangar at the Fullerton airport. However, the airport now needs the hangar for other things. Three months ago, the owners donated the set and its wax crew to the museum. On a recent weekend, they held a party to say goodbye.
"I've been on an emotional roller coaster," Lori Greenthal told the Register. "I'm happy they're going to be together and on display. It brings such joy to so many people." The museum held a successful Kickstarter campaign to pay for about \$14,000 to cover the expected costs of restoring the figures. "Most of them are great shape," Huddleston said. "The only damage is their hair was messed up over the years and also 30 years of really harsh light on them had made their paint fade off."

Spock's figure already has been restored. Among other things, that meant removing a "terrible, tacky wig" that someone had stuck on top of the figure's original hair, which was composed of individual strands painstakingly punched into the wax, Huddleston said. The nonprofit museum, which has no permanent home, plans to take the figures on a five-year North American tour beginning later this year in Los Angeles, Huddleston said. The tour will help raise money to give the museum a home in North Hollywood. Meanwhile, the Spock and McCoy figures will be introduced at the Wondercon convention in Anaheim that begins Friday, Huddleston said. Huddleston called the figures "true pieces of art." "I'm living a nerd's dream," he said. — AP



This cover image released by New West Records shows "Close Ties," by Rodney Crowell. — AP

For **Crowell**, music is a commitment that deepened with time

Rodney Crowell's tender lyrics about a woman with "hair two shades of foxtail red" in a song that features ex-wife Rosanne Cash makes it an easy leap to assume that he's singing about her. It's not like the thought didn't cross her mind. "If I'm totally honest," she said, "Yeah, a little bit." But Crowell, whose new album "Close Ties" is sure to be one of the year's cornerstone releases in the Americana genre, insists he had others in mind while writing "It Ain't Over Yet." He was thinking about old friends Susanna and Guy Clark, who both died in recent years.

That's fortunate, since he sings: "Takes the right kind of woman to help you put it all in place. It only happened once in my life, but man you should have seen." It might have made for awkward dinner conversation with Crowell's current wife, Claudia Church. "Rosanne was a wonderful period in my life," Crowell said, "but the 'one' woman is the one I'm with now."

Susanna Clark was a straight-talking muse for many aspiring Nashville songwriters in the 1970s who figured if she liked one of their songs, they must be on to something, Crowell explained. Crowell understands why people might think he was talking about Cash, who appears on record with her for only the second time since their 12-year marriage broke up in 1992 (he sang backup on a song on her most recent album). They were once country music's First Couple, taking turns at the top of the charts, and for both their artistry has deepened as the spotlight moved on. They're both also of the school that appreciate listeners who can take their own meanings from songs.

'Forgive me for who I was then'

Another song on "Close Ties," out Friday, was actually written with Cash in mind. More specifically, "Forgive Me Annabelle" is about Crowell's own actions during their breakup. After an inevitably bitter period, they're friends now. "I passed through a period where I simply did not like myself," Crowell said. "If you don't like yourself, you're not liking anybody else. You're pretty miserable. And that's what the narrator is apologizing for. It's saying, 'Forgive me for who I was then.' But, of course, I was already forgiven."

Crowell recalls pawing through some albums at home and coming upon his own "Diamonds and Dirt" from 1988, which yielded five No. 1 country singles. He and his wife laughed at the mullet-haired guy on the cover. "I wanted to be like Dwight Yoakam," he said. "He definitely owned 'cool' at that moment."

He's fueled by a "look back with bemusement" attitude now. After taking five years off at the turn of the century, Crowell returned as a focused writer, digging deep into his heart and leaving few wasted words. He learned to take his art more seriously than himself. In "I Don't Care Anymore" he sings: "All those party dolls and favors that I savored from day one add up to next to nothing after all is said and done."

The funny "Nashville 1972" recalls his first meeting, at age 22, with Willie Nelson. At a party, of course. "There was hippies and reefer and God knows what all, I was drinking pretty hard," he sings. "I played him this shitty song I wrote and puked out in the yard." Like most people his age, 66, Crowell is affected by loved ones lost - the Clarks, Townes Van Zandt, Leonard Cohen - and it's reflected in his music. He's also recently rewritten some of his old songs, notably "Shame on the Moon," a 1982 hit for Bob Seger, where he wanted another crack at a verse he didn't like.

"He's actually writing the best songs of his life after 45 years, or however long it is," Cash said. "His level of commitment has deepened, and as his level of commitment has deepened, his songs have gotten better. That's very inspiring. He's not a dilettante. He's not just out there showing up at the next gig. He's completely devoted to his work and his songwriting and it shows." As Leonard Cohen said, he's completely employed in the tower of song. — AP

Anthony Perkins' son follows in father's horror footsteps

Some might say the horror genre is in Oz Perkins' genes. The actor, whose father Anthony Perkins starred in "Psycho," is making his directorial debut this spring with the psychological thriller "The Blackcoat's Daughter." He said he was inspired by the classic film "Rosemary's Baby."

"That's a very glamorous movie where a lot of the tension is paid to silence and color and texture and glamour, look, beauty, frailty. And so keeping with those sort of concepts and those feelings, those vibes, I set out to just sort of to make something like that that was going to be sort of a sad movie disguised as a horror movie," he said. Perkins also wrote the film, which stars Lucy Boynton, Emma Roberts and Kiernan Shipka, of "Mad Men." Shipka said she jumped at the chance to be a part of the female-led project.

"I think I've been super lucky to fall into projects even like this that have really strong, interesting, cool, and creepy female leads," she said. "The Blackcoat's Daughter" follows two teens who are terrorized by dark, supernatural forces during winter break at their boarding school. "I've always been really terrible with horror films," Boynton said. "I scare really easily and can't stand all the violence and gore. So it was so exciting reading a script that had all of those horrific elements to it, but was so much more about the characters' experience. So it's much more a film that's about grief and loss that uses horror as a kind of a vehicle to drive that. So you kind of get the best of both worlds, doing a really beautiful film while also having all the blood and guts that you need." Perkins said he's often working through his relationship with his famous father. Anthony Perkins died in 1992 when his son was not yet 20. "There's a knot there which I think is obviously common for a lot of people, especially people whose parents die when they're young. There's a quality of like, 'Oh the person is gone.' That's when finding out about them starts," he said. "The Blackcoat's Daughter" opens in US theaters and On Demand on Friday. — AP



Actress Lucy Boynton, left, director Osgood Perkins, actress Kiernan Shipka and actress Emma Roberts attend a special screening of "The Blackcoat's Daughter," hosted by A24 and DirecTV, at Landmark Sunshine Cinema on Wednesday, March 22, 2017, in New York. — AP



Dancers perform at CinemaCon 2017 20th Century Fox Invites You to a Special Presentation Highlighting Its Future Release Schedule at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace during CinemaCon. — AFP

Fox serves up apes and aliens at CinemaCon

20th Century Fox opened day four of CinemaCon on Thursday with stunning new footage from "Alien: Covenant," some CGI apes and a singalong with Australian showman Hugh Jackman. The studio has a deserved reputation for razzmatazz at the annual Las Vegas gathering, and opened this year with an illuminated dance troupe high kicking in the dark to a remix of "There's No Business Like Show Business." The presentation was book-ended by big Broadway moments, with "Logan" star Jackman coming onstage to introduce footage from his P.T. Barnum biopic "The Greatest Showman" as a chorus of singers took to the stage at Caesar's Palace and balloons fell from the ceiling. Hollywood's biggest studios decamp to Sin City for four days every spring, providing news and footage from their upcoming movies to the theater operators who will be showing them.

Despite the bells and whistles, Fox's presentation was less star-studded than many of the studios' shows, and there was no word on the progress of James Cameron's now fabled "Avatar" sequels. But there was a crowd-pleasing start to the show with an appearance from Amy Schumer and Goldie Hawn, who star in kidnap comedy "Snatched." "Goldie Hawn is up here! She is such an inspiration to me. I love the way you live," Schumer enthused, noting that her co-star used to be a dancer in Vegas. There were presentations for comedy reboot "Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul" and survival drama "The Mountain Between Us," starring Idris Elba and Kate Winslet. Then it was onto the main event, with an extended look at "War For The Planet Of The Apes," the third installment in the rebooted series.

Spectacular

The spectacular CGI-laden footage followed Caesar, mopped by Andy Serkis, and his heavily armed fellow apes as

they chase a new character on horseback through a snowy forest. Fox debuted footage from spy comedy sequel "Kingsman: The Golden Circle," "Red Sparrow," another spy movie starring Jennifer Lawrence and Kenneth Branagh's "Murder On The Orient Express."

And then came the moment much of the crowd had been waiting for, as Ridley Scott appeared on the giant screen to deliver a pre-recorded message introducing "Alien: Covenant." "What you're about to see is a small window into the hell that awaits our characters as they arrive at a strange new world," Scott said, expressing in strong language his hope that the footage would cause audience members to lose control of their bowel movements.

"Alien: Covenant," due out on May 19, is the follow-up to "Prometheus" in the "Alien" prequel trilogy, and the sixth film overall in the series. A trailer appeared to show Michael Fassbender's android David having turned against humanity, and hinted that he may even have created the titular alien himself.

"The gods have rejected mankind as weak, cruel and filled with greed," he says in a voiceover as we see him unleash a large swarm of lotus-like bombs on a civilization of humanoids-possibly the Engineers from "Prometheus." "They are a dying species, grasping for resurrection... But their power is an illusion. They don't deserve to start again and I'm not going to let them." The human scientists are then seen screaming as they flee a spaceship drenched in blood and a variety of creatures, including the iconic xenomorph. — AFP

Latin singer Maluma eyes English music crossover

Already one of the biggest names in Latin music, Colombian pop star Maluma is hoping to cross over to a wider audience with an upcoming album of Spanish and English music. Maluma, the 23-year-old singer from Medellin, Colombia, has already collaborated with some of Latin music's most successful cross over talents, such as Shakira and Ricky Martin. "I'm trying to find the balance and do like, 'Spanglish' music or some songs in Spanish and others in English or do a translation," Maluma told Reuters at the end of his US tour in Los Angeles.

Maluma's second album, "Pretty Boy, Dirty Boy," was released in 2015 and became his breakout record, with hit singles "Borro Cassette" and "Sin Contrato." So far, his native Spanish has already garnered him a legion of fans on social media. Maluma, whose real name is Juan Luis Londono Arias, is the most-followed Latin male artist on Instagram with more

than 22 million fans. "That connection that I have with my fans is really special and every time when I have moments, when I have free time, the only thing that I think about is what I'm going to post, what I'm going to say to my fans," he said. "I think that's the key to being a success right now," he added.

It was Maluma's social media presence that brought him to the attention of pop star Selena Gomez, whom Maluma invited to collaborate on a new song. "I found out that she was following me and I tried to be in touch with her to make some music but we can't do it... maybe because she's a busy girl and me too, I'm a really busy man, and maybe next time we can do something," he said.

Maluma's world tour next takes him to Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. "I have a lot of surprises in store," Maluma teased of his upcoming shows, although he remained tight-lipped about whether any special guest stars might join him on

stage. "I like to prepare each tour in a different way. Now that I'm heading to Mexico, I'm preparing something special for my fans in Mexico." — Reuters



Maluma



A man taking pictures of cherry blossoms. — AFP photos



This picture taken on March 30, 2017 shows visitors looking at pictures they have taken of cherry blossoms in a park in Tokyo.



Cherry blossoms in Tokyo



Women take a selfie with cherry blossoms in a park in Tokyo.



A group of colleagues raising their glasses for a toast as they picnic under cherry trees.

Japan counts down to cherry blossom fever

Japan's cherry blossom season kicks off boozy parties across the country and draws tourists from far and wide, but the annual coming-of-spring ritual isn't official until inspectors like Hisato Nishii sign off on it. Over the past few weeks, local weather offices have been sending civil servants like Nishii out to so-called barometer trees that signal when sakura -- cherry blossom in Japanese -- have bloomed.

It's no small matter. Millions of Japanese celebrate the explosion of white and pink flowers heralding the change of season, with the Tokyo area expected to hit full bloom this week. Parks are full, restaurants are packed, and companies get in on the action with sakura-branded merchandise, from pink beer cans to flower-motif candy.

The festivities come at a time when Japan kicks off a new business year, many university graduates start their first full-time jobs, and older colleagues shift into new positions. The very short season-full blooms only last about a week before the petals start falling off trees -- has long been cast as a symbol of the fragility of life in Japanese art and literature.

"Sakura have soaked into Japanese peo-

ple's minds because they come at a time when many are starting a new chapter in their life," Nishii said, as he inspected a barometer tree in Mito city, about 100 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. "They capture people's hearts because they bloom only for a short period of time."

'We drink because it's spring'

Blooms in a particular area -- they start as early as March in southern Kyushu and as late as May in northernmost Hokkaido -- are official when a half dozen or more flowers blossom on a barometer tree. Inspectors initially come once a day, but once the buds start swelling up, the visits increase to twice daily, Nishii said. The location of a sample tree is a tightly guarded secret to prevent pranks.

"We carefully observe them so as not to miss any open buds and once we confirm it, we officially announce the blossom season's start," he said. The Japan Meteorological Agency has been monitoring cherry blossoms since 1953, but timing the blooms is still far from an exact science. A big rainfall can wash out the delicate flowers while a cold weather snap sometimes delays their appearance.

It's a nail-biting experience for some, including many tourists who book travel around the expected times for a full bloom when trees are covered in a blanket of flowers. Parks in Tokyo have already been filling up as friends, families and colleagues stake out choice spots, laying plastic tarps on the grass as they start hours-long parties under the pretty-in-pink trees.

Yusuke Kinoshita was one of thousands of locals and tourists who gathered in Ueno Park, one of the capital's most popular sakura viewing spots, even before the blooms started.

"I've been drinking since 10 this morning," the 39-year-old hotel worker said one recent weekday afternoon after his shift, noting that his boss would be joining the boozy party later on. "It's the Japanese way for the most junior colleagues to stake out a spot and get the party going once the boss comes." "We drink because it's sakura season," he added. "We drink because it's spring." — AFP

Bloomingdale's gives Kuwait a bite of the 'Big Apple'



One of the most eagerly awaited fashion stores in the region, Bloomingdale's, hosted its opening event yesterday at the 360 MALL, Kuwait's luxury retail destination. The momentous occasion was a stunning and fun-filled affair 'Like No Other'. HH Sheikh Ahmad Bin Abdulla Al-Sabah; the Honorable Lawrence Robert Silverman, the Ambassador of the United States to Kuwait and Mattar Al-Tayer joined Khalid Al Tayer, CEO - Retail, Al-Tayer Group to inaugurate the second international Bloomingdale's store, which is part of a strategic partnership between Al-Tayer Group LLC and Macy's, Inc.

Over 500 VIP guests and dignitaries attended the launch which commenced with a ribbon cutting ceremony led by Khalid Al-Tayer outside the store's VIP entrance. Guests were entertained by traditional Kuwaiti folk dancers, with the buzz continuing inside across all three-levels. Activities representing the five New York boroughs were brought to life through interactive vignettes and iconic landmarks. The Ground Level featured a replica of the popular Queens Unisphere where customers were treated to nail art sessions; the Manhattan Times Square and Little Italy

vignettes located on the Mezzanine Level enthralled guests with freshly baked pizzas and live social media feeds. On Level One guests were served up cotton candy and popcorn at Coney Island.

Models showcased the latest Spring/Summer trends while 'Wall Street bankers' and breakdancers transformed the store's interiors to the sidewalks of New York City, performing cleverly choreographed dance routines. Urban street artists created stunning graffiti pieces while engaging onlookers to help create master pieces. The contemporary scene was complete with a life-sized adult coloring wall featuring New York and Kuwait skylines, and "TV heads" which had guests grooving to the beats while their faces appeared live on the screens.

The most famous store in the world is often described more as a lifestyle than as a store. With the new Bloomingdale's store opening in Kuwait, shoppers in the region will now have the luxury of a rich choice of offerings across various categories of merchandise. This season, #bLikeNoOther and discover the entire Spring/Summer 2017 collections now available in store.



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2017

'Star Trek' wax figures gets a new mission: helping museum

38



Young models present creations from the YIAN by Lu Enhua parent-child outfit collection during China Fashion Week in Beijing yesterday. — AP

Dalit, out and proud: Indian singers rising above caste

For young Indians from disadvantaged, low-caste backgrounds, singer Ginni Mahi was an inspiration, one of their own defying ancient prejudices through her infectious brand of "Dalit-pride" pop anthems. But it wasn't until an outbreak of horrific violence against Dalits last year that Mahi emerged as an icon, her music the soundtrack for protesters demanding a better life for their long-persecuted community, formerly known as "untouchables".

"What is there to hide?" the 18-year-old told AFP from her one-room studio on the outskirts of the town of Jalandhar in northern Punjab state. "I am a Chamar, and proud of it," she added, referring to a caste once stigmatized for doing so-called "unclean" work with animal skins. Her songs-rebellious lyrics set against Punjabi dance beats-exhort pride in her Dalit roots, her community's history of struggle and hope for the future. In one of her most popular hits Mahi seizes the phrase "Dangar Chamar", an insult hurled at her people for centuries, and turns it into a rallying cry.

Mahi grew up listening to harrowing tales from her grandmother, a Chamar raised at a time when low-caste villagers were treated worse than animals, and vowed never to forget where she came from. "I want to be the voice of these people who

were exploited, but could do nothing about it," Mahi said. She got her chance last year when huge protests erupted in response to a spate of Dalit hate crimes that harked back to the worst days of caste violence.

Four young Dalits were stripped naked and publicly flogged after being falsely accused of killing a cow, an animal considered sacred in Hindu-majority India. Outrage compounded later over a savage beating meted out to a pregnant woman and her husband by stick-wielding thugs after they refused to allow a group of higher-caste men to graze cattle on their land. As anger grew Mahi's songs went viral, spreading from her small corner of Punjab across the country, a battle cry for low-caste Indians fed up with being mistreated.

Transcending caste barriers

Her stand has also shone a rare spotlight on other low-caste artists, and empowered a generation of young Dalits using talent and technology to rise above the oppressive caste system. Raj Dadral, a veteran Dalit musician, said online platforms like YouTube were helping musicians gain unprecedented exposure in places where caste poses no boundary to success.

"We've been able to reach newer markets and audiences including Indian expatriate communities abroad," he told AFP at his home in Punjab. "Our community has always been very supportive and proud from the start, but there was a time when I received death threats for singing." The proliferation of small digital recording studios across Punjab has also given artists a low-cost means of kickstarting their careers, New Delhi-based editor Hartosh Singh Bal told AFP.

"As they become successful and popular, market forces take over and they want to transcend caste barriers and cut across communities," said Bal, who spent nearly a decade in Punjab. Mahi has her sights set on the silver screen. Her film clips-slick productions heavy on pyrotechnics and special effects-would not be out of place on MTV, and the young singer dreams of cracking India's booming movie scene. "I'd love that," she said of working in Bollywood, the Mumbai-based film industry pumping out flicks rich in Indian music, dance and glamour. "I will work hard, and hopefully someday get to sing for Bollywood, maybe even Hollywood." — AFP



Ginni Mahi smiles with her father.



Indian singer Ginni Mahi takes part in a recording session at a studio in Jalandhar. — AFP photos



Ginni Mahi (L) speaks with music director Amarjit Singh (C) as she takes part in a recording session.



Music director Amarjit Singh plays a keyboard during a recording session.