

**Interior Ministry opens service center at Avenues mall**



**Trump military strikes in Syria complicated by Iran's role**



**Online fury as man dragged off overbooked United flight**



**Dybala stars as Juventus outclass Barcelona in CL q-final first leg**



# ASSEMBLY REJECTS CRUCIAL CITIZENSHIP LAW REVISION

OPPOSITION MPs ANNOUNCE TWO GRILLINGS AGAINST PREMIER



Min 22°  
Max 36°  
High Tide 00:46 & 12:52  
Low Tide 07:03 & 19:25



150 FILS  
NO: 17196  
40 PAGES

conspiracy theories

## BEYOND JUSTIFICATION



By Badrya Darwish

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**H**ow fair is the airline business? The whole world was shocked and horrified to see a passenger pulled by force from his seat on a United Airlines flight from Chicago to Louisville, Kentucky. The guy was humiliated and dragged from his seat as if he was a criminal. Even criminals are protected by laws and cannot be humiliated, beaten or physically assaulted. There is a basic respect for a human being.

I felt sorry for the man because his wife was also next to him on the flight. The problem is that this took place not in a dictatorship or uncivilized, remote and lawless land which every day sees coup d'états, military rule, death and no rules. It happened, guys, in the USA, which all of us consider the policeman of the world. So if the policeman of the world can shamelessly do this to his own citizens, what protections do we expect for the rest of us?

The mind does not accept any justification from the airline. The justification was worse than the crime and the repulsion the world felt in seeing such an act. I watched many TV reports and spoke with many people, and they all voiced the same analysis: Shock, outrage and disgust at the airline. And my friends asked: How would I feel traveling to the United States, and suppose my son or daughter is with me, and the random choice of bumping falls on him or her? What would happen to us? We are a family together - we cannot be apart.

It's not justified to randomly pull someone. Maybe you will harm his life. You never know what are his circumstances - maybe he had a court date that needed to be attended or a deadline or patients to see. So your random choice, my dear airline, can harm people's lives for your profit. No matter what laws or rules you give me, that the captain is in charge - this was unjust. Clearly and grossly unjust. I asked my American friend if the guy could at least sue for his rights - as suing is a good business in the US - but she said it is unlikely, as the law is in favor of the airline.

The most annoying thing was the shabby response of the airline's CEO. Would he like to have this happen to him or a member of his family? I love the people of the United States and I find it a democratic country, where you know how to fight for your rights. But this law that protects an airline in such circumstances is far away from democracy. It's disgusting.

Careful guys when you travel in the United States - make sure that you don't choose an overbooked flight.

## AMIR MEETS SUDAN PRESIDENT



KUWAIT: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left) receives Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 2)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday rejected an opposition-sponsored amendment stipulating to allow the judiciary to look into the cases of Kuwaitis who had their citizenships revoked by the government. Following a seven-hour debate, the Assembly voted by 36 - including 14 Cabinet members led by the prime minister himself - against 27 to reject the proposed crucial amendment.

Under the current law, the administrative court is not competent to handle citizenship cases because nationality is a sovereign matter. Immediately after the vote, opposition MPs separately announced they would file two grillings against Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Islamist MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei said he and MPs Mohammad Al-Mutair and Marzuq Al-Khalifa will file to grill the prime minister today, while MPs Riyadh Al-Adasani and Shuaib Al-Muwaizri said they will file another grilling on Sunday. The lawmakers said the two grillings are coordinated by the opposition MPs. Yesterday's events are highly expected to

trigger heated confrontations between the government and opposition lawmakers as the entire country awaits a crucial ruling by the constitutional court on May 3 that could prematurely end the short life of the Assembly.

At the start of the debate, the government bluntly said it opposes any interference in the issue of citizenship, with State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah stating that allowing the courts to hear citizenship cases is against the constitution and breaches the concept of sovereignty. Lawmakers expressed contradictory views on the sensitive issue that has for decades been handled only by the government without any challenge.

Continued on Page 13

## MIRAJ OFF ON APR 27

KUWAIT: Kuwait will observe April 27 as the official holiday marking the annual religious occasion of Israa and Miraj, the Civil Service Commission said yesterday. Israa and Miraj falls on April 24 but the country will observe it on April 27. — KUNA

## ZAIN 2ND MOST POWERFUL BRAND IN REGION

### Brand Finance®

The 10 Most Powerful Brands  
These are the most powerful Middle Eastern brands, whose rating is based on Brand Finance's Brand Strength Index (BSI).

Emirates	BSI Score	87.3
zain	BSI Score	81.8
بنك أبوظبي التجاري ADCB	BSI Score	81.2
Emirates NBD	BSI Score	79.8
SIBAL	BSI Score	79.3
etisalat	BSI Score	79.3
بنك دبي الإسلامي Dubai Islamic Bank	BSI Score	78.7
سابك سابك	BSI Score	78.5
QATAR	BSI Score	77.6
دو	BSI Score	77.3

KUWAIT/LONDON: Every year, leading valuation and strategy consultancy Brand Finance based in London, values the brands of thousands of the world's biggest companies. The Middle East's 50 most valuable brands, classified by both their industry and their nation, are featured in the Brand Finance Middle East 50 ranking.

As part of its overall assessment of brand value, Brand Finance looks at two key factors. The first is revenues (both historic and forecasted) and second is the strength and familiarity of each brand. On this latter factor, Brand Finance looks at aspects such as marketing investment, preference, sustainability and margins. By stripping out the effect of revenues, it is possible to get an even clearer picture of what the brand power brings to the overall business and the effective it has on the success of its team's customer-focused efforts.

Excluding financial indicators, Zain was ranked the second most powerful home-grown brand in the region behind Emirates, the UAE based airline. The valuation of Zain's brand for 2017 was calculated at \$2.34 billion, a 9 percent increase on its 2016 valuation.

Zain has been a recipient of numerous regional and global awards since the introduction of its inspiring brand in 2007. This year's high ranking and increase in valuation has been driven by the tangible developments occurring within the company, where talent development and customer-centric programs, heavy investment in network upgrades, and technology innovation is impacting customer experience positively. Additionally, Zain's Corporate Sustainability programs and eye-catching marketing and widespread social media



Bader Nasser Al Kharafi, Zain Group Vice-Chairman and Group CEO

campaigns have captured the imagination of the whole region.

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Group Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, said, "This accolade of being the second most powerful home-brand in the Middle East is a credit to the enthusiasm of all our employees, who we fondly refer to as Zainers, and our loyal customers, who are part and parcel of the brand and our greatest ambassadors. We value our brand dearly, and all that it represents with respect to empowering and improving the lives of customers and communities we serve. We shall continue to work hard together with all our various stakeholders to ensure this acknowledgment is reflected across all our activities."

Brand Finance's Middle East Managing Director Andrew Campbell comments, "Zain flies the flag for Kuwait, firmly placing the country not only on the world telecom map, but also across its footprint as one of the most powerful brands in the region."

The company's marketing campaigns across the region on various media channels have captured the hearts and minds of millions of people across the Arab World and further afield. Zain's Ramadan 2016 TVC had a remarkable 12.5 million views on YouTube, with the company's Ramadan EID 2016 TVC also attaining 22 million views to date, both relevant and indicative factors of the brand power of Zain! Today, Zain Group and its eight mobile operations now boast more than 8.3 million friends on Facebook, 5.7 million followers on Twitter, and 1.1 million followers on Instagram. Over the past four years, Zain Group's and all mobile operations' numerous YouTube channels across the region have had more than 200 million views.

Sustainability, transparency and thought-leadership are at the very core of Zain's business and this is reflected in every aspect of the company's day-to-day operational activities. Zain's annual Sustainability Report highlights the company's regional leadership in pursuing its sustainability agenda and supporting its communities through outreach activities such as capacity-building, education, socio-economic development, and environmental stewardship. In addition, with a focus on supporting the entrepreneurial start-up ecosystem, Zain has partnered with the MIT Pan Arab Start Up Competition for the past three years and the global MIT Innovate for Refugees competition.

## PHILIPPINE, SAUDI LEADERS DISCUSS LABOR, NARCOTICS

RIYADH: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte met yesterday with King Salman in Saudi Arabia, where hundreds of thousands of Filipinos work as nurses, domestic helpers, drivers, waiters and technicians. It was Duterte's first time meeting with the Saudi king. Philippine media outlets report that the Middle East is the second largest source of remittances, with Filipinos sending back home some \$7.5 billion in wages from the region last year. Local media report there are 760,000 Filipino workers living in Saudi Arabia, though that figure could be higher.

Before embarking on his weeklong tour of the Gulf, which includes stops in Qatar and Bahrain next, Duterte said the region is home to the largest group of Filipinos working overseas. More than 1 million Filipinos reside and work in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain. Hundreds of thousands also work in the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Kuwait. Continued on Page 13



RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte review the honor guard upon the latter's arrival in the Saudi capital yesterday. — AFP

## TRIPLE BLASTS HIT DORTMUND BUS, PLAYER INJURED

DORTMUND, Germany: Spain international Marc Bartra was injured in explosions which hit the Borussia Dortmund team bus yesterday and saw their Champions League game against Monaco called off, the club confirmed. The 26-year-old center-back injured his hand and was taken to hospital for treatment, said Dortmund's CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke. The quarterfinal first leg was rescheduled for 1845 local time today. "There has been an attack with explosives on the team bus," said Watzke.

"The whole team is in a state of shock, you can't get pictures like that out of your head. I hope the team will be in a position to be able to compete tomorrow on the pitch. In a crisis situation like this, Borussia pulls together." The explosions came shortly after 1900 local time on Wittbraeucker Strasse, around 10 km from the Dortmund stadium Signal Iduna Park. According to the police, three explosive devices were detonated near the team bus while it was en route. Several of the vehicles' window panes were broken. Continued on Page 13

## GULF WORKERS BEARING ALL RECRUITMENT COSTS

DUBAI: South Asian migrants working in the multibillion dollar construction industry in Arab Gulf countries are shouldering the costs of their own recruitment fees while companies and their clients are reaping the benefits from inexpensive labor, according to a study released yesterday. The research by New York University's Stern Center for Business and Human Rights found that workers spend an average of 10 to 18 months' worth of salary paying off the fees that help facilitate their migration.

A slide in oil prices has slowed down the pace of construction in the Gulf and affected governments' abilities to pay for major infrastructure costs, but there is still strong demand for millions of low-wage construction workers. Qatar is investing heavily in the construction of stadiums for the 2022 World Cup. Dubai is building up a vast desert area that will

be the site of the 2020 World Expo.

In order to reduce the cost of labor on mega projects, a weakly controlled system for recruitment is passing on the costs to the workers themselves, says the study. Workers from Bangladesh are paying the highest fees in the world. Bangladeshis earning just a few hundred dollars a month in the Gulf are paying recruitment fees ranging from around \$1,700 to \$5,200. Indian migrants are paying an average of between \$1,000 and \$3,000.

The study describes it as a "perverse business model". Rather than providing an opportunity for decent pay and a better livelihood, construction industry practices across the Gulf are pushing workers into extreme debt and exacerbating abuses, such as an inability to change jobs or move to another country due to indebtedness.

Continued on page 13



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.**

# AMIR, SUDANESE PRESIDENT HOLD OFFICIAL TALKS

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday the visiting President of Sudan Omar Al-Bashir and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was held in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

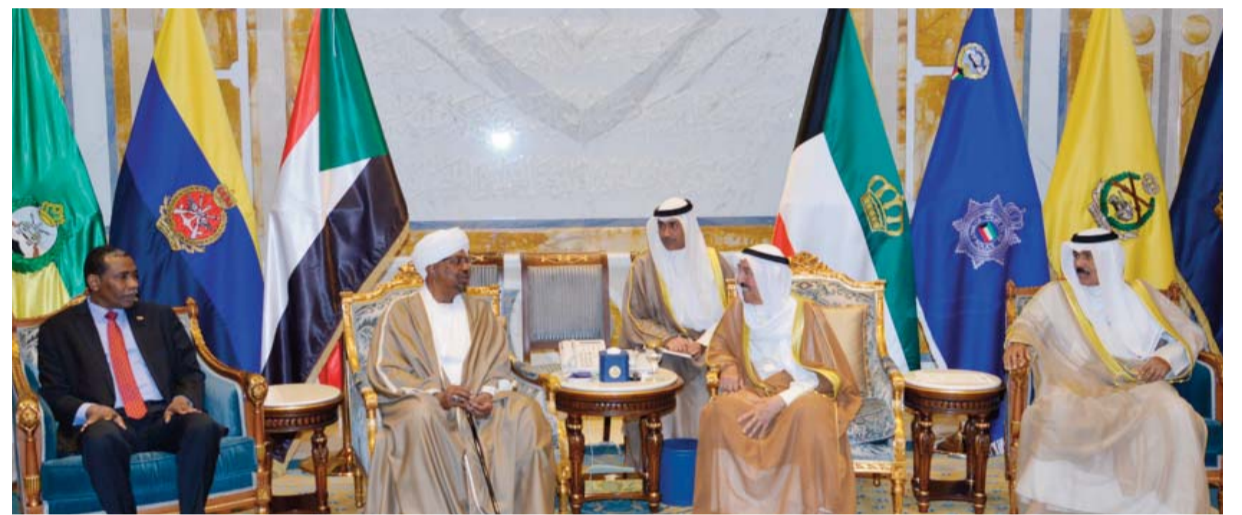
After the reception, the official round of talks began with the meeting chaired by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf on the Kuwaiti side, while President Bashir headed the Sudanese delegation. Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah said that the meeting focused on bilateral relations and means to develop them. After the meeting, His Highness the Amir hosted a luncheon in honor of the visiting Sudanese President and his delegation. The Sudanese President arrived in Kuwait yesterday on a two-day official visit. He was received at the airport by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, and Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah in addition to senior officials from the army, the police, and Kuwait National Guard (KNG). The honorary delegation is headed by advisor at the Amiri Diwan Khaled Yusuf Al-Fuleij.

The Sudanese President's visit is a historic one, said

Kuwaiti Ambassador in Khartoum Bassam Al-Qabandi, adding that the Kuwaiti-Sudanese relations are deep-rooted and distinguished, and have witnessed quantum leaps through exchanging visits of officials from the two countries. The State of Kuwait is paying much attention to the visit as it is expected to contribute to boosting bilateral cooperation, which could benefit interest of the two nations, he said.

The ambassador revealed that Kuwait was a first country, which invested in Sudan, as the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development had provided the first loan to Sudan in 1962 to establish railways. Kuwait has a pioneering role in supporting all investments in the areas of economy and development in that Arab country, he stressed. There are a number of cooperation fields and agreements, which need to be activated, he said, indicating that officials of the two countries are going to hold meetings on the sidelines of the visit.

As for military cooperation, Qabandi said some 136 Kuwaiti cadets are studying at Sudan's military academy, and 46 others graduated last February. Some 56 Kuwait officers are studying at the college of command and general staff of Sudan for a year, he said. — KUNA



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir hold official talks.**



**Children present flowers to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir.**



**Head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah greets Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir.**



**Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher welcomes Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir.**



**Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Mahmoud Al-Dousary greets Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir.**



**Ambassador of Senegal to Kuwait and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Abdul Ahad Mbacke greets Sudanese President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir.**

## AMIR TO ATTEND AL-SHAHEED PARK'S SECOND PHASE OPENING

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is set to patronize and attend the opening of the second phase of Al-Shaheed Park at 10:30 am today, the Amiri Diwan announced yesterday.

In other news, His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah have separately

received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. Meanwhile, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel who presented the Crown Prince with a commemorative golden coin celebrating the opening of the bank's new building. His Highness also received engineer Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel. — KUNA photos



**His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with engineer Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim.**

## FM CONDOLES WITH EGYPT OVER DEADLY CHURCH ATTACKS

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah phoned Monday Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shukry to extend condolences over victims of Sunday's deadly terror attacks on two churches. During the phone conversation, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled expressed deep sympathy with the victims of the bombing attacks on St George Church in Tanta and Saint Mark's Cathedral in Alexandria which killed at least 44 people and injured over 100 others. He also reiterated Kuwait's strong condemnation of such heinous criminal acts. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled affirmed Kuwait's solidarity with Egyptian government in whatever measures it takes to counter terror acts that seek to destabilize the country.

Separately, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled received on Monday a phone call from Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad



**Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah**

Javad Zarif. During their conversation, they discussed bilateral relations and issues of common interest. They have also touched upon the latest regional and international developments of mutual concern. — KUNA



## INTERIOR MINISTRY OPENS SERVICE CENTER IN THE AVENUES MALL



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry opened a service center in the Avenues Mall yesterday, during a ceremony that was attended by Undersecretary Lieutenant General Mahmoud Al-Dousary and Director General of Service Centers Department Major General Adeb Al-Suwaidan.

The new center comes as part of the ministry's efforts to offer best quality services to the public and reach out to them at popular gathering places, Dousary said in a statement. He added that there are plans to open similar centers in new areas where people can access the ministry's services easily. The new services center in the Avenues Mall offers services both to shoppers as well as people living in nearby areas, he further indicated.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Passports Affairs Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah reiterated that the center helps save people the trouble of hav-



ing to go to centers located in areas far from their place of residence. The services that the center offers include residency, traffic, nationality and passport-related transactions, he added.

Major General Suwaidan said in the meantime that the center helps complete transactions in a short period of time, reduce crowding, and offer many public related services.

## MINISTER SIGNS KD 8.5 MILLION ROAD MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

By Meshal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Public Works Abdul Rahman Al-Mutawa signed two road maintenance contracts with a total value of KD 8,560,000 yesterday, said informed sources. The first contract, with a total value of KD 5 million, involve urgent maintenance operations on various roads including asphalt, tiles, curbstones,

ditches, cracks and water accumulation spots as well as roads and yards within various ministries. The second contract, with a total value of KD 3,560,000, is for urgent and immediate maintenance operations on highways including asphalt, tiles, curbstones, ditches, cracks and water accumulation spots, in addition to drainage systems and manholes, the sources added.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher meets with Brigadier General Mahmoud Al-Matar, the Jordanian Armed Forces Inspector General. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** A number of retired noncommissioned officers staged a sit-in outside the National Assembly building on Monday to demand being paid special allowances similar to those paid to commissioned officers. The parliament's financial committee approved a recommendation later the same day to pay the allowances that they demand. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## POPE TAWADROS VISIT TO KUWAIT ON SCHEDULE

### UNIVERSITY EXEMPTED FROM 'KUWAITIZATION'

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Pastor of the St Mark Coptic Orthodox Church in Kuwait, Father Bishoy, stressed that the visit of Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria to Kuwait in the period of April 23-27 on an invitation by Kuwait's political leadership remains scheduled. Bishoy also expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for condoling Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and Pope Tawadros on those killed in the bombings of churches in Tanta and Alexandria. Father Bishoy also stressed that such

a criminal act targeted undermining Egyptians' unity. "Enemies have always failed to achieve this vicious goal and will always fail, thanks to our unity in Egypt," he underlined.

#### Exemption

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) agreed to exempt Kuwait University (KU) from applying the 'Kuwaitization' policy of replacing expatriate labor forces with national manpower in the current fiscal year 2017-2018. A letter CSC sent to KU said the exemption request was reviewed by CSC and was granted upon the justifications pre-

sented by the university, including the fact that Kuwaitis seem to refrain from applying for many of the advertised job vacancies. KU also explained that it had reduced the number of expat employees from 379 to 324, and had laid off around 100 expat employees working in consultancy offices. KU also stressed that the reduction led to a shortage in certain jobs Kuwaiti manpower usually refrain from, such as typists, couriers and mandooobs (representatives), especially in view of the growing number of KU students, the building of new KU centers and extending working hours up to 8:00 pm.

## KUWAIT FIGHTS CYBER-CRIMES WITH LAWS: DIPLOMAT

**VIENNA:** The State of Kuwait, in shadow of mounting cyber-crimes and misuse of social media, has enacted several legislations aimed at minimizing irregular use of the emerging communication means. There has been rapid cyber and technological development, mounting numbers of these technology users, individuals and institutions, thus creating a sphere where diverse criminal acts have been mushrooming, says Nawaf Ahmad Al-Rujaib, the State of Kuwait's Second Secretary to Austria.

Criminals have been using these means to carry out local and international criminal acts, including those threatening societies' morals and economies, in addition to facilitating gangs' schemes to execute cross-border crimes and terrorist operations, said Rujaib, in a statement during a meeting of

international experts tasked with conducting a comprehensive study on electronic crimes. The State of Kuwait, as part of its approach to tackle negative outcomes of negative use of the internet, has enacted a number of legislations; namely Law 4/2014 on electronic transactions and Law 37/2014 on establishing the authority for organizing technological and information communications.

Law 2015 on combating technological and information crimes aims to safeguard individuals' freedoms and dignity as well as protecting the country against terrorist and criminal threats, he added. The abovementioned law includes identifications of electronic systems, electronic fraud, online terrorist acts as well as criminalizing counterfeiting, eavesdropping and money laundering. — KUNA

## FIREWORK FUMES CHOKE SCHOOL REVELERS

**KUWAIT:** Up to 21 people suffered from breathing difficulty due to fireworks during a celebration held at Dasman Elementary School yesterday. The fire department reported that a number of revelers at the school set off fireworks at graduates' celebration, causing fumes and causing breathing problems for 16 peoples, who were transported to the Amiri Hospital. A single case was transported to hospital aboard a private car and four others were treated on the spot.

Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Huwailah, the private teaching undersecretary, said in a

statement after inspecting the school that an investigation was launched to identify and punish those responsible for the incident. He confirmed that 18 individuals; 14 students and four teachers, choked with the smoke. However, they were immediately hospitalized.

Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Fares, who was partaking in a parliamentary session when the incident happened, was assured by telephone about condition of those who were affected with the fumes. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality inspectors carried out a campaign during which 20 car rental and sales offices were inspected. Several cars were impounded, citations issued and warning tickets were given during the crackdown. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

# JAZEERA AIRWAYS SPONSORS 12TH EDITION OF KUWAIT TIMES STUDENT ART COMPETITION

EXCLUSIVE SPONSOR AIDS IN ENCOURAGING LOCAL YOUTHS MANY TALENTS

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways, the first private airline in Kuwait and the Middle East, is the exclusive airline sponsor of the 12th Edition of Kuwait Times annual student art competition labeled 'Kuwait Beautiful and Green.' The nationwide contest, expected to run until 20 April, 2017, is divided under five different categories, encouraging students aged between 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, 15-18 and special needs to participate and win due recognition.

'Kuwait Beautiful and Green' has been a consistent theme with the well-known English publication as it serves to highlight Kuwait's exceptional landscape and picturesque environment. A panel of high profile judges from the Kuwaiti and expatriate communities will evaluate the art works based on the category of the participant.



"Epitomizing Kuwait's cultural portrayal through the eyes of the students offers a fresh perspective of how the country has grown, especially with recent developments that have added to the urban habitat currently. We are honored to be part of a platform that encourages young minds in our community to explore their talent and help in the visual

preservation of our wonderful country," said Dr Mohamed Barakat, VP Marketing and Product. Jazeera Airways will continue to sponsor more activities that fall in line with the airline's corporate social responsibility to support the youth in diverse areas and nurture a strong generation. Since its inception over a decade ago, Jazeera Airways has strengthened its

presence by currently flying to over 15 destinations and continues to serve as a beacon of excellence for innovative products and services to enhance travel experience on ground and in the air. Only recently, Jazeera Airways introduced a dedicated business lounge adjacent to its respective gates at Kuwait International Airport and is now scheduled to

reveal its brand-new terminal that will showcase a broad portfolio of advanced technological and innovative solutions, as a testimony to its pioneering spirit. This is in addition to its mobile app designed for those wishing to book their tickets or check in online, as well as its newly launched WhatsApp phone number for all Jazeera passengers and interested customers, and many other innovative ideas that promise to change the travel experience in Kuwait and the region.

To learn more about Jazeera Airways services, offers, promotions and destinations, customers can contact the Call Center on 177 or visit the airline's website on [www.jazeeraairways.com](http://www.jazeeraairways.com). Customers can also download the Jazeera Airways app on the iPhone or Android or Windows.

## ARAB YOUTH MINISTERS MEETING CONCLUDES

**CAIRO:** Arab Ministers of Youth and Sport condemned on Monday the Israeli violations against Palestinian athletes. The ministers, at the conclusion of their meeting, called on Israeli occupation authorities to stop their oppression against the Palestinian athletes. They agreed to support the Syrian youth in neighboring countries, particularly Lebanon and Jordan. The ministers agreed to provide \$250,000 for the two countries to implement projects that

would benefit for the Syrian youth. They meanwhile allocated \$20,000 for Jordan to hold the 14th Arab Capitals Youth Forum in the kingdom.

The ministers agreed to hold a youth dialogue forum in Lebanon, the Arab youth mental games in Iraq and the Arab youth identity forum in Palestine. The Arab ministers also approved organization of youth-related forums and festivals in different Arab countries, and set necessary allocations for them. — KUNA

## KAMCO SPONSORS AUK'S 13TH ANNUAL CAREER FAIR

**KUWAIT:** KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMS in the region, sponsored the American University of Kuwait's (AUK) 13th Annual Career Fair. The event presented students, alumni, and anyone in search of a job with an opportunity to meet face to face with KAMCO representatives and ask questions about the hiring process within the investment firm.

The fair took place at AUK, where KAMCO representatives interacted with students, fresh graduates and alumnus seeking internships, career opportunities and advice related to the hiring process in the firm and the market as a whole.

Farouq Al-Oumi, Chief Resources Officer of KAMCO, said, "As one of the leading investment firms in Kuwait, it is our duty to support the future generations by participating in such events that educate students and help prepare them for their future professions. We will continue to be on the lookout for more opportunities to enhance and empower the local youth, as this goal falls in line with our human resource development strategy. As a market leader our focus is to not only improve our employees but also provide aspiring graduates with the necessary tools to pave the path for their future careers."

Also commenting on the career fair, Danah Al Jasem, Vice President and Head of the Marketing Department said, "The successful turnout of this event further entices our excitement and commitment to annual sponsor the career fair. This event marks yet another initiative taken by KAMCO to empower the local youth and provide them with the opportunity to improve their job seeking skills and assisting them in acquiring the



necessary assistance they need to prepare for their future working lives." Jasem added, "We, at KAMCO, take it as our mission to participate and further educate the local youth as part of our corporate social

responsibility plan that primarily focuses on the categories of education, health and the environment. We will continue to seek different methods and formulate the most effective strategies to empower the youth in our community."

## MGRP PRAISES KFH EFFORTS IN TRAINING NATIONAL LABOR

BANK HOLDS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR NEW FEMALE RECRUITS

**KUWAIT:** The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) praised Kuwait Finance House (KFH) in recognition of its efforts in training the national labor through comprehensive training plans, hailing its commitment towards qualifying and honing the skills of its human resources. The statement was made by Amani Al-Merri, an official at the National Labor Force Development Department on the sidelines of inaugurating a training program for a batch of new KFH female recruits. She expressed her pride of Kuwaitis working at the private sector, affirming MGRP's support for the Kuwaiti nationals in collaboration and coordination with KFH and the private sector in general.

Meanwhile, Deputy General Manager Sales and Distribution at KFH, Khaled Al-Subaiei urged trainees for putting forth extra efforts, while striving towards pursuing leadership positions. He added that such training programs contribute to raise the bar of employees, enrich their banking knowledge and put them on track to be well equipped and prepared to assume the responsibility of serving clients and encounter any obstacle and challenge according to the highest international standards of service quality.

It is worth noting that the training program was designed to prepare the employees to get



fully functional in banking transactions and financial services at KFH branches to better serve clients and cater for their aspirations. The five-week program encompassed 15 female recruits. It included training courses and workshops on

banking products, such as; banking cards, bank accounts, deposits, letters of guarantee, and KFH services. In addition, the program tackled subjects on sharia basics, counterfeiting and fraud, information technology systems, etc.



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The Middle East's Largest Students' Art Competition

March 19<sup>th</sup> Till April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### HELLO ARTISTS...

Welcome to the Student's Art Competition. I hope you are ready to paint a beautiful painting and win wonderful prizes. The theme for your painting must be related to planting and greening, basically anything pertaining to our environment. We are looking for a great painting. So, please pick up your color pencils, paint brushes, crayons or whatever you prefer and start drawing and painting.

*Good luck to you, our young artists.*

- Competition is open to ages from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) (15 - 17) and Special needs.
- The competition is open for all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
- The competition will start on March 19th and will continue till April 20th 2017.
- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
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- Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
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In Brief

AMIR OFFERS CONDOLENCES OVER SAUDI ROYALTY'S DEATH

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on the death of Prince Saad bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. —KUNA



ABBAS HAILS KUWAIT'S SUPPORT

**MANAMA:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas praised Kuwait's role in supporting the Palestinian cause, saying that the GCC country was always on the frontier of backing up this important Arab issue. Speaking during a meeting with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah yesterday, the Palestinian President hailed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's initiative to host an International Conference for Palestinian Children, which will be held in Kuwait next month. — KUNA



RELIEF SENT TO LIBYA

**KUWAIT:** Ten tons of Kuwaiti relief aid and food supplies were sent to Libya to help ease the dire humanitarian situation in the fellow Arab country, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) said yesterday. KRCS Chairman of the Board Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said that the current batch was part of a relief aid campaign aiming at delivering 40 tons of relief aid material via planes to the Libyan people who are suffering from internal strife and violence in their country. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Blacksmiths working at Kuwait's Al-Safafir (metals) market. — KUNA



RIYADH: GCC justice ministries' undersecretaries meet in Riyadh yesterday.— KUNA

GCC TEAM TO FOLLOW UP JASTA

**RIYADH:** The eighth annual meeting of GCC justice ministries' undersecretaries kicked off in Riyadh yesterday, focusing on inter-GCC judicial cooperation. Emerging from the meeting, Kuwait's Ministry of Justice Undersecretary Abdullatif Al-Saree said that the officials discussed a sug-

gestion to form a specialized team from state members to follow up the US Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA).

Saree added that Saudi Arabia's justice ministry had raised an idea to hold an annual meeting of GCC judicial inspection departments' chiefs. Saree

pointed out that the undersecretaries' annual meeting aims to look into relevant recommendations made by judicial committees since the beginning of the year. Prospective recommendations would be referred to the coming GCC justice ministerial meeting due here in September. —KUNA

KUWAITI FARMER GRABS AWARD FOR INNOVATION



DUBAI: Kuwaiti farmer Youssef Al-Kiraibani receives the award. —KUNA

**DUBAI:** Kuwaiti farmer Youssef Al-Kiraibani has won farm innovation prize of the Middle East agricultural award, or AgraME, for cultivating a variety of crops non-indigenous to the Middle East. "I have succeeded in planting a slew of exotic crops such as black tomatoes, white strawberry and red corn, and several others in Kuwait's harsh agricultural environment," Kiraibani said following the prize-giving ceremony held in Dubai on Monday.

He noted that he won the prize after a fierce competition with farmers, agricultural companies and research firms from all around the world. "The prize is one of the top in the region in the agricultural domain," he said. The Middle East agricultural award 'AgraME' recognizes outstanding achievements of individuals, departments, teams or organizations that have contributed to the growth and development of the agricultural sector with a focus on best practice and innovation. The award is officially endorsed and judged by the United Arab Emirates' Ministry of Climate Change and Environment. — KUNA



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Crime

Report

RECKLESS DRIVER HELD IN MAIDAN HAWALLY

**KUWAIT:** A 21-year-old Kuwaiti was held at Maidan Hawally police station for endangering others' lives, then escaping from police and attempting to kill an Asian man. He was also charged with several traffic violations including driving in the wrong direction, running a red light and causing a collision. Police received a call about a driver blocking an important and busy intersection in Maidan Hawally. When a police patrol asked him to stop, he ran the red light and drove the wrong way during his attempt to escape, but was caught when he collided with a car. Separately, traffic detectives arrested two citizens after a video clip showing them driving recklessly was uploaded online. The two will be charged with driving without a license, driving in the wrong direction, negligence and endangering their own lives and that of others. Their vehicle was also driven without license plates.

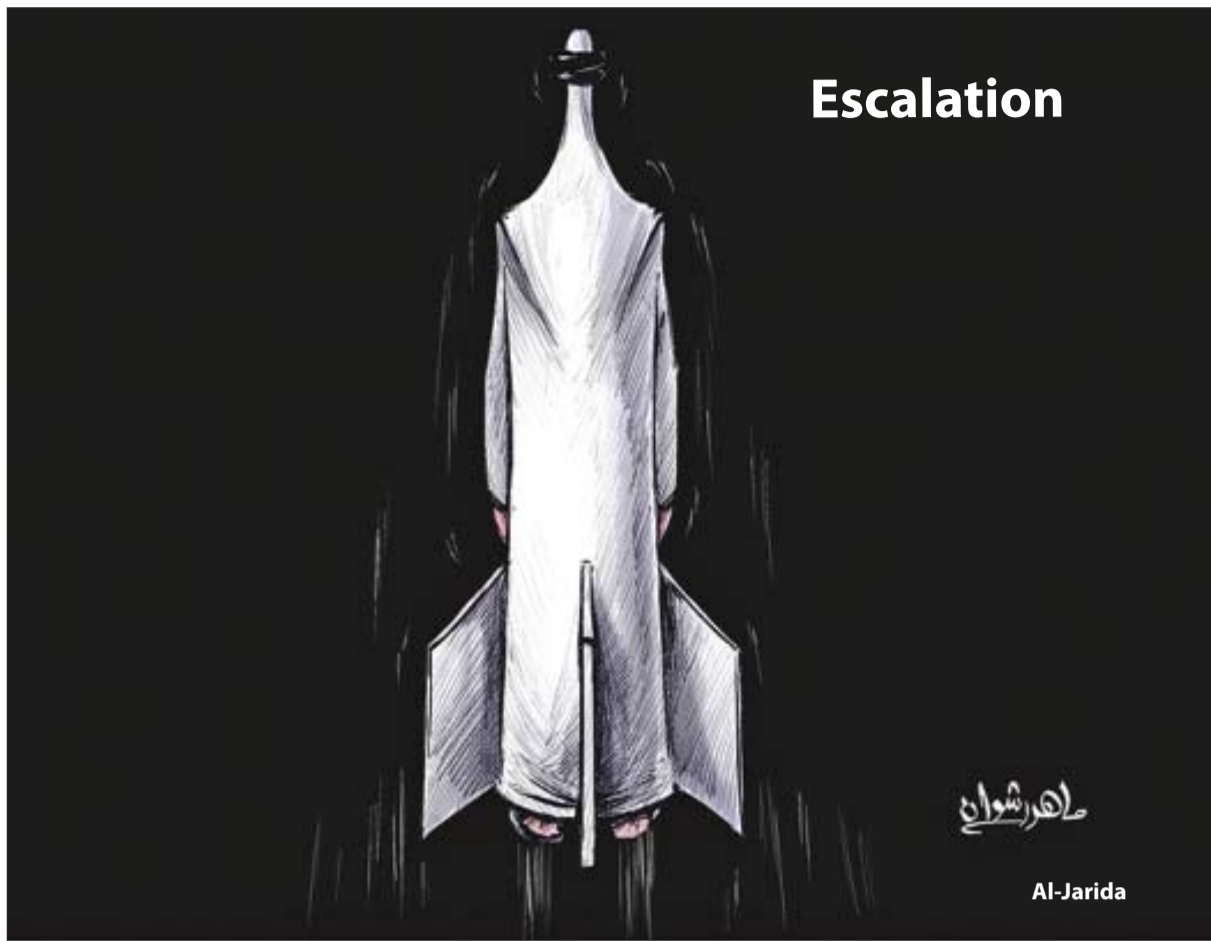
Forgery

The juvenile protection department arrested an Egyptian man working in a restaurant without a health certificate, then found out that he was working with a forged certificate for which he paid KD 40. The certificate was forged by two Egyptian expats. Detectives found many certificates in their car and residence for various persons and stamps for health and commercial transactions of municipal officials, license department and doctors, in addition to pictures and data about the persons for whom the certificates were being prepared, along with KD 7,516. One of the suspects confessed to agreeing with the second suspect, who earlier worked for the department that issues licenses, to process them illegally in exchange of money. Both confessed to committing the crimes, and were sent to the public prosecution.

Insult

Two brothers were released after questioning following accusations of insulting two detectives in Mishref. The two detectives said that they were on a patrol when one of the citizens claimed he was an investigator, and both insulted them. In a separate case, a policeman accused three cousins of insulting him while at work in Hitteen. The incident took place in front of the suspects' residence. — *Translated from the Arabic press*

Escalation



Al-Jarida

CON ARTISTS SCAMMED PEOPLE WITH FAKE TRIP PRIZES

**KUWAIT:** A Jordanian and an Egyptian were arrested for swindling and blackmailing. A security source said a citizen told criminal detectives that he received a call saying he won a trip with all costs covered except for the ticket price. The man was asked to go to the company's office in Salmiya, where he met two expats and paid KD 160. He later discovered that he was a victim of scam. And not only that, but he also learned that the suspects had went to

court and were awarded KD 1,380 after winning a civil case they fled against him. Detectives worked on the case and were able to find evidence implicating the two of swindling other victims, and arrested them. They said during questioning that they worked for a hotel reservations company, but its owner denied knowledge of anything, so he was asked to cancel the contracts his employees made with customers. — *Al-Anbaa*

الجريدة Al-Jarida

LITIGATION RIGHTS

By Ghanem Al-Najjar

We are currently watching an absurd, repeated and boring performance. Politicians have been saying things, and then make other statements in which they say the exact opposite. Sometimes they are with the judiciary, and other times they are against it. It is all about the case in question; they are even willing to legislate that and turn it into institutional texts. The problem with legislation is hastiness, bias, imbalance and personification; therefore, our legislations are issued with loopholes in contradiction to the constitution and its well-established principles.

*They believe that the giver of the grant can withdraw it at any given time*

How can a law and its exact opposite be issued within a very short period based on contradicting justifications made by the same people? There are many examples of this situation, such as reducing the juvenile's age to 16, the DNA law, the e-media law, in addition to laws that are issued without being put into practice for a long period of time. Malfunction in legislation is scandalous and need not much effort to prove. The need to reform this has become so urgent because failure of legislation costs so much effort, time and money, especially when disputes turn into conflicts including so much pre-staged and less serious ones.

Let us take the citizenship amendments for example. All proposed amendments deal with details subject to approval or rejection. Some of them are simply inadequate. This is not the first time the citizenship law is amended. It has been subject to various amendments before. Most importantly, about this Byzantine Controversy is that the disagreeing parties know for sure that the problem is not about the law; it is rather about practices and dealing with citizenship as a gift or a grant rather than a well-deserved right.

They believe that the giver of the grant can withdraw it at any given time; he can also grant it to whomever regardless if they deserve it or not. The difference in details and personalizing the matter should not deviate us from the principle; that the need to activate the constitutional right of litigation. To whom else can someone whose citizenship was unlawfully withdrawn or cancelled resort? A simple question with a simple answer that in a country ruled by law, and authorities are separated, he should go to the honest independent judiciary.

It is a matter of principle beyond any doubt. It is unacceptable that some people praise the judiciary when it matches their opinions and criticize it when it disagrees with them. Change in Kuwait is being done gradually through changing the balances of power. It is not a revolutionary one. There are many examples of things that used to be taboos such as women political rights, separating the Crown Prince's position from the premiership, adjusting the electoral constituencies and amending the law of Inheriting of the Emirate.

The right of litigation, even in citizenship cases, will be of much gain for all people. It will not protect any forgers or manipulators. Such right is a gain for the political regime as a whole not for certain people, political powers or social sects.

— *Translated by Kuwait Times*

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- **File photographs** should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it appears. 'High Dynamic Range' images are acceptable. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization (removal of dust, cropping, reasonable adjustments to exposure, color, contrast, etc.) will be disqualified.
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WARBA BANK SPONSORS FIRST FORUM FOR RETIREES' STORIES OF SUCCESS

HELD UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE NATIONAL PROJECT FOR RETIREES

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank is keen on playing a vital role in supporting the Kuwaiti society and sponsoring productive social occasions, since it owes its success, as a prestigious Islamic banking institute that manages to leave an imprint on the Islamic banking sector, to the society where it started seven years ago. Based on that, Warba Bank sponsored 'My Experience' forum where retirees spoke about their stories of success. The forum was organized by the Professional Leadership Academy for Training and Consulting, and Life Experts Consulting Company; and that as part of the national project for retirees' experiences. The event took place on April 5, 2017 at Costa del Sol hotel, with the presence of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's Assistant Undersecretary for Management and Financial Affairs Samira Al-Ghareeb, and the attendance of more than 100 participants.

The activity focused on successful experiences of institutions and individuals in achieving success after retirement. A number of retirees participated in a competition in which they gave presentations about their post-retirement projects. A higher committee consisting of social experts and trainers selected the winning project. Furthermore, the forum shed light on a vital social issue and helped change the society's perspective towards 120,000 retired Kuwaitis who are experienced, energetic, and loyal.

Abdullah Al-Shuail, Area Manager of Retail Banking Group at Warba Bank, said during the event: "Warba Bank is proud of this exceptional activity that sheds light on



a special segment of employees; the retirees who exerted all efforts to utilize their skills for the development of their institutions. We support retirees to realize their ambitions and starting their own businesses, through which they can extend their careers and continue contributing to the society's growth, in addition to help stimulating the national economy."

The bank set up a booth at the event, in which staff members gave explanations to visitors regarding the bank's leading products and services, including the highly popular Sunbula Account that was relaunched early this year with up to KD 20,000 cash prizes for 12 winners a month. The bank also organized a special raffle draw for the Sunbula Account, in which two visitors won. Warba Bank strives since its inception to improve its social responsibility strategy by supporting all segments of society and helping them realize achievements and growth.



الانباا Al-Anbaa

DAMA PIECES

By Mudaffar Abdullah

All of a sudden, a senior leader is deposed and another Dama (Turkish draughts or 'checkers') piece appears to take over as a new official, who will shamelessly urge the youth to exert more efforts to serve the nation. Let us take the example of Kuwait Airways chairperson Rasha Al-Roumi's resignation, or rather, her forced resignation after all the efforts she exerted in reforming what the government had damaged and ruined for decades, without taking the trouble of defining whether Kuwait Airways was a commercial company or a charity organization.

I will not speak about how she was dismissed because so many well-devoted and dedicated previous officials have been expelled. The issue is not new. What matters here is a phenomenon that had been spreading over the past few years; that is the 'Dama (Checkers) Piece policy'. Dama is a folkloric game with 64 cells; which in this case can be seen as representing the government's positions. The minute a senior official is expelled or a new cabinet is formed, we usually see faces that had been in office for ages heading them. It is becoming so disgusting because most of those faces are boring ones that will bring nothing new except showing loyalty to whomever appointed them.

They are usually former retired officials or frequent visitors of certain diwanias, including retired police or army personnel who had been paid hundreds of thousands of dinars as indemnities, only to be reshuffled in various ministries and authorities. Naturally enough, nobody in the government dares to talk about the reasons behind appointing a Dama piece, or the superpowers they have and which qualified them to be moved from one position to another.

Those faces have become very well-known because the number of the cells in the game are limited. They are being seen with much despise or pity, it makes no difference. The other side of the problem is that all political powers keep bragging about supporting certain pieces of checkers affiliated to them. They even feel proud that their voices are very well heard with certain teams of the government, though the truth is that such appointment came after a threat to file an interpellation, intimidate a minister or spoil a session.

This is how people's interests are being run. It is also noteworthy to mention a statement made by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah when he said that reform efforts are being obstructed by so many senior officials who were appointed through wasta (connections).

— *Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Jarida*



**Babies starve as Iraqi war rages**

THREE DEAD IN MURDER-SUICIDE AT US SCHOOL

**CHINA REMAINS WORLD'S BIGGEST EXECUTIONER**

EXECUTIONS IN CHINA SAID TO OUTPACE WORLD DESPITE DECLINE

**BEIJING:** China executed more people last year than the rest of the world combined, Amnesty said yesterday, defying a global decline with thousands of killings that have disproportionately targeted poor citizens. Even as executions have dropped by more than a third globally, China's death penalty rate is "shockingly high" although the full extent of the secretive practice is unknown, Amnesty International said. While President Xi Jinping's much-hyped corruption crackdown has seen many high-ranking figures sent to jail, their death sentences have often been commuted. Meanwhile ordinary people caught in the crosshairs of the law have not been so lucky, it said.

Farmers were more frequently sentenced to death than any other group in China, Amnesty said in a report that sought to lift the veil on the workings of the system. China's ruling Communist Party regards execution figures as a state secret, meaning that hundreds of death sentences are omitted from the public database of court verdicts. "China is really the only country that has such a complete regime of secrecy over executions," Amnesty's East Asia director Nicholas Bequelin said at a press conference in Hong Kong. "Probably the reason is the numbers are shockingly high," he added.

**Secrecy and speed**

Although local media reports estimated that at least 931 individuals were executed between 2014 and 2016, only 85 of them were found in the online database, Amnesty said. Estimates from other rights groups also puts the number of annual executions in China in the thousands. From arrest to execution, the process is characterized by secrecy and speed: A 2016 report from US-based Dui Hua Foundation said China's average death row prisoner waits only two months before being executed.

Dui Hua estimates that there were approximately 2,000 executions in China in 2016, down from 2,400 in 2013 and some 4,000 in 2010 - following legal reforms that improved oversight. Concerns over wrongful convictions have grown in recent years, fuelled by police reliance on forced confessions and the lack of effective defense in criminal trials. Chinese courts have a conviction rate of 99.92 percent. The nation's top judge, Zhou Qiang, apologized in 2015 for past miscarriages of justice, saying: "We feel deep remorse for wrongful convictions".

Public anger has mounted over miscarriages of justice, including a high-profile case that saw a teenager in Inner Mongolia wrongfully convicted and executed for rape and murder in 1996. Huguilun was put to death two months after the woman was killed and was finally exonerated nine years later when a serial killer confessed to the crime. Despite Chief Justice Zhou's call to "correct" mistakes, experts say recent reforms have not been widely implemented.

"Coerced confessions are supposed to be excluded from evidence. In practice, however, the police have unchallenged discretion to... extract confessions by detaining and torturing suspects for long periods," New York University professor Jerome Cohen said. Even cases which provoke widespread anger and online petitions calling for death sentences to be revoked are not exempt. Farmer Jia Jinglong was sentenced to death for killing a village official with a nail gun after his home was demolished weeks before his wedding day in 2013. Jia was beaten and denied compensation for his house, the state-run Global Times reported, and the case prompted fury in China, where land seizures and forced evictions of villagers by local officials have become a major source of social resentment. But

despite the public outcry and calls from legal experts to commute his sentence, he was executed last November. Only a handful of countries still use the death penalty

with regularity. The United States executed 20 people last year, the lowest figure for the country since 1991. All other countries together executed at least 1,032 people last

year-a decline of 37 percent compared to 2015. Of those, 87 percent took place in just four countries - Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Pakistan. — AFP



**HONG KONG:** Amnesty International East Asia Director Nicholas Bequelin (left) and Deputy Director of Global Issues Program James Lynch hold the copies of reports on the death penalty during a press conference in Hong Kong. —AP

**US MILITARY STRIKES IN SYRIA COMPLICATED BY IRAN'S ROLE**

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump's decision to launch missiles into Syria risked raising tensions with Iran, a key backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad in a conflict with dangerously blurry battle lines. Tehran has condemned the missile attack on the Shayrat airfield, and officials have raised the possibility of consequences. The friction underscores a challenge for Washington, which has long supported opposition groups fighting Assad and his Iranian allies without joining the fray itself.

Deeper US involvement in Syria means greater chances of direct conflict with an often unpredictable and aggressive Iranian foe. Retaliatory measures by Iran could have ripple effects in the region, targeting everything from US Navy warships to US-allied Arab governments. Iran could also use Hezbollah and other Shiite militias to hit American forces fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, or attack the many US allies in the region.

**'Deconfliction' agreement**

The US cruise missile strikes, launched as punishment for a Syrian chemical attack that killed more than 80 people, could also prompt Iran to boost Revolutionary Guard forces fighting alongside Assad's government. Before Thursday's attack, the US took the standard measures to

prevent an inadvertent strike on Russia's military, another Assad ally. No such "deconfliction" agreement exists with Iran's military and paramilitary, meaning there was no way to prevent its personnel from being in the wrong place at the wrong time during the missile attack.

There is no sign Tehran has retaliated against the US American forces have not had any "unsafe" or "unprofessional interactions with Iranian maritime forces" since the strike, said Cmdr. Bill Urban, spokesman for the US Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet. On Sunday, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said the US strike on the base was a "strategic mistake and offense." And one prominent Iranian lawmaker threatened consequences. "Russia and Iran won't be quiet against such acts which violate interests of the region," said Allaeddin Boroujerdi, the head of the parliamentary committee on national security and foreign policy.

The US has taken great pains in recent years to work around Iranian fighters in Iraq and Syria as it battles the Islamic State group. That has partly reflected an effort to safeguard a landmark nuclear agreement, and to avoid another American conflagration in the Middle East. Naval forces from the elite Guard keep close tabs on American ship movements in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, where a fifth of the world's oil trade navigates.

In February, several armed Revolutionary Guard speedboats approached and filmed a US aircraft carrier entering the Gulf. Hezbollah has long threatened US interests in the region, including Israel's security. But Giorgio Cafiero, CEO of Washington-based consultancy Gulf State Analytics, expected a wait-and-see approach from Iran. "My gut tells me if this is a one-off operation," Cafiero said of the US cruise missiles, "we will likely see a relatively calm and measured response from Iran and its Shiite proxies."

**Advise-and-assist**

In Iraq, the US and Iran are essentially fighting the same enemy, though independently and, when possible, at a distance. Since US airstrikes and advise-and-assist operations began in Iraq in 2014, the US has tread cautiously in supporting Iraqi and Kurdish ground forces while avoiding direct engagement with Iran. No such comity exists in Syria. Long before the country spiraled into civil war, Syria was a key Iranian partner, serving as a conduit to the Iran-based Hezbollah and helping Tehran flex its muscles all the way to Israel's northern border and the Mediterranean Sea. It was a place that never bore a strong American imprint.

Since the 2011 start of the Syrian civil war, Iranian and Hezbollah fighters have fought alongside Assad even as the Obama administration insisted his days as leader were "numbered." And the US has supported groups that have lined up on the opposite side of the battlefield. While Trump has dialed back the US push to oust Assad, he also has vowed to take a tougher approach to Iran. He has imposed new sanctions on Tehran and threatened to dismantle the nuclear deal. He has stepped up support for Saudi and Emirati forces fighting Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen.

All those efforts also mean more exposure for Washington if it goes after Syria again militarily. "I don't think the Trump administration is trying to punish Iran with the strikes in Syria, but it will certainly send a strong message," said Edward Djerejian, a former US ambassador to Syria and Israel who now directs Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy. Nevertheless, Djerejian said, Trump must "pay attention to what the Iranians are doing in the region because they have the ability to really disrupt things in their own way." —AP



**BEKAA VALLEY:** A Syrian refugee girl holds her brother as she walks at an informal refugee camp, at Al-Marji town in Bekaa valley, east Lebanon Lebanon. — AP

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## ON MISSILE-HIT WARSHIP, ISRAEL READIES FOR ALL THREATS

**ABOARD INS HANIT:** White specks appear on the horizon and a voice crackles over the radio with a warning: "The speed boat is acting independently." Two boats on suicide bombing missions had been spotted either side of the INS Hanit, one of the Israeli navy's top warships. "We recognize the target. This is an immediate enemy," a voice says in Hebrew over the loudspeaker. "Ready for action." A siren rings out and young recruits rush to the back, hurrying to put on helmets and bulletproof vests before manning machine-guns. The Hanit's engines go full throttle, dragging it rapidly from three to 27 knots. The speedboats rush forward but cannot catch up.

The "attack" last week was in fact part of a series of war games with Greek and US forces to prepare for a range of threats, from submarines to more immediate risks from Hamas and Hezbollah. The Hanit holds a prominent place in Israeli consciousness. It was struck by a Hezbollah missile off the Lebanese coast in the 2006 war with the Lebanese Shiite militant group, killing four soldiers.

It was the first direct strike on an Israeli warship in decades and Hezbollah celebrated it as among its biggest victories of the 34-day war. More than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and 120 Israelis, the majority soldiers, died during the conflict but many in Israel consider the war a failure as

Hezbollah was not defeated. The strike on the Hanit symbolized for many how overconfidence fed into that failure. An investigation found that the missile hit because officials didn't believe Hezbollah had such sophisticated technology and so didn't turn on anti-missile systems.

### 'Big shock'

The Israeli head of the current training mission insists they are still learning the lessons. "The hit of the Hanit was such a big shock to Israel, a trauma, that I am sure no one would let it happen again," he told AFP aboard the ship, speaking on condition of anonymity under military rules. The ship could have sunk if the missile had struck directly rather than hitting a crane, he said. "The reason that it happened from my point of view was that we were not prepared for this kind of missile."

Israelis do compulsory military service at 18 and many on board during the recent training exercise were under 10 back in 2006. Nimrod, a young sailor who already has more than 6,000 hours of experience on board during his nearly three years of service, said they were regularly reminded of the deaths. In the corridor near the sleeping quarters, a picture of the four men killed hangs on the wall. The ship is now equipped with Barak missile defense systems, as well as advanced missiles. — AFP



**AT SEA:** Israeli soldiers onboard the Israeli vessel Saar 5 Class Corvette 'INS Hanit' attend a training session during the 'Novel Dina 17' exercise in the Mediterranean Sea. — AFP



**PYONGYANG:** A woman walks along the highway from downtown Pyongyang to Sunan International Airport at the end of the day yesterday in Pyongyang, North Korea. — AP

## NORTH KOREA WARNS OF NUKE STRIKE IF PROVOKED

### RUSSIA 'REALLY WORRIED' ABOUT POSSIBLE US ATTACK

**PYONGYANG:** North Korean state media yesterday warned of a nuclear attack on the United States at any sign of a US pre-emptive strike as a US Navy strike group led by a nuclear-powered aircraft steamed towards the western Pacific. Tension has escalated sharply on the Korean peninsula with talk of military action by the United States gaining traction following its strikes last week against Syria and amid concerns the reclusive North may soon conduct a sixth nuclear test.

North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said the country was prepared to respond to any aggression by the United States. "Our revolutionary strong army is keenly watching every move by enemy elements with our nuclear sight focused on the US invasionary bases not only in South Korea and the Pacific operation theatre but also in the US mainland," it said. South Korean acting President Hwang Kyo-ahn warned of "greater provocations" by North Korea and ordered the military to intensify monitoring and to ensure close communication with the United States.

"It is possible the North may wage greater provocations such as a nuclear test timed with various anniversaries including the Supreme People's Assembly," said Hwang, acting leader since former president Park Geun-hye was removed amid a graft scandal. The North convened a Supreme People's Assembly session yesterday, one of its twice-yearly sessions in which major appointments are announced and national policy goals are formally approved. It did not immediately release details. But South Korean

officials took pains to quell talk in social media of an impending security crisis or outbreak of war.

"We'd like to ask precaution so as not to get blinded by exaggerated assessment about the security situation on the Korean peninsula," Defense Ministry spokesman Moon Sang-kyun said. Saturday is the 105th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung, the country's founding father and grandfather of current ruler, Kim Jong Un. A military parade is expected in the North's capital, Pyongyang, to mark the day. North Korea often also marks important anniversaries with tests of its nuclear or missile capabilities in breach of UN Security Council resolutions.

Groups of men and women in colorful outfits were singing and dancing on street corners in Pyongyang, which was illuminated by better lighting than in previous years, apparently practicing for the parade planned for later in the week. Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad sent a message of congratulations to mark the event, lambasting "big powers" for their "expansionist" policy.

"The friendly two countries are celebrating this anniversary and, at the same time, conducting a war against big powers' wild ambition to subject all countries to their expansionist and dominationist policy and deprive them of their rights to self-determination," the North's KCNA news agency quoted the message as saying. "The two peoples of Syria and the DPRK are as ever struggling for their rights to self-determination and national sovereignty and the security and prosperity of their countries." DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

the North's official name. The North's foreign ministry, in a statement carried by KCNA, said the US navy strike group's approach showed America's "reckless moves for invading had reached a serious phase". "We never beg for peace but we will take the toughest counteraction against the provocateurs in order to defend ourselves by powerful force of arms and keep to the road chosen by ourselves," an unidentified ministry spokesman said. North Korea and the rich, democratic South are technically still at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. The North regularly threatens to destroy the South and its main ally, the United States.

### Sanctions warning

North Korea is emerging as one of the most pressing foreign policy problems facing the administration of US President Donald Trump. It has conducted five nuclear tests, two of them last year, and is working to develop nuclear-tipped missiles that can reach the United States. The Trump administration is reviewing its policy towards North Korea and has said all options are on the table, including military strikes, but US officials said non-military action appears to be at the top of the list. Russia's foreign ministry, in a statement ahead of a visit by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, said it was concerned about many aspects of US foreign policy, and particularly concerned about North Korea. "We are really worried about what Washington has in mind for North Korea after it hinted at the possibility of a unilateral military scenario," a statement said. — Reuters

## BABIES STARVE AS IRAQI WAR RAGES

**QAYYARA:** The babies cry with hunger but are so severely malnourished that doctors treating them at a hospital in Iraq would make their condition worse if they fed them enough to stop the pangs. Many of the starving infants are from Mosul, where war between Islamic State militants and Iraqi forces is taking a heavy toll on several hundred thousand civilians trapped inside the city. A new, specialist ward was opened recently to deal with the growing number of children from Mosul showing signs of malnutrition as the conflict grinds on—most of them less than six-months-old.

That means they were born around the time Iraqi forces severed Islamic State's last major supply route from Mosul to Syria, besieging the militants inside the city, but also creating acute shortages of food. "Normally nutritional crises are much more common in Africa and not in this kind of country," said pediatrician Rosanna Meneghetti at the hospital, which is run by aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in Qayyara, about 60 km south of Mosul. "We did not anticipate this".

So far, the number of cases recorded is below the level considered critical but it nonetheless highlights the hardship faced by civilians who are effectively being held hostage by Islamic State. Iraqi forces backed by a US-led coalition have retaken most of the city but are struggling to dislodge the militants from several districts in the west, including the Old City. Residents who have managed to escape say there is almost nothing to eat but flour mixed with water and boiled wheat grain. What little food remains is too expensive for most resi-

dents to afford, or kept for Islamic State members and their supporters.

### Formula milk shortage

In the ward, a team of doctors monitors the babies' progress in grams, feeding them a special peanut-based paste that will gradually accustom them to eating and increase their weight. On one bed lies a six-month-old boy weighing 2.4 kg - less than half the median weight for an infant of that age. The diminutive patients are also treated for other diseases associated with malnutrition, which weakens the immune system, making them even more vulnerable. "It's a new thing in Iraq," said MSF project coordinator Isabelle Legall. "Most of the (Iraqi) doctors have never seen it (malnutrition)". Part of the problem, Legall said, is a lack of tradition of breast-feeding among Iraqi mothers, who usually raise their babies on formula milk, which is now almost impossible to come by in Mosul.

Even if they want to breastfeed, many mothers find it difficult due to the physical and emotional strain of living in a warzone. "The mother is very stressed and can't find much food herself so cannot produce so much milk," Meneghetti said. One of the mothers from Mosul told the doctors she had no option but to feed her baby sugar dissolved in water, yogurt, or a mixture of flour and water. "All of this is because of Daesh (Islamic State)," said another mother, keeping vigil over her emaciated baby. Some of the babies come from villages that were retaken from Islamic State months ago, pointing to a wider trend of food insecurity. —Reuters



**MOSUL:** A displaced Iraqi woman mourns her husband and sons, who were killed last week as they tried to flee their homes in Sekak neighborhood in western Mosul. — AFP

## IS CONTROLS LESS THAN 7% OF IRAQ

**BAGHDAD:** The Islamic State group now controls less than seven percent of Iraq, down from the 40 percent it held nearly three years ago, a military spokesman said yesterday. "Daesh controlled 40 percent of Iraqi land" in 2014, Brigadier General Yahya Rasool told reporters, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "As of March 31 (this year), they only held 6.8 percent of Iraqi territory," said Rasool, the spokesman of the Joint Operations Command coordinating the anti-jihadist effort.

Various members of the forces, Iraqi and foreign, battling the jihadists have disagreed in the past on control of territory figures but IS has been losing ground steadily over close to two years. The most brutal organization in modern jihad shocked the world when it took over Mosul, Iraq's second city, in June 2014 and then swept across much of the country's Sunni Arab heartland.

Its reach in Iraq peaked in August the same year when a second offensive saw it take over areas of northern Iraq that were home to various minorities and had been under the control of the autonomous Kurds. Iraqi forces with the backing of the US-led coalition—which has thousands of forces deployed in Iraq and carries out daily air strikes—launched a major offen-

sive to retake Mosul in October 2016. They retook control of the eastern side of the city, which is divided by the Tigris river, in January and have since mid-February been battling die-hard jihadists holed up in their last west Mosul redoubts.

### Coalition to stay

The full recapture of Mosul, the de facto capital of the "caliphate" IS supreme Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi publicly proclaimed in the city nearly three years ago, would effectively end any IS claim to be running a state. Speaking at the same press conference in Baghdad yesterday, the spokesman for the US-led coalition vowed that Iraq would not be abandoned after the recapture of Mosul. "Once that task is accomplished, the coalition will be here to support our Iraqi partners as they eliminate IS from every corner of Iraq," Colonel John Dorrian said.

The coalition has come under criticism following the deaths last month in west Mosul of scores of civilians in an air strike it admitted may have been its own. "Every strike that we conduct, we conduct using precision-guided munitions. Every strike that we conduct is coordinated directly with the Iraqi security forces," he said. "We are very careful." —AFP

## 9 DEAD; MILITANTS ATTACK PHILIPPINE TOURIST ISLAND

**MANILA:** Nine people including four Philippine security officials were killed yesterday during clashes with the Abu Sayyaf kidnap group on a popular resort island as millions prepare to travel for the Easter holiday. The incursion on Bohol island would be the first on a key Philippine tourist destination in recent years by the group which pledges allegiance to the Islamic State and often targets foreigners in the lawless southern Mindanao region. Five gunmen were killed while four assault rifles and an improvised explosive

device were recovered in the fighting, officials said. Just days earlier Australia and the US warned their citizens about possible "terrorist" kidnappings in Bohol or nearby Cebu island.

"We're quite worried... we are afraid of hostage situations," said Khent Guimalan, who works at the front desk of the upscale Bohol Beach Club. "The mayor and police have tightened security. There's a checkpoint everywhere," Guimalan said by phone from the Panglao tourist area, where she said hotels were fully booked until next week.

Following the clash authorities distributed photos of suspected Abu Sayyaf members asking locals to report any suspicious activity, according to Guimalan. Local officials said the militants had used fast boats Monday to reach a village where they squared off against security forces yesterday.

### Whale sharks and tarsiers

Security forces have been on alert for "potential activity on the part of some lawless elements" during the peak Easter tourist season, military spokesman Brigadier-General Restituto Padilla said. "Our forces who were acting on this information were able to engage these lawless armed groups that are believed to be part of the Abu Sayyaf group from Mindanao," he said on ABS-CBN television.

The armed men sailed upriver from Inabanga, a farming and fishing coastal community some 780 kilometres away from the Abu Sayyaf stronghold of Jolo in the southern Philippines, local police said. Bohol, about 600 kilometers south of Manila, is a mere 30 minutes' boat ride away from the major port of Cebu on Cebu island, which is also among the country's top tourist draws. The island is famous among foreign tourists who swim with docile whale sharks and marvel at tiny primates called tarsiers, go on cruises aboard boats on crystal-clear rivers and lounge on its beaches. — AFP



**INABANGA:** Police and soldiers take position as they engage with the Abu Sayyaf group in the village of Napo, Inabanga town, Bolo province, in the central Philippines yesterday. — AFP



# THREE DEAD IN MURDER-SUICIDE AT US SCHOOL

**SAN BERNARDINO:** A man walked into a school in southern California Monday and shot dead his estranged wife in front of her students, killing an eight-year-old boy in the crossfire before turning his gun on himself. Police said local resident Cedric

Anderson had checked into the office as a visitor after entering the campus in the city of San Bernardino and going to the special needs classroom, where he opened fire on Karen Elaine Smith, 53, as she was teaching.

Officers said Anderson, also 53, had only targeted Smith but two students were caught in the crossfire and one of them, Jonathan Martinez, died later in hospital. "This does appear to have been a murder-suicide with both male adult and female adult victim succumbing to injuries, with the male succumbing to a self-inflicted gunshot wound," Lieutenant Mike Madden of the San Bernardino Police Department told a news conference. Police said initially the two wounded students had been listed as critical but later confirmed Martinez's death.

Students at North Park Elementary School - which has around 500 students between kindergarten and sixth grade - were transported to a nearby campus, where they were "having snacks, playing games and watching a Disney movie," the police department tweeted. Many panicked parents and relatives who rushed to the school had to endure waits of several agonizing hours before they could be certain that their child was not among the victims. "I saw blood splashing on the wall. I ran as fast as I can. I lost a shoe," one student said. An 11-year-old boy told AFP he was in the middle of a math test when he heard the gunfire. "I started feeling really scared from the SWAT team, and people from the police station came through the door to walk us out we had to walk with our hands up," he said.

## Massacre

San Bernardino, about an hour's drive east of Los Angeles, was the scene of horrific violence when Syed Rizwan Farook and his wife Tashfeen Malik gunned down 14 people and wounded 22 others in December 2015 before being shot dead by police. At the time, before the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, it was the deadliest attack on US soil since September 11, 2001. Pakistani-born Malik-who met her future US-born husband on a Muslim dating website and married him in Saudi Arabia-had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group on Facebook and was instrumental in radicalizing him. Monday's shooting will likely reignite the debate on gun violence in the US, where attempts to put in place tougher gun control measures have failed, despite a series of mass killings.

In one of the most notorious school shootings in modern US history, 20 children and six staff were massacred in 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut. In June last year, 49 people were killed in a shooting rampage at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. "School campuses are sacred spaces where children should be free to learn, play and grow without threat of violence," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said in a statement. — AFP



**SAN BERNARDINO:** A police officer leads children to be reunited with parents at Cajon High School after a gunman entered a classroom and killed one woman and one student, before turning the gun on himself, at North Park Elementary School in San Bernardino, California. — AFP

# NINE LIFE SENTENCES IN US CHURCH SLAYING CASE

**CHARLESTON:** With Charleston church shooter Dylann Roof getting nine life sentences in state court on top of a federal death sentence, his prosecutions are finally over - and some relatives of the nine parishioners he killed at a historically black church say they can finally begin to heal. Nadine Collier, daughter of the slain 70-year-old Ethel Lance, wore a white suit to Roof's sentencing Monday; a color she said lets the world know a chapter in her life had closed. "I will not open that book again," she said to Roof, before he was sentenced. "I just want to say, have mercy on your soul."

The 23-year-old avowed white supremacist said nothing in his own defense as he was sentenced Monday on nine counts of murder, along with three charges of attempted murder and a weapons charge. He was taken from court back to the Charleston County jail, where he'll await transfer to a federal prison and, ultimately, the federal system's death row in Terre Haute, Indiana. Roof's plea deal came in exchange for an agreement that state prosecutors would drop their own pursuit of the death penalty against him for the June 2015 slaughter at Emanuel AME Church.

Judge JC Nicholson handed down nine consecutive life sentences.

Roof stood at the defense table with his attorneys, clad in a gray and white striped jail jumpsuit and handcuffed to a chain at his waist. The deal, Solicitor Scarlett Wilson said, serves as an "insurance policy" in the event that Roof's federal conviction falls apart. But it also means the families of the nine people he killed don't have to endure a second grueling trial. Roof was 21 when he walked into a Wednesday night Bible study session at the historic church known as Mother Emanuel. As witnesses testified in his federal trial last year, Roof waited until the session's closing minutes to unload 77 shots into his victims as they shut their eyes in a final prayer.

Survivors testified during the federal trial, evoking chilling images of the bloody Wednesday night tableau. Jennifer Pinckney, widow of slain pastor and state Sen Clementa Pinckney, brought some jurors to tears as she told how she shielded her young daughter in her husband's office while the bullets rang out in the nearby fellowship hall. At Roof's first court appearance on the day after his arrest, his victims' relatives spoke of forgiveness, with some saying they mourned their loved ones but would pray for his lost soul.

The families of what have become known as the Emanuel Nine have been widely lauded for their willingness to forgive in the face of sorrow but also, in embrace of their strong faith, to pray the man who drastically altered their lives would find peace himself. That sentiment was present at Monday's hearing. Blondelle Gadsden, sister of slain Myra Thompson, said she hoped Roof would find his own faith in prison. "I can't think of anything worse that he could do at this point than to not accept Christ and try to make his days on this earth a little bit more peaceful," she said.

But Eva Dilligard, whose sister Susie Jackson was slain by Roof, said, "I think somebody doing something like that, he should get death. ... I'm very sorry. I'm a child of God. But he hurt the entire family." Roof didn't address the court Monday. But his grandfather, Columbia attorney Joe Roof, said that, while he was saddened that his grandson wouldn't be a part of his later years, "The system ... seems to have worked as it should have worked." — AP



**CHARLESTON:** Dylann Roof appears in the Charleston County Court to enter his guilty plea on murder charges in Charleston, SC. — AP

# US GOVERNOR BROUGHT DOWN BY HUMILIATING SEX SCANDAL

**WASHINGTON:** The governor of the conservative southern US state of Alabama resigned Monday, shortly after lawmakers began impeachment proceedings linked to his affair with a senior aide that was made public in humiliating detail. Robert Bentley, 74, pleaded guilty in an agreement with prosecutors on Monday to two misdemeanor campaign violations and is barred from seeking public office again.

"I have spent the last year in deep and earnest prayer over our state and our people. I pray every morning for wisdom and guidance and forgiveness for the sins I have committed," the former dermatologist and church deacon told a news conference announcing his resignation, never directly acknowledging his romantic relationship with 45-year-old political adviser Rebekah Caldwell Mason. The relationship between Bentley and his married aide became a topic of speculation in 2015, when his wife of 50 years, Dianne, abruptly filed for divorce.

The scandal broke last spring when the state's top police officer - fired by Bentley - provided the news organization AL.com with salacious details of the secret romance. The media outlet reported on a 2014 phone conversation between Bentley and a woman he called Rebekah that was secretly captured by Dianne Bentley. "When I stand behind you, and I put my arms around you, and I put my hands on your breasts, and I put my hands (unintelligible) and just pull you real close. I love that, too," the governor is heard saying. "Baby, let me know what I am going to do when I start locking the door," he said during another part of the tape.

"If we are going to do what we did the other day, we are going to have to start locking the door." Last week, an impeachment



**ALABAMA:** Former Alabama Governor Robert Bentley speaks after officially resigning in Montgomery, Ala. — AP

investigation report prepared for the Alabama House Judiciary Committee said Bentley tried to cover up the affair "in a process characterized by increasing obsession and paranoia." "To ensure the silence of his staff, Governor Bentley encouraged an atmosphere of intimidation," it added. "Concern over the recordings appears to have become an obsession."

The report revealed that Bentley once opened the door of his hotel room in Washington clad in boxer shorts, thinking Mason was the other side when it was actually hotel staff. On the same trip in 2014, Dianne Bentley attended a group dinner with her husband and Mason, and saw the text messages he was sending his mistress while seated next to his wife, including "I can't take my eyes off of you." — AFP



**MOSCOW:** US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson disembarks from an airplane upon his arrival at the Vnukovo II Government airport in Moscow yesterday. Tillerson arrived in Moscow to confront the Russian leadership over its support for President Bashar Al-Assad's Syrian regime. — AFP

# WHAT EXACTLY IS US SYRIA POLICY?

## BIG QUESTIONS FOR US ALLIES

**LUCCA:** Seeking support from abroad, the US struggled yesterday to explain a hazy Syria strategy that has yet to clarify key questions: whether President Bashar Assad must go, how displaced Syrians will be protected and when America might feel compelled to take further action. Successive attempts by top Trump administration officials to articulate a plan have only furthered the appearance of a policy still evolving, even after the US broke with precedent last week by attacking Assad's forces. In the absence of answers, other countries seem to be moving ahead on their own terms.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, after a meeting in Italy with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, floated the possibility of new sanctions on both the Syrian and Russian militaries, an idea the US has only briefly mentioned. In an unusual announcement for a foreign government, Johnson also said the US could launch more cruise missiles into Syria like the ones President Donald Trump ordered last week in reaction to Assad's use of chemical weapons. "Crucially, they could do so again," Johnson said.

Tillerson himself raised fresh expectations for aggressive US action - and not only in Syria - as he visited Sant'Anna di Stazzema, a Tuscan village where the Nazis massacred more than 500 civilians during World War II. As he laid a wreath, he alluded to the Syria chemical attack. "We rededicate ourselves to holding to account any and all who commit crimes against the innocents anywhere in the world," Tillerson said. Though such comments hint at a more activist US foreign policy focused on preventing humanitarian atrocities, Trump has consistently suggested he prefers the opposite approach.

### The 'likemindeds'

His young administration has generally downplayed human rights concerns while promoting an "America First" strategy de-emphasizing the concerns of foreign nations. The uncertain view of US objectives prevailed as Tillerson planned to attend a meeting Tuesday of the "likemindeds" - countries that share a similar approach to resolving Syria's protracted civil war. The session on the sidelines of the Group of 7 summit in Italy was to include Middle East countries, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, that share a US interest in resolving the conflict and resisting Iran's influence in Syria.

Tuesday night, Tillerson will fly to Moscow, the

first official visit by a Trump Cabinet official to Russia, Assad's strongest ally. The US has said its Syria strategy centers on persuading President Vladimir Putin to stop supporting Assad. On Monday, the US upped the stakes significantly by accusing Russia of knowing in advance of the chemical attack and using a Russian-operated drone to help cover it up.

No component of Trump's Syria policy has engendered more confusion than Assad's future - an issue that similarly befuddled the Obama administration, whose once-adamant position that Assad must go softened substantially by the time President Barack Obama left office in January. Leading up to the U.S. missile attack, Trump's administration had said Assad's future was up to the Syrian people. Then Trump, the day after the assault, said his thinking about Assad had changed. Tillerson answered a question

about effecting regime change by saying the US was organizing a coalition to do just that.

### Setting a precedent

Yet after Trump's retaliatory strike, the position became less clear. Some officials, like Tillerson, said the US was confident Syrians would choose on their own to push Assad aside, while suggesting the US wouldn't mandate it. UN Ambassador Nikki Haley and others said ousting Assad was indeed a US goal, but only one of several. Another unanswered question: Did Trump's strike set a precedent that any chemical attack will trigger a US response? At the White House, spokesman Sean Spicer insisted that Trump wouldn't box himself in by disclosing his actions in advance. But he added further uncertainty to the equation by saying that even barrel bombs - which Assad has used with frequency - would necessitate US action. — AP

# WHO'S MEL? US TERROR CASE MAY UNMASK POLICE MOLE

**NEW YORK:** For years, a woman named "Mel" mingled with young Muslims in New York, telling them she was a Turkish convert to the faith looking for friends. In reality, she was a cop working for the New York Police Department. Her true identity and the full nature of her work remains a guarded secret, but, thanks partly to social media, she may be unmasked as part of an upcoming trial of two women accused of plotting a homemade bomb attack.

By combing the web, attorneys for the two defendants, Noelle Valentzas and Asia Siddiqui, say they have obtained the agent's photograph and learned her real name. And in recent weeks, they got a judge's permission for a plan to circulate her picture at area mosques in order to build a case that their clients were entrapped by someone fishing for harmless people to lure into a phony plot. The defense has an obligation "to investigate the case fully," defense attorney Charles Swift said, including probing the activities and background of the police department's mole. That plan has dismayed police officials, who have been working to scrub any trace of "Mel" from the web.

### Revealing identity

The NYPD's top counterterrorism official, John Miller, said in a court filing that revealing her identity and widely circulating her picture could jeopardize ongoing undercover investigations. The case could provide a rare glimpse into how the police department uses informants and undercover investigators to smoke out Islamic extremists - a tactic that has already sparked complaints by civil rights groups that the nation's largest police department illegally spied on Muslims on the basis of religion.

From a law enforcement perspective, the stakes are high for other reasons. Investigators with blown covers are often pulled off the street for good as a precaution. That's because risks of exposure are real, said a former NYPD undercover in major drug and gun trafficking cases and subject of the recent book "Gunz and God: The Life of an NYPD Undercover" who still uses an alias, Stevie Stryker. "There are people out there who would do anything to take revenge on you," said Stryker, who testified only when courtrooms were closed to the public. "Protecting your identity goes to your house. It's about protecting your wife and family." — AP



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## INDONESIAN INVESTIGATOR ATTACKED WITH CHEMICAL



**JAKARTA:** Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) investigator Novel Baswedan (center) who was injured in an attack by unidentified assailants is assisted by officials and police officers as he leaves the general hospital yesterday. — AP

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia's anti-graft agency yesterday condemned an acid attack on one of its top investigators handling a corruption investigation that has implicated dozens of politicians, and said it would not be deterred in its fight. The corruption investigation, involving the suspected theft of \$170 million from a budget to procure national electronic identity cards, is turning into one of the biggest cases the agency, known by its Indonesian initials KPK, has handled. The KPK has banned the speaker of parliament, Setya Novanto, from overseas travel for six months in connection with the case, which has stirred sensational headlines in Southeast Asia's biggest economy long burdened by endemic graft.

Early yesterday, an unidentified attacker threw acid at senior KPK investigator Novel Baswedan, police said. He was being treated in hospital for injuries to his eyes and face, and police were investigating whether the attack was related to his work, said Jakarta police chief Mochammad Iriawan. It was not the first time Baswedan had been attacked and his agency said it would not be cowed. "We strongly condemn the uncivilized attack on Novel. Novel is us and we are the KPK. We will never stop fighting against corruption," the KPK said in a statement.

Deputy agency chief Laode M Syarif said police would be asked to step up security for agency officials. "We will ask the national and city police for extra protection for KPK investigators," he told reporters. President Joko

Widodo ordered police to investigate and urged KPK officials to be vigilant. "This is a brutal act that I strongly condemn," Widodo told reporters at the presidential palace. "All investigators must be alert and keep working hard." Two suspects on trial over the graft case have told a court that at least 37 politicians benefited from the theft of funds from the ID procurement budget, including parliament speaker Novanto.

### Party payments?

Late on Monday, the KPK banned Novanto from going overseas for six months. A KPK public relations official, Ipi Maryati, said Novanto had been banned from travel so that "whenever his information is needed in the investigation of the case, he's not out of the country". Novanto, who is also the chairman of Indonesia's second-biggest political party, Golkar, told media he would cooperate with authorities. He has not been charged and has previously denied wrongdoing. Golkar's secretary general, Idrus Marham, told Reuters the party and Novanto would respect the legal process. "We also believe in the principle of innocent until proven guilty," Marham said. The allegations against Novanto and others, set out in a KPK indictment, include accounts of sums ranging from \$5,000 to \$5.5 million being divided up in a room in parliament among members of various parties, including the one backing President Joko Widodo. —Reuters

## ONLINE FURY; PASSENGER DRAGGED OFF OVERBOOKED UNITED AIRLINES PASSENGER'S REMOVAL SPARKS OUTRAGE IN CHINA

**CHICAGO:** The social media storm prompted by footage of United Airlines forcibly removing a passenger from an overbooked flight continued to spread yesterday with accusations of perceived racism and calls for a boycott of the US carrier. Footage from the incident in which a Chinese-American passenger was dragged from his seat quickly went viral with outrage extending even to China.

The incident occurred Sunday on a United Express flight from Chicago to Louisville, Kentucky. Such flights are operated by one of eight regional airlines that partner with United. The airline said it had asked for volunteers to

give up their seats, and police were called in after one passenger refused to leave the plane. Smartphone video posted online showed three Chicago Department of Aviation police officers struggling with a seated middle-aged man. He starts to scream as he is dragged off while other passengers look on some recording the event with their phones.

One passenger can be heard yelling, "Oh my God, look at what you did to him!" The show-down quickly ignited social media outrage, with "United" a trending term on Twitter, Facebook and Google. The footage was also re-posted on China's Twitter-like Sina Weibo, where the inci-

dent quickly became the top trending topic, garnering more than 120 million views and 80,000 comments. "Shameless! We won't forgive them. Ethnic Chinese around the world please boycott United Airlines!" wrote one commentator. United Airlines claims to be the biggest carrier to China, with more nonstop US-China flights to more Chinese cities than any other airline, according to the company's website.

### 'Upsetting for all'

In a statement late Monday, the Chicago Department of Aviation said the incident was "not in accordance with our standard operating procedure and the actions of the aviation security officer are obviously not condoned by the department." "That officer has been placed on leave effective today pending a thorough review of the situation," the statement said. It was another example of bad press and negative social media coverage for United after an incident in late March in which two teenage girls were prevented from boarding a flight in Denver because they were wearing leggings.

The airline defended its action at the time by saying the girls were flying on passes that required them to abide by a dress code in return for free or discounted travel. Speaking to various media outlets about Sunday's incident, the airline said it had asked for volunteers to leave the overbooked plane. "One customer refused to leave the aircraft voluntarily and law enforcement was asked to come to the gate," United spokesman Charlie Hobart was quoted by the Chicago Tribune newspaper as saying.

United did not return AFP's request for comment, but the airline addressed the incident in a statement posted on its website on Monday. "This is an upsetting event to all of us," said chief executive Oscar Munoz, noting that the airline was conducting a "detailed review of what happened." "We are also reaching out to this passenger to talk directly to him and further address and resolve this situation," he said.

### Passengers 'disturbed'

Tyler Bridges, who posted footage of Sunday's incident on Twitter, said the man appeared to be bloodied after his encounter with the law enforcement officials. Bridges also posted video showing the man running back on the plane, repeatedly saying, "I have to go home." He appeared to be pacing and disoriented. "Not a good way to treat a doctor trying to get to work because they overbooked," he wrote. He described passenger reaction on the plane as "disturbed" saying: "Kids were crying." US airlines are allowed to involuntarily bump passengers off overbooked flights, with compensation, if enough volunteers cannot be found, according to the Department of Transportation. — Agencies



Image made from a video provided shows a passenger being removed from a United Airlines flight in Chicago. — AP

## VIOLENCE ERUPTS IN VENEZUELA US VOICES 'GRAVE CONCERN'

**CARACAS:** Venezuela erupted yesterday in a fifth day of violent protests against President Nicolas Maduro as the United States voiced "grave concern" over moves to stifle one of his main opponents. In the latest clashes in the once-booming oil exporter, riot police in Caracas fired tear gas at stone-throwing demonstrators whose leaders vowed not to let up the pressure on Maduro. "This is a battle of resistance. We will see who gets tired first: us of fighting, or them of repressing," said the deputy speaker of the opposition-majority congress, Freddy Guevara.

The streets of Caracas and several other Venezuelan cities have seen running battles in recent days as protesters have rallied demanding elections. Police fired water cannons, tear gas and rubber bullets at demonstrators, who hurled rocks and Molotov cocktails. On Monday, several patients including a newborn baby had to be evacuated from a medical clinic in the Las Mercedes district after it was struck by tear gas canisters, a doctor there, Luis Montanes, told reporters. One protester was killed on Thursday. Dozens of people have been wounded or arrested.

### US: 'grave concern'

Maduro is fighting efforts to force him from power over an economic crisis marked by severe shortages and the world's highest inflation. Pressure rose on him last week after two Supreme Court rulings that stripped the legisla-

ture's power. The court later reversed the rulings amid an outcry. But the crisis deepened Friday when authorities banned senior opposition figure Henrique Capriles from holding public office for 15 years, blocking him from running against Maduro in next year's election. The United States on Monday expressed "grave concern" about Capriles' ban. "We urge President Maduro to

reconsider the decision to bar Capriles and ensure Venezuelans can exercise their right to elect their representatives in free and fair elections," the US State Department said in a statement. The European Union earlier added to the international pressure, raising alarm over the "ongoing escalation of tensions and violent confrontations." —AFP



**CARACAS:** Venezuelan opposition activists protesting against President Nicolas Maduro's government are engulfed by a cloud of tear gas shot by riot police in Caracas. — AFP



**ISLAMABAD:** Journalists look a image of Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was arrested in March 2016, during a press conference by Pakistan's army spokesman and the Information Minister, in Islamabad, Pakistan. - AP

## INDIA WARNS PAKISTAN

**NEW DELHI:** India yesterday warned Pakistan of serious consequences for their bilateral relationship if it executes a retired Indian naval officer convicted of espionage and sabotage. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj told agitated lawmakers in Parliament that India would take up the issue with Pakistan at the highest level to ensure that justice was done to Kulbhushan Jadhav. He was arrested by Pakistan last year and convicted by a Pakistani military tribunal this week. Pakistan alleges that Jadhav was an Indian intelligence official who aided and financed terrorist activities in the southwestern province of Baluchistan and the port city of Karachi.

Swaraj dismissed Jadhav's trial as a farce and said Pakistan had ignored 13 separate requests in the past year to be permitted to offer him consular services. "The government and people of India would view very seriously the possibility that an innocent Indian citizen is facing death sentence in Pakistan without due process and in violation of basic norms, law, justice and international relations," she said. Swaraj warned "the Pakistan government to consider the consequences for our bilateral relationship if they proceed on this matter."

Lawmakers from opposition Congress and other parties asked the government to put international pressure on Pakistan to free Jadhav and return him to India. Pakistan's army released a video shortly after Jadhav's arrest last year in which he confessed to having spent years sowing unrest in Pakistan. It was not clear if he was speaking under duress. India's External Affairs Ministry said Monday that Jadhav was kidnapped last year from Iran and his subsequent presence in Pakistan was never explained credibly. It concluded that his death sentence, if carried out, would be regarded by the Indian government as pre-mediated murder.

Pakistan and India have tensed relations. High-level talks between the neighbors have been suspended since January last year, when India postponed scheduled meetings on Kashmir and other problems after an attack on an Indian air force base that killed seven soldiers. India says phone intercepts suggest the gunmen came from Pakistan, a charge Islamabad denies. India and Pakistan have fought three wars, two of them over Kashmir, the divided region both claim in its entirety, since they won independence from British colonialists in 1947. —AP

## CHINA PUNISHES OFFICIAL FOR NOT DARING TO SMOKE NEAR MUSLIMS

**BEIJING:** Authorities in China's restive Xinjiang region have punished a local official for declining to smoke in front of Muslim elders, seeing that as a sign he was insufficiently committed to the region's fight against religious extremism, according to a government report and state media yesterday. Jelil Matniyaz, Communist Party head of a village in Hotan Prefecture, was demoted for "not daring" to smoke in front of religious figures, said the report, issued Saturday and reproduced by official newspapers and websites.

Matniyaz, identified as a member of Xinjiang's indigenous Uighur ethnic minority, was cited by the report as not having a "resolute political stance." The state-run Global Times newspaper yesterday quoted other local officials as saying that government leaders should push back against rather than comply with religious prohibitions against smoking to demonstrate their "commitment to secularization."

The punishment appears to be the latest extreme measure by the authorities to exert their will in Xinjiang, particularly its southern portion including Hotan where Uighur culture is strongest. Chinese authorities and the state-controlled media have increasingly equated religious expression with extremism in their official rhetoric, partly in response to a bloody insurgency blamed on Uighur Islamic militants.

The government has argued that its measures, such as prohibiting women from wearing Islamic veils or men from growing beards, are part of an effort to roll back dangerous religious fundamentalism. Overseas Uighur advocate groups say the restrictions have only increased resentment over heavy-handed Chinese rule and fueled a cycle of radicalization

and violence. Although smoking is not strictly forbidden in many parts of the Muslim world, it is sometimes discouraged by the more religiously observant.

Ironically, Matniyaz's punishment comes as health officials are seeking to curb a deeply ingrained smoking culture in China, where about half of all males regularly light up. Adrian Zenz, a researcher at the European School of Culture and Theology in Germany, said Xinjiang officials were attempting "social re-engineering" by purging any hint of Islamic influence on Uighur society. "The normal practice of religion is now being defined as extremism," Zenz said. "This is a whole new dimension."

The Hotan Daily newspaper said a total of 97 local officials were censured as part of a Communist Party investigation into the conduct of its own members. The report indicated the probe was personally directed by Chen Quanguo, the Xinjiang's regional Communist Party leader and highest ranking official, who has vowed to crack down on extremism. Chen was transferred to Xinjiang in August from Tibet, another region whose non-ethnic Chinese residents have long lived under social, political and religious restrictions far more severe than in other parts of the country.

In recent months Chen has ratcheted up security measures and sent phalanxes of armed paramilitary police and armored tanks rumbling through Hotan's streets in large-scale displays of force. An ancient stop on the Silk Road, Hotan and its surrounding region have seen an uptick in violence in recent years. State media reported that a car rammed into a Communist Party building in December and blew up, resulting in one dead. Months later, eight people died in a knife attack in a different part of Hotan — AP



KUWAIT: Opposition MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei hands a grilling request against HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah yesterday to National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, who refused to accept it. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## ASSEMBLY REJECTS CRUCIAL CITIZENSHIP LAW...

Continued from Page 1

Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem led the debate by saying he opposed the amendment because it will provide legal protection to tens of thousands of suspected fraudsters who obtained their citizenships through forgery.

Courts have thrown out many cases related to citizenship on the basis that they are not competent to look into such sovereign cases, except in a few exceptional cases.

Opposition and other lawmakers wanted to amend the nationality law in such a way that no citizenship can be revoked by the government without a final court order. But wider opposition to this amendment forced the lawmakers to reduce the scope of the amendment to allow those who get their citizenships withdrawn to take their cases to court.

MP Khalil Abul said that revoking citizenships for political reasons is 'immoral'. He said that if the nationality is withdrawn because of forgery, the citizenships of all those who committed the crime must be withdrawn as well. Tabtabaei said Kuwait is committed to international obligations to allow the judiciary to hear citizenship cases and if it failed to do this, it will be placed on the blacklist by the United Nations and be subjected to sanctions. He also challenged Sheikh Mohammad to say what he said about the government's opposition at the world human rights body in Geneva.

MP Adel Al-Damkhi said the proposed amendments do not prevent the government from revoking citizenships, but allows those affected by the measure to go to court. MP Abdullah Al-Fahhad said there is a contradiction in the government's attitude. On one side, it forms a committee to review reinstating revoked citizenships, but is rejecting the courts to handle such cases.

MP Yousef Al-Fadhlah strongly opposed the proposed amendments, saying that they pave the way for wider and deeper amendments that would allow people to obtain citizenships through forgery. He said this is not correct that under the current law, the government can revoke citizenships without a reason.

Adasani said the proposed amendment does not provide any protection to those who forge and the government should not act as the arbitrator and the opponent at the same time. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari insisted that sovereignty rests with the people and the government was granted sovereignty through a law which can be changed, especially after the government misused this law. Several other lawmakers backed the amendments and insisted that the changes do not protect or encourage people who fake their documents to obtain citizenship - they only allow those who get their citizenships revoked from seeking legal recourse from the judiciary.

## TRIPLE BLASTS HIT DORTMUND BUS...

Continued from Page 1

In the aftermath of the explosions, the Dortmund team was taken back to the team hotel. "For security reasons, we do not want to announce the next steps in the procedure," added Watzke. With the 80,000-capacity stadium

filling up just before the scheduled kick-off time, fans were told to stay in the ground until police signalled it was safe for them to leave. "All our support for Marc Bartra, BVB and all their fans," tweeted Barcelona, Bartra's former club, before their Champions League quarter-final against Juventus yesterday. An attack of this nature is unprecedented in German club football. — AFP

## GULF WORKERS BEARING ALL RECRUITMENT...

Continued from Page 1

"Companies should strive to be in compliance with local law in areas where they are operating," said David Segall, one of the authors of the report. "As we've seen in other industries, the dam holding back reputational damage tends to break suddenly and without warning and irreversibly so I think it would be to construction companies' benefit to come ahead of the curve on this one." Segall and his co-author Sarah Labowitz say construction firms and their Gulf-based clients can help "end the cycle of abuse" by paying for the recruitment costs of construction workers who are needed to build the region's skyscrapers, stadiums, hotels, theme parks and sprawling malls.

The report, titled "Migrant Workers Pay: Recruitment of the Migrant Labor Force in the Gulf Construction Industry," details how workers are exploited through a complex system of agents and subagents who gross hundreds of dollars in profit per worker. Workers are paying several times more than the real cost of recruitment, which is closer to \$400 to \$650, excluding the cost of airfare. It calls on Arab governments to enforce laws against the selling of visas and on migrant-sending countries to legalize and regulate their local net-

works of unregistered recruitment agents. There are laws in place banning Gulf-based employers from directly charging migrant workers for their own recruitment. Selling visas is also illegal in the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain. The study found that governments in the Gulf provide migrant worker visas to multinational and local construction companies for free or at a nominal cost, but Gulf-based agents turn around and sell them at a markup to recruiters in South Asian countries who then pass on the cost to the lowest-paid and most vulnerable workers.

There are around 25 million migrant workers across the GCC, in some countries outnumbering the local population. Often hailing from South Asia, the workers accept low-wage jobs with few protections for a chance to send money to relatives back home. They are allowed to return for a visit once every few years. "At the end of the day, most of these people are coming for a very simple reason: They're coming for a better life," Segall said. The Stern Center for Business and Human Rights, which advocates for business practices that abide by human rights standards, receives funding from NYU's business school, foundations, individuals and companies — AP

## PHILIPPINE, SAUDI LEADERS DISCUSS LABOR...

Continued from Page 1

The official Saudi Press Agency reported that Salman hosted Duterte for lunch in the capital, Riyadh, and that the two sides signed a number of memorandums, including some dealing with labor. The report did not disclose further details about the memorandums signed. A slide in oil prices has impacted Saudi government spending and the revenue of Saudi companies relying on state-backed infrastructure projects. This has left tens of thousands of Filipinos and South Asian laborers without pay and, in many cases, without airfare or exit permits to return home.

In addition to discussing labor issues, Duterte said his visit to the kingdom would also address ways to broaden cooperation in trade, investments, security, energy and anti-narcotics. Both Saudi Arabia and the Philippines have strict laws against drug dealing and drug smuggling.

In Saudi Arabia, dozens of convicted drug smugglers are executed each year. In the Philippines, Human Rights Watch says 7,000 have died in Duterte's war on drugs, many of them in extrajudicial killings. Duterte has said he does not condone unlawful killings, although he has threatened criminals with death in several speeches.

In Qatar and Bahrain, expatriate workers outnumber the local population. In Saudi Arabia, a third of the population - around 9 million people - are foreigners, many of whom take on low-wage jobs that Saudi citizens shun. Saudi analyst Khaled Almaena said the kingdom's labor laws are good on paper, but there are concerns around their implementation. Almaena has advocated for protecting the rights of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia, and during his time as editor of the Saudi daily Arab News he started a weekly for Filipino expats called "Pinoy Xtra". "Without the contribution of the Filipino nurses the hospitals here would flat," he said. — AP

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Focus

**GRAIN ON RUNWAYS, PARKING LOTS, FIELDS AMID GLOBAL GLUT**

Iowa farmer Karl Fox is drowning in corn. Reluctant to sell his harvest at today's rock-bottom prices, he has stuffed storage bins at his property full and left more corn piled on the ground, covered with a tarp. He would rather risk potential crop damage from the elements than pay the exorbitant cost of storage elsewhere. "That's how poor people do it," said Fox, who has been farming for 28 years. "You do what you have to do."

Farmers face similar problems across the globe. World stockpiles of corn and wheat are at record highs. From Iowa to China, years of bumper crops and low prices have overwhelmed storage capacity for basic foodstuffs. Global stocks of corn, wheat, rice and soybeans combined will hit a record 671.1 million tonnes going into the next harvest - the third straight year of historically high surplus, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). That's enough to cover demand from China for about a year.

In the United States, farmers facing a fourth straight year of declining incomes and rising debts are hanging on to grain in the hope of higher prices later. They may be waiting a long time: Market fundamentals appear to be weakening as the world's top grain producers ponder what to do with so much food. The persistent glut is a striking contrast from the panic a decade ago, when severe droughts in Russia and the United States sent prices soaring. The shrinking supply forced big importers such as China to enact policies to encourage more domestic production and increase the volume of storage to improve food security.

China abandoned that policy last year and is now selling off hundreds of millions of tonnes of old stocks. Russia, too, is looking at exporting from state-held stockpiles, with storage stuffed after a record harvest in 2016. A surge of Chinese and Russian exports would put even more downward pressure on prices in an over-supplied global market. That means US farmers will likely be producing more grain for less money. The USDA forecasts net farm income will fall 8.7 percent this year to \$62.3 billion - the lowest level since 2009.

**Caterpillars, Rodents and Donkeys**

In farms across Iowa, corn bulges in plastic tubes that snake across the fields. The grain-stuffed silo bags are taller than a man, often longer than a soccer field and look like monstrous white caterpillars. On the other side of the globe in Australia, demand for the storage bags has exploded after farmers produced record crops of wheat and barley.

They are laying across fields in Argentina, too. There, wheat production spiked 41.6 percent this year over the 2015/16 season, according to the most recent USDA data. There are risks to using the bags, however, as wild animals ranging from rodents to armadillos and even donkeys can be tempted to break in for the grain, said Mariano Bosch, the head of Adecoagro SA, which farms more than 225,000 hectares of row crops in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.

When the company expanded its grain plantings in northern Argentina, he said, they started building electrified fences around their silo bags to keep out cougars and pumas. "They won't eat the grain. They're just curious," said Bosch, who added that about 40 percent of the company's grain this year is stored in silo bags. In neighboring Brazil, the world's largest soybean shipper and the second-largest exporter of corn, towering grain silos have sprung up all across the country.

**Grains on the Runway**

Storing grain gives farmers more control over when and how they sell, to avoid low harvest-time prices and to best take advantage of spikes in futures or currency swings. But with storage running short - and a mountain of grain to move ahead of summer or early autumn harvests - that control is slipping away. Farmers with mounting bills, tight cash-flow and nowhere to store crops may have to sell them - even if it means taking a loss.

In Goodland, Kansas, where the next wheat harvest begins in late June, farmers holding grain in silos are facing cash wheat prices of about \$3.15 a bushel and cash corn prices of \$2.90 a bushel - both well below production costs of at least \$4 a bushel. Permanent storage in the United States can handle about 24.3 billion bushels - well short of the 25.9 billion bushels of wheat, soybeans and feed grains the USDA said was piled up by the end of last autumn's harvest.

The overflow in the United States has prompted a rush for temporary storage. The USDA has approved permits for more than 1.2 billion bushels of temporary and emergency grain storage - such as tarp-covered piles and open-air mounds. — Reuters

**BRAZIL SUB PROGRAM NAVIGATES TURBULENT WATERS**

In a vast hangar, Brazilian technicians work on the enormous cylindrical hulls of two submarines, but in a country buffeted by economic crisis and corruption the vessels already face stormy waters. The hangar at a naval facility in Itaguaí, south of Rio de Janeiro, is 38 m tall, an impressive structure where the future submarines, lying in separate sections, are being equipped before eventual assembly. In all, five submarines are planned, one of them nuclear-powered, with the first scheduled for launching in July 2018.

The bid to transform Brazil's small submarine fleet was won by French group DCNS in a \$6.7 billion (\$7.1 billion) contract signed in 2009 to bring in its technological know-how and also to build a new naval base and shipyard at the site. The plan is to phase out the five submarines built with Germany between 1980 and 1990 and give the navy a boost in its main job of patrolling Brazil's 8,500-km coastline.

But for all the ambition and foreign help, Brazil's submarine-building voyage is falling behind schedule. The first conventional vessel was meant to have been launched this year while the nuclear sub - being built exclusively with Brazilian technology - is five years behind schedule. Although the planning stage for that submarine is completed, construction will not start until 2021, with launching in 2028. The base and new shipyard are just over 60 percent finished.

Latin America's biggest country is into its third year of recession and a huge embezzlement and bribery scandal has turned politics upside down, while exacerbating the economic woes. At the heart of that scandal is Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht, which has been targeted by prosecutors over its central role in fleecing state oil company Petrobras and making illegal payments to political campaigns. And Odebrecht is DCNS's partner in the submarine project.

Currently some 1,650 workers in Odebrecht overalls are working at the site. Back in 2014 there were more than 6,000, said Admiral Gilberto Max Hirschfeld, who oversees the construction. Odebrecht's involvement in the submarine project has also been caught up in the corruption scandal, but Hirschfeld said "the investigation does not affect the shipyard". The problems with keeping up to schedule are caused by "having to slow down as a result of budget shortages," he said. "But we're focusing all our efforts on the first launch taking place in 2018."

A big moment will be when the first section of the first hull is transported to the shipyard for final assembly, using a 710-m tunnel that has been cut through the mountainside to link the factory hangar and new base.

The enormous scale of the project and expense is all worth it for Brazil, the admiral

said. "Brazil's riches attract a lot of envy and we don't know what will happen in 50, 100 years," he said.

He also downplayed the problems of delays, pointing out long waits in DCNS' construction of a new Barracuda line of nuclear subs in France. "The country is

going through difficulties, but it's entirely manageable," said Eric Berthelot, director of DCNS Brazil. "It's a strategic development for the country. We've seen the economy's evolution these last few years and today there are signs of improvement," Berthelot said. — AFP



The first Brazilian conventional submarines (SSK) are manufactured under the national submarine development program (Prosub) in partnership with France at the naval submarine shipyard (ICN) in Itaguaí, some 70 km south of Rio de Janeiro, on April 7, 2017. — AFP

**MOSUL'S SUDANESE EXILED, DISPLACED, BROKE**

They're not Iraqis but they suffered under jihadist rule just like other Mosul residents. Now they have lost everything they spent decades working for and long for their native Sudan. Most of them moved to Iraq in the 1980s, when the country was something of an economic powerhouse and an attractive destination for many laborers from poorer countries in the region. When the Islamic State group took over Mosul in June 2014, the city's Sudanese residents stayed. And when civilians from their neighborhood of west Mosul fled the fighting last month, they left with them.

Now they live in administrative limbo, huddled together on foam mattresses thrown on the gravel inside a huge United Nations tent at the Hammam Al-Ail displacement camp south of Mosul. "We came here to build something but now we have lost everything," said Yaacub Mohammed Adel, who is originally from Khartoum and ran a tea shop in the Mosul al-Jadida neighborhood until mid-March this year. "We want compensation for the property we lost... We want to go back to Sudan, but not empty-handed," he said.

The western side of Mosul, including the same neighborhood where a lot of them lived and worked, has suffered extensive damage from air strikes and shelling. Ahmad Abdallah moved to Iraq from the troubled Sudanese region of Darfur, which has also been torn by conflict and mass displacement in recent years. "The country during Saddam was good," said the 53-year-old Abdallah, referring to former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

**'They took pity'**

"There was work available in Baghdad, in Basra, in Mosul... It was safe. There were about 50,000 Sudanese on Iraqi soil at that time." He said that the jihadists who made Mosul the de facto Iraqi capital of their self-proclaimed "caliphate" never specifically took aim at their small community. "In Mosul, we Sudanese were never very religious. But Daesh (IS) never even asked us not to shave, we did not have to pledge allegiance. Most of us are old, I guess they kind of took pity," the greying man explained. "They just ignored us," Abdallah said.

Now the group of ageing Sudanese workers fear they will continue to be ignored and most of them are mulling a return to Sudan. "El-Fasher (the capital of Sudan's North Darfur province) is a thousand times better than Mosul now... In the end Sudan is my country," he said with a

resigned smile. "I miss my family, it's been a long time." Nobody in the group of around 15 has been back once since they left Sudan, and under IS rule in Mosul they could not call home because mobile phones were banned. "When I first got out I called my family and they didn't know I was alive," said Adel. "They thought I was missing."

**Compensation or return**

Ibrahim Zakariah, from another part of Darfur, lost everything but his sense of humor in the fighting that swept west Mosul over the past two months. "You see, I had only this shirt when I fled and I bought those plastic sandals here," he said, giving a tour of his little corner of the tent. "But I have a room with a view of the sea," he joked, pointing to a puddle of rainwater that formed overnight

right next to his mattress. He moved to Iraq in 1987 and spent several years in Baghdad's Battaween neighborhood, which is still the capital's main hub for daily laborers from Egypt and Sudan.

He is still undecided about a possible return to Sudan and clings to hope that a promised meeting with a Red Cross delegation could yield some compensation. "Nobody helps us here and all we had is gone," said Zakariah. "But I'm an old man, maybe I'll rebuild something in Mosul if I get a chance. We have faced many wars in Iraq. If there's another one it's OK, we are used to it."

The 55-year-old man, a white scarf wrapped around his head, said he lost touch with his family a long time ago. "I think they are dead, I don't know. If I go back, maybe I'll stay with my sister. If she still knows who I am." — AFP



Displaced Sudanese men who fled from the northern Iraqi city of Mosul due to the ongoing fighting between government forces and Islamic State, sit inside a tent at the Hammam Al-Ail camp south of Mosul on April 4, 2017. — AFP

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## WARBURTON SHOULD BE FIT FOR LIONS: CARDIFF COACH

**LONDON:** Sam Warburton faces six weeks out with a knee injury but his Cardiff Blues coach Danny Wilson said he should be fit in time for the British and Irish Lions tour of New Zealand. The 28-year-old backrow forward—who many have predicted could captain the Lions in New Zealand after his success four years ago in the 2-1 Test series win over Australia—won't play again for Cardiff Blues before the Lions depart for New Zealand, but he should be fit by the tour opener on June 3. "Sam has a low grade medial strain which will put him out for approximately six weeks, which won't interfere with the Lions," said Wilson at a press conference. "He shouldn't have any problem regarding the Lions. "Knowing how diligent Sam will be, with all these things, you see players who get back quickly if they follow religiously the protocol and they get a bit of luck.—AFP



## END OF THE ROAD FOR 50KM OLYMPIC WALK?

**PARIS:** Athletics' governing body meets in London this week to assess Russia's progress in stamping out doping and whether the 50km walk has come to the end of the Olympic road. Also at today's meeting the IAAF wants to discuss ending the practice of African athletes switching allegiances. The stamina-sapping walking event has been on the Games menu since Los Angeles in 1932 but is suffering from dwindling viewer interest and allegations of doping, especially among Russian competitors, leaving the discipline vulnerable for the 2020 Tokyo Games. The 2016 Rio 50km walk winner, Russia's Sergey Kiryapkin, was stripped of his gold after he was found guilty of doping. Despite the event's endangered status three-time European gold medalist Yohann Diniz spoke out in its defence. "The audience it pulls in is very good, it works better even than the marathon. The 50km walk throws up so many twists and turns, improbable scenarios. "And it's an event which truly represents the Olympic spirit in all its splendour, not the business that the Olympics has turned into," the Frenchman told AFP. The 1980 Moscow Games 50km walk champion Maurizio Damilano, president of the event's body, hopes a compromise can be found for 2020.—AFP

## GIANTS' POSEY 'FINE' AFTER FASTBALL TO HELMET

**SAN FRANCISCO:** San Francisco catcher Buster Posey was "fine" Monday after taking a fastball to the head in the first inning of the Giants' 4-1 win over the Arizona Diamondbacks. Posey, batting with a runner at third and two outs in the bottom of the first, couldn't avoid the pitch from Arizona's Taijuan Walker, which hit him near the crown of his helmet. He immediately went down, with manager Bruce Bochy and trainer Dave Groeschner racing to the plate. Posey stood on his own, but Bochy pulled him from the game so he could be monitored by team medical staff. "He's fine," Bochy said after the game. "It's a scary moment, a dangerous moment. But that doesn't mean there's something there." Both teams were at pains to say there would be no lingering ill feeling from the incident when they play again tonight. Walker said the pitch that hit Posey just got away from him. "I never want to do that," Walker said. "I have before. It's scary. It's something I never want to do. That one just got away from me."—AFP



### FIGURE SKATING

## JAPAN THANKS RETIRING ASADA

**TOKYO:** Japan yesterday expressed national thanks to former world champion figure skater Mao Asada, a day after she shocked the nation by announcing her retirement from competition. The 26-year-old Asada, who won three world titles in 2008, 2010 and 2014, said on her official blog late Monday that she was hanging up her skates, sparking TV stations to flash the news on screen. By Yesterday morning, public broadcaster NHK was reporting the retirement as its top news item, squeezing out rising geopolitical tensions on the neighbouring Korean peninsula.

All major newspapers and sports tabloids reported the announcement on their front pages, while the sports dailies ran inside headlines expressing emotions such as "Thank you, Mao" and "Thank you, beloved Mao". The central government weighed in with top spokesman Yoshihide Suga reacting at a regular morning briefing. "She performed brilliantly," said Suga, the chief cabinet secretary and right-hand man to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe "She is a rare athlete that many fans have loved for a long time." Asada, a silver medalist at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics behind South Korea's Kim Yuna, never made it on to the highest step of the Games podium but that did not seem to matter to her admirers. "She could not win a gold at an

Olympics, but she herself has shined like a gold medal," said Tamayo Marukawa, the state minister in charge of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Asada's retirement also spurred reactions from other athletes as well as TV personalities.

"Asada is brilliant and attractive as an athlete and great as a person," footballer Yuto Nagatomo of Inter Milan and Japan said on Twitter. "Personally, she was one of my favourite athletes." Nobunari Oda, a figure skater who competed in 2010 at Vancouver with Asada, tearfully said on a live television programme: "I will miss her." The rivalry between Asada and Kim was on the minds of many. TV personality Chihara Jr said: "Kim Yuna is the top, Mao Asada is the best." Asada took a one-year break after the last of her three world championship victories complaining of exhaustion. But after returning to the ice for the 2015-16 season, her results began to nosedive, culminating in a humiliating 12th-place finish at the Japan nationals in December.

Many in Japan feel a close kinship to Asada, having watched her skate since her teens, including her breathtaking win at the global Grand Prix final at the age of 15.

But what arguably sealed national affection was how she reacted after her performance in the short programme flopped at the Sochi Olympics in 2014.—AFP

### ATHLETICS

## TWO WORLD CHAMPIONS AMONG RUSSIANS CLEARED FOR WORLDS

**PARIS:** World champions Sergey Shubenkov and Maria Kuchina are among seven more Russian athletes cleared to compete as neutrals while the Russian team is banned for doping, the IAAF said yesterday. It takes the tally of Russians granted permission by athletics' governing body to compete to 12 and was greeted with cautious optimism in Russia, with high-jump star Kuchina saying she was relishing returning to elite-level action. "I wish to thank the Doping Review Board for their continued dedication and diligence in assessing these applications," said IAAF president Sebastian Coe, clearing the seven to take part in international competition, including the world championships in London in August.

The other Russians deemed to be drug-free were: Illia Mudrov (pole vault); Sergey Shirobokov (race walks); Daniil Tsyplakov (high jump); Olga Mullina (pole vault); and Yana Smerdova (race walks).

The Doping Review Board of the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations) "unanimously accepted" their applications, the IAAF said in a statement, as it attempts to clean up the sport.

Russia's athletics team was barred wholesale from the Rio Olympics last summer because of widespread doping that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) says was state-sponsored.

Moscow has repeatedly denied allegations it was involved, but WADA has said the cheating extended to multiple Olympic sports from the Summer and Winter Games over several years. The reigning 2015 world champion Kuchina told R-Sport agency: "Of course the main event is the world championships and I need to prepare for it. "I have enough power and emotions and will just start working. I'm happy to compete together with the world's strongest high jumpers. Happy there finally will be a tough competition."

In February the IAAF extended the ban on Russia's track and field team to the prestigious world championships this summer—Russia has been barred from international competition since November 2015. Reigning 110m hurdles world champion Shubenkov was damning then of the IAAF's prolonged ban on the Russian team. The drug-tainted RusAF, the Russian Athletics Federation, said dozens more of its athletes were hoping to make it to the London showpiece. "It's a good sign that the IAAF has issued a decision that we have all been waiting a long time for," Maria Trushchenkova, a RusAF top official, told AFP yesterday.

"But around 70 Russian athletes are still waiting for IAAF permission to compete as neutrals—



Maria Kuchina

and we receive new bids almost every day."

### 'REBUILDING CONFIDENCE'

Three other Russian athletes were given the green light to compete as neutrals by the IAAF earlier this year and two last year. They too all met the IAAF's "exceptional eligibility criteria", but the IAAF cautioned that they still needed to be accepted by the individual competitions. Coe, who previously said that the Russian team could

not be reintegrated into the sport before November, added: "There can be no time constraints on a process which has been established to safeguard the rights and aspirations of the world's clean athletes and is about rebuilding confidence in competition. "For the avoidance of any doubt—as we have consistently stated from the beginning of this process—all athletes given exceptional eligibility will compete as independent neutral athletes and not as a Russian team."—AFP

### ALPINE SKIING

## WORLEY RELISHES NEED FOR SPEED IN GOLD RUSH

**PARIS:** Tessa Worley fought back from heart-breaking injury to win a world giant slalom title and now the Frenchwoman wants to attack alpine skiing's speed events.

The 27-year-old, who has an Australian father and French mother, made a spectacular return from rupturing the cruciate anterior ligament in her right knee in a fall just three weeks before the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

Worley won her first World Cup race in nearly three years in Killington, Vermont in November and went on to win the world title in St Moritz as well as the World Cup giant slalom title for the season.

"I don't feel it was revenge. I think I really came to accept that I was injured that year and it just was not my year," Worley told AFP

in an interview. "This injury also brought me some things and let me get to where I am this year. I made it despite the difficult moments and doubts. I succeeded and learned a lot from all that."

Worley said her World Cup triumphs showed that she can compete on every kind of piste. But having conquered the supreme technical skills of the giant slalom, Worley feels she has to prove herself as a speed skier as well. "I have made a lot of progress in Super-G. But there is still a new level to reach to get to the top step of the podium," Worley said. "It's really very close and it will be a good direction to work on. It is clearly a different discipline but it is becoming very important," said Worley, who has twice taken fifth place in Super-G World Cup races.—AFP



## DRIVERS SWAP HIGHWAYS FOR FAIRWAYS IN GRIPPING AUDI QUATTRO CUP

**KUWAIT:** Audi customers in Kuwait showed off driving skills of a different kind at the weekend, tee in golf at the annual Audi quattro Cup tournament.

The prestigious and hugely popular event saw 50 teams of golfers battling it out for much more than bragging rights against fellow Audi owners over the demanding fairways and greens of the Sahara Golf Club.

The Audi Kuwait customers drove, chipped, pitched and putted their way around the challenging 18 holes in the hope of putting themselves in pole position to win the Audi quattro Cup Kuwait and a trip of a lifetime for a place in the Audi quattro Cup World Final, from December 1-5, 2017, at Quivira Golf Club in Cabo San

Lucas, Mexico. After some scintillating competition in an action-packed day, the battle for top honours was an extremely tight finish. The leading three pairs all scored 44 stable ford points, with Mohammad Baba and Khaled Saad Al-Sabah winning on a count-back to take first place and the coveted prize of a place in the world final in Mexico. Talal Al-Othman and Hanadi Al-Marzouq finished second, with Wael Al-Welayti and Fadia Emadi collecting third place. Khaled Saad Al-Sabah was in the prizes again on the course, securing Nearest the Pin on Hole 11 and Andy Palmer picked up Nearest the Pin on Hole 4. Kyung O/C Hyun demonstrated her power with the Longest Drive on Hole 13. The Audi quattro Cup Golf Tournament

Series is world's most renowned amateur golf tournament and celebrates its 27th anniversary this year. During 2017, over 800 rounds of golf will be played by more than 100,000 competitors in more than 50 countries. The special series sees every winning team from the regional tournament invited to the national final with the chance to qualify for the World Final.

The format of the Audi quattro Cup tournament involves both players in a team teeing off on every hole, then choosing the best tee shot and playing alternate shots from there until the ball is holed, with the Stableford format used to score each team. The team that scores the most points wins the tournament.



RUGBY

# BACKLASH AS LEGAL ACTION TAKEN OVER FORCE AXE THREAT

**SYDNEY:** RugbyWA has launched legal action against the Australian Rugby Union in a bid to keep threatened Super franchise Western Force afloat as the axe hovers over the club and a backlash builds. A writ against the governing body was lodged on Monday evening, Western Australia's rugby body said, notifying the ARU of the intention to apply for an injunction against any plan to revoke the Perth-based team's licence. It followed meetings between the two sides in the wake of the ARU announcing that either the Force or Melbourne Rebels would be culled from the revamped 2018 southern hemi-

sphere tournament. RugbyWA called talks with the ARU "unsatisfactory", saying they highlighted "that the terms of the assessment and process being used to evaluate ourselves and the Rebels were inconsistent and inequitable". It added that "we felt in order to protect our position it was necessary to issue legal proceedings to protect our rights under the Alliance Agreement". Under the agreement struck last year, Force players and professional staff became employees of the ARU after the governing body helped bail out the club, which was suffering financial problems. According to the West Australian

newspaper, the Force have a clause in the agreement that commits both parties to a current broadcast deal that ends in 2020. The Australian newspaper cited Rebels owner Andrew Cox as saying his team may also go down the legal route. The growing backlash follows Super Rugby's governing body SANZAAR announcing on Sunday that two South African teams and one from Australia would be axed, streamlining the 18-team competition to a three-conference 15-team format. SANZAAR has left it to the national rugby unions involved to announce the

teams to cut. The ARU on Monday said it would be either the Force or Rebels, meaning the ACT Brumbies, NSW Waratahs and Queensland Reds were safe, with Japan's maligned Sunwolves joining the Australian conference. ARU chairman Cameron Clyne previously said a decision would be made within days following an analysis of financial sustainability, performance and commercial factors. But the deadline has now been pushed back. "We maintain our commitment to reaching resolution on this matter as soon as possible, however the timeline that we initially anticipated of

78-72 hours will not apply," Clyne said yesterday. The fallout has seen calls mount for ARU chief executive Bill Pulver to step down, with former Wallabies coach Alan Jones saying the entire board should quit over their handling of the issue. "I can't comprehend how an Australian rugby administration would not stand up to SANZAAR and protect the interests of Australian rugby, not Japanese rugby," he told New Zealand's Radio Sport. "To wipe out an Australian team and admit a Japanese team into the conference is mind boggling." —AFP

CYCLING

## BRITAIN TRY TO FORGET SCANDAL AT TRACK WORLDS

**HONG KONG:** Britain will try to move on from damaging allegations of sexism and bullying as they challenge with a new-look squad at this week's Track Cycling World Championships in Hong Kong. The Brits' rise to cycling prominence has become mired in controversy over the past year since axed rider Jess Varnish lashed out at the team's internal culture. The fall-out led to the departure of technical director Shane Sutton and prompted an independent review, a leaked draft of which slammed a "culture of fear and bullying" within British Cycling. However, some leading figures have begun to push back, with record-breaking Olympian Chris Hoy saying he felt the row had been "sensationalised" by media. Even Katy Marchant, who like Varnish was highly critical of British Cycling when they failed to qualify for the Olympic team sprint at last year's world championships, told the Daily Telegraph: "I had never had a problem with the culture." "Obviously at the world champs last year there was a lot of disappointment, and there were some heated moments. Things got expressed maybe not the way that they should," she said. Olympic gold and silver medallist Callum Skinner said the British team now hoped to "draw a line" under the controversy. "I think the important thing is that going forward... it feels now like we're in a happy place and the sport is moving forward for the better," he said, according to the Telegraph. "I don't think there's a need for a continual cycle of the view after the view after the view. I think it's just good to draw a line under it, make the changes that are necessary and move forward," added Skinner.

NEW FACES

Despite the absence of power couple Jason and Laura Kenny, who are awaiting their first child, and the retirements of Bradley Wiggins and Joanna Rowsell Shand post-Olympics, Britain have still brought four Rio champions to Hong Kong. Katie Archibald, Elinor Barker, Steven Burke and Callum Skinner all summited the podium in team events last year in Brazil, while Marchant won bronze in the individual sprint. Australia, now without retired great Anna Meares and hoping to make amends for a disappointing Olympics, have brought eight debutants alongside a clutch of world title-winners. Six-time world champion Cameron Meyer headlines the team, which is now under new performance director Simon Jones, while Rebecca Wiasak is aiming for her third straight individual pursuit title. "We're not here to be the second best. We're starting to get the right people around us and no doubt (Jones) will make a number of changes within our squad in the high-performance programme and that will be for the better," Wiasak told AFP. She added: "A number of our riders are in incredible form, so we'd hope to come away at least with a couple of gold medals." In what is only the second track world championships held in Asia, the women's madison will be contested for the first time and the omnium has been slashed from six events to four. With teams now preparing for Tokyo 2020, Germany's Kristina Vogel is the sole individual sprint Olympic champion at the event, which runs from today to Sunday. Home hopes are carried by Hong Kong's Sarah Lee, the 2012 Olympics keirin bronze medallist and the time trial runner-up at last year's world championships. —AFP



**CHICAGO:** Kris Bryant #17 of the Chicago Cubs flies out during the fourth inning of a game against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Wrigley Field on Monday in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

BASEBALL

# RIZZO AND CUBS RAISE BANNER, BEAT DODGERS IN HOME OPENER

**CHICAGO:** Anthony Rizzo hit a game-winning single off closer Kenley Jansen in the ninth inning as the Chicago Cubs beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 3-2 on Monday night after raising a World Series championship banner for the first time at Wrigley Field. Pinch-hitter Jon Jay started the decisive rally with a leadoff single against Sergio Romo (0-1). With two outs and Jay on third, Rizzo sliced a 1-1 pitch from Jansen into left field for his first RBI this season. Wade Davis (1-0) pitched a scoreless inning for his first win with the Cubs, who blew a 2-0 lead before a dramatic victory in their rain-delayed home opener.

GIANTS 4, DIAMONDBACKS 1

Buster Posey was doing well after being struck in the helmet by a 94 mph fastball in the first inning, a frightening moment during San Francisco's victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks in its home opener. Posey will be re-evaluated yesterday but was doing fine, according to manager Bruce Bochy. The star catcher is likely to sit out in late night game. Taijuan Walker's 0-1 fastball with two outs in the first inning sent Posey immediately to ground. Athletic trainer Dave Groeschner sprinted toward the plate and Bochy was right behind. Posey got up on his own but exited the game. Bochy said if Posey weren't a catcher, he might have been OK to stay in the game, but the Giants weren't taking any chances with the 2012 NL MVP and 2010 NL Rookie of the Year.

TIGERS 2, RED SOX 1

Justin Verlander and Chris Sale dominated in a matchup of ace pitchers before Nicholas Castellanos singled in the go-ahead run off Sale in the eighth inning, lifting Detroit over Boston. Verlander gave up an unearned run, three hits and two walks while striking out four over seven innings. Justin Wilson (1-0) struck out one and walked one in the eighth and Francisco Rodriguez struck out two and allowed a hit in the ninth, earning his second save in three chances. Sale (0-1) struck out 10 and gave up two runs and five hits over 7 2/3 innings. Ian Kinsler homered off Sale in the sixth. The Red Sox scored their only run in the second inning after Castellanos' fielding error loaded the bases with no outs.

YANKEES 8, RAYS 1

Michael Pineda retired his first 20 batters before Evan Longoria lined a double down the left-field line in New York's home opener. Pineda (1-1) dominated like the pitcher the Yankees have always hoped he would become. He struck out 11, walked none and threw 67 of 93 pitches for strikes. Tampa Bay's Logan Morrison homered with one out in the eighth, a ball that hit off the top of the wall in right-center and deflected off a fan before bouncing back onto the field. A video review was needed to determine it was a home run. Alex Cobb (1-1) allowed five runs in 7 1/3 innings.

MARINERS 6, ASTROS 0

James Paxton shut down Houston for the second time in a week, pitching seven innings of four-hit ball and leading Seattle to a win in its home opener. The Mariners rebounded nicely from Sunday's ugly ninth-inning meltdown against the Angels when they gave up seven runs and lost 10-9. Paxton (1-0) was a big reason why, keeping Houston's offense

silent long enough for Seattle's bats to wake up and finally convert with runners in scoring position. Paxton struck out eight and walked two while pitching in Seattle's home opener for the second time in his career. Charlie Morton (0-1) allowed three runs and seven hits and struck out six.

ATHLETICS 2, ROYALS 0

Khris Davis hit a two-run homer while Jharel Cotton shut down Kansas City's anemic offense and Oakland held on to spoil the Royals' home opener. Cotton (1-1) gave up a single in the first and another in the sixth, but otherwise befuddled a Royals lineup that hasn't shown much punch. He walked three and struck out six over seven innings. Sean Doolittle ran into trouble in the ninth, putting runners on the corners with two outs. He bounced back to strike out Brandon Moss for his first save, helping the A's beat the Royals for the seventh consecutive time. Davis provided all the offense Oakland needed when he followed a leadoff single by Ryon Healy with his fourth homer of the year. The shot to right on a 3-0 pitch from Ian Kennedy (0-2) barely scraped the wall.

Padres 5, Rockies 3

Wil Myers hit a leadoff triple in the eighth inning to complete the first cycle of his career and send San Diego past Colorado. Myers singled in the first, doubled in the third and homered in the sixth to help the Padres win for the third time in four games. Matt Kemp had the only other cycle in San Diego history on Aug 14, 2015, also at Coors Field. Hunter Renfro homered for the Padres, a two-run shot off Tyler Chatwood (0-2). Miguel Diaz (1-0) and five other pitchers combined to keep Colorado in check. DJ LeMahieu and Mark Reynolds homered for the Rockies.

NATIONALS 14, CARDINALS 6

Bryce Harper tied a career high with four hits and reached base in all six plate appearances as Washington routed St. Louis. Harper drove in three runs during his first four-hit game since April 17, 2013. Stephen Drew, Adam Eaton and Ryan Zimmerman each had three of Washington's 19 hits

as the Nationals overcame four errors. They broke open the game in a seven-run eighth inning. Tanner Roark (2-0) allowed five runs - three earned - over five innings. Cardinals starter Adam Wainwright (0-2) gave up six runs and 11 hits in four-plus innings.

METS 4, PHILLIES 3

Jay Bruce homered twice, including the tiebreaking shot in a testy eighth inning to lead New York over Philadelphia. Recently bumped up to the cleanup spot, Bruce put the Mets in front 4-2 with a towering, two-run drive off his own digital image on the videoboard in right field. He connected on a 1-2 pitch from left hander Joely Rodriguez, giving Bruce four homers this season and three in the past two days after many expected New York to trade him last winter. Tempers flared two batters earlier when Phillies reliever Edubray Ramos (0-1) threw a first-pitch fastball over Asdrubal Cabrera's head - perhaps seeking revenge for Cabrera's two-handed bat flip after hitting a game-winning homer against Ramos last Sept. 22 as the Mets were chasing a playoff berth. Addison Reed allowed Brock Stassi's solo homer in the ninth but recovered to earn his second save. Stassi's drive was his first major league hit. Jerry Blevins (1-0) got two outs for the Mets, aided by a fine defensive play from catcher Travis d'Arnaud and Cabrera at shortstop.

REDS 7, PIRATES 1

Eugenio Suarez and Scooter Gennett homered as Cincinnati took advantage of wild Pittsburgh starter Tyler Glasnow. Making his season debut, Glasnow (0-1) failed to make it out of the second inning. The right-hander walked five - including four straight in the first - and left after throwing just 35 of his 64 pitches for strikes. Billy Hamilton had two of the Reds' eight hits and added a pair of stolen bases. Michael Lorenzen (1-0) worked three shutout innings in relief of erratic starter Brandon Finnegan. Cincinnati's bullpen retired 21 straight to end the game. The Pirates managed only four hits and stranded eight, going 0 for 9 with runners in scoring position. — AP



## ULTIMATE SOCCER ACADEMY SUPPORTED BY NISSAN AL BAPTAIN GEARS UP FOR MARE NOSTRUM CUP TOURNAMENT

**KUWAIT:** Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Co. (AABC), the authorized agent of Nissan and the official sponsor of Ultimate Soccer Academy in Kuwait, is proud to announce that Ultimate Soccer Academy is gearing up for the 'Mare Nostrum Cup' Tournament, which will be taking place in the city of Barcelona during the 13th until the 17th of April 2017. After Ultimate Soccer Academy participated in the 2016 tournament, this year marks the Academy's fourth consecutive year to participate at the organized 'Mare Nostrum Cup'. A total of 220 academies will participate in the tournament this year, with teams from all around the world like, Sweden, Switzerland, Estonia, Belgium, and England, Ireland, Scotland, Japan, the United States and more. This year, Ultimate Soccer Academy will join with two teams, 2007/2008 & 2005/2006. The Ultimate Soccer Academy, is known for its top-quality coaching, and one of the

most reputable sports academies in Kuwait that provides football training for kids between 5-18 years of age. This is Nissan Al Babtain's second consecutive year providing support and assistance to various activities and events that the academy organizes around the year, including field trips in Kuwait and abroad, as well as world-class soccer training programs under the supervision of highly reputed coaches. Nissan Al Babtain is proud to support aspiring soccer-players by giving them the opportunity to grow their strengths, partake in competitive matches and instill a passion for sports and healthy living in a fun and engaging environment that exhibits team spirit. Nissan Al Babtain's latest sponsorships are part of the brands Corporate Social Responsibility strategy that emphasizes the importance of promoting sportsmanship among the younger generations.







## PAKISTAN CHARGES JAMSHED IN SPOT-FIXING CASE

**KARACHI:** Pakistan cricket charged former Test batsman Nasir Jamshed yesterday with obstructing and failing to cooperate in an investigation into a spot-fixing case which rocked their Twenty20 league. Jamshed, 27, is the fifth player charged in the scandal which saw a one-year ban-six months suspended-and a fine meted out to fast bowler Mohammad Irfan last month.

Three other players—Sharjeel Khan, Khalid Latif and Shahzaib Hasan—will fight the allegations before a three-member tribunal headed by a retired judge. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Jamshed, who was arrested in Britain in February and bailed until this month in the same case, was charged on two counts. "Jamshed has been charged for violation of articles 2.4.6 (not cooperat-

ing with investigation) and 2.4.7 (obstructing and delaying investigation) of the PCB Anti-Corruption Code," said a PCB statement. The Pakistan Super League (PSL) in February-March was hailed as a step towards restoring international cricket in Pakistan. But on February 10 Sharjeel and Khalid were suspended for allegedly meeting a man linked to an international betting syndi-

cate. Sharjeel was charged with accepting a fixing offer and not reporting it to the PCB's anti-corruption unit while Khalid's alleged violation was to lure other players into fixing. Hasan was also charged with getting players into fixing. Jamshed was allegedly a link between the bookies and players. He denies the charges. Jamshed was seen as a talented opener whose career was lifted with

back-to-back hundreds against India in 2012 but was discarded after the 2015 World Cup due to lack of form and fitness. Sharjeel and Khalid appeared before the tribunal last month and have until May 5 to respond to the charges. The tribunal is set to start day-to-day proceedings from May 19. Irfan confessed to "not reporting a fixing offer" and opted for "agreed sanction". —AFP



Kevin Grosskreutz

## WORLD CUP WINNER GROSSKREUTZ JOINS BASEMENT DARMSTADT

**BERLIN:** Germany's troubled World Cup winner Kevin Grosskreutz yesterday signed for Darmstadt, who are adrift at the bottom of the Bundesliga, as he looks to rebuild his career. The 28-year-old right-back or winger was sacked by second division club VfB Stuttgart last month following his part in a punch-up, also involving some of the club's youth players, on a late-night visit to a brothel.

After his dismissal a tearful Grosskreutz said he wanted nothing more to do with football. Now Darmstadt, who are 14 points from safety with six games left in Germany's top tier, have offered him a lifeline under coach Torsten Frings, an ex-Germany midfielder.

"I am really looking forward to playing for Darmstadt," said Grosskreutz. "Torsten Frings has been very concerned about me and together with the club's senior figures has convinced me that this is the right step for me. "As with all my previous clubs I will do everything to ensure that we will have success together."

Grosskreutz has endured a spectacular fall from grace since he picked up a World Cup winners medal despite not playing a minute of Brazil 2014.

He was part of the Borussia Dortmund team which won the German league in 2011 and 2012 and played in the 2013 Champions League final defeat to Bayern Munich. Grosskreutz left his home-town club in 2015 after failing to see eye-to-eye with coach Thomas Tuchel.

A move to Galatasaray was blighted by the fact he could not play for the Turkish giants because of incorrectly presented paperwork at the time of the transfer. In January 2016 he signed for Stuttgart after six unhappy months in Istanbul, until he was fired for his late-night exploits in the city's red-light district.

Despite Grosskreutz's tarnished reputation Frings is delighted to have signed a World Cup winner who has made five appearances for Germany.

"I am very happy and proud that we have managed to bring a player like Kevin Grosskreutz to Darmstadt," said the 40-year-old Frings. "Kevin has unbelievable experience, is a world champion and has played at an absolute top level."

"I've felt in the talks how up for it he is for this new challenge. "He will be a very important building block for our team in the coming season." — AFP

## CRICKET



AB de Villiers

## DE VILLIERS SHINES ON RETURN FROM INJURY

**NEW DELHI:** Fit-again South African AB de Villiers was pleasantly surprised to discover he has lost none of his touch after the batsman blasted a swashbuckling 89 not out in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match on Monday.

The 33-year-old, who has taken a break from tests to manage his workload, missed the final of South Africa's domestic 50-overs tournament with a back injury, which also kept him out of Royal Challengers Bangalore's IPL opener against Delhi.

There was no sign of any rust, however, as the player celebrated for his '360-degree' batting prowess clobbered nine sixes and three fours in a 46-ball blitz against the Kings XI Punjab at Indore's Holkar Cricket Stadium.

His brilliant innings helped a slow-starting Bangalore set a competitive 148 for four total but the hosts proved too strong in their reply, easing to an eight-wicket victory with 33 balls to spare.

"I did surprise myself and played a few

good shots," De Villiers, who was wearing a microphone, told the commentary team while he was fielding, admitting he had periods of uncertainty during the layoff.

"It's not like you become a bad player overnight, the rustiness is more self-doubt," he added. A couple of his sixes sailed out of the stadium and such was his timing that even when he charged a Mohit Sharma delivery which turned out wider than he had assumed, De Villiers made a late adjustment to send it over the long-off boundary. "Mr 360 is back! Genius @ABdeVilliers17," tweeted India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh, no mean six-hitter himself.

Sunrisers Hyderabad captain David Warner also doffed his hat at the South African, calling him "best in the business" while many of de Villiers' compatriots hailed the knock. "If I was a commentator I'd do a mic drop and enjoy the show... No words can describe @ABdeVilliers17... wow!" Proteas paceman Morne Morkel tweeted. —Reuters

## SOCCER

## ARGENTINA FIRE COACH BAUZA

**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentina's football association fired Edgardo Bauza as coach of the crisis-hit national team as it struggles to qualify for next year's World Cup, the head of the body said Monday. It was the first big move by the Argentine Football Association (AFA) since it last month picked new executives tasked with ending three years of turmoil in the Argentine game.

"We have reached a verbal agreement. We have told Edgardo Bauza that he is no longer the coach of Argentina," the AFA's new president Claudio Tapia told reporters after meeting with Bauza at the association's headquarters. He did not say who Bauza's replacement would be, but said more details would be given at a news conference for Tuesday at 2230 GMT at the AFA.

### WORLD CUP RISK

The world number two-ranked football nation risks failing to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1970.

Star striker Lionel Messi is to miss the country's three remaining qualifying matches due to suspension.

After a defeat to Bolivia last month, Argentina dropped to fifth place in the regional table-out of the top-four automatic qualifying positions. FIFA hit Messi with a four-match ban last month for swearing at an assistant referee in a game against Chile.

Bauza vowed after the Bolivia defeat that his squad had the strength to fight on. But Argentina have won only one of eight World Cup 2018 qualifiers played without Barcelona superstar Messi, compared to five out of six won with him on the pitch.

"The national team is playing badly and everyone knows it," Tapia said last week. Argentina's World Cup hero Diego Maradona said he was ready to lead an appeal to FIFA against Messi's ban. But it is rare for the sport's governing world body to repeal a suspension.

### MESSI SITUATION

Messi threatened to quit the national team last year after they lost on penalties to Chile in the Copa America Centenario final. That crisis prompted then-coach Gerardo Martino to quit and be replaced by Bauza, who left Brazilian club Sao Paulo to take up the post. Various other possible replacements such as Mauricio Pochettino of Tottenham Hotspur and Diego Simeone of Atletico Madrid reportedly turned down the job.

Bauza is the shortest-serving Argentina coach since 1974. During eight months with him in charge, Argentina won three matches and lost three, with two draws.

### CORRUPTION CLAIMS

The team has been undermined by a broader crisis afflicting the Argentina game, tangled up with politics. A power struggle broke out after



**LA PAZ:** This file photo taken on March 28, 2017 shows Argentina's coach Edgardo Bauza during the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia South American qualifier football match against Bolivia at Hernando Siles stadium in La Paz, Bolivia. —AFP

the death of former AFA president Julio Grondona in 2014. Maradona last year branded the AFA's management a "mafia." Argentina's President Mauricio Macri too complained of "the poor organization of Argentine football." He urged reform to "a system full of bad habits and corruption." FIFA and the Argentine courts have probed the AFA's affairs. Tapia acknowledged last week that firing Bauza would be problemat-

ic given the association's financial difficulties, though on Monday he appeared to have found a solution.

"We have a coach who has a cancellation clause. These contracts are not cheap," he said last week. "If you bring in a new coach, you have to have resources. If a coach earns two and you bring in one who earns three, where do you get it from?" — AFP

## WEHRLEIN RETURNS FOR SAUBER IN BAHRAIN

**LONDON:** German driver Pascal Wehrlein will be back behind the wheel for Sauber in Bahrain this weekend after missing the first two races of the Formula One season due to fitness issues, the Swiss-based team said yesterday. "Good news: We are pleased to inform that Pascal Wehrlein will be back in the car as of the Bahrain GP," Sauber said on Twitter.

Sunday's race at Sakhir will be the 22-year-old's debut for the Ferrari-powered team after he drove for now-defunct Manor last year, finishing 13th in Bahrain.

Italian Antonio Giovinazzi, a Ferrari reserve driver, stepped in for Wehrlein in Australia and China without scoring points and crashed

in qualifying and the race in Shanghai last weekend.

Wehrlein's absence in China was aimed at limiting the effects of jetlag and giving him more time to recover for Bahrain.

The German, who has close ties to champions Mercedes, injured his back in a crash at the "Race of Champions" event in Miami in January and was unable to train for weeks afterwards. Although he tested in Spain in March, and was cleared to drive in Australia, he pulled out on the Saturday before final practice. Sauber's other driver is Sweden's Marcus Ericsson, who has also yet to score this season. —Reuters

## NEYMAR BANNED FOR CLASICO AGAINST REAL

**MADRID:** Barcelona's Brazilian superstar Neymar will miss a huge La Liga clash at Real Madrid on April 23 after being handed a three-game suspension, the Spanish federation said yesterday. The 25-year-old forward was shown the first red card of his Barcelona career for two bookable offences as Barca's title defence suffered a big blow in a 2-0 defeat at Malaga on Saturday.

However, he was handed an extra two-match suspension on top of the automatic one-game ban for sarcastically applauding the officials as he left the pitch.

Barcelona are expected to appeal the decision. As well as missing a potential La Liga title decider at the Bernabeu, Neymar will be absent for home games against Real Sociedad and Osasuna. Madrid lead Barca by three points at the top of the table but also have a game in hand as they close on a first league title in five years. Neymar was booked in the first half at La Rosaleda for delaying a Malaga free-kick by tying his shoelaces in front of the ball and then charged into Roberto Rosales 25 minutes from time to see his second yellow card. "I think the interpretation of the yellow cards is special," said Barcelona boss Luis Enrique after the game.

"We have to be very careful in some games because there were some ugly challenges from behind that went unpunished and tying boots was." It is not the first time in recent weeks Neymar's attention to detail with his boots caught the eye. He changed his footwear whilst play was ongoing in Barca's two previous games against Granada and Sevilla, leaving his side temporarily down to 10 men.

Neymar has a highly lucrative long-term sponsorship deal with Nike with suggestions his antics may be to ensure his boots get extra time on camera. Meanwhile, Liverpool midfielder Philippe Coutinho is the hottest Brazilian talent after Neymar, according to his compatriot Juninho.

Coutinho became the top-scoring Brazilian in England's Premier League when he scored his 30th goal in his club's 2-1 win over Stoke City on Saturday, eclipsing the former Middlesbrough midfielder. "I am delighted that he takes my record," Juninho told the Daily Mail. "I can't think of anyone better—the record couldn't be in better hands." Coutinho can be considered, after

Neymar, the best player in Brazil. He's a different class and he deserves everything he is achieving because he has worked very hard for it." Coutinho has showed signs of regaining his best form in the past couple of games after taking time to regain his sharpness following an early-season ankle injury.

Juninho, who had two spells with Middlesbrough between 1995-1997 and 2002-2004, believes the key to Coutinho's game lies in his ability to find space.

"If you have an intelligence to your game

then you can find the space on the pitch and because the game in England is so fast that means a lot of the time it is also very open," he said. "One of Coutinho's biggest qualities is that ability to find the space. People think that type of player will have more difficulties adapting to English football than say Spanish football but in England I found a lot more space than I did in Spain," said Juninho, who also played for Atletico Madrid. "The intensity is there but if you get past the first wave of pressure then the pitch opens up." — Agencies



Neymar

## UNITED ON RIGHT TRACK WITH MOURINHO: VIDIC

**LONDON:** Manchester United may be struggling by their own high standards under Jose Mourinho this season but the Portuguese manager will get them back to winning ways, the club's former captain Nemanja Vidic said on Tuesday. United, who spent heavily in the close season, are only fifth in the Premier League, 18 points adrift of leaders Chelsea. They remain in the hunt for a top-four finish and Champions League qualification, however, and with 57 points from 30 games they sit four adrift

of fourth-placed rivals Manchester City, with a game in hand. United face a tough task when they take on Mourinho's former club Chelsea on Sunday and Vidic acknowledged that the winners of a record 20 English league titles have had to lower their expectations. "Realistically, if we can add a Champions League slot to the (League) Cup we have won already, we have to be satisfied," the retired 35-year old Serbian defender told the club's website

(www.manutd.com). "We are not in the position we would like to be in but we are fighting for the Champions League (qualification)," said Vidic, who won five Premier League titles and the 2008 Champions League during his eight-year spell at United. "Before the season you always think United should compete for the title but it's not easy. Mourinho came and brought in four players but to build a winning team you need time. "He has been in charge of big teams

and won trophies in different countries so he has the experience and I believe he knows what he is doing." United could also qualify for the continent's elite club competition if they win the second-tier Europa League, where they visit Anderlecht in the first leg of their quarter-final clash on Thursday. Vidic also backed United's top scorer this season, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, to stay at the club for one more term with his current contract set to run out after this season. "At 35 years of age it's not easy

because I am 35 and to be fair I am a bit tired of football," Vidic said. "But it seems he is still enjoying it and feeling good on the pitch. It's good for the club and I hope he will continue to be fit and perform like he has for most of the season. "He was never counting on speed as a player and that is a positive sign he can do well again next year." Ibrahimovic has scored 28 goals in 43 games for United in all competitions, including a brace in their 3-2 League Cup final win over Southampton. — Reuters

## BALE BACKS COLEMAN TO LEAD WALES TO 2018 WORLD CUP

**LONDON:** Wales manager Chris Coleman is the right man to guide the country to their first World Cup finals since 1958, winger Gareth Bale has said. Wales' hopes of qualifying for the 2018 World Cup in Russia hang in the balance after a run of four consecutive draws left them third in Group D, four points adrift of Serbia and Republic of Ireland with five games left. Only the nine group winners qualify automatically for the World Cup while the eight best runners-up will advance to a round of playoffs for the remaining four berths in Russia. Bale said he wanted Coleman to remain in charge and help steer the side to Russia. "What he has done for the team and Welsh football has been amazing," Bale told

the Daily Telegraph. "Qualification could have gone better but we're going to do everything we can to get there. "It won't be easy and there's a lot we have to do in the group now but Chris is the man who can keep us focused and positive and show us how to get the results we need." Bale also said Wales had to move on from their Euro 2016 campaign, where they reached the semi-finals, and focus on World Cup qualification. "We don't want to keep on looking back at the Euros. For everyone it was incredible to be a part of that and we all want that again," the Real Madrid winger added. "It would mean everything to reach Russia—we've only reached one World Cup finals before and that was back in the 1950s." — Reuters



**MUNICH:** Bayern's Arturo Vidal, left, and Arjen Robben attend a news conference prior to the Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and Real Madrid, in Munich, Germany, yesterday. Munich will face Real today. — AP

SOCCER

## BAYERN OUT TO BE REAL MADRID 'BETE NOIRE' AGAIN

**MUNICH:** Bayern Munich host Real Madrid in today's mouthwatering Champions League quarter-final, first-leg, with Carlo Ancelotti's Bavarians looking once again to be the Spaniards' 'bete noire'. And the subplots to the Allianz Arena clash are fascinating. Bayern boss Carlo Ancelotti coached Real to the 2014 Champions League crown and is up against his former assistant from that triumph, Madrid's current head coach Zinedine Zidane. World Cup 2010 winner Xabi Alonso, who also won the 2014 Champions League before joining Bayern, will face his ex-club for the last time before retiring in June. And Real's Germany midfielder Toni Kroos is another to be coming up against his former employers.

Ancelotti says "little things will make the difference" between the star-studded squads that will see two goal-scoring giants go head-to-head. Bayern's top-scorer Robert Lewandowski, with 38 goals in all competitions this season, is up against Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo, with 26 goals from 36 games. That may be modest by his standards, but Ronaldo has tormented Bayern in the past with four goals in as many games and the Bavarians will be wary, especially with backup from Wales star Gareth Bale and France's Karim Benzema. Lewandowski suffered a bruised shoulder in scoring twice in Saturday's 4-1 hammering of Borussia Dortmund, but expects to be "100 percent" fit. Bayern are on a Champions League record of 16 straight European wins at the Allianz Arena and that's a record Dutch winger Arjen Robben is keen to maintain. "We have to up the ante, we have to signal (to Real) from the first minute that there is nothing to take in Munich and we want to win the game," he said. Bayern are looking to recover their 'bete noire' nickname, given to them by Real fans after Munich won eight of 14 matches against Real between 2000 and 2012.

### 'SOUNDS LIKE A FINAL'

All that changed in the 2014 Champions League's semi-final when the team coached by Pep Guardiola was thrashed 4-0 in Munich, crashing out 5-0 on aggregate as Ronaldo and Sergio Ramos netted twice each. That defeat remains Bayern's record home European loss, yet there is no talk of revenge ahead of Wednesday's clash. "This is the quarter-finals, but it sounds like a final," said Bayern captain Philipp Lahm. "We're playing against an absolute top team, who have top players in every position. We will have to play to our potential." Both sides are missing key defenders, though. Germany's Mats Hummels was ruled out after damaging ankle ligaments on Sunday so Jerome Boateng and Javi Martinez will form the centre-back partnership. Hummels faces a race against time to be back for the return at the Santiago Bernabeu on April 18, while Real have defenders Pepe and Raphael Varane ruled out of both legs. Pepe suffered a double rib fracture in Saturday's 1-1 draw with Atletico Madrid, while Varane is out for a month with a hamstring injury. Right-back Daniel Carvajal trained on his own on Monday and is struggling with a knock. Bayern received a boost on Monday with Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer back in training following a minor foot operation 10 days ago, while Thomas Mueller is also fit after an ankle injury. "We're very confident. It's a European cracker featuring two top teams," said Mueller. — AFP

## OSCAR PENALTY MISS AS SILVA BULLET SINKS SIPG

**SAITAMA:** Big-money midfielder Oscar missed a second-half penalty as Andre Villas-Boas's Shanghai SIPG lost 1-0 to Urawa Red Diamonds in their first defeat of this year's AFC Champions League yesterday. After SIPG went behind to Rafael Silva's 44th-minute strike, 60-million-euro signing Oscar looked set to maintain SIPG's unbeaten record in Group F when he won a penalty in the 64th minute. But the Brazil international, after a stutter run-up, saw his spot-kick palmed onto the bar by Urawa goalkeeper Shusaku Nishikawa, prompting loud celebrations by the home fans. The result means the Japanese side replace SIPG at the top of Group F on away goals scored in fixtures between the two sides, after SIPG's 3-2 win in Shanghai last month. Alex Teixeira, another expensive Brazilian import to China, fared much better as he scored one and set up two more in Jiangsu Suning's 3-0 victory over Japan's Gamba Osaka. Teixeira slammed a sumptuous opener after just three minutes when he robbed veteran Japan international Yasuhito Endo and surged forward before hitting a powerful finish past Masaaki Higashiguchi. He teed up his Brazilian compatriot, Ramires, four minutes later with a dan-

gerous ball into the box which the ex-Chelsea man steered past Higashiguchi. And Teixeira completed the master-class just before half-time with a pinpoint free kick onto the head of defender Hong Jeong-Ho, who made it 3-0 as Jiangsu stayed top of Group H with a maximum 12 points from four games. Below them in the same group, Adelaide United resurrected their hopes of reaching the last 16 with a 3-1 away win over Jeju United to climb off the bottom of the standings. And in Group F, FC Seoul kept their campaign just alive with a 3-2 victory over 2014 champions Western Sydney Wanderers, courtesy of a double from Dejan Damjanovic. "I'm really happy and finally we won," said the Montenegrin striker, as he celebrated the first win of the campaign for last year's semi-finalists. Of reports linking him to the Wanderers for next season, Damjanovic added: "I am 36 soon and I came to Korea to finish my football, but you never know my contract finishes in November but my first option is Seoul." Seoul's first points in Group F give them an outside chance of making the knock-out rounds as they are tied on three points with Western Sydney, six behind Urawa and SIPG. — AFP



**SAITAMA:** Urawa Red Diamonds forward Zlatan (C) heads the ball in front of Shanghai SIPG midfielder Akhmedov Odil (L) during the AFC Champions League football match between Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds and China's Shanghai SIPG in Saitama yesterday. — AFP

## LEICESTER TO MEET ATLETICO IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE Q-FINALS

**MADRID:** Atletico Madrid and Leicester have a lot in common these days. Relying on gritty defense and quick counterattacking, the teams meet at the Vicente Calderon Stadium today in the first leg of the Champions League quarterfinals. "They remind us of the best Atleti," Atletico left back Filipe Luis said. "They have very good players. It's a solid team that defends very well." Atletico made it to two Champions League finals in the last three seasons thanks to Diego Simeone's stout defense, one that allowed the team to successfully challenge the powerful attacks of teams such as Barcelona and Bayern Munich. Effective offense the other way secured Atletico the victories it needed to remain contending. Atletico is playing in the Champions League quarterfinals for the fourth straight season. It lost the final to Real Madrid both in 2014 and 2016, the last one in a penalty shootout. Leicester showed a lot of the same qualities when it stunned the soccer world by winning the Premier League title last season. Fierce defending, quick breakthroughs and precise finishes also kept it alive in its first Champions League campaign this season despite a struggling start. "Leicester's team is very similar to ours. It defends very well in the back and relies on counterattacks a lot," Luis said. "We know it's going to be very complicated. We are also a team that plays better against opponents that holds possession and tries to control the game. It will be an even matchup." Both teams head into the game enjoying their best run of the season after lackluster starts.

Atletico struggled with inconsistency early on but Simeone was able to get the team back on track entering the final stretch. Atletico is unbeaten in eight games in all competitions and is coming off a draw against Spanish league leader Madrid in the city derby at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium on Saturday. Atletico has conceded only two goals in its last seven games. "It's our best moment to take on this challenge," Luis said of Atletico, which has won 28 of its last 34 games in European competitions at the Vicente Calderon. Leicester has been on a roll since manager Claudio Ranieri was fired after guiding Leicester to the Premier League title. The team won six straight games under replacement coach Craig Shakespeare until a 4-2 loss at Everton on Sunday, when several regular starters were rested. "We're kind of thriving at the minute," Leicester midfielder Danny Drinkwater said. — AP

### Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	
Bayern Munich v Real Madrid	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
beIN SPORTS HD 11	
Atletico de Madrid v Leicester City	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 2	



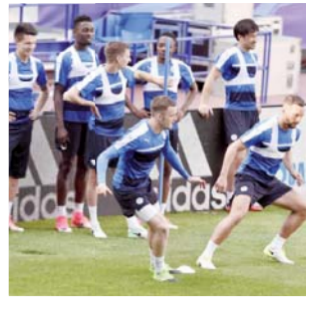
**MADRID:** Leicester City's English striker Jamie Vardy (L) and Leicester City's English midfielder Danny Drinkwater (R) train at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid yesterday on the eve of the UEFA Champions League quarter final first leg football match Atletico de Madrid vs Leicester City. — AFP

# Sports

Two world champions among Russians cleared for worlds



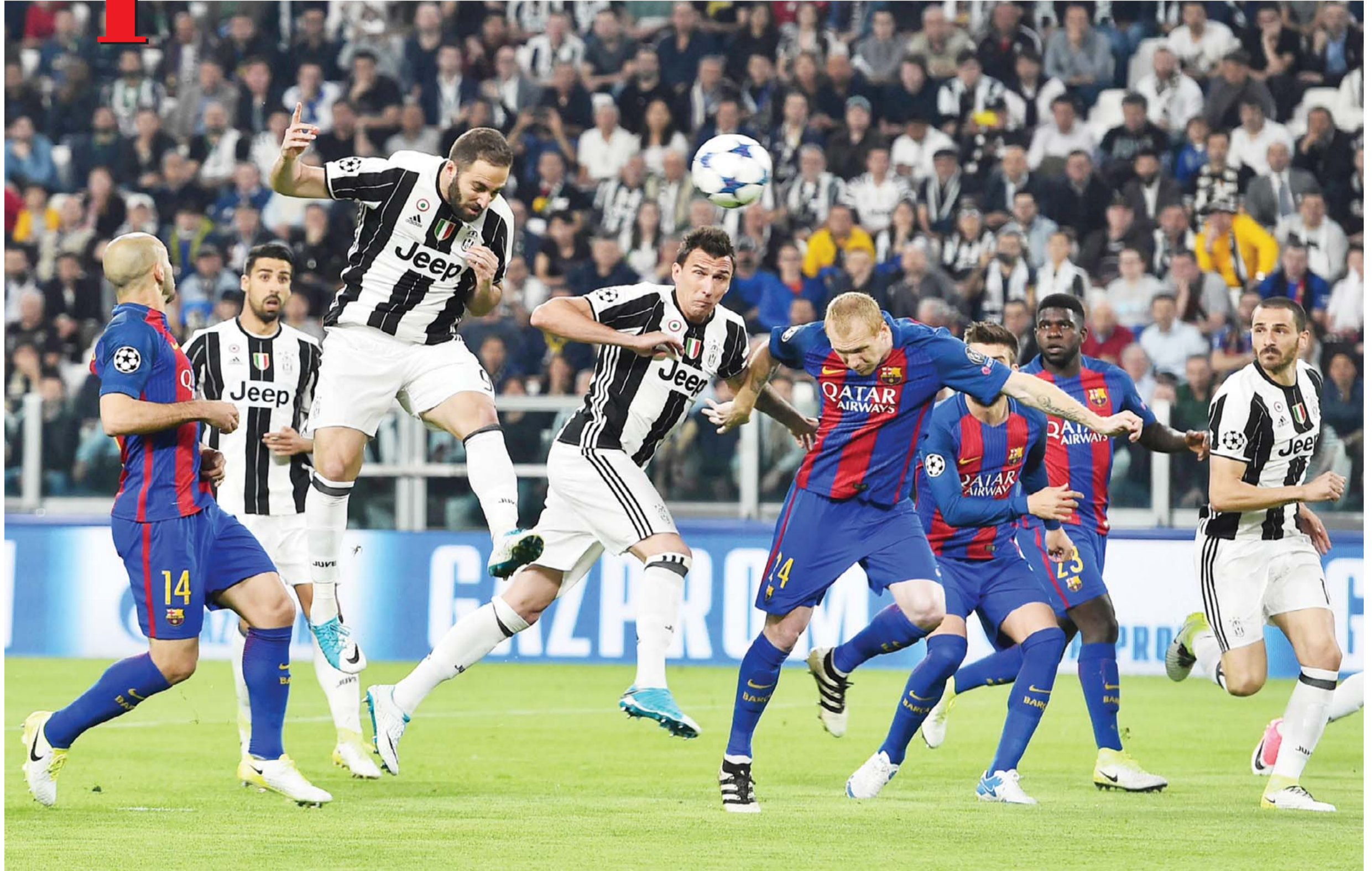
Leicester to meet Atletico in Champions League q-finals



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ARGENTINA FIRE COACH BAUZA

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TURIN: Juventus' forward from Argentina Gonzalo Higuain (2nd L) heads the ball next to Juventus' forward from Croatia Mario Mandzukic (C) and Barcelona's Argentinian defender Javier Mascherano (L) during the UEFA Champions League quarter final first leg football match Juventus vs Barcelona, yesterday at the Juventus stadium in Turin. — AFP

## DYBALA STARS AS JUVENTUS OUTCLASS BARCELONA

TURIN: Paulo Dybala upstaged his fellow Argentine Lionel Messi by scoring two exquisitely taken goals to set Juventus on the way to an emphatic 3-0 win over an underwhelming Barcelona in the Champions League yesterday.

The Spanish side, who overcame a 4-0 first-leg deficit in the previous round to beat Paris St Germain, will have to pull a similar trick out of the hat after being comprehensively outplayed in the quarter-final first leg.

Dybala fired Juve ahead in the seventh minute and added the second goal before the half hour while defender Giorgio Chiellini headed in the third early in the second half in another rousing Juventus performance. It could have been worse for Barca as Gonzalo Higuain, usually Juve's most dangerous marksman, missed two chances that he would usually have snapped up.

Barca had 65 percent of the possession but were strangely ponderous in midfield and leaky at the back, where they could not cope with the pace and aggression of Mario Mandzukic or Juan Cuadrado on the flanks. The match pitted Chiellini against Barcelona forward Luis Suarez for the first time since the infamous incident at the 2014 World Cup when the Uruguayan bit the Italian defender.

Juve, unbeaten at home in a European tie for four years, went straight on to the attack and Higuain wasted their first chance after three minutes with a poor close-range header from Miralem Pjanic's cross.

They needed another four minutes to go ahead when Cuadrado found Dybala who cleverly turned and curled a left-foot shot past Marc Andre ter Stegen.

The player known as the Jewel, often tipped to be Messi's natural successor, struck again 15 minutes later, meeting Mandzukic's low cross in his stride to beat Ter Stegen inside the near post with another left-foot effort.

That goal came just after Juve goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon had made a superb save from Andres Iniesta in Barca's best first-half attack.

Barcelona made a more promising start to the second half as Messi rolled one effort wide from the edge of the area and Iniesta then fired wide.

Juventus were not finished, though, and, after Higuain squandered another chance by delaying too long over his shot, Chiellini outjumped Javier Mascherano at the far post to head in from a corner for the third in the 55th minute.

The hosts kept attacking to the end and former Barca player Dani Alves had a chance to add a fourth but took too long over his shot. — Reuters



TURIN: Juventus's Paulo Dybala, left, scores his side's second goal during a Champions League, quarterfinal, first-leg soccer match between Juventus and Barcelona, at the Juventus Stadium in Turin, Italy, yesterday. — AP



LONDON: Crystal Palace's Yohan Cabaye, left, competes for the ball with Arsenal's Gabriel Paulista during the English Premier League soccer match between Crystal Palace and Arsenal at Selhurst Park in London, Monday. — AP

## WENGER FACES NEW QUIT CALLS AFTER PALACE LOSS

LONDON: Arsene Wenger faces renewed calls to resign after Arsenal's miserable season spiralled out of control with furious fans turning on his flops during their humiliating 3-0 defeat at Crystal Palace.

Wenger's side hit a new low on a chastening evening in south London as struggling Palace condemned the symbolic Gunners to their heaviest Premier League defeat of the season. Wenger's side have lost four successive away league games for the first time in his 21-year reign as manager. Goals from Andros Townsend, Yohan Cabaye and Luka Milivojevic gave Palace their first home win over Arsenal since 1979 and left Wenger in turmoil after his team's fifth defeat in their last eight league games.

With many Arsenal supporters again demanding Wenger resign, the toxic atmosphere around the north Londoners boiled over as fans refused to give the ball back to Gunners right-back Hector Bellerin when it went into the away section in the second half.

Instead, they berated Bellerin and his team-mates with chants of "you're not fit to wear the shirt", with the Spaniard having to be consoled by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain when he was jeered again at the final whistle. Wenger and his squad were targeted for more abuse when they made their way from the dressing room to the team bus. Arsenal's shocking surrender leaves them in sixth place, lagging seven points behind fourth placed Manchester City.

With Wenger's record of leading Arsenal into the Champions League for 19 consecutive years in severe dan-

ger, the beleaguered Frenchman acknowledged he has to find a way to avoid the mutinous mood wrecking what may yet prove to be his final season in charge.

"I want the fans to support the team, but I can understand they are extremely frustrated, like we all are," Wenger said. "We came with the desire to win the game, but in the decisive moments of the game Palace were sharper."

"To see us lose in that way is disappointing. It's part of my job to build the confidence. We have a week to do it, it's our job, we will try to do it."

Faced with the prospect of missing out on the Champions League for the first time since 1997, Wenger has hardly helped his cause by refusing to confirm if he will sign an extension to the contract which runs out at the end of the season. The uncertainty over his future has been a major distraction for a team lacking the fighting spirit required to cope with adversity.

Wenger conceded Arsenal's chances of making the Champions League via a top-four finish look bleak, but he refused to be drawn on whether or not he will stay.

"I think it will be very difficult certainly," he said. "I don't want to speak about me tonight. I'm not in the mood."

"At the moment I pay more respect to the fact we had a disappointing result." Looking shell-shocked and far less defiant than he often is at such downbeat moments, Wenger must have been devastated by the way the likes of Alexis Sanchez, Mesut Ozil and Theo Walcott went missing when he needed them most. — AFP



**EQUATE supports GPCA's PlastiCon 2017 conference**



**BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (front right) and Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), (front left), arrive for a press conference after a meeting of the heads of international economy and finance organizations in Berlin. — AP**

# BOUBYAN BANK REPORTS 17% GROWTH IN Q1 PROFITS

**BANK RECORDS KD 10.7M IN NET PROFITS WITH AN EPS OF 4.7 FILS**

**KUWAIT:** Boubyan Bank has recorded a net profit growth of 17 percent in Q1 2017. The bank's net profits amounts to KD 10.7 million, with earning per share of 4.7 fils compared to 4 fils for the comparative period of 2016.

Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed, the Bank's Vice-Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, stated that such an increase in the bank's profits is a good start for a year at the same time is also expected to bring a lot of challenges for the Kuwaiti banking sector for both Islamic and conventional banks. He added: "Despite all the challenges faced by Kuwaiti economy and the banking sector, in particular, over the recent years, Boubyan Bank maintained a good level of growth whether in terms of profitability or market share."

He went on to add that the announcement of Q1 profits coincided with the report of Moody's, the international credit rating agency, which had positive news for the bank. "The agency's upgrade of the long-term deposit ratings highlights the growth of Boubyan Bank's share in the Kuwaiti market and reinforces the bank's strategic and financial importance," he added.

Moody's, one of the most prestigious global credit rating agencies, has recently upgraded the credit rating of Boubyan bank's long-term deposit ratings from "Baa1" to "A3".

**Growth of All Main Indicators**

On the other hand, Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed stated that the all of the Bank's main indicators showed that the Bank witnessed a remarkable growth during the first past quarter where the total assets increased to KD 3.7 billion at a growth rate of 13 percent while the operational revenues increased to hit KD 29 million at a growth rate of 17 percent in addition to the increase in customers' deposits by 20 percent, amounting to KD 3.1 billion.

He further added that the total equity of the bank increased to KD 344 million compared with KD 318 million last year and that there was a notable increase in the financing portfolio up to KD 2.7 billion with a growth rate of 18 percent in addition to the continuous growth of the bank's customers' base.

Al-Majed stated as well that the market share,

in financing, increased generally to approximately 7.4 percent in the meantime, while the share of the retail finance increased specifically to approximately 10.5 percent.

**Remarkable Awards**

Al-Majed also stated that the beginning of the current year has also witnessed the Bank's receipt of a number of remarkable awards, the most prominent of which was the "Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait" award from Global Finance for the third year in a row due to the bank's achievements whether in terms of increasing the profitability rates or increasing its market share.

Al-Majed went on to add: "The bank managed to establish itself as one of the best institutions in the Kuwaiti private sector in the field of customer service, evidenced by continuing to receive the first place award, for the seventh year in a row atop all Islamic Banks in customer service from Service Hero, the international consumer-driven customer satisfaction index, in addition to being named the Best Private Sector Institution in Customer Service in Kuwait for the 2nd time."



**Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed**

He further stated: "These awards once more reiterates our bank's superb competitive abilities, and its ability to provide its customers with the highest levels of services and the best products

customers may seek, whether they are existing customers or potential customers targeted in the Kuwaiti market."

**Expansion of Branches & Technology Services**

On the other hand, Al-Majed stressed the continuity of the Bank's plans to expand in the local market by opening new branches which have now reached 38 branches compared with 15 branches only 5 years ago. He went on to add: "In line with our domestic geographical expansion to be closer to our clients, we are continuing our investment in e-services and e-banking products which placed us ahead of other local banks. We are doing that in order to cater to the needs of our clients."

"Customer service has always been our recipe for success, as we have always taken into account that all our customers are special and that they deserve the best because meeting their aspirations and ambitions should be up to the level of their expectations when they chose us. In other words, by choosing us, customers should be rewarded with special care and attention," Al-Majed concluded.

# FED'S INDEPENDENCE UNDER THREAT: YELLEN

**WASHINGTON:** The US central bank's shield from political interference is "under some threat" from Congress, a prospect that could erode progress in the economy, Federal Reserve chief Janet Yellen warned yesterday. Research shows that countries that allow the central bank independence in setting monetary policy "tend to enjoy stronger macroeconomic performance," Yellen said in a discussion at the University of Michigan. The US Congress "very wisely" passed a law that afforded that independence to the Fed in the 1970s, but it is threatened by proposed legislation that would either audit the Fed's decisions or require it to follow a strict mathematical formula to set interest rates.

"I always worry about threats to our independence," Yellen said. While she did not mention US President Donald Trump, he was highly critical of the Fed during the election campaign last year. "I do think independence of a central bank to make decisions about monetary policy, free of short-term political pressures, is very important and results in better decision making, focused on the long-term needs and health of the economy," Yellen said. This does not mean the Fed lacks accountability or transparency, she said, noting that she is required to testify before Congress twice a year, and holds regular news conferences in addition to publishing the minutes of the policy meetings.

**Staying ahead of curve**

Yellen said the economy currently is "pretty healthy," as it continues to gradually improve in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis. But it will

be key for the central bank to not allow inflation to accelerate too quickly. She repeated the central bank's expectation that it will need to raise interest rates only gradually to keep inflation hovering around the two percent target.

"But we don't want to wait too long" to get to a neutral point where the interest rate is no longer stimulating the economy. She cautioned that "if the economy ends up overheating and inflation were to rise well above target, we don't want to be in position to have to raise rates rapidly which could conceivably cause a recession."

"We want to be ahead of the curve not behind the curve," she said. The Fed has raised interest rates twice in recent months, after the initial hike in December 2015 moved the key lending rate off zero for the first time since December 2008. Not only is inflation near the Fed's two percent target, the unemployment rate has fallen to 4.5 percent, which she said is lower than what central bankers generally consider to be "full employment."

**Concern**

Yellen told an audience at the University of Michigan that unemployment is now below the point the Fed views as full employment, dipping to 4.5 percent in March. A key inflation gauge is moving toward the Fed's 2 percent target for price stability. Yellen did not specifically address the timing for future rate hikes, but her remarks support the view that future hikes are coming. The Fed last raised rates in March, a quarter-point move that was the second increase in three months. "We are

doing pretty well" in terms of the Fed's goals, Yellen said. "The economy is growing at a moderate pace." The Fed's next meeting is May 2-3 and most private economists believe a rate hike at that time is unlikely. But they say rates could be raised at the June meeting and again in September.

In her comments, which came in the form of a discussion led by Susan M. Collins, dean of the university's Gerald R Ford School of Public Policy, Yellen expressed concerns about moves in Congress to limit the central bank's independence. She specifically mentioned legislation that would subject the Fed's decision on interest-rate policies to review by the Government Accountability Office, the auditing arm of Congress. She also cited a proposal to require the Fed to follow a specific formula for setting interest rates with any deviation from that formula subject to GAO reviews. "Our independence is under some threat," Yellen said, citing the various bills that have been introduced. She said these changes could end up harming the Fed's ability to manage the economy to promote low unemployment and guard against accelerating inflation.

"The independence of a central bank to make decisions about monetary policy free of ... political pressures is very important," Yellen said. Last week, the Fed revealed that officials had discussed at their March meeting the timing for the start of a process of reducing the central bank's holdings of Treasury bonds and mortgage backed securities, which the Fed purchased as a way to lower long-term interest rates and jump-start economic growth following the 2007-2009 recession. — Agencies

# OPEC FIGURES SHOW OIL OUTPUT CUTS EXCEED PLEDGE IN MARCH

**DUBAI/LONDON:** OPEC states cut oil output in March by more than they pledged under supply curbs, according to figures the exporter group uses to monitor its supply, extending a record of higher-than-expected adherence to its first production cut in eight years.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries agreed to cut output by about 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) for six months from Jan 1 to prop up prices and reduce a glut. Russia and 10 other non-OPEC states agreed to cut half as much. Production from the 11 OPEC members with output targets under the deal has averaged 29.757 million bpd, according to average assessments of secondary sources OPEC uses to monitor its output. The figures were seen by Reuters. OPEC pledged to reduce output by the 11 countries to 29.804 million bpd. This means production has fallen by more than OPEC said it would and amounts to 104 percent adherence to the supply cut regime, according to an OPEC calculation.

"OPEC's compliance has been more than anticipated," an OPEC delegate said. "For non-OPEC, it is satisfactory and getting better." The supply cut is supporting oil prices which are trading around \$56 a barrel, up from \$42 a year ago. But crude is still half the level it was at in mid-2014, with high inventories and rising US production limiting gains.

Including Nigeria and Libya, the two members exempt from the deal to cut supply, output

by all 13 OPEC members in March fell to 31.939 million bpd, two sources said. That would be down 19,000 bpd from OPEC's published February figure. OPEC is scheduled to publish the assessment of March output based on secondary sources in its monthly oil market report today. The figures could be revised before publication as more secondary-source estimates are added, OPEC sources said.

The 11 non-OPEC producers that joined the deal have not cut as much production, partly because of phased implementation of the agreement by Russia, the largest non-OPEC producer that is cooperating with the organization. But compliance by OPEC and non-OPEC together is expected to rise in March from February's level of 94 percent, Kuwaiti Oil Minister Essam al-Marzouq said on Monday.

OPEC uses two sets of figures to monitor its output - figures provided by each country and those provided by secondary sources that include industry media. This is a legacy of old disputes over real production levels. The production cut agreed last year was from levels as assessed by the secondary sources.

The six secondary sources used by OPEC are the International Energy Agency, oil-pricing agencies Platts and Argus, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), consultancy Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA) and industry newsletter Petroleum Intelligence Weekly (PIW). — Reuters





ATLANTA: Georgia Department of Labor services specialist Louis Holliday (right) helps a woman with a job search on a computer at an unemployment office in Atlanta. — AP

## US EMPLOYERS POSTED MORE JOBS IN FEBRUARY

**WASHINGTON:** US employers posted more open positions in February, but the number of people getting hired and the number quitting jobs fell. The overall figures suggest that the job market remains healthy, although it has yet to take off during the early stages of the Trump presidency.

The Labor Department said yesterday that job openings rose 2.1 percent in February to a seasonally adjusted 5.7 million. While more employers are seeking workers, hiring fell 2 percent compared to January to 5.3 million. Job openings have increased 3.2 percent over the past 12 months.

More than 2.5 million people quit their jobs in February, but that was a sharp 19.6 percent decline from January. This may be a sign that workers have mixed confidence about the economy, since workers typically quit either when they have another

job, or are optimistic they can find one.

An increased pace of quits can also boost wages, because most people quit for a new job at higher pay. It also indicates that employers may be recruiting workers from other jobs by offering bigger paychecks. The government said last week that employers added a net total of 98,000 jobs in March. But on average over the past three months, employers have added 178,000 jobs a month — an average that economists say is closer to the underlying trend. The unemployment rate fell two-tenths to 4.5 percent. Those figures are net gains after layoffs, quits and retirements are subtracted from overall hiring. Yesterday's data come from the Job Openings and Labor Turnover survey, or JOLTS. They are more detailed and provide a fuller view of the job market than the monthly jobs report. — AP

## ALTICE USA FILES FOR WALL STREET SHARE FLOTATION

**NEW YORK:** Telecom firm Altice, led by billionaire Patrick Drahi, said yesterday its Altice USA affiliate has filed papers in preparation for an initial public offering (IPO) on the New York Stock Exchange.

A so-called "registration statement" has been filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, it said, but the number of shares on offer and their price range had yet to be determined.

Ahead of the announcement, a banking source familiar with the matter told AFP Monday that this key first step would be followed by a series of "road show" presentations to investors ahead of the flotation and the start of trading over the summer. The funds raised would go to reduce debt and finance additional acquisitions in the United States, where Altice currently ranks as the number four cable operator with operations in about 20 states, the source said.

The offering comes at a time of flux in the US telecoms landscape, with the administration of President Donald Trump expected to employ a light touch on regulation.

Altice USA could acquire ventures such as Verizon's Fios or Cox Communications, banking sources told AFP. Cox has said it is not for sale, but it could potentially emerge as a corporate partner to Altice USA. Altice plans to raise up to \$2 billion with the transaction, from selling five to 10 percent of the available shares, valuing the enterprise at \$25-30 billion, the source said.

Drahi would maintain 70 percent of the company, with the shares for sale coming from Canadian pension fund CPPIB and BC Partners, which together now hold 30 percent.

The IPO would be the second biggest of the year after Snapchat parent Snap raised \$3.4 billion in March. — AFP



LONDON: Customers browse for fruit and vegetables on a food stall at Whitechapel Market in east London yesterday. Rising clothing and food prices kept British annual inflation at its highest level in three and a half years in March, official data showed yesterday. — AFP

## PYONGYANG LUXURY HOTEL GETS MORE MODERN, LESS SOVIET STYLE

**PYONGYANG, North Korea:** North Korea's most famous luxury hotel has reopened after renovations that modernized its 1980s, vaguely Soviet, style. The Koryo is one of Pyongyang's best-known and most visible landmarks, with its twin towers in the center of the capital. It was closed for several months while the first three floors were remodeled. The guest rooms weren't changed.

People entering the hotel are now greeted by a brighter and more up-to-date look that - possibly to the disappointment of many exotica-seeking foreigners - is a sharp contrast with the opulent and vaguely Soviet style of its prior lobby. The Koryo was built in 1985 under the instructions of North Korea's "eternal president," the late national founder Kim Il Sung, who wanted it to be a symbol of the country's strength and modernity. It is a popular spot for socializing among local elites, foreign businessmen, diplomats and others who are able to afford its relatively high

prices - a cappuccino in its lobby coffee shop goes for about \$7. The cheapest rooms are \$100 to \$120 a night.

The hotel, located near Pyongyang's main train station, also features an indoor pool and sauna, several places to eat, including a revolving restaurant atop one of its towers, a bookstore and other amenities one could only dream of in a provincial North Korean hotel.

In 2015 a major fire charred its upper floors, though the extent of damage and other information about the blaze has never been disclosed. At 43 stories, the Koryo has long been eclipsed in height by other hotels. One of them is the 47-story Yanggakdo, and, tallest of all, the 105-story, pyramid-shaped Ryugyong.

The Yanggakdo is more popular with budget or first-time visitors and is considered a notch or two lower than the Koryo, while the Ryugyong has been under construction for decades and has never been open for guests. — AP



PYONGYANG: In this Oct 27, 2014 file photo, people wait in the lobby of the Koryo hotel before it underwent renovations, in Pyongyang. — AP

## COUNTRIES SHOULD HELP THOSE HURT BY FREE TRADE: REPORT

**WASHINGTON:** The world isn't doing enough to help workers and communities damaged by free trade, the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization say.

In a report Monday, the three multinational groups repeated their longstanding view that free trade spreads broad economic benefits. Open markets and increased competition can help poor countries rise from poverty, lower prices in rich countries and force companies and countries to become more efficient and focus on what they do best.

But drawing on recent research, they admit that those who lose out in global competition can be hit harder and suffer longer than previously understood. The organizations want countries to make it easier for people to switch careers or move where jobs are, and in some cases to provide insurance for lost wages.

The report comes amid a backlash against globalization in the United States and Europe. President Donald Trump was elected after promising to renegotiate or tear up trade agreements and to consider

imposing trade sanctions against countries that use what he calls unfair trade practices. British voters decided last year to leave the European Union, a rebuke to policymakers who had sought ever closer economic ties between the countries of Europe. After surging in the 1990s and much of the 2000s, global trade has faltered since the Great Recession. Last year, world trade grew just 1.9 percent, the slowest since the recession year 2009.

Roberto Azevedo, the head of the World Trade Organization, said after a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on Monday that it was important to note the positive impacts of trade "But also we must recognize the concerns of people about trade and the impact that it can have in their lives," he told reporters. "We need to ensure the benefits of trade are shared more widely. We should also recognize at the same time that 80 percent of the jobs that are lost today in the advanced economies are not due to imports. They are lost because of new technologies, innovation and higher productivity." — AP

## BREXIT TO TRIGGER UK FARM POLICY OVERHAUL AND EU FUNDING GAP

### PAYMENTS TO BRITISH FARMERS LIKELY TO BE CUT POST-BREXIT

**LONDON:** Britain is expected to radically overhaul agricultural policy after it leaves the European Union and the bloc may have to make changes too when it loses Britain's net contributions to the region's farming budget. For the first time in decades, farmers in Britain will have to fight for a slice of government funds with departments such as health and education once Brussels hands over the purse strings for farming budgets to London.

Britain's exit also spells trouble for EU farmers as the country puts more into the bloc's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) than it takes out, meaning subsidies for farmers on the continent could also fall unless the funding gap is plugged. British farmers have been shielded by a powerful farming lobby within Europe and benefit from EU subsidies, preferential trade deals and access to cheap seasonal labour, but they fear they will be losers on all three fronts in a post-Brexit world.

"The bloody-mindedness of the French or the Irish in standing up for agriculture was not just standing up for their farmers but actually brought a good deal for us as well. Without them we are more vulnerable," said Nigel Miller, who has a sheep and cattle farm near Galashiels in Scotland's Borders region. "The reality is, as a farmer, I don't see the UK government expending a lot of negotiating capital to protect agriculture. Their main issue when they look for trade deals will be financial services, banking, etc," Miller said.

Britain voted to leave the 28-nation EU in a referendum in June last year. It has two years to sort out the terms of the divorce before it comes into effect in March 2019. In 2015, British farmers received 3.25 billion euros (\$3.5 billion) from the EU's agriculture fund in direct payments based chiefly on the amount of land they farm, essentially a form of income support that does not take individual needs into account.

The government has guaranteed payments will be maintained until 2020 but farming and environment minister Andrea Leadsom said in February there would be a major policy overhaul when the EU subsidies stop.

tion is genuinely sustainable, reducing flood-risk, maintaining healthy soils and protecting biodiversity," she said.

Britain has about 18.4 million hectares of agricultural land of which more than half is classified as permanent grassland, according to government data for 2015. Wheat is the leading arable crop with 1.8 million hectares while others include barley, rapeseed, oats, rye, sugar beet and potatoes.

**Spending cuts**

British farmers fear that in a post-Brexit world preferential trade deals could end, seasonal workers from the EU may find it harder to come to Britain and subsidies will stop. The farm lobby has been a powerful force in Brussels but has less influence in Britain where, according to European Commission data for 2014, agriculture accounts for 1.2 percent of employment, compared with an EU average of 4.7 percent.

A National Farmers Union (NFU) survey late last year showed British farmers overall plan to reduce spending on machinery by 26 percent and cut investment on land by 31 percent over

the next three years because of uncertainty caused by Brexit. In budget terms, Britain will benefit from leaving the EU as it puts more into the bloc's CAP than it gets out. But that does not necessarily mean farmers will be the ones to benefit.

"The moment you are putting payments to farmers up against the National Health Service, care in the community, education ... You can see it is going to take its share of cuts," said Sean Rickard, a former chief economist for the NFU. Farmers also worry that when it comes to trade deals and EU market access, sectors such as financial services will be a much higher priority for the government, and any new EU trade tariffs could have a significant impact.

The EU is Britain's most important trading partner for most agricultural sectors. In 2015-16, for example, about 80 percent of UK wheat exports went to the EU, mainly the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. There is also concern that new trading arrangements with countries outside the EU could leave farmers vulnerable to cheap imports from agricultural powerhouses such as Brazil and the United States. — Reuters

## SOUTH AFRICAN TUMULT HINDERS BARCLAYS' EXIT FROM CONTINENT

**JOHANNESBURG:** Barclays' plan to sell its African business and pull out of the continent are being hindered by South Africa's political upheaval and credit-rating downgrades, according to banking sources and fund managers. The British bank gave itself 2-3 years to sell its controlling stake in Johannesburg-based Barclays Africa when it announced the plan in early 2016, and sold 12 percent last May in an "accelerated bookbuild" - a share sale held over a short period of time.

It had been planning another accelerated bookbuild in the last two weeks but pushed it back because of concerns over investor appetite due to political and economic uncertainty in South Africa, according to a banking source familiar with the plans.

The source, who asked not to be named as they are not authorized to speak publicly, did not say when the deal might now take place.

A spokesman for Barclays in London declined to comment. South Africa has been mired in business uncertainty since late last year when the ruling African National Congress (ANC) pledged to radically transform the economy following losses in local elections that were partly caused by anger over deep inequality that persists more than two decades after apartheid.

It said it would redistribute the wealth of the country to the black majority, but has not outlined how it plans to do so. Investor unease increased significantly two weeks ago with the sacking of respected finance minister Pravin Gordhan which led to S&P Global Ratings cutting the credit rating of South Africa and its banks to junk.

Fitch also pushed Pretoria's debt into junk territory and is expected to also downgrade local banks in the coming days because their large exposure to sovereign debt closely links their credit profile to that of the government.

The downgrades have heightened the risk

of a prolonged economic stagnation and rattled investor confidence in banks, whose performance is closely linked to the economy, wiping out more than 132 billion rand (\$9.5 billion) from their market value in two weeks. The pool of potential buyers to which Barclays' can sell shares in its African business is also shrinking, according to bankers, because the mandates of some institutional investors, including some pension funds, do not allow them to hold an asset that's sliding on credit ratings.

"Barclays Plc have to make a tough call - go ahead and sell Barclays Africa at a low enough price that will attract investors or wait, possibly a few years, until the situation has stabilised," said Kokkie Kooyman, portfolio manager at Dekker Capital in Cape Town.

### 'Paying price'

The British bank said early last year that it planned to reduce its 62 percent stake in its African business to below 20 percent by 2019 as part of its plan to exit Africa to focus on the United States and Britain. As well as hindering its global strategy, delays in the sale timetable could throw up regulatory problems.

Barclays is partly relying on funds raised from the stake sale to meet capital requirements that were identified as a concern by the Bank of England in a November "stress test" aimed at gauging its ability to withstand financial shocks. The lender faces the annual test again late this year, and the British regulator could ask it to submit plans to raise extra capital if it has not met the requirements. Barclays is increasingly looking at selling its remaining 50 percent stake in chunks because it is struggling to find one strategic buyer that will satisfy South African regulators, sources have previously said. Barclays Africa earns more than 80 percent of its revenue in South Africa, but also operates in nine other including Kenya, Ghana, Botswana and Mozambique. — Reuters

INVESTORS PLAY SAFE AS SYRIA TENSIONS RISE

LONDON: Nervous investors sought shelter in gold, Treasuries and the yen yesterday as growing tensions over Syria put the US administration and Russia on a collision course.

European shares edged higher, reversing early falls, but Wall Street looked set to open lower, according to index futures, as uncertainty over looming French presidential elections also simmered.

Western countries blame Syrian President

Bashar Al-Assad for last week's deadly gas attack. US President Donald Trump responded by firing cruise missiles at a Syrian air base.

"It's a relatively modest reaction but there is a lot of geopolitical risk in global markets at the moment," said TD Securities European head of currency strategy Ned Rumpelton.

have French elections coming up." The latest polls from France are providing another twist in the race for the presidency, with far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon making ground against the rest of the pack before the first round of voting on April 23.

This has raised the possibility that Melenchon could square off against far-right leader Marine Le Pen - both of whom are eurosceptics - in the election's decisive second round in May.

German Bunds yields dipped below 0.20 percent for the first time in more than five weeks, before edging higher, while French yields hit a one-week high of 0.96 percent leaving the gap between the two - a key gauge of investors' con-

cerns - at its widest in six weeks. "After Britain's Brexit referendum and the US presidential election surprised markets in 2016, could this event do the same?" Mark Burgess, global head of equities at Columbia Threadneedle in London, wrote in a note. Then pan-European STOXX 600 share index eked out gains of 0.1 percent, led higher by miners as the gold price rose.

Gold, sought at times of global tension as a safe place to store wealth, last traded up 0.3 percent on the day at almost \$1,258

an ounce. The precious metal hit a five-month high above \$1,270 on Friday after the US missile strike on Thursday. The dollar fell 0.1 percent against a basket of other major currencies. The greenback weakened 0.4 percent to 110.53 yen and 0.2 percent to \$1.0616 per euro. Sterling rose 0.2 percent to \$1.2441.

Oil retreated from five-week highs hit earlier in the day as concerns about rising US shale production offset a shutdown at Libya's largest oilfield over the weekend and the U.S. strikes against Syria that had supported prices. Global benchmark Brent fell 4 cents to \$55.94, breaking a six-session winning streak. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Tuesday 11 April 2017. Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades. Includes sub-tables for Trades, Security, and various market segments like Basic Materials, Consumer Goods, etc.



TOKYO: A woman walks past an electronic stock indicator of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Shares were mostly lower yesterday in Asia amid growing wariness over tensions with North Korea. — AP

DOLLAR FALLS AS INVESTORS SEEK SAFE-HAVEN YEN

NEW YORK: The dollar fell broadly yesterday as geopolitical risk and declining US Treasury yields pushed traders out of the greenback. The Japanese yen rose broadly, as possible US action in Syria and North Korea, and a resurgence of a previously written-off leftist contender in France's presidential race prompted buying of the safe-haven currency.

The possibility of some kind of US military action against North Korea in response to its weapons tests grew after US missile strikes against Syria last week in retaliation for a chemical weapons attack on civilians. US Treasury yields fell for a second straight day as anxiety increased.

Buying of Treasuries and the yen also jumped after Reuters reported black smoke was rising from part of an airfield in Moscow. The smoke turned out to be caused by gas burning nearby, and the move was a "knee-jerk reaction," analysts said.

North American trading. The dollar was last trading at 110.31 yen. "It shows how nervous markets are about the geopolitical situation," said Marc Chandler, global head of currency strategy at Brown Brothers Harriman. "And at the end of the day the focus on the geopolitical data is coming without much serious economic data."

The euro also fell against the yen as investors weighed the possibility of a face-off between far-right candidate Marine Le Pen and left-wing candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon, who has surged in polls recently. If the euro holds yesterday's downturn, it would mark 11 straight days of losses against the Japanese currency, the longest streak in the history of the euro, Chandler noted.

"We see further downside as risks ahead of the first round of the French presidential elections have grown of late... so all that (is) boosting demand for safe havens," said Valentin Marinov, head of FX strategy at Credit Agricole in London. — Reuters

CONCERNS OVER MONEY HABIT OF AMERICANS

RESEARCH REPORT

NEW YORK: Traditional financial literacy efforts haven't been a rousing success. Research from Harvard Business School shows that even Americans who are taught personal finance in school don't seem to save more or manage credit better than anyone else.

That's why many experts concerned about Americans' money habits - including regulators such as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and financial think tanks such as the Center for Financial Services Innovation - are promoting the concept of financial health.

"Financial literacy is really what you know. Financial health is the outcome," says Rachel Schneider, the center's senior vice president. "You might know what to do, but the gap between knowing and behavior is huge."

The concept of financial health also acknowledges the forces beyond our control. Just as physical health is a combination of behavior, genes and access to good medical care, financial health is a result of personal decisions and abilities, the economy and access to good, unbiased financial services and advice.

"There is an element of personal responsibility, but it's more than that," Schneider says.

Definitions of financial health typically have three factors in common:

- You can manage your day-to-day financial life
You can absorb a financial shock
You're on track to meet your financial goals
You have good credit scores
You pay bills on time
You have a decent emergency fund.

is developing a habit of saving regularly so you continually replenish your coffers.

YOU'RE ON TRACK WITH RETIREMENT SAVINGS. How much you need will vary by age and circumstance, but you've done the calculations and are setting aside money regularly to get there.

YOUR DEBT LOAD IS SUSTAINABLE. The Center for Financial Services Innovation recommends that mortgage payments consume no more than 28 percent of your pretax income and that all debt payments, including a mortgage, should be less than 36 percent.

YOU DON'T ROUTINELY CARRY CREDIT CARD OR OTHER HIGH-RATE DEBT. Mortgages pay for homes that can increase in value, and student loans provide an education that can help increase your income.

YOU HAVE GOOD CREDIT SCORES. Some people treat credit scores as a proxy for financial health. They really measure only how well you repay debt. But good credit is a safety net when you need it.

YOU'RE APPROPRIATELY INSURED. You want to be protected against financial shocks that could wipe you out, including medical bills, lawsuits, natural disasters or the death of a family member.

YOU HAVE A DECENT EMERGENCY FUND. "Decent" varies according to your circumstances. The Center for Financial Services Innovation, which developed ways financial institutions can measure consumer financial health, would like to see everyone have six months' worth of living expenses set aside.



## KOREA INC'S CHINA TROUBLES RATTLE LOCAL WORKERS

**BEIJING/SHANGHAI:** South Korean companies in China have been clobbered by Beijing's angry response to Seoul's decision to deploy a US anti-missile system, but the boycotts and regulatory pressure on firms like Hyundai and Lotte are rebounding on their Chinese workers and suppliers.

South Korean businesses are a major employer in China, with firms such as Hyundai Motor Co, smartphone manufacturer Samsung Electronics Co, and retail giant Lotte Group directly creating some 700,000 jobs in China, according to a Korea trade promotion agency, and there are many more down the supply chain. Hyundai, which says its Chinese affiliates and suppliers alone create a total of 90,000 jobs, has responded to falling sales by cutting production.

In Beijing's industrial suburb of Shunyi, where Hyundai has its biggest overseas manufacturing base, its suppliers, workers and local retailers who depend on them are feeling the pinch.

"We haven't worked weekends since a month ago and don't know when it will get back to normal," said a supplier of hub caps to Hyundai.

"We can do nothing but wait while losing money," Hyundai's Beijing plants, which used to run 24 hours, seven days a week, are now running just 8am to 5pm on a four-day week, its workers say, and concerns of further output cuts are unnerving those working in its supply chain and local stores. Couriers complain deliveries to Hyundai's main plant have dropped by between a half and two-thirds, while the owner of a nearby convenience store said his business had been hit because salaries at the plant were down.

The chief executive of a South Korean auto parts supplier employing over 100 Chinese employees said his factory's utilization rate had dropped by 30 percent. He had not laid anyone off yet, but said the future was uncertain.

"We have no choice but to reduce Chinese workers if the situation is prolonged. There are no signs that the situation would get better anytime soon," he said. Hyundai itself said there was "no current impact on employment in China", that it was fully committed to the Chinese market, and would "continue to do our utmost to protect our employees in the region".

### Collateral damage

The dispute over the THAAD missile defense system, which South Korea and the United States say is needed to contain the threat from North Korea, has prompted calls for boycotts in Chinese media and increased regulatory scrutiny for South Korean firms.

Lotte Group, which has suffered a local boycott of its products since it agreed to provide land for the US missile defense system, closed 75 of its 99 hypermarkets in China in recent weeks after regulatory inspections by authorities. It said workers at affected stores were being paid in full as per Chinese law.

This could drop to 60-70 percent in the second month of closure, but the firm would "pay the most it can", a Lotte Mart spokesman said. Lotte Group employs 20,000 people in China.

Reuters spoke to five Lotte employees in stores around China who said they were still being paid and that workers were still coming into closed stores to check expiry dates and handle inventory.

Corporate risk analysts said China was willing to accept some "tolerable collateral damage",

and it was being strategic in the areas it targeted, avoiding, for now, big employers like tech giant Samsung.

"They've pretty carefully targeted Lotte in terms of what the government has orchestrated, as well as tourism, flights and duty free," said Andrew Gilholm, director of analysis for China and North Asia at risk consultancy Control Risks. He said the stand-off could go on at least until South Korea has new leadership, following the impeachment last month that ended the presidency of Park Geun-hye.

"Beijing is likely to keep the pressure on until the new government is set up in Seoul and has made its position (on THAAD) clear," he said. For now, Korean firms are keeping their heads down waiting for the row to blow over. But workers and dealers remain anxious, with sales showing no signs of recovery and no idea when things might return to normal.

"The recent slide has been very serious. Normally we sell more than 100 vehicles in a month. Now we can only shift 30," said a Hyundai dealer in Beijing.

"Anti-Korean sentiment has soared, and lots of consumers aren't willing to buy South Korean cars," he said. — Reuters



**DEWSBURY:** This file photo taken on July 05, 2015 shows a shop worker putting out fruit and vegetables at a local supermarket in Savile Town, Dewsbury. — AFP

## US TO SEEK CHINA ACCESS FOR BEEF, SERVICES: WHITE HOUSE TALKS STILL 'AT EARLY STAGES OF FLESHING OUT' A PLEDGE

**WASHINGTON:** US trade negotiators will try to hammer out deals with China over the next 100 days to resume imports of American beef and to allow US access to China's closed services sector, White House spokesman Sean Spicer said on Monday.

Spicer said that US and Chinese officials were still at the early stages of "fleshing out" a pledge by President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping to develop 100-day plan to help reduce China's massive trade surplus with the United States that was made at their first meeting in Florida last week. Asked in a press briefing whether China had offered concessions on beef and financial services access, as reported by the Financial Times, Spicer said these sectors were among topics that US-China talks would cover.

"I think, obviously, beef exports and additional market access in China, intellectual property, the ability to have foreign ownership, especially in the services industry, is something that has been a big prize of US exporters and industry for a long time," Spicer said. "But it is something that is being hammered out as we go forward."

Another Trump administration official said US trade discussions with China will cover a variety of sectors, and the meetings were just getting started.

Asked about the FT's report of beef and financial services concessions by China, the official said: "Two sectors is not considered comprehensive." No decisions have been made to revive negotiations over a US-China bilateral investment treaty that were pursued by the

Obama administration last year, said the official, who was not authorized to speak publicly about US negotiating plans.

China could become a massive export market for US beef if a deal could be struck, said Brett Stuart, chief executive of Global AgriTrends in Denver. He said the Greater China region currently imports about \$7 billion worth of beef annually - a figure expected to grow as China's middle class expands. But China has purchased hardly any American beef since it conditionally lifted a longstanding import ban last year. The ban was imposed in 2003 due to a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease, in Washington state. "We have yet to see US beef on Chinese tables," said Craig Uden, president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. — Reuters

## UK INFLATION STUCK AT 3.5-YEAR HIGH: DATA

**LONDON:** Rising clothing and food prices kept British annual inflation at its highest level in three and a half years in March, official data showed yesterday.

The 12-month inflation rate stood at 2.3 percent last month, the same rate as in February, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. That was broadly in line with expectations. The last time British inflation was higher was in September 2013.

The impact of higher clothing and food prices, along with alcohol and tobacco, were largely offset by lower transport costs and air fares in particular. "The costs of raw materials and the price of manufac-

ured goods leaving factories were both little changed, as falling fuel prices helped stem further rises," said ONS statistician Jonathan Athow.

The pound jumped against the dollar immediately after the data release, but has since handed back gains. Inflation has now stood above the Bank of England's 2.0-percent target level for the last two months. "March's headline inflation figure in the UK ... flattened out at 2.3 percent and the Bank of England is unlikely to change its unhurried approach to raising headline interest rates from their current record low of 0.25 percent," noted AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould. — AFP



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Workers paint a residential apartment as high-rise buildings are seen in the background in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP

## CHINESE AUTO SALES WEAKEN SHARPLY IN MARCH AFTER TAX RISE

**BEIJING:** Growth in China's auto sales plunged in March as demand for SUVs weakened and purchases of sedans contracted, an industry group reported yesterday.

Sales of cars, minivans and SUVs in the biggest market by number of vehicles sold rose 1.7 percent from a year earlier, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. That was down from 6.3 percent growth in the first two months of the year.

Total vehicle sales, including trucks and buses, rose 3 percent to 2.5 million. Auto demand was forecast to cool after Beijing raised a sales tax Jan. 1, but the March decline was unexpectedly sharp. Forecasters expect sales growth in mid-single digits this year, down from last year's 15 percent.

A steady decline in sales growth is squeezing global brands that look to China's crowded market to drive revenue and newer local brands that are expanding abroad. Sales of SUVs, which are shoring up revenue for automakers as demand in other segments plunges, rose 19.6 percent from a year earlier to 832,300. Still, that was down from 21.6 percent growth in January-February.

Sales of sedans shrank 4.9 percent to 990,000 units, down from 3.8 percent growth in January-February. In the year to date, overall market growth slowed to 4.6 percent, down 2.1 percentage points from a year earlier, according to CAAM. It said March exports rose 23.8 percent to 70,000 units.

Chinese drivers bought a total of 24.4 million vehicles last year after a 10 percent sales tax on small-engine vehicles was cut by half. Part of that was restored in January, raising the tax from 5 percent to 7.5 percent. General Motors Co said sales of GM-brand vehicles by the company and its Chinese partners rose 16 percent to 345,448. It said SUV deliveries rose 45 percent and Cadillac sales gained 63 percent. Ford Motor Co.'s luxury unit, Lincoln, said first-quarter sales rose 114 percent to 11,731 vehicles. Nissan Motor Co, the most popular Japanese brand in China, said March sales rose 9 percent over a year ago to 120,106 vehicles. It said year-to-date sales were up 5.3 percent to 314,347.

Toyota Motor Co. said sales rose 11.2 percent to 112,400 units. Sales for the first three months were up 10.2 percent to 296,000. — AP



**BAODING:** In this Feb 19, 2017 photo, a worker walks past Haval SUV models parked outside the Great Wall Motors assembly plant in Baoding in north China's Hebei province. — AP

## FRANCE'S GIG ECONOMY CREATES HOPE AND TENSION AS POLL LOOMS

**PARIS:** It's lunchtime and Parisians are queuing for baguettes at a bakery on the Rue Montmartre, a sight long typical of life in the French capital. But three cyclists clad in neon-blue outfits chat outside and regularly check the smartphones strapped to their wrists, waiting for orders to whisk meals from nearby restaurants and bistros to other Parisians in their homes or offices.

They're among an army of riders working for the British-based Deliveroo firm who have rapidly become a familiar sight pedalling up and down the city's boulevards.

These recent scenes in the Montorgueil district of Paris offer two opposing visions for large parts of France's services economy; each is championed by one of the candidates likely to contest the runoff vote for the French presidency next month.

Far-right contender Marine Le Pen wants to protect the likes of the traditional French baker or driver of metered taxis in towns and cities across the country from unfair competition.

Her centrist rival Emmanuel Macron sees the "gig economy" of firms such as Deliveroo and the US app-based cab service Uber as a model for creating jobs particularly in the "banlieues" - deprived suburban housing estates where unemployment is almost three times the national rate. Still, concern is growing about a new class of working poor with no social protection, and California-based Uber faced days of sometimes violent protests by its French drivers in December after raising fees it charges them to use the platform. So, with the rapid emergence of new forms of employment creating such frictions, the next president will have to decide whether to say "stop" or "more" to the gig economy.

On the Rue Montmartre, the Deliveroo riders lean towards the view of Macron - a former banker who tried to push through liberal reforms as economy minister from 2014-16 - even though they work as self-employed contractors without protections such as accident insurance that salaried staff automatically enjoy. One was 21-year-old Nicolas Usunier, who dropped out of college in his first year and looked in vain for a job at bakeries and supermarkets. By contrast, becoming a Deliveroo rider was quick and easy, he told Reuters.

"I was struggling. Then I saw a guy doing that; two weeks later I was on my bike going around Paris," he said. "I know some would like a real contract, but I like the flexibility."

Waiting for an order at the bakery in central Paris, an-hour's commute from his home, Usunier says he has not seriously considered getting insurance. "I will think about it the day I have an accident," he laughed.

### The job argument

France is famous for strong rights enjoyed by those people who have traditional employment contracts. Their working week is set at just 35 hours and firing them is difficult. Critics say this makes employers reluctant to hire and the price is chronic unemployment which, at almost 10 percent is roughly double the rate in Germany or Britain.

Approaching a quarter of young workers have no job. France is also struggling to integrate generations of immigrants, failing to create anything like enough jobs for those stuck on the cities' peripheries. But contrary to France's

image of a country set in its ways, the gig economy - where people offer their labor without the security of a traditional employment contract, often in industries where smartphone apps connect customers to businesses - is changing the landscape.

France now has 1.1 million registered self-contracting workers, although only 643,800 were active as of the middle of last year. That compares with a labor force of about 29 million, including just under 3.5 million unemployed. However, one in four jobs created in the first half of 2016 in the Paris region was due alone to cab services operated by Uber and its rivals, according to a study by the Boston Consulting Group commissioned by the US company.

The figure for what is known as the VTC sector - "transport vehicle with driver" - was lower elsewhere as Uber is less active in provincial cities, but still significant at 15 percent of new net jobs in the whole of France.

Ironically, Uber and its competitors possibly have more growth potential in France than in generally less regulated economies such as Britain and the United States.

Last year, there were just 5.6 VTC and traditional taxi drivers per 1,000 residents of greater Paris compared with 12 in London and 17 in New York, making it hard to find a cab at times. Outside the capital, getting French taxi firms to answer the phone late at night, let alone send a car, can be an even more frustrating experience. Boston Consulting said almost 60,000 extra jobs could be created in Paris alone by 2022 if it came close to matching the London or New York levels. — Reuters

# 3RD EDITION OF TOP CEO CONFERENCE 2017 DRAWS TO A CLOSE

## EVENT WELCOMES A RECORD NUMBER OF TOP VPS AND CEOs FROM ACROSS REGION

**DUBAI:** The third edition of the Top CEO Conference drew to a spectacular close at Bay La Sun Hotel & Marina, King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), where it made its Saudi Arabian debut. The annual event is organized by TRENDS magazine and INSEAD - the leading international business school - and serves to address the burning issues facing the corporate world today, with this year's edition taking place under the theme 'Adapting to Disruption: New Roles, New Realities' to reflect the transformation in the way C-level executives and businesses prepare to make agile strides toward a sustainable future.

Julien Hawari, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Mediaquest, commented: "With a record number of CEOs and VPs from the Arabian Gulf region in attendance this year, the Top CEO Conference 2017 has been an open and productive discussion between thought leaders, executives and officials, framing global issues in a regional context to help businesses to navigate challenges, embrace a new reality, and take their organizations forward in the right direction. Key highlights on the successful 2017 agenda included 'Big Data and Artificial Intelligence', 'Challenges of Slow Growth', 'New Technologies' and 'Leadership 2.0'."

"KAEC is very much at the heart of the conversation around the future of business in Saudi Arabia and the wider region," said Fahd Al-Rasheed, Group CEO and Managing Director of King Abdullah Economic City. "Our strategic position as the gateway into both the Saudi Arabian and the broader Red Sea markets makes us an ideal destination for businesses seeking to explore the potential of this fast-developing region. It has been a privilege to host the inaugural Top CEO Conference to be held on Saudi soil and we look forward to a fruitful relationship with this important thought leadership event."

The 'Big Data and Artificial Intelligence' session was hosted by Justine Cassell from the Human Computer Interaction Institute, who explored how AI and Big Data are transforming both business and society. The session shed light on the fantastic opportunities offered by machine learning and AI, while



also assessing the risks involved in their adoption, including the potential replacement of jobs with algorithms and machines. Presenting feasible solutions, the session advocated building technology for good and encouraging better global cooperation by infusing human skills into AI.

A panel discussion on 'Challenges of Slow Growth' was held between Dr Fahad M Al-Turki, Jadwa Investment; Dr Lama Al Sulaiman, Jeddah Chamber of Commerce; Eng. Yasser Joharji, Nahdi Medical Company; Irene Mia, The Economist Group; Khalid Suleiman Aljasser, Arabian Centres; Khalid Al Rumaihi, Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB); and CEO of Mediaquest Julien Hawari. The panel addressed the end of the GCC's era of abundance and the urgent need to enable sustainable growth and implement pragmatic strategies, with a discussion on the government reform programs that have been put in place to stabilize the economy, and the importance of collaboration if businesses are to face the changing scenario and counter the slowdown. Offering a silver lining, the session also provided insights into the possible advantages of slower growth in the GCC region.

The 'New Technologies' panel discussion saw dynamic debate related to the digital Fourth Industrial Revolution, between Justine Cassell, Human Computer Interaction Institute; Issam AbdulRahim Kazim, Dubai

Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing; Anand Vengurlekar, INSEAD; Ronaldo Mouchawar, Souq.com; Majed Al-Suwaidi, Managing Director of Dubai Media



City, Dubai Studio City and Dubai Production City; and Samer Bohsali from Strategy &. Going beyond digital disruption in the virtual world, the panel considered the real world impact of technological advances such as 3D printing. The discussion addressed the increasingly rapid rate of progress that will be witnessed over the next five years, which will see virtual technologies becoming a reality with the inevitable adoption of machine learning. It also explored the magnitude and



regional impact of this upcoming change. 'Leadership 2.0' saw a panel discussing the new generation of business leaders, who will be required to operate in an ever more complex, competitive and social-media-heavy environment. Expert opinions were shared by the speakers including Dr Ashraf Gamal El Din, Hawkamah; Huda Al-Lawati, Savola Group; Sushant Upadhyay, Aon Hewitt; Dr Lama Al-Sulaiman, Jeddah Chamber of Commerce; Hassan M Fattah, Brunswick; and Prof. Miguel Sousa Lobo from INSEAD. The session presented methods for leaders to take their businesses to the next level, by walking the talk and driving their companies' transformation independently - a challenge that will require higher levels of strategic flexibility, a new emphasis on building trust between senior leadership and younger employees, and concerted efforts to stimulate leadership growth via SMEs and entrepreneurial ventures.

The Top CEO Conference has once again been a huge success, cementing its position as an essential leadership event for GCC business leaders. With businesses in the GCC and the Middle East at a significant turning point, this year's agenda has addressed the most urgent issues, assessed their regional impact, encouraged a dialogue among industry experts, and provided valuable insights into what lies ahead. Most importantly, we have left the conference with forward-thinking

solutions that will shape the future of business in the region for the better.

Mediaquest is one of the region's largest, most successful and most influential privately owned media companies. Established in 1997, Mediaquest's mission is to inform, educate and entertain audiences across the MENA region, thereby building bridges between the Arab world and the West. Mediaquest generates a combined online and offline portfolio of more than 20 titles, covering marketing, communications, women's interests, lifestyle, entertainment and automotive. Reputed brands include: Marie Claire Arabia, Haya magazine and Buro 24/7 Middle East, as well as the highly regarded business-to-business titles: TRENDS magazine, Gulf Marketing Review, Saneou Al-Hadath, Arabies and Communicate. Mediaquest's dedicated dot-mena network hosts 75 premium websites that attract more than 41 million unique visitors each month. Mediaquest creates, project-manages and delivers some of the region's best-known industry events, including the Festival of Media MENA Conference and Awards; Arab Luxury World, a conference on the business of luxury; the Top CEO Conference and Awards; the Marketing to Women Conference; and the prestigious annual MENA Effie Awards, which are recognized as a benchmark for achievement in the region's marketing sphere.

## RASAMEEL INVESTMENT COMPANY PARTICIPATES IN DUBAI INVESTMENT FORUM

**DUBAI:** Rasameel Investment Company has participated recently in the annual Investment Forum hosted by the city of Dubai for the seventh year in a row under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.



Rashed Al-Rashed

The annual Investment Forum was attended by a wide range of leaders, politicians and businessmen from around the world to discuss many economic issues, and focus particularly on the question of direct investment.

Commenting on the major issues discussed in the forum Rashed Al-Rashed, Head of the Local Real Estate Management at Rasameel Investment, said "The forum focused on the diversification of the economy and the means necessary to achieve that goal, especially in Abu Dhabi, which currently attaches great importance to investment in human resources, innovation, knowledge-based economy, alternative energy and aviation."

He pointed out that the participants in the forum also discussed a series of issues related to foreign direct investment, and proposed solutions to help attract them. The forum sessions also dealt with the attractive factors for foreign direct investment such as the clarity of

laws and regulations, the stability of governments, the modern infrastructure and the quality of labor. Al-Rashed said that the forum also addressed Dubai's huge preparations to host Expo 2020, which is scheduled to last for six months. In this regard, the city has signed contracts worth AED 11 billion for construction projects in 2017 alone.

He added that the Organizing Committee of Expo 2020 aims to attract nearly 70 percent of EXPO visitors coming from outside of the United Arab Emirates, which is a very ambitious plan as the visitors to the previous editions of the EXPO were mostly citizens of the host countries. This plan will contribute significantly to increase the global marketing of Dubai and thus help attract more foreign investment. The Head of the Local Real Estate Management at Rasameel Investment concluded his statement by referring to the great demand from many countries and companies to participate in the exhibition. The number of participating countries reached 122, mainly due to Dubai's prominent position in the world as well as the advantages offered by the organizers to the participants, including free registration and participation as well as measures aiming to encourage small and medium enterprises to participate in the exhibition.



## EQUATE SUPPORTS GPCA'S PLASTICON 2017 CONFERENCE

### FORUM SHOWCASES VALUE CHAIN IN PLASTICS INDUSTRY



**KUWAIT:** Supporting the developing value chain in the plastics industry, EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, supported the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) PlastiCon Conference 2017 for the eighth consecutive year, in which EQUATE's President & CEO Mohammad Husain noted the importance of addressing trends to shift the Gulf countries into a healthy balance between exports and what is consumed regionally, redefining resources, increasing technological advancement and implementing steps that will help the region to flourish.

Husain said: "Today, the GCC is the leading global net exporter of polyolefin with net exports reaching 14.9 million tons in 2016, a volume that is expected to increase in the upcoming years. However, we have other challenges ahead of us.

From urbanization, healthcare, energy efficiency, climate change to water deficit, these challenges require tailored solutions that bring new opportunities for a healthy balance. Solutions will in return diversify our economy, create job opportunities, open new markets and elevate our manufacturing standards." Husain delivered the keynote address on the future of

the GCC Polymer Industry, saying that changes, initiatives and developments seen in the region are reaffirming the Polyolefin industry's growth and are creating opportunities for future developments and constant innovations in the downstream business.

Taking example of the EQUATE model in supporting overall economic growth and sustainability, Husain added that strengths must be consolidated between the public and private sectors, and most importantly within the private sector. Through its full acquisition of the global Ethylene Glycol (EG) producer, MEGlobal, EQUATE propelled itself into global leadership as the world's second largest EG producer, further confirming its position as a pioneer in petrochemicals.

The Company also supports research and knowledge sharing through the partnership with academic and research institutions such as Kuwait University (KU), aiming for progress, innovation, sustainability and training of future professionals who will positively lead the industry. As part of the partnership, two students at the KU College of Petroleum and Engineering and a teaching assistant were invited to attend the conference for the opportunity to network with various delegates.



#### Global producer

The EQUATE Group is a global producer of petrochemicals that creates a better world. The Group combines EQUATE Petrochemical Company (EQUATE), its subsidiaries and The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC). The EQUATE Group is the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG) with industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that produce Ethylene, EG, Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET). The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. As a leading global enterprise, the EQUATE Group strongly pursues sustainability principles and best practices wherever it operates through partnerships with various stakeholders including employees and customers as well as societies as a whole in fields that includes human development, environment, education, health and public awareness. The EQUATE Group's shareholders include Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC). The Group provides reliable services and solutions that enables global customers and stakeholders to grow and attain the success they seek by being "Partners in Success." www.equate.com

## MOHAMED NASER AL-SAYER & SONS AND LEXUS ARE PARTNERS FOR FIRST PAAET CAREER AND EDUCATION FAIR



**KUWAIT:** Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons (MNSS), one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies participated in the first career and education fair in association with Public Authority for Applied Education & Training (PAAET) which was held during 26 -28 March 2017 at PAAET sports complex Shuwaikh.



Lexus participation in the fair came with a IS 200t car display stand and test drive session NX 200t and GS 200t for the ambitious youth who attended the fair in pursuit of better career prospects.

The main objective of the event was to create the ideal environment for graduates of colleges and institutes who form the backbone of the trained working middle class that are keen to be attracted by the local labor market.

Dr Al-Kandari mentioned that the fair seeks to guide Kuwaiti youth of schools, institutes and colleges graduate or undergraduate students who are looking for career opportunities and other education, employment, training and development options available in the different sectors.

According to Mahmoud Abou-Zahr Business Director Lexus Kuwait "Al-Sayer and Lexus are pleased to be associated with this great event for the aspiring youth. Specially that Lexus is an evolving lifestyle brand with bold vision for the future and connect with dynamic individuals. Lexus continually anticipates the needs of people and the environment as it demonstrates a keen sense for forward thinking and innovation." The fair was a great success with the active participation of youth visiting the fair to communicate closely with labor market, public and private sector.

## US TAKES DOWN HUGE BOTNET AS SPAIN ARRESTS NOTORIOUS RUSSIAN HACKER

**WASHINGTON:** US authorities moved Monday to take down a global computer botnet behind the massive theft of personal data and unwanted spam emails, as Spain arrested the notorious Russian hacker who operated it. US authorities say the Russian, Piotr or Peter Levashov, had operated the Kelihos network of tens of thousands of infected computers, stealing personal data and renting the network out to others to send spam emails by the millions and extort ransom from computer owners. Levashov, also known in the hacking world as Peter Severa, was arrested at Barcelona airport on Friday at the US request.

A Spanish judge on Monday ordered him to be remanded in custody as Washington is expected to seek his extradition. The US has 40 days to present evidence. A US indictment unsealed Monday said Levashov, 36 and a native of St. Petersburg, had operated the Kelihos botnet since around 2010. Two years earlier he

was already in the sights of US investigators running another botnet and managing the spam operations of a major US spammer, Alan Ralsky. Ralsky and others were jailed in that case but Levashov was never caught.

### 100,000 computers infected

The Kelihos network is made up of private computers around the world running on the Microsoft Windows operating system. The computers are infected with malware that gives Levashov the ability to control them remotely, with the owners completely unaware. According to the Justice Department, at times the number of computers in the network has topped 100,000, with between five and 10 percent of them in the United States.

Through underground networks, Kelihos sold the network's services to others, who would use it to send out spam emails advertising counterfeit drugs, work-

at-home scams, and other fraud schemes, the indictment said. They were also used for illegal "pump-and-dump" stock market manipulation schemes, and to spread other malware through which hackers could steal a user's banking account information including passwords, and lock up a computer's information to demand huge ransoms. Levashov was proud of his work. According to Justice Department filings, earlier this year he posted an ad for his work noting he had been in the spam business "since the distant year 1999."

"During these years there has not been a single day that I keep still, by constantly improving quality of spamming," he said. His prices rose with the illegality of the operation. For legal ads, he charged \$200 per million spam emails. For scams and phishing attacks, it was \$500 per million.

To help someone with a stock manipulation, he wanted a deposit of \$5,000-\$10,000 to share his list of 25 million

traders. He also demanded 5 percent of the gains made on the stock.

The Spamhaus Project, which documents spam, botnets, malware and other abuse, listed Levashov as seventh on its "10 Worst Spammers" list and "one of the longest operating criminal spam-lords on the internet."

"The ability of botnets like Kelihos to be weaponized quickly for vast and varied types of harms is a dangerous and deep threat to all Americans, driving at the core of how we communicate, network, earn a living, and live our everyday lives," said Acting US Assistant Attorney General Kenneth Blanco in a statement.

### Taking over the network

Levashov's arrest was unrelated to investigations into Russian interference in last year's US presidential election, US officials said. Earlier, the suspect's wife had earlier told Russia Today that his arrest was

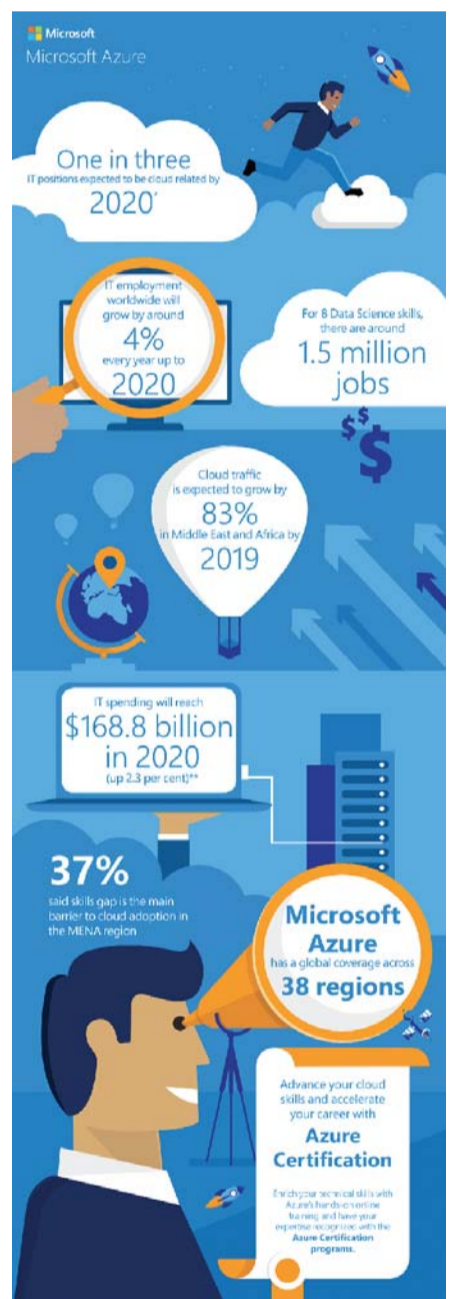
connected to the election hacking case. In parallel with the arrest, US justice authorities announced an extraordinary move to bring down the Kelihos network, obtaining warrants that allow it to take control of the computers in the botnet by changing the malware to intercept its operation.

That will direct the Kelihos traffic to "sinkhole" servers set up by authorities, overtime eliminating traffic through Levashov's server network.

Such a move appeared to be the first ever application of controversial new investigative powers for US authorities which took effect late last year. While the move will give them access to private computers, investigators pledged to guard the privacy of computer owners. "This operation will not capture content from the target computers or modify them in any other capacity except limiting the target computers' ability to interact with the Kelihos botnet," the warrant said. — AFP

## MICROSOFT URGES UP SKILLING AS ANALYSTS OBSERVE SURGE

**KUWAIT CITY:** Microsoft today called for IT professionals across Kuwait and the wider Middle East to prepare themselves for a cloud future by sharpening their skills in Microsoft Azure, through the company's cloud trainings and certifications. Azure trainings and certifications run as a blend of scheduled and on-demand online courses, covering generalized and niche, cloud-focused subject areas for getting up to speed with Azure. IT Pros can choose to learn in Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) with labs, or study for a test and take a certification exam.



directly to their existing job and allow them to add value. Our trainings will show you guide IT Pros to build hybrid or open-source solutions, and the courseware provides tactile learning experiences that you can employ immediately, while earning technical certifications that prepare you for rewarding career advancement."

A recent worldwide survey conducted by Microsoft showed a marked increase in the salaries of cloud professionals, as companies recruit for their digital transformation journeys. The survey also noted that 37 percent of respondents in the Middle East and Africa region cited a skills gap as the main barrier to cloud adoption. "In the GCC, governments have initiated bold economic-development visions centered on technology," said Ozyucel.

"Much of the activity in the private and public sectors around these programs - especially given the emerging constraints of the petrochemical price dip - is about doing more with less. In the context of digital transformation, that means cloud, so the surge in demand for cloud specialists is to be expected." An IDC forecast from 2015 projects that by 2020, more than one in three IT positions worldwide will be cloud related and that the cloud-readiness of professionals will start to have a significant impact on operations. The report also suggested IT employment worldwide will grow by around 4% every year up to 2020, and that all growth will occur in cloud-related positions. "Azure training courses ready participants for Microsoft Certified Professional exams, which allow them to earn the kind of accreditation that opens new doors. Acquiring cloud skills has become a critical component in organizational success. Our certifications will enable IT experts to re-imagine their firm's IT infrastructure, preparing them for a competitive digital future," added Ozyucel.

But it is not just infrastructure that can be transformed in the Azure cloud. With their newfound skill base, Azure professionals will be able to show their organizations and customers how to build transformative solutions from Microsoft's tried and tested AI platforms. Business intelligence and analytics solutions can reinvent customer engagement strategies. Natural-language processing modules can automate and streamline customer service through chatbots; and communications tools can ensure that organizations keep their employees connected and collaborating, wherever they may be in the world.

An IDC White Paper sponsored by Microsoft Corp. shows global demand for "cloud-ready" IT workers will grow by 26 percent annually through 2015 and onwards, with as many as 7 million cloud-related jobs available worldwide. According to the study, IT hiring managers report that the biggest reason they failed to fill 1.7 million open cloud-related positions in 2012 was because job seekers lacked the training and certification needed to work in a cloud-enabled world.

"Training is one of the best investments you can make in your career," said Ozyucel. "Azure Certifications can be the first step in your journey towards cloud expertise. Then you will be in a better position to add value to your employer's business or to help your customers with their own journeys to digital transformation, where they can benefit from Microsoft Azure's global coverage across 36 regions."



**GUJRAT:** This picture shows Indian salt pan worker Nirmalbhaj Jakhodia working in the Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) region of Gujarat some 180km west of Ahmedabad. — AFP photos

## TAKING THE WEB TO CHILDREN IN INDIA'S REMOTE SALT DESERT

WI-FI POWERED BY VAN BRINGS DIGITAL WORLD TO 10,000 FAMILIES

**THE LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH, India:** Sheltered beneath a canvas sheet to escape the blistering desert sun, miles from any roads or power lines, a group of Indian children huddle around a tablet and experience the internet for the very first time. The remote Wi-Fi connection is powered by a van bringing the digital world to around 10,000 families living on the inhospitable salt flats of western Gujarat state, where they work eight months a year in extreme conditions.

The salt desert known as the Little Rann of Kutch is roughly 180 kilometers from state capital Ahmedabad. The workers mining the land for salt live without electricity and other amenities while their children attend school in mud huts or tin sheds where they lack even the most basic learning supplies. Bringing the web to this isolated region is no small feat, with communities scattered over thousands of square kilometers.

The crew from NGO Agariya Heethrakshak Manch, one of the stakeholders in the project, first erected a powerful digital tower on the outskirts of the desert capable of sending a signal up to 60 kilometers away. Then they fixed an antenna to the top of their van and hit the road armed with laptops, tablets and printers. They visit each of the region's 14 makeshift schools approximately once per week, teaching the students how to use technology to access the internet and learn digital skills.

The students are eager to learn, crowding around to watch online videos about mathematics and science. "The internet and these tablets have made learning much more fun and engaging for all the children. They now have so much to



**GUJRAT:** This picture shows Anand Solanki, right, facilitator of the 'Zero Connect' program, and teacher Deepsinh Vanola (top left), with a group of children of salt pan workers during a tent school workshop using an Internet-connected van, in the Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) region of Gujarat some 180km west of Ahmedabad.

learn and explore," Pankti Jog of Agariya Heethrakshak Manch said. The youngsters are not the only ones discovering the joys of the web. This mobile service has also helped their parents-migrants who make the annual journey to the salt plains for work-access government welfare schemes online, Jog said. The crew hopes to

increase the frequency of school visits to once every three days once they get more vans. Currently their single van speeds between three schools a day, spending about two hours at each, Jog said. "We have connected around 800 students to internet and digital learning in this remote region", she said.—AFP

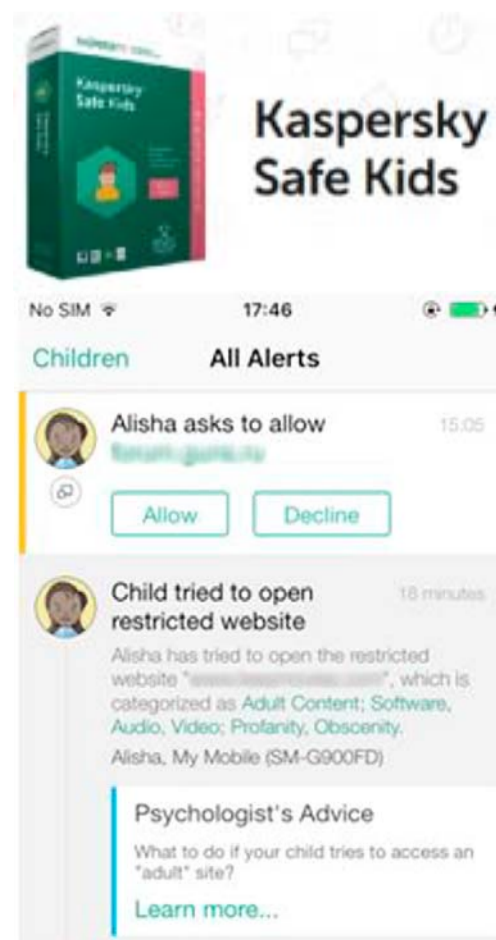
## ONE THIRD OF PARENTS FEEL THEY CAN'T CONTROL THEIR CHILD'S WEB ACTIVITIES

**DUBAI:** Kaspersky Lab has complemented its solution to protect children against digital threats with new features for iOS and Android platforms. Now, children can remotely ask parents for access to a restricted site or app with the touch of a button, while parents receive handy tips when Kaspersky Safe Kids registers difficult situations. Parents see these tips as a comment in the Kaspersky Safe Kids settings and in a report about the child's Internet activity in the My Kaspersky portal.

The tips can also appear as part of an urgent notification to a parent's mobile device, for example, if a child is trying to access a site from a category blocked by the parents (such as a site with obscene language). The results of a survey conducted by Kaspersky Lab and B2B International show that one in three parents feel they can't control what their child sees and does on the Web. Even with parental control tools, adults often don't know how to react to specific online behavior by their kids.

For instance, should they confiscate a gadget if their child is caught trying to access gambling sites? Or, how strictly should they talk to their child if the system registers an interest in adult-themed sites? The advice from psychologists integrated in the new version of Kaspersky Safe Kids allows parents not only to adequately assess the degree of risk to their child but also to revise their approach to their child's online security.

Parents will get tips about inappropriate sites and applications, when new suspicious contacts appear, when online purchases are made, about excessive use of the Internet, and in a number of



other situations. "Whichever product we develop, we always strive to make it as user-friendly and intuitive as possible. When it comes to parents' peace of mind and protecting children, this is more relevant than ever. We want our solution for protecting children online to provide more than just technical assistance; it also needs to be a partner for parents," said Andrei Mochola, Head of Consumer Business at Kaspersky Lab.

"Kaspersky Safe Kids is about more than just controlling children's Internet activity - we want to help parents get a better understanding of why their kids behave the way they do and why they are interested in particular content. We believe the psychologists' advice doesn't simply add a human touch to the program - it takes protection to a whole new level," she added. Another new product feature in the Android version allows kids to request access to restricted sites or applications.

If a parent has configured Kaspersky Safe Kids to prevent a child from using specific types of sites or apps, then a window appears denying access whenever a child tries to open them. Now, the child can send a request for access directly from this window. If the parent sees fit, they can agree to the request with the touch of a button. For iPhones and iPads, this function only works for websites. In addition to the functions described above, the solution helps parents stay informed of what their child is doing online, how much time they spend on the Internet, which sites they visit, what games they play, whom they communicate with on social networking sites, and where they go.

## UBER TO SERVE TAIWAN AFTER TWO-MONTH PAUSE

**TAIPEI:** Uber said it would re-launch its ride-hailing service in Taiwan following a two-month hiatus on the island after sparring with authorities over legal issues. The San Francisco-based giant, which has encountered regulatory roadblocks around the world despite its huge popularity, suspended operations in Taiwan in February due to an "impasse" with authorities who deemed it illegal. But on Monday the company said it would be reentering the market with a new business model.

"A brand-new Uber will serve Taiwanese once again," it said in a statement, without providing details or a date for the restart. A source at Uber who asked not to be named said the model would involve working with "legal car rental operators." Since it entered the Taiwan market in 2013, Uber had been racking up fines for running a business without the proper registration to operate as a taxi service.

In January authorities hiked the maximum possible penalty to Tw\$25 million

(\$815,940) per driver-the highest in the world. The company withdrew from the market a month later, criticizing the government's actions for hindering innovation and called on President Tsai Ing-wen to take action. Taiwan's transport ministry said it would welcome Uber as long as it works with licensed private drivers. "The problem with self-use drivers was competition and inadequate protection for customers," Hu Ti-chi, an official at the ministry's department of railways and highways, said.

Local media reported that the firm still has about Tw\$830 million in outstanding fines. Uber has faced stiff resistance from traditional taxi drivers across the world, as well as bans in some places over safety concerns. In neighboring Thailand police have threatened to shut down Uber and recently taken to arresting and fining its drivers. However, the smartphone app insists it is not a transport company like taxi firms, and that it is simply a platform connecting drivers and passengers. — AFP

## EL NINO CAN WARN ON CHOLERA OUTBREAKS IN AFRICA: STUDY

WASHINGTON: El Nino, the cyclical climatic phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean, is linked to shifts in cholera cases in Africa, providing an early warning that could save lives, scientists said Monday. During the years when El Nino is warming the eastern Pacific, East Africa has about 50,000 additional cholera cases a year, new research from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health suggests.

By contrast, the years when El Nino is not active, there were 30,000 fewer cholera cases in East Africa, according to the study published Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of

Sciences. The researchers analyzed more than 17,000 annual observations from 3,710 different locations between 2000 and 2014 in Africa, which has the most cholera deaths in the world.

The total number of cases of cholera across Africa as a whole were about the same in El Nino years as compared with non-El Nino years, but the geographic distribution of illnesses was "fundamentally different," the study's authors said in a statement. In total, 177 million people live in Africa in the regions where cholera cases spike with El Nino, and even triple in certain areas. Cholera is an infectious bacterial disease that can be fatal.

It is typically caught from infected water supplies, resulting in severe vomiting and diarrhea. "We usually know when El Nino is coming six to 12 months before it occurs," said study leader Justin Lessler, an associate professor of epidemiology at the Bloomberg School.

"Knowing there is elevated cholera risk in a particular region can help reduce the number of deaths that result," he said. "If you have cholera treatment centers available, fast, supportive care can reduce the fatality rate from cholera from as high as 30 percent to next to nothing." El Nino conditions in the equatorial Pacific strongly impact weather condi-

tions globally, including increasing rainfall in East Africa and decreasing rainfall in drier areas of northern and southern Africa.

In some areas, heavy rainfalls can cause sewers to overrun and contaminate drinking water. In other parts of Africa, the dry conditions can make clean water sources less available and people are forced to consume water from contaminated sources, the researchers noted. There is a vaccine against cholera but its protection is not lifelong. In addition, there is not enough supply of the vaccine to cover the populations in the African regions where the incidence of cholera is linked to El Nino.—AFP

## 'SLIDING INTO CATASTROPHE': SUDAN FAMINE COULD SPREAD

CONDITIONS TO DETERIORATE AS LEAN SEASON APPROACHES

AWEIL, South Sudan: Two months after the world's youngest nation declared a famine amid its civil war, hunger has become more widespread than expected, aid workers say. South Sudan's Northern Bahr el Ghazal region is on the brink of starvation, with 290,000 people at risk of dying without sustained food assistance. Humanitarian workers say conditions will only deteriorate as the lean season approaches.

In February, South Sudan and the United Nations formally declared a famine in two counties in Unity State. Northern Bahr el Ghazal's five counties now face the same fate. "All five counties are sliding into catastrophe," said an aid worker who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly on the issue. "If it wasn't for food assistance, this

ried that one day I'll die with my children because we can't get food," said Abuk Garang. The young mother stared at her son's emaciated legs while he anxiously tugged at her breasts.

The boy, William Deng, was born in September, yet he looks more like a newborn. Unable to draw any milk, the child chokes back tears and begins gnawing on his fist. Garang tries to console him, but she knows he's famished. "We've only eaten leaves for three days," she said. "If there's no food, he'll die." When Garang heard that food was being distributed in a nearby town, she and thousands of others flocked there in desperation. After hours of waiting, she beamed and pointed to her new bag of sorghum, then shielded her face, embarrassed by her excitement. One by one, others staggered into aid group World

### Mass deaths from starvation

World Vision last week rolled out the first phase of a program to provide 65,000 people in Aweil East county with food during the month of April. The aim is to start with 17,000 of the most severely malnourished and vulnerable people. Aid workers said they weren't prepared for the level of despair. "I was shocked by the number of malnourished kids here," said the aid group's South Sudan communications manager, Rose Ogola.

"And the looks of desperation on the mothers." In the small town of Malualkuel alone, where the food was distributed, local leaders said 4,000 out of the town's 6,000 people are facing extreme starvation. "It's the worst I've ever seen it in 12 years in terms of food security and hunger-related deaths," said James Mayvien Aror, Aweil East county's relief and rehabilitation commissioner. "I feel sad. I'm not happy to see people die."

During a food and security review meeting last week in Aweil town, aid workers and government officials estimated an increase of 3 to 5 percent in the number of people in Northern Bahr el Ghazal who will face extreme hunger in the coming months.

"The region requires sustained humanitarian support," said George Fominyen, spokesman for the World Food Program in South Sudan. "Without that, and without the improvement in the conditions of people there, you're going to find those with the threat of moving into phase five." Level five in global food security classification is famine.

The UN's refugee agency said yesterday the "risk of mass deaths from starvation" is growing in South Sudan. With the onset of the lean season in June and July, the fear is there won't be enough food to meet the growing demand. Local community leaders said 200,000 metric tons of food is still needed for Northern Bahr el Ghazal. "Yesterday we didn't eat anything at all," said 20-year-old Adel Bol. Like so many others, she had heard there was food and quickly came running.

Cradling her 10-month-old daughter, she lifted the baby's shirt to reveal her protruding ribs. Akir Mayen's bald head is twice the size of her skeletal body. She flailed her arms, trying to clutch at her mother's chest. "If she dies," Bol said, "I'll never give birth again."—AP



**SOUTH SUDAN:** In this photo, Abuk Garang, right, holds her 7-month-old son William Deng, and Adel Bol, left, holds her 10-month-old daughter Akir Mayen, as they and others walk to a food distribution site in Malualkuel, in the Northern Bahr el Ghazal region of South Sudan.—AP photos

place would be at a level five famine." Northern Bahr el Ghazal and its 1.4 million residents have remained relatively peaceful during South Sudan's three-year civil war. But due to soaring inflation fueled by the conflict, harsh climate conditions and its remoteness, this region has become severely affected by hunger. "I'm wor-

vision's food distribution compound. Some had hobbled through the bush on one good leg, while others had walked for hours with bloody feet under the sweltering sun. A steady stream of women with weak children strapped to their backs and babies attempting to nurse could be seen for miles.

## PROSTATE CANCER TESTS ARE NOW OK WITH PANEL, WITH CAVEATS

CHICAGO: An influential US government health panel is dropping its opposition to routine prostate cancer screening in favor of letting men decide for themselves after talking with their doctor. The new draft guidelines echo those of several leading medical groups, but they don't make the decision any easier for men: With their doctor's help, they have to decide whether to take an imperfect PSA test that has a small chance of detecting a deadly cancer and a larger chance of triggering unnecessary worry and treatment with serious side effects.

"This isn't a one-size-fits-all" recommendation, said the panel's chair Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, a San Francisco internist who already follows the advice and discusses the potential pros and cons with her patients. Men whose greatest concern is reducing their chances of dying from cancer are sometimes willing to face the consequences and choose testing. "Other men will realize the likely benefit is small and aren't willing to risk the harms," she said.

PSA screening to detect the most common male cancer is among the most heated topics in men's health. It involves a simple blood test for elevated levels of a protein that may signal cancer but also can be caused by less serious prostate problems. It can find cancer that frequently doesn't need treatment because it's too small and slow growing to become deadly. Doctors say there's no good way to tell which early cancers might become lethal. The next step is often radiation or surgery to remove the prostate, which may result in impotence and incontinence.

The US Preventive Services Task Force says its latest recommendation is based on new evidence indicating that routine PSA blood tests can slightly reduce some men's chances of dying from prostate cancer and that drastic treatment can be avoided with close monitoring when cancer is detected. The shift shuffles the panel's 2012 guidance, which prompted criticism from some urologists - specialists who treat the disease - and angered some prostate cancer patients certain that PSA screening had saved their lives.

The new advice published yesterday closely aligns the panel with medical groups that also support shared-decision-making. The biggest remaining difference is timing. The task force draft says screening conversations should begin at age 55. Other groups say start earlier, depending on family history of prostate cancer and other factors. It recommends against testing men aged 70 and older. The panel leaves open how often men should be screened. It does not recommend earlier testing for blacks and those

with a family history but says they should know their risks are higher.

### Active surveillance

Dr. Meir Stampfer, a Harvard University cancer expert, called the new advice "a more reasoned approach." He said PSA tests make sense if they do not lead to overly aggressive treatment. His research suggests that more than 1 in 5 men worldwide have undetected prostate cancer, including more than 40 million Americans, but that most will die of other causes. The task force's 2012 advice against screening said there was little evidence that PSA screening was reducing deaths.

Since then, PSA screening rates have declined by as much as 10 percent, and now less than one-third of US men get the tests. Fewer men are being diagnosed with early-stage disease, when it is more treatable, while more are being diagnosed with more aggressive harder-to-treat cancer. The panel says its new advice stems from long-term research indicating that for every 1,000 men offered PSA screening, one to two will avoid death from prostate cancer and three will

avoid prostate cancer spreading to other organs. Newer research also has shown benefits from "active surveillance" of men whose initial PSA tests and biopsies indicate slow-growing cancer that hasn't spread, the panel said. This approach includes repeated PSA tests and close monitoring, which can delay or even avoid the need for treatment. The task force's recommendations influence U.S. government policy and are widely followed by primary care physicians. Medicare and many private insurers have continued to pay for the screening.

The government-appointed volunteer panel reviews evidence and issues advice for a variety of screenings and treatments. "It sounds like cooler heads have prevailed," said Dr. Jim Hu, a urologist and prostate cancer specialist at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center who called the old advice "draconian." The prostate cancer recommendations, announced online in the Journal of the American Medical Association, are open for public comment on the task force website until May 8. Final guidance will come months later but the panel's guidelines typically echo its draft advice.—AP



**SAN FRANCISCO:** In this photo, Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo poses by a mural in the lobby of her office in San Francisco.—AP



**CINOVEC, Czech Republic:** In this picture, a border sign is placed in a former mine located at the border with Germany near the village of Cinovec, Czech Republic.—AP

## LITHIUM REVIVING CENTURIES-OLD CZECH MINING TRADITION

CINOVEC, Czech Republic: A surge in the global use of lithium, a key component in electric batteries, is leading to the revival of a centuries-long mining tradition in the Czech Republic's Ore Mountains. Demand for the light metal, which is already used in smartphone batteries, is expected to triple in the next decade as it is used in far greater quantities in electric cars and electric storage systems. With major car manufacturers increasingly focused on electric cars, Goldman Sachs calls lithium "the new gasoline." Others say it's the oil of the future.

Tesla Motors for one thinks it's worth betting on. Its CEO, Elon Musk, has plans to build a "gigafactory" to produce lithium-ion batteries somewhere in Europe, on top of the \$5 billion plant it's setting up in Nevada. The potential of lithium's boom is already having a knock-on effect for the small village of Cinovec on the Czech border with Germany, which has a tin and tungsten mining tradition dating back to 1378. Its mines were abandoned in 1991 because they ceased to be economically sustainable following the collapse of communism, but recent explorations have found the biggest deposit of lithium in Europe.

Jaromir Stary, the head of the Department of Mineral Resources at the Czech Geological Survey, said the lithium resources in the Czech Republic could amount to 1.2-1.4 million metric tons, mostly in the Cinovec area. Only Serbia has a similar deposit in Europe, estimated at 1 million metric tons. Australia's European Metals Holdings, or EMH, has had an exclusive license to explore the resources and the right to seek permission to mine since 2014 when it acquired Czech exploration company Geomet, which first confirmed the presence of the ore. Ion

"You can have a splendid idea but you need money to make it reality," said Otto Janout, a prospector and one of Geomet's four founders. EMH is listed at the London Stock Exchange and the Australian Securities Exchange in Sydney. Speculation that EMH is seen the company's share price spike eight-fold in the past year alone. EMH Managing Director Keith Coughlan said it was planning to open a mine at Cinovec

within the coming years to produce over 20,000 metric tons of lithium carbonate (about 3,800 tons of lithium) a year.

### Biggest consumer

That would place the country among the top five lithium producers in the world. "I believe it is a danger for Europe to continue to think that it can rely on Asia for its supply chain of battery related materials and in particular lithium," Coughlan said. "I think it is a very significant asset from a European perspective." According to a report by the US Geological Survey (USGS), Australia was the leading lithium producer with 14,300 metric tons in 2016, followed by Chile with 12,000 metric tons. Argentina is third with 5,700, while China, the biggest consumer, was fourth with 2,000 tons.

Global output was 35,000 metric tons in 2016, 12 percent more than the previous year, the report said. A Deutsche Bank study in 2016 forecast global battery consumption growing threefold in the next ten years. Parts of the Czech deposit span the border with Germany, where Canada's Bacanora has been exploring it. Stary said a major disadvantage of the Czech ore compared with other deposits could be its low grade as it contains about 0.2 percent of lithium on average. But it's relatively uncomplicated and environmentally friendly to process.

Unlike most other deposits in the world, the Czech variant is located in an area with functioning infrastructure, including a rail track. Potential customers are located nearby, and not just car manufacturers. US-based A123 Systems recently opened a new plant in the eastern Czech city of Ostrava to make lithium-ion car starter batteries for luxury auto brands. Prague-based HE3DA has recently started a trial production of lithium batteries suitable to store energy from renewable electric sources, using nanotechnology. It plans to open a new factory in eastern Czech Republic next year. The company has already signed a memorandum about the future cooperation with EMH, HE3DA president Jan Prochazka said. "It means stable supplies for us," Prochazka said. "There'll be a fight over lithium, no doubt."—AP

## EARLY QUAKE WARNING SYSTEM EXPANDS TO OREGON, WASHINGTON

SEATTLE: An early warning system for earthquakes has been expanded to Oregon and Washington, joining California in testing a prototype that could give people seconds or up to a minute of warning before strong shaking begins. The system isn't ready to issue public quake warnings yet, according to the US Geological Survey, which has been working with university partners to develop the ShakeAlert system.

But this version allows early adopters in Oregon and Washington to begin using the early signals to figure out what they need to do in the event of an earthquake. Such pilot projects are helping to make the system more reliable and pave the way for broader use. Officials with USGS, the University of Washington and others held a news conference Monday in Seattle to announce the system's roll out across the US West Coast.

California has been testing the production prototype since early 2016. Even a few seconds of advanced notice can help people to duck and cover or cities to slow trains, stop elevators or take other protective measures, agency officials say. In Washington, a Seattle area firm RH2 Engineering has signed on as a pilot user to test the system to prevent water tank spills, The Seattle Times reported.

The firm develops municipal water and sewage plants and hopes to use the system to be able to close valves in the event of an earthquake.

"The advantage of earthquake early warning is that it gives us forewarning that the shaking will occur, and we can be sure the valve is fully closed by the time the shaking starts," the firm's Dan Ervin told the newspaper.

The company is working on software and hardware to process the warning signals and automatically close valves. The early warning system detects earthquakes using a network of ground motion sensors. The amount of warning time depends on distance from an earthquake's epicenter. Locations very close to the epicenter may not get any warning, but others farther away could get anywhere from seconds to minutes.

The University of Oregon is working with the Eugene Water & Electric Board, Oregon's largest public electric and water utility service, to install sensors on its hydroelectric facilities, canals and water treatment plant, the Daily Astorian reported. The USGS says it will cost \$38.3 million in capital investment to complete the ShakeAlert system so that it can begin issuing alerts to the public. It will cost about \$16.1 million each year to operate and maintain it.—AP



**SYDNEY:** This file photo shows a platypus baby or 'puggle' held before being transferred back to its burrow after emerging for the first time at Sydney's Taronga Zoo. —AFP

## TWO PLATYPUSES DECAPITATED IN DESPICABLE AUSTRALIA KILLINGS

**SYDNEY:** Two platypuses have been found decapitated in Australia, with wildlife officials yesterday saying they were deliberately killed in "despicable" acts of cruelty. Three of the rare mammals were discovered dead at botanical gardens in the rural town of Albury in New South Wales, two with their heads cut off. Local wildlife rescue provider Hazel Cook, who had the bodies inspected by a vet, told the Border Mail newspaper the deaths were "definitely" not caused by another animal.

"You can actually see where they've tried to cut into the vertebrae," she said, adding that there was no way to tell if they were alive when they were decapitated. "We have

no idea why anyone would do that, especially to something as gentle as a platypus." The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Services said the platypuses had been found over the past five weeks.

"These animals appear to have been deliberately killed in a despicable act of cruelty to one of Australia's most loved animals," a spokeswoman said. The duck-bill platypus, a timid and nocturnal animal that lives in deep waterside burrows, is one of only two egg-laying mammals. It is found only in eastern Australia. Harming native animals in Australia can result in fines of up to Aus\$11,000 (US\$8,200) or six months in jail. —AFP



**GERMANY:** Two baby tigers are pictured before being vaccinated at the zoo in Leipzig, eastern Germany. —AFP

# WHALE CAMS REVEAL SECRET ANTARCTIC FEEDING HABITS

**SYDNEY:** Whale cams have revealed the secret feeding habits of the giant mammals in frozen Antarctica, details on their social lives, and even how they must blow hard to clear sea ice to breathe. Scientists attached tiny cameras and electronic tags to humpbacks to better understand what they do underwater as they study how shrinking sea ice caused by warming sea temperatures linked to climate change may impact them.

"Once we have an idea about where the whales feed, how often, where they go and rest, we can use this to inform policy and management to protect these whales and their ecosystem," leading whale scientist Ari Friedlaender said yesterday. The Australian Antarctic Division-led team said the information helped determine how the abundance of their main food, krill, affected the feeding success of whales. It also added to their understanding of how any change in krill population due to climate change, commercial fishing, or ocean acidification, may impact whales in the future.

"We have some wonderful data on different feeding strategies from rolling lunges near the surface, to bubble net feeding, to deep foraging dives lunging through dense patches of krill," said Friedlaender. "We have been able to show that whales spend a great deal of time during the days socializing and resting and then feeding largely throughout the evening and night time." The cameras were attached by suction cups to each whale for between 24 and 48 hours before they fell off and were retrieved and reused.

WWF-Australia, which helps fund the cameras, said the work was about enabling habitats to become more resilient and thrive in the future. "Growing human impacts such as climate



**ANTARCTICA:** This undated handout picture taken by Dave Brosha and released by the Australian Antarctic Division shows a Minke whale surfacing off the coast in the Gerlache Strait in Antarctica. —AFP

change and increasing krill fishing overlapping in their critical feeding areas need to be managed carefully," said Chris Johnson, WWF-Australia ocean science manager. The Antarctic remains one of the world's last wild frontiers, containing some of the most pristine marine ecosystems left on the planet.

It is seen as a critical laboratory for scientists monitoring the effects of climate change. The researchers also deployed longer-term electronic tags on the smaller Antarctic minke whales, with scientist Elanor Bell saying there was little information on their feeding behavior. "Minke

are faster and more elusive than humpback whales and often forage in areas with lots of sea ice," she said.

"This makes it challenging to find and approach them to deploy tracking equipment.

"So it was really exciting to be able to attach some tags on this voyage. These will transmit the location and dive depth data to satellites every time they surface for up to two months." The research, backed by the International Whaling Commission, ultimately aims to estimate the abundance and distribution of whales and their role in the Antarctic ecosystem. —AFP



**GERMANY:** In this photo, keeper German Alonso straps a leg prosthesis to on the left leg of secretary bird Soeckchen (*Sagittarius seprentarius*) at the bird park in Walsrode, northern Germany. —AP

## SECRETARY BIRD AT GERMAN PARK GETS NEW LEG FROM 3-D PRINTER

**BERLIN:** Soeckchen the secretary bird is now strutting around her home in northern Germany with an artificial leg produced using a 3-D printer. Keepers at the Weltvogel bird park in Walsrode found two-year-old Soeckchen (Little Socks) in her aviary with a broken left leg. Her

lower leg had to be amputated. Zookeepers turned to Lars Thalmann of e-Nable, which makes free prosthetic hands for children.

The dpa news agency says it was the first time the organization had made prosthesis for an animal. Park spokeswoman Janina Buse says

it took two attempts to get it right. A first prosthesis, which mimicked the leg's form, turned out too heavy.

Buse says Thalmann built a second leg without talons - "it looks much simpler, but the bird is managing brilliantly with it." —AP

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
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Shams Aldeen Abdushar'abi who was killed in the Baq'a area.



Mohammad Abdulrab Qahed stands for a portrait with his wife, Um Saad, and children Imad, Wiam, and Dua'a, at a school where they now live in Sana'a, Yemen.



Sami Al-Ramyan



Alex Potter

# YEMEN NOW PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION AT AL-SHAHEED PARK

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

When you enter the multipurpose hall in Al-Shaheed Park, you won't see beauty in the usual sense of natural landscapes or artistic portraits. But you will experience beauty: the beauty of reality, of life in the midst of suffering. That is what shines through in the current Yemen Now exhibition showcasing the work of documentary photographers from Kuwait in collaboration with an American photojournalist who recently visited war-torn Yemen.

### Why Yemen?

Photographer Huda Abdul-Mughni says she fell in love with Yemen after her inaugural visit to attend and document a collective wedding back in 2012. "Yemen is a land

with a great architectural and historical legacy. I have travelled to many countries. However, I haven't felt the great attention and hospitality like I've seen in that country and its generous people. The poor may look for anything to offer you," she said.

"After 10 years of the Yemen wedding project, I went back to find out what they had done in their lives after marriage, to find that two of them had died as a result of the war, meanwhile one of them lost their baby due to the lack of medical care," she added. Yemen was the first country that Alex Potter, the photojournalist, worked in the Middle East. For this reason, Potter has a special feeling for the people of the Yemen.

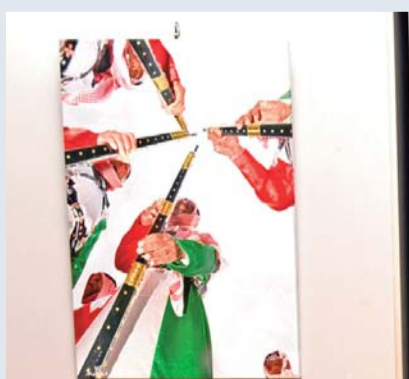
"I came in 2012 to document the post-revolution election, there were few other journalists there for the years I've stayed. The small group of us is truly dedicated to the story

of Yemen." "The pictures were taken at the beginning of the war in 2015. They're mostly in Sana'a and Amran. I realize I was merely able to photograph one side of the conflict, but it was people I lived with and cared about whose home was disintegrating before their very eyes. Despite all that, I want to show not only the reality of destruction, but the resilience of Yemeni people," she explained.

Yemen is located in the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula in Asia, between Saudi Arabia and Oman, overlooking the Indian Ocean and Bab Al-Mandab strait in the Red Sea. After the war, more than two million Yemenis were displaced, of whom more than 35,000 were stranded in Djibouti. Sami Al-Ramyan went with a relief campaign to cover Yemeni refugees there in the city of Abkhaz in 2015. "I was outraged by the poor conditions and the severe lack of basic living needs of electricity, water and cooling under

the heat of extreme weather. My photography project focused on the youngsters in the refugee camps and the poor conditions to raise awareness about the tragic situation to help in raising money for them. I witnessed fear and optimism. They don't know their fate, nevertheless they hold onto hope," he said.

Potter stresses the Yemeni people's attachment to hope, describing them as proud and faithful. "Even those who lost everything will still tell me "Alhamdulillah, at least I still have my daughter," or "Inshallah Allah will protect us and bring us through." Today at 7.00 pm, the award winning short film, Yamaniyat, will be screened alongside the exhibition, followed up, on the day after with a public discussion with the photographers to talk about their experience in Yemen and the refugee camps. Sales proceeds will be allocated to relief funds.



Ghazi Qaffaf, photographer at KUNA held a photography exhibition of his pictures called "Pictures from Kuwait" at the basement of the National Library of Kuwait. The event was a huge success. A number of officials and friends attended in event which lasted from April 8 to 9, 2017.

## KUWAITI BAND AL-HASSAN BROTHERS TO RELEASE DEBUT ALBUM 'MI LUNA'

Kuwaiti multilingual band the Al-Hassan Brothers will debut their first album "Mi Luna" and release their first music video today both produced by AJNA Records. Al-Hassan Brothers are Ali Al-Hassan, Haitham Al-Hassan, Mahmoud Al-Hassan and Hassan Al-Hassan Al-Hassan are a group of four Kuwaiti guitarists whose talent on the guitar are

evident in their music which is inspired by a variety of backgrounds. The band was formed in the summer of 2015 and was signed to AJNA Records in 2016 under the guidance of music composer Nawaf Gheraibah.

"Mi Luna" consists of 12 tracks, performed in English, Arabic and Spanish. The album is composed of contemporary guitar

melodies performed in various languages and their music pieces echo music ranging from flamenco, Rock and Kuwaiti folk. Their first single "Yo the Quiero" is a beautifully haunting song composed about the loss of a loved one. The video will be presented for the first time at the press conference today at the Center for Arts in Shuwaikh at 6 pm.

Al-Hassan Brothers will be performing at the Al-Shaheed Park Amphitheater on April 20, 2017 and will be backed by seven members of their supporting band: a drummer, bassist, two percussionists, an electric guitarist and a special Bahraini guest; guitarist Hamanino. The concert will be a free event and open to the public.



## GERMANY EMBASSY DEPUTY HEAD OF MISSION HOSTS SPRING RECEPTION

The deputy head of mission of Germany embassy, Rudiger Zettel hosted a spring reception at his residence. Diplomats, friends and media persons attended the event.

## EMBASSY OF INDIA KUWAIT STATEMENT ON AADHAAR CARD

While "Aadhaar" has been made mandatory for filing of Income Tax Return as well as for seeking PAN (Permanent Account Number) cards, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi has now clarified that mandatory quoting of Aadhaar for PAN applications and filing Income Tax Return shall

not apply to a Non-Resident Indian (NRI) as he/she is not eligible to get "Aadhaar." Only a resident Indian is entitled to an Aadhaar Card. Please note that Aadhaar card is not mandatory for obtaining driving license or a SIM card in India. It is only one of several documents recognized for address proof of the applicant.



— Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



## KDD ORGANIZES OPEN DAY AT AQUA PARK

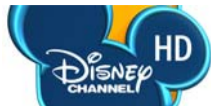
The Kuwait Danish Dairy Company (KDD) recently organized an open day activity for its employees and families at the Aqua Park City with participation from the Lebanese announcer, Karen Der Kaloustian who presented a

variety of amusing activities. Commenting on the event, KDD general manager, Khaled Al-Thaher said that the activities addressed all age categories and included various cultural and touristic competitions about Kuwait and GCC states.





- 23:30 Fast N' Loud
Disney XD
06:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy
06:25 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man



- 00:00 Binny And The Ghost
00:25 Hank Zipzer
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



- 00:05 Botched
01:50 EI News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story

- 00:15 Swamp Brothers
00:45 Bondi Vet
01:40 Pit Bulls & Parolees
02:35 Tanked

FROM THE PRODUCERS OF THE TAKEN TRILOGY THE TRANSPORTER REFUELED



MOVIEPILOT

THE TRANSPORTER: REFUELED ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack



- 06:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy
06:25 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
06:50 Atomic Puppet



- 00:20 Wildebeeste: Born To Run
01:10 Animals Gone Wild
02:00 Secrets Of The King Cobra



- 00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street



- 00:10 Monster Fish
01:00 Wicked Tuna
02:00 Air Crazed Investigation



- 00:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
01:20 Race To Escape
02:10 World's Funniest Fails



- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Man Finds Food
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives



REIGN OVER ME ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 14:55 Bear Grylls Survival School
15:20 Mythbusters
16:10 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

- 09:00 Cooking For Real
10:00 Siba's Table
11:00 The Kitchen

- 04:45 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster

- 11:35 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
12:00 Johnny Kapahala: Back On Board
13:45 K.C. Undercover

- 00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 The Wheel: Survival Games
02:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls

- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Sport Science

- 08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:05 Goldie & Bear
09:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons

- 00:30 Blood Relatives
01:20 In The Name Of Love: People Magazine Investigates
02:00 Hate In America



- 00:30 Blood Relatives
01:20 In The Name Of Love: People Magazine Investigates
02:00 Hate In America

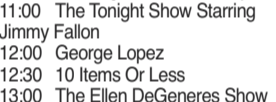
- 10:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware
11:00 Parched
12:00 Science Of Stupid



- 00:00 Berlin Station
01:00 Quantic
02:00 Supergirl
03:00 Better Call Saul



- 00:30 Angie Tribeca
01:00 Angie Tribeca
01:30 Family Guy
02:00 Bordertown



- 01:00 Memory Loss
02:45 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
04:15 Pirates Who Don't Do Anything



- 01:00 Clockstoppers
03:00 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
05:00 Ice Princess



- 00:15 Everly
02:00 Metro
03:45 King Arthur
06:00 Die Hard



- 00:00 Afternoon Delight
02:00 Cheech & Chong's The Corsican Brothers



- 00:15 Serena
02:10 Brooklyn
04:00 Boychick



- 00:15 V/H/S 2
02:00 Reign Over Me
04:15 127 Hours

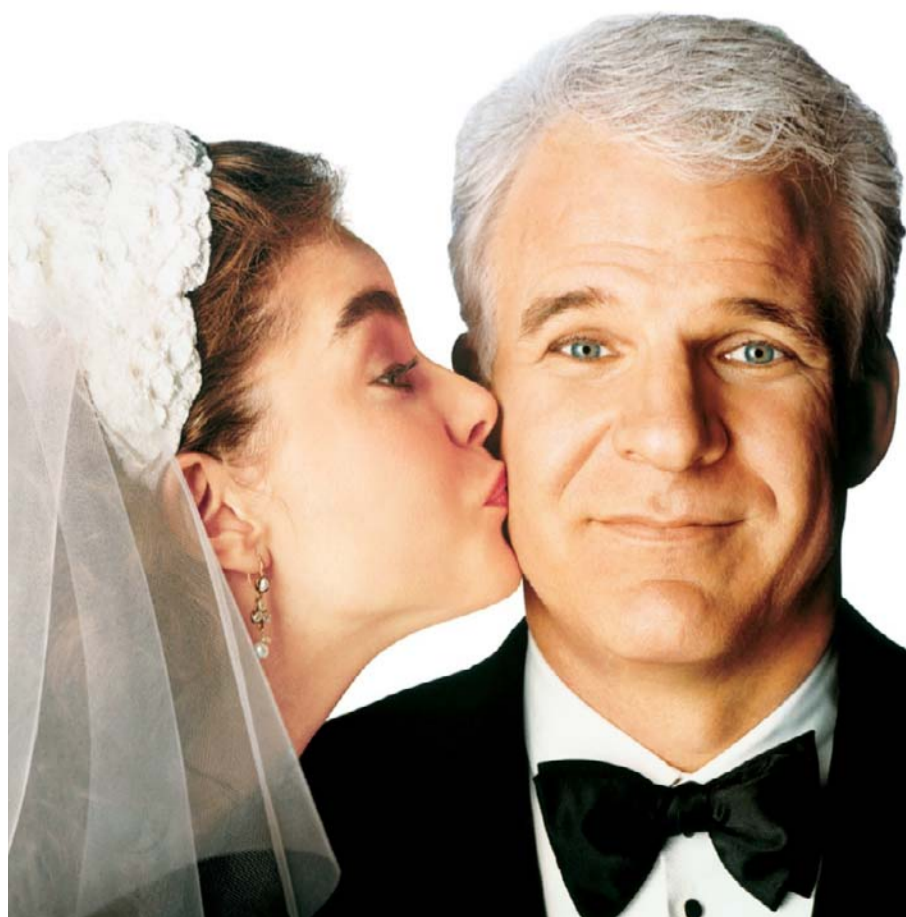


- 01:00 Memory Loss
02:45 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
04:15 Pirates Who Don't Do Anything



- 00:20 Little Miss Atlanta
01:10 The Undateables
02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life

FATHER of the BRIDE



FATHER OF THE BRIDE ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD



- 00:15 The Food Files
00:40 The Food Files
01:05 The Game Chef
01:30 Dog Whisperer



# CLASSIFIEDS



**Kuwait Times**  
 Now you can browse  
[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)  
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



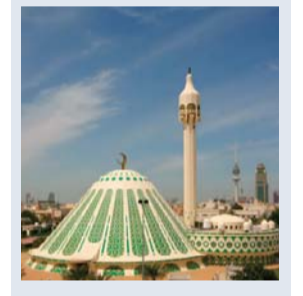
## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (06/04/2017 TO 12/04/2017)

Programme	Time	Programme	Time	Programme	Time	Programme	Time
<b>SHARQIA-1</b>		AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	12:30 AM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	5:45 PM	GET OUT	4:30 PM
AFTERMATH	12:00 PM			SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	7:45 PM	GET OUT	6:45 PM
AFTERMATH	2:00 PM	<b>FANAR-2</b>		SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	9:45 PM	GET OUT	9:00 PM
EAT LOCAL	4:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	11:45 AM	GET OUT	11:45 PM	GET OUT	11:15 PM
AFTERMATH	6:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	1:45 PM				
EAT LOCAL	8:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	3:45 PM	<b>AVENUES-1</b>		<b>AL-KOUT.1</b>	
AFTERMATH	10:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	5:45 PM	COLLIDE	11:30 AM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	11:30 AM
EAT LOCAL	12:05 AM	GOING IN STYLE	7:45 PM	AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	1:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	1:30 PM
		GOING IN STYLE	9:45 PM	COLLIDE	3:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	3:30 PM
		GOING IN STYLE	11:45 PM	AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	5:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	5:30 PM
				AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	8:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	7:30 PM
				AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	10:15 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	9:30 PM
				AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	12:30 AM	AFTERMATH	11:30 PM
<b>SHARQIA-2</b>		<b>FANAR-3</b>		<b>AVENUES-2</b>		<b>AL-KOUT.2</b>	
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	11:30 AM	AFTERMATH	12:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX	11:45 AM	GOING IN STYLE	12:00 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	1:30 PM	AFTERMATH	2:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -3D-4DX	2:15 PM	GOING IN STYLE	2:00 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	3:30 PM	AFTERMATH	4:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -3D-4DX	4:15 PM	GOING IN STYLE	4:00 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	5:30 PM	EAT LOCAL	6:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -3D-4DX	6:15 PM	GOING IN STYLE	6:00 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	7:30 PM	AFTERMATH	8:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -3D-4DX	8:15 PM	GOING IN STYLE	8:00 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	9:30 PM	EAT LOCAL	10:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX	10:15 PM	GOING IN STYLE	10:00 PM
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	11:30 PM	EAT LOCAL	12:05 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX	12:45 AM	GOING IN STYLE	12:05 AM
<b>SHARQIA-3</b>		<b>FANAR-4</b>		<b>AVENUES-3</b>		<b>AL-KOUT.3</b>	
GOING IN STYLE	12:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	12:15 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	12:15 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	12:30 PM
GOING IN STYLE	2:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	2:15 PM	GET OUT	2:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	2:30 PM
GOING IN STYLE	4:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	4:15 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	4:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	4:30 PM
GOING IN STYLE	6:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	6:15 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	7:00 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	6:30 PM
GOING IN STYLE	8:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	8:15 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	9:15 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	8:30 PM
GOING IN STYLE	10:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	10:15 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	11:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	10:30 PM
AFTERMATH	12:45 AM	AFTERMATH	12:15 AM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM		SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	12:30 AM
<b>MUHALAB-1</b>		<b>FANAR-5</b>		<b>AVENUES-4</b>		<b>AL-KOUT.4</b>	
AFTERMATH	11:45 AM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	1:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	11:45 AM	AFTERMATH	1:00 PM
AFTERMATH	1:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	3:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	1:45 PM	EAT LOCAL	3:00 PM
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	3:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	5:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	4:00 PM	AFTERMATH	5:00 PM
AFTERMATH	6:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	7:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	6:15 PM	EAT LOCAL	7:00 PM
AFTERMATH	8:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	9:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	8:30 PM	AFTERMATH	9:00 PM
AFTERMATH	10:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	11:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	8:30 PM	EAT LOCAL	11:00 PM
AFTERMATH	12:30 AM	EAT LOCAL	1:00 AM	Special Show "SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE"	8:30 PM	EAT LOCAL	1:00 AM
				KONG: SKULL ISLAND	10:45 PM		
				AFTERMATH	1:15 AM		
<b>MUHALAB-2</b>		<b>MARINA-1</b>		<b>360°-1</b>		<b>BAIRAQ-1</b>	
GOING IN STYLE	1:00 PM	AFTERMATH	12:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	12:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	1:00 PM
GOING IN STYLE	3:00 PM	AFTERMATH	2:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	2:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	3:00 PM
GOING IN STYLE	5:00 PM	AFTERMATH	4:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	5:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	5:00 PM
GOING IN STYLE	7:00 PM	AFTERMATH	6:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	7:15 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	7:00 PM
GOING IN STYLE	9:00 PM	MAHBAS (SOLITAIRE)	8:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	9:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	9:00 PM
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	11:00 PM	MAHBAS (SOLITAIRE)	10:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	11:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	11:00 PM
		AFTERMATH	12:05 AM				
<b>MUHALAB-3</b>		<b>MARINA-2</b>		<b>360°-2</b>		<b>BAIRAQ-2</b>	
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	12:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	12:15 PM	SALT AND FIRE	1:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE	12:45 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	2:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	2:15 PM	EAT LOCAL	3:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE	2:45 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	4:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	4:15 PM	SALT AND FIRE	5:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	4:45 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	6:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	6:15 PM	EAT LOCAL	8:00 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	7:15 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	8:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	8:15 PM	EAT LOCAL	10:00 PM	SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	9:15 PM
SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	10:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	10:15 PM	SALT AND FIRE	12:15 AM	AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	9:15 PM
GOING IN STYLE	12:05 AM	GOING IN STYLE	12:15 AM	EAT LOCAL		SAFRA 5 NUJOOM	11:30 PM
<b>FANAR-1</b>		<b>MARINA-3</b>		<b>360°-3</b>			
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	1:15 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	11:45 AM	GET OUT	11:45 AM		
AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	1:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	1:45 PM	GET OUT	2:15 PM		
GET OUT	3:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	3:45 PM				
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	5:45 PM						
AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	8:15 PM						
GET OUT	10:30 PM						

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
 I, Khalilulla Nabujan Sayeed s/o Nawabjan Shaikh, holder of Indian Passport No. L3465768 and Civil ID No. 276070402459 has changed my name to Khalilullah Nawabjan Shaikh, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5294)

I, Maddipatla Nagaraja s/o Narayana Naidu, holder of Indian Passport No. H8473093 and Civil ID No. 279060501967 has changed my name to Rallapalli Nagaraja Naidu, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5293) 11-4-2017

**EMERGENCY**  
  
**112**  
 Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**



**PRAYER TIMINGS**

<b>Fajr:</b>	<b>04:05</b>
<b>Shorook:</b>	<b>05:26</b>
<b>Duhr:</b>	<b>11:49</b>
<b>Asr:</b>	<b>15:23</b>
<b>Maghrib:</b>	<b>18:12</b>
<b>Isha:</b>	<b>19:31</b>

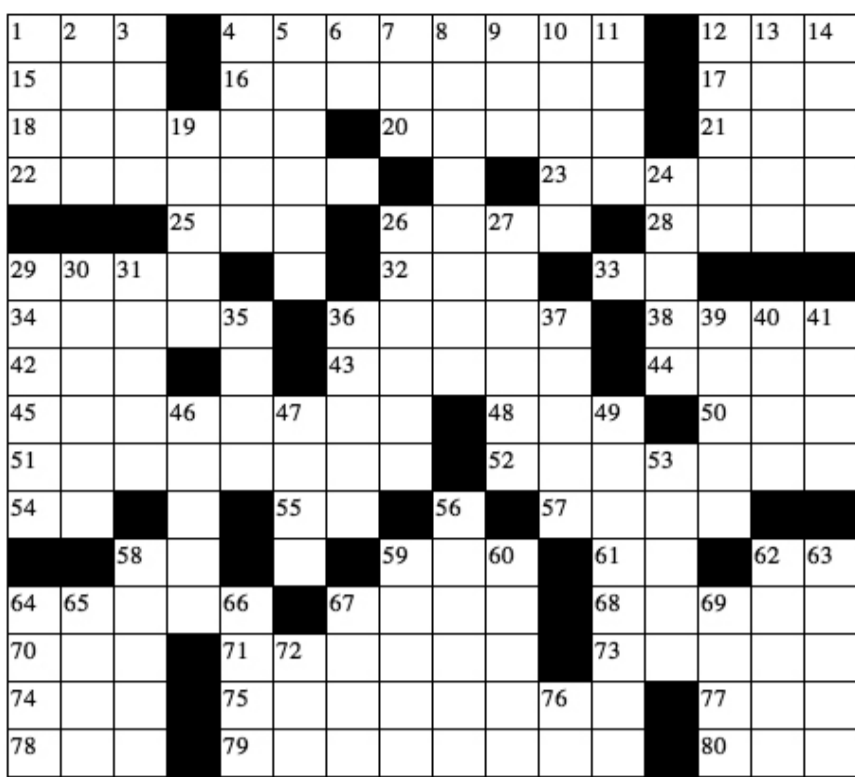
## Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

### Flight Schedule

### DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 12/4/2017				Departure Flights on Wednesday 12/4/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	AAG	147	IQA	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	IRC	6512	ABD	14:50
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50	FDB	060	Doha	15:05
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	IRC	527	Mashhad	15:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05	KAC	563	Amman	15:40
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	JZR	188	Dubai	15:50
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	619	Doha	16:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:40	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
KAC	544	Cairo	03:50	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
CEB	018	Manila	04:00	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:30
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	SAW	706	Dammam	16:50
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	04:45	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	SVA	505	Madinah	16:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	FDB	052	Dubai	17:05
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	JZR	240	Amman	17:30
BAW	157	London	06:05	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	QTR	1081	Alexandria	19:15
IRC	6511	ABD	09:10	JZR	552	Cairo	19:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	785	Jeddah	20:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:35
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	KAC	353	Bangalore	20:55
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	DLH	634	Doha	21:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:00
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:10
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:40
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	13:15	QTR	1089	Doha	21:45
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15	KAC	203	Lahore	21:45
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
IRC	6521	Lamerd	14:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:00
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	KAC	155	Istanbul	22:15
KAC	364						

CROSSWORD 1576



ACROSS

1. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
4. Formed like a bacillus.
12. A vinyl polymer used especially in paints or adhesives.
15. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
16. Having no fever.
17. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
18. Lace again.
20. Any system of principles or beliefs.
21. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
22. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
23. A religious cult practiced chiefly in Caribbean countries (especially Haiti).
25. An implement used to propel or steer a boat.
28. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
29. A small wooded hollow.
32. The cry made by sheep.
33. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
34. A naturally occurring glyceride of oleic acid that is found in fats and oils.
38. (law) A comprehensive term for any proceeding in a court of law whereby an individual seeks a legal remedy.
42. Beyond or deviating from the usual or expected.
43. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
44. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
45. A mountain peak in south central Sri Lanka (7,360 feet high).
48. The airforce of Great Britain.
50. Standard time in the 8th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 120th meridian west.
51. A language spoken by the Atakapa people of the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
52. A genus of Nymphalidae.
54. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
55. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
57. The outermost (and toughest) of the 3 meninges.
61. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
64. A republic in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea.
68. A member of the Mongolian people of central Asia who invaded Russia in the 13th century.
70. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
71. Basic principles of the cosmos.
73. An iconic mental representation.
74. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
75. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
77. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
78. (astronomy) A measure of time

DOWN

1. The lean flesh of a fish that is often farmed.
2. American novelist (1909-1955).
3. With no effort to conceal.
4. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
5. Regional and archaic.
6. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
7. Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
8. Pour water on.
9. A statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.
10. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trademarks Aleve and Anaprox and Afanax).
11. Make anew.
12. Earlier in time.
13. Not clearly understood or expressed.
14. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
19. Garlic mayonnaise.
24. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
26. A port city in southwestern Iran.
27. Medium-sized tree-dwelling monkey of the Amazon basin.
30. A liquid solution that results from elution.
31. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
35. The Fate who spins the thread of life.
36. Of a pale purple color.
37. Either of two large African antelopes of the genus Taurotragus having short spirally twisted horns in both sexes.
39. First in order of importance.
40. Interface consisting of a standard port between a computer and its peripherals that is used in some computers.
41. Informal terms for a meal.
46. A city in northeastern Ohio.
47. The highest point of something.
49. Pertaining to or resembling or befitting Faust or Faustus especially in insatiably striving for worldly knowledge and power even at the price of spiritual values.
53. Thick like cream.
56. Relating to the blood vessels or blood.
58. A unit of weight for precious stones = 200 mg.
59. French writer who is considered the father of science fiction (1828-1905).
60. An assertion of a right (as to money or property).
62. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
63. Any system of principles or beliefs.
65. Not easy.
66. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
67. An agenda of things to do.
69. An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
72. Headdress that protects the head from bad weather.
76. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may enjoy a job in the movie industry. Certainly, you could work in the background with technical set design, makeup or costume. Life gets exciting for you from time to time and it would be good to step away from a situation to study the next step. Today there are many interruptions, making it very difficult to stay focused. Stop seeking approval from others and begin looking at yourself as deserving more. You would not like your best friend to enjoy your every move as it would give you little confidence. As a result, you will now practice self-confidence and hold yourself in high esteem. You have a lot to offer and people love your ideas. You might even consider a job in advertising.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your efforts to improve your financial status are positive. Improvements and corrections within the work environment are imperative. Others will notice your positive attitude. You may want to make a list of some personal changes you want to make—they are more important than you think. If any of the changes are emotional, get some professional help so that you will have tools to help you deal with life more comfortably. Nourish your sense of humor. Honest interaction with others is important and you should make an effort to listen to your own responses as well as how you present yourself to others. Explanations will come easily but simple reasoning is the most important process of understanding. Presentations at work may be rescheduled for tomorrow.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Create ways in which your superiors can be encouraged by your ideas. Think through your work goals. Eagerness is commendable but must be timed for the best impact. Controlling your intensity may be the work that is set out for you during this month. Look for ways in which to accomplish your work and let the advancements and promises for raises take care of themselves. There will be a time to work toward a raise, but not now. You could find that you are appreciated for your feelings and your ability to follow through with projects. Challenges may be a green light but be careful where you step! Find ways to be helpful. Through this effort, your whole essence could change. Take some time this evening to visit with a needy family member.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Good communication is at a high. Your timing is perfect for whatever you have set before you now. You are most spontaneous when it comes to responding to the need to come to the aid of a co-worker. There is a desire for beauty and harmony in your life that stimulates your creativity and imagination, yet makes you prone to delusion. This is a good time to consolidate and organize your affairs or rearrange your living situation—not necessarily to shop. Your friends may find you especially witty and eccentric just now. You should find constructive ways to express a tremendous energy you may be feeling now. Perhaps visiting with a young person or a drive to a nearby park with a loved one would be fun. You may enjoy feeding the ducks.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your professional involvement defines who you are and your work is the key to your wellbeing. Your business and directional abilities are in high focus. Draw the line between when to work overtime and when to have some fun. Others value you for your ability to make practical decisions concerning group issues. You have a natural sense of what the public wants at this time. Clear decisions affecting others will be acceptable and appreciated—relax. You have a strong ability to control your emotions and may have learned some excellent problem-solving techniques. This is a superb time to get close to family members or friends without the emotional factor sweeping you away. Mental stimulation from others is a key for you right now.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are doing your best work and your work is showing the results of your efforts. You could feel a great amount of support from those around you and circumstances could dictate your taking action. An older person in your family may enjoy having a noon meal with you and the visit has possibilities of ending in much laughter after a little reminiscing session. This may be a good thing to do from time to time and has many possibilities. Life's earlier, simpler pleasures may give you ideas in helping yourself and others to solve problems. Sharing some changes in technology may bring others around to listen. Communicating and getting your message across to others is productive. Friends around you should find you most eager to interact.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today is for teamwork. You don't have to prove how well you can work in a team; you just have to follow the plan. This is a successful day. Whatever you invest in at this time will last a long time and tend to increase in value. This is a great time to begin a new and positive habit; eventually, the old, negative habits will just dissolve away. Perhaps a more nutritional way of feeding your body would be most acceptable for you now. Communicating and getting your message across to others is at a high. Your timing should be perfect and those around you should find you most spontaneous and alive. Taxes may prove less taxing than usual this month, as you are more able to understand how to manage your finances in successful ways.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

There is good luck in money matters today. However, future income may be thin for a short while. Do what you can to eliminate any problems that may come up later. One way or another, the winds of change are on their way. Although you would rather know exactly what the plans are... The quick-moving events coming soon may be a wonderful freeing experience. Do not try to force an issue with a young person this afternoon. Your powers of creativity are great and you will be able to create a way to cleverly make your point. This is a time of unexpected opportunities. A difficult job is now found to be much easier. Relations with friends of the opposite sex could be a big plus at this time. This is one of your better days for love and money.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your hours at work may lessen and this could be a good thing—considering you are likely to work very long hours. If you end up not making as much as you had hoped, you might consider another job. A job promotion or further education is possible now. You have a way of turning things around to have most positive results. Ambitious schemes and the pursuit of success and status take on a high priority. You may find yourself visiting old friends this afternoon, perhaps co-worker friends. You may not feel like socializing, but you will want to enjoy just hanging around. Stay away from lifting and moving things. Nurture yourself by doing something for someone else. Someone shows his or her appreciation for your kind deeds today.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A hard to unravel problem comes to your attention and you will rise to the challenge. Figuring things out, spotting the tilt of a picture, separating the old from the new and finding the flaw in the fabric are just a few of the things that take on special meaning now. There is mental busywork now. Your mind is quickened, making you receptive to all external stimuli. Be judicious and diplomatic in your discussions with co-workers. You are feeling festive and desirous of having fun times with family and friends this afternoon. Just being away from the focus of solving problems helps you to relax. Communicating with long-distance friends is enjoyable and acquaintances with neighbors are made strong. You are becoming a better listener.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

If your personal popularity was wanting before today, it is back now. There is good harmony and understanding with others today. People hardly have to finish a sentence before you intuitively know just what they need; easy does it. You will be happy to know that when you make a presentation to higher-ups, the support you need will be there for you. This is a great time to work with others. There is a tendency for you to be extremely hard working and ambitious on the professional level. It is important to develop a team attitude so as not to alienate fellow workers. Your taste in art and creative expressions has just begun. Now is perhaps a good time to select furnishings, colors and the finer things of life. Shop for the best buys.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Steer away from arguments and possible hard feelings. Your thoughts may not synchronize with your feelings and this could result in a clash with someone today. This may be a difficult time to relax and remain calm. There may be a serious decision made about the future of a project, investment or term of employment with your business at this time. This is a most beneficial time to seek out new ventures in which to invest. This evening brings about some new and positive insight to an old problem. Everything conspires to reveal you at your most elegant, particularly in social situations. You will have a grasp for abstract and spiritual ideas and the ability to communicate these to others. A common interest in all things mystical has your attention today.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Treasure Island

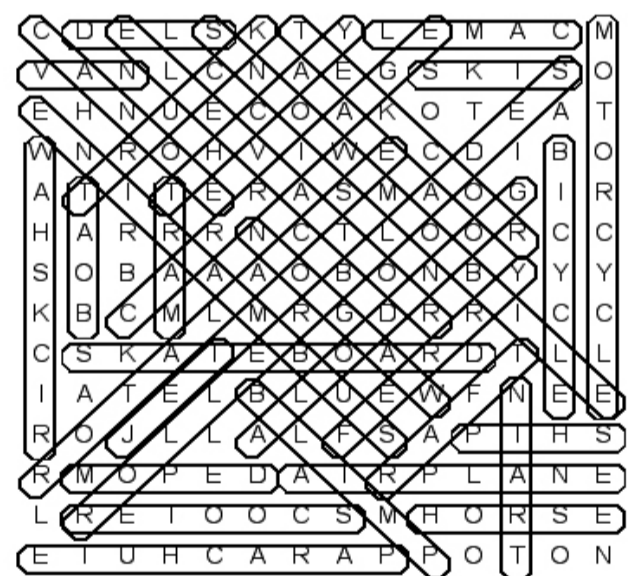
Find and circle all of the words and names from the book Treasure Island. The remaining 46 letters spell a secret message.

M U S K E T T E L L O M S N I A T P A C T  
T H E B L A C K S P O T R N E M A E S S L  
E A S C U R C O S S N O N N A C L E Q I T  
C I S S A H R E V I A T S A O C O U A O L  
A I A C E N T E L E A L N D A W I S R A R  
B S S S H A N F V B D W G S R R N R B I E  
I R T S R O N O E L M M H Y E T A E U K T  
N A T I E I O N N E I O U T P P R C O S  
B E P N A A G N N B R S R T A S S U C O A  
O L S T L U F O E E A E N P I B I S A B M  
Y H P N N O T A D R L L P H S N H A N G R  
Y A R N I E T R A B L L E O O Y E E O E  
C N B C L K L S W I E E N S R J T R E L T  
I D S C U I W N I D N O S I I P O T R L R  
O S K S V T E A P B G M A R O O N E D A  
W S L E A Y L R H Y O S U R L A W U O I U  
S E S A E P R A L M W G U I N E A S S L Q  
T E R P N E D I O E S I R E G O R Y L L O J  
Y V A C L D I O E S N J G O D K C A L B N  
H C A E B B S O C N N B U R I E D G O L D

- |                    |                  |                  |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| ADMIRAL BENBOW INN | CAPE             | ISLAND           | QUARTERMASTER    |
| APPLE BARREL       | CAPTAIN FLINT    | ISRAEL HANDS     | SAIL             |
| ASHORE             | CAPTAIN SMOLLETT | JIM HAWKINS      | SCHOONER         |
| BEACH              | CHEST            | JOLLY ROGER      | SEAFARING        |
| BEN GUNN           | COAST            | LOGBOOK          | SEAMEN           |
| BILLY BONES        | COMPASS          | LONG JOHN SILVER | SHIP             |
| BLACK DOG          | COVE             | MAROONED         | SKELETON         |
| BUCCANEER          | CREW             | MUSKET           | SPY-GLASS        |
| BURIED GOLD        | CUTLASS          | MULTINY          | SQUIRE TRELAWNEY |
| CABIN BOY          | DR. LIVESY       | PARROT           | THE BLACK SPOT   |
| CANNON BALLS       | GUINEAS          | PIRATES          | TREASURE         |
| CANNONS            | HISPANIOLA       | PISTOL           | WALRUS           |

Yesterday's Solution

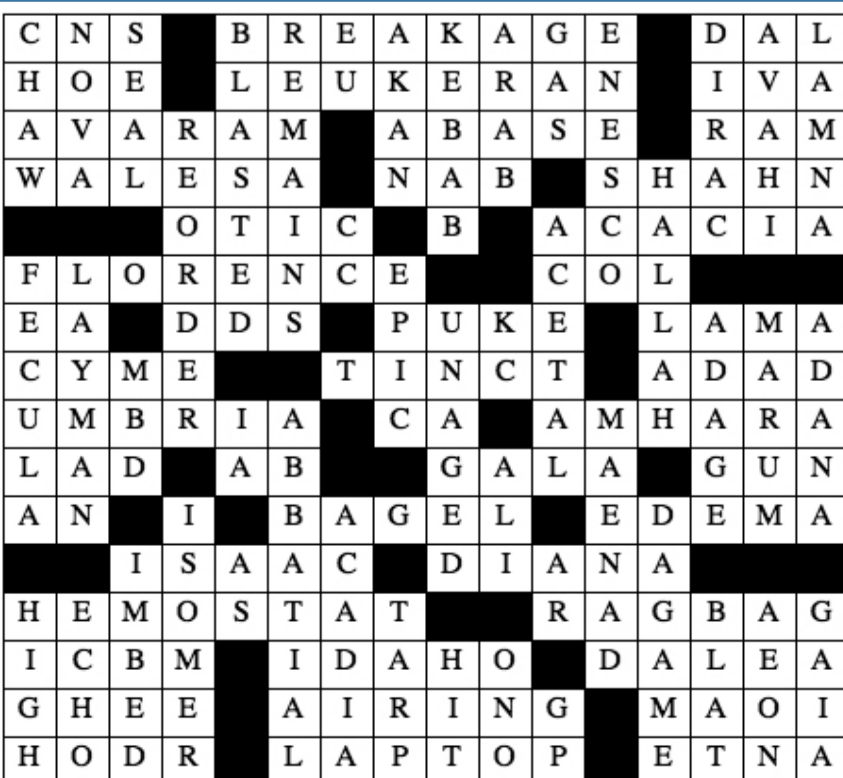
Transportation



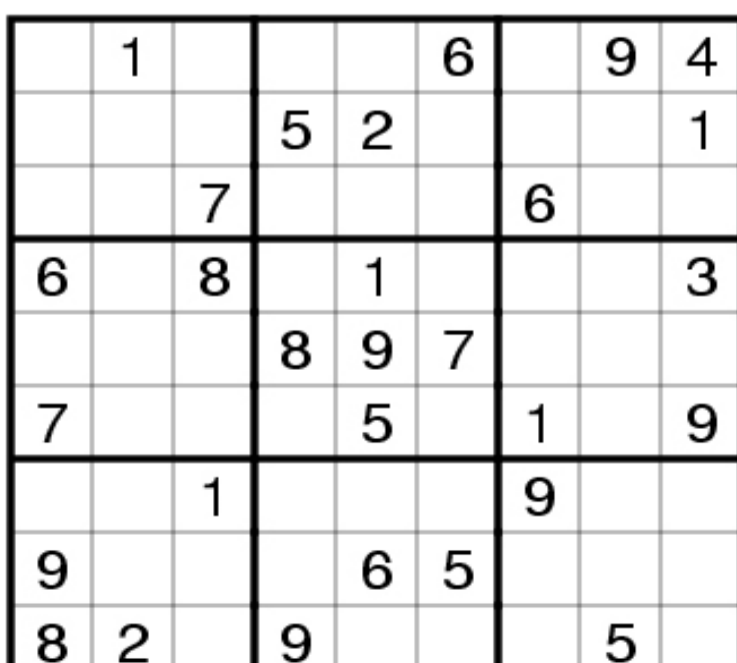
- |           |            |               |            |
|-----------|------------|---------------|------------|
| AIRPLANE  | FERRY      | RICKSHAW      | SNOWMOBILE |
| BICYCLE   | GONDOLA    | ROCKET        | SUBMARINE  |
| BLIMP     | HORSE      | ROLLER BLADES | TRAIN      |
| BOAT      | JET        | SCOOTER       | TRAM       |
| CAMEL     | MOPED      | SHIP          | TRUCK      |
| CANOE     | MOTORCYCLE | SKATEBOARD    | VAN        |
| CARRIAGE  | PARACHUTE  | SKIS          | WAGON      |
| ELEVATOR  | RAFT       | SLED          | YACHT      |
| ESCALATOR |            |               |            |

The hidden transportation method is: HOT AIR BALLOON

Yesterday's Solution



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
Qadisiya	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	Fahaee 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 Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya 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: 2627 - 2630  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
www.met.gov.kw

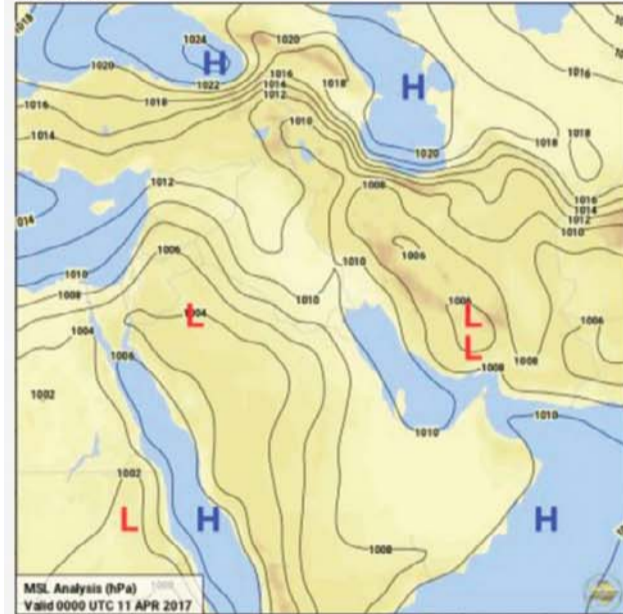
### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 11/04/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 34 °C

**By Day** : Partly cloudy with light variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain  
**By Night** : Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain

#### SFC. CHART



#### Four-Day Forecast

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Expected Weather	partly cloudy	partly cloudy + raising dust	partly cloudy + raising dust	partly cloudy + raising dust
Min Temp °C	24	25	27	26
Max Temp °C	37	37	40	38
Wind Direction	south easterly	south easterly to southerly	southerly changing to north easterly later on	northerly
Wind Speed km/h	15 - 35	15 - 40	20 - 40	20 - 45

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

#### Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

#### Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	24	31
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24	34
ABDALY	22	35
BUBYAN	23	27
JAHRA	24	36
FAILAKA ISLAND	23	29
SALMIYAH	24	28
AHMADI	24	27
JAL ALIYAH	21	35
QAROH ISLAND	22	26
UMM AL-MARADEM	22	28
NUWAISIB	24	33
WAFRA	23	34
SALMY	21	34
MUTRIBA	21	37

#### Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	33
Min Temp (°C)	20
Max Rel Hum (%)	60
Min Rel Hum (%)	20
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	46 E
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	05:26
Sunset	18:12

#### Prayer Times

Fajr	04:05
Sunrise	05:26
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:12
Isha	19:31

### 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
Antigua	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	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	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. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	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

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
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
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
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

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarooof	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. Abdallateef 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

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
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GOSSIP

# Brad Pitt's Ad Astra to film in July



**B**rad Pitt's new movie 'Ad Astra' will begin filming in July. The 53-year-old actor is set to star in the upcoming sci-fi movie which will see him play the role of an autistic engineer whose father left when he was young to try and find extra-terrestrial life on Neptune. As an adult, Brad's character is now tasked with travelling the solar system to find his father. The idea for the movie was penned by filmmaker James Gray - who directed the recently released movie 'The Lost City of Z', which Pitt produced - who recently confirmed the impending shoot date. When asked by Collider.com if 'Ad Astra' is his next project with Pitt in the starring role, Gray said: "Yes, yes, and yes. I'm ter-

rified by it. "The science-fiction genre is so tricky because there are elements of fantasy usually involved, and there are also fantastical elements. What I'm trying to do is the most realistic depiction of space travel that's been put in a movie and to basically say, 'Space is awfully hostile to us.' "It's kind of a 'Heart of Darkness' story about traveling to the outer edge of our solar system. I have a lot of hopes for it but it is certainly ambitious ... It starts shooting July 17th, so not too far away. I'm filled with terror, but that's fine." As of yet, no other details have been released about the project with no release date or further casting announcements. Meanwhile, Gray recently dubbed Pitt as the "great-

est guy", despite missing out on the debut of 'The Lost City of Z' at the New York Film Festival last year following his high-profile split from Angelina Jolie. Gray said of Pitt: "I've exchanged a lot of emails with him. I love him to death. I've been here, obviously, not there. I'll see him soon. He is the greatest guy." "I owe him a huge debt. He was the one who sent the book [that inspired the film] to me and he's the one who's stuck by me for many, many years. And I've got nothing but love for that guy."

## Dwayne Johnson: Black Adam could become permanent DCEU character

**D**wayne 'The Rock' Johnson thinks his DC Comics character Black Adam could join an ensemble movie "at some point". The 44-year-old actor was first cast as Black Adam for the upcoming DC movie 'Shazam!' - in which his character would be the villain - however slow development on the project and the rising popularity of Dwayne led studio bosses to give the character his own eponymously titled feature. Now, Dwayne believes Black Adam could become a steady character in the DC Extended Universe (DCEU) after he's been established in his own movie. Speaking to MTV News, Dwayne said: "We've had great discussions with Geoff Johns over at DC. This is a really fun, cool time for DC right now because they're world-building. We're seeing that with Wonder Woman and Aquaman. We have a few surprises down the line. So what we decided to do was to create a scenario where Black Adam has his stand-alone movie, and Captain Marvel, Shazam, has his stand-alone movie. We're building our world that way, and then we can come together at some point." If Black Adam does become a steady feature in the DCEU, he could appear in a future ensemble movie, if the studio bosses decide to pursue a sequel to the upcoming 'Justice League', which sees Batman (Ben Affleck), Superman (Henry Cavill), Wonder Woman (Gal Gadot), the Flash (Ezra Miller), Aquaman (Jason Momoa) and Cyborg (Ray Fisher) join forces to battle with the evil Steppenwolf (Ciar'n Hinds). Recently, 'Justice League' director Zack Snyder said one of the most "rewarding aspects" of making the feature was working with the "complex relationships" that exist within the group of "larger-than-life characters". He said: "One of the more rewarding aspects of creating Justice League was having fun exploring the dynamic between this diverse group of larger-than-life characters with disparate backgrounds, ethics, and unique perspectives all trying to come together and work as a team. "It not only offers an opportunity for great drama and complex relationships, but it also often results in great fun. It's an exciting concept to explore and it only gets better when you add the component of our incredibly talented cast - their chemistry really adds to that dynamic." 'Black Adam' has yet to be given a release date, but 'Shazam!' is scheduled for 2019 and 'Justice League' will hit screens in November this year.

## Madonna's Vogue producer sues Warner Music Group



**T**he producer behind Madonna's biggest hit 'Vogue' is suing Warner Music Group for unpaid royalties. Shep Pettibone - who has also worked with the likes of the late George Michael and Sir Elton John in the past - co-wrote and produced the 58-year-old pop megastar's 1990 single and he believes he is owed the sum of \$500,000 as he has claimed they failed to pay him what he deserves. According to documents obtained by TMZ, Shep says it was in 2012 when he and Warner Brothers were sued after they allegedly swiped the song - which featured on Madonna's 'I'm Breathless' LP - that he felt let down by the label and claims they kept money from him to pay off the massive legal bills for the case, which is said to have cost them more than \$700,000. Shep now has a legal team working for him to get Warner Brothers to pay him what he believes he is rightfully owed for his contribution to Madonna's chart-topping track. In 2016, Madonna won the copyright infringement case from 2012. A company called VMG Salsoul, LLC claimed a tiny part of 'Vogue' mirrored that of their 80s song 'Love Break'. They alleged that Shep pinched an unlicensed "horn hit" from their popular track and they felt they were owed rights to Madonna's song. However, the horns were just 23 seconds long and the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit decided to it was too short to take action. At the time, judge Susan Graber said: "Defendants copied, at most, a quarter-note single horn hit and a full measure containing rests and a double horn hit. A reasonable jury could not conclude that an average audience would recognize an appropriation of the Love Break composition."



## FOO FIGHTERS DELAY ALBUM FOR GLASTONBURY

**F**oo Fighters have delayed their next album to focus on pulling off a blinding set at Glastonbury. The 'Walk' hitmakers were expected to spend a lot of time in the recording studio working on the follow-up to 2014's 'Sonic Highways' over the coming months, but guitarist Chris Shiflett has said they will be concentrating all of their energy on their forthcoming headline slot at the music extravaganza at Worthy Farm in Somerset, South West England, where they will top the bill on the Pyramid Stage on Saturday June 24. The 45-year-old rocker told website musicfeeds.com.au: "We've got some shows coming up this summer. I'm not sure what the plan is for a new record. I'm sure there will be one at some point, but right now we've just got a bunch of gigs coming up this summer and some festivals. I'm sure that there'll be more coming down the pipe. And when the Powers That Be that manipulate this kind of information want the world to know, they're gonna tell everybody!" Chris was joined by frontman Dave Grohl, Taylor Hawkins, Nate Mendel and Pat Smear as they announced the news of their headline performance in a video on Glastonbury's Facebook page and founder Michael Eavis confirmed the news at a special concert near

the festival venue in Somerset back in February. Taking to the stage to introduce the band, he said: "Foo Fighters are the best band in the world right now. They came to Worthy Farm this afternoon to tell me that they're going to headline Glastonbury. Saturday night. June 25th. Be there or be square." In the Facebook video, Michael and his daughter Emily were seen driving up to the famous Pyramid stage, where the band were sitting with their instruments. However, Emily informed them that they were four months too early. Michael said: "This is the world famous Pyramid stage that you're headlining on. And Emily explained: "I'm really sorry but it's not tonight. Give us four months." However, they then agreed that the band would play a gig at a venue in Frome, Somerset instead, which was also broadcast live on Facebook. Foo Fighters were forced to pull out of the 2015 festival after frontman Grohl broke his leg. It is the indie rock group's third time headlining, the last being in 2003 and they made their debut in 1997. And, in 2011 they stormed the Park Stage with a surprise set.

## Mariah Carey to drop new album 'this year'

**M**ariah Carey will drop a new studio album "later this year." The 47-year-old singer has certainly had a tough time recently, what with splitting from her fiancé James Packer and now calling time on her relationship with Bryan Tanaka, but she's determined to stay focused on her music after her new label pact with Epic Records, according to Variety. The 'Hero' hitmaker's Butterfly MC Records and Epic Records, which is under the Sony Music Entertainment umbrella, have reportedly recently joined forces. She said in a statement: "I am putting my heart and soul into making more music. I am so thrilled for this next chapter and to continue working with, and for, everyone that I love." Although she's been working on her album over the past few months, Mariah dropped her single 'I Don't', which was inspired by her break up from James last year, in February. She said just after she released her new track: "I'm working on another song [right now], it's a secret project with a friend of mind that's an incredibly talented artist. "I'm not gonna say his name, but you'll hear about it soon and we're going to be working on the video soon." Meanwhile, Mariah - who has five-year-old twins Moroccan and Monroe with her ex-husband Nick Cannon - also revealed she is working in the studio with her kids and admits it is "one of her favorite things." She explained: "We recently did something together in the studio, and it's one of my favorite things. "I don't want to go on too much about it, but they're doing their thing. They love to be on stage, they love singing, and it's one of the most incredible things for me to watch."

## Sonoya Mizuno joins Crazy Rich Asians



**S**onoya Mizuno is set to join the cast of 'Crazy Rich Asians'. The Japanese actress will join the previously announced cast including Constance Wu and newcomer Henry Golding in the upcoming movie based on the 2013 novel of the same name by Kevin Kwan. 'Crazy Rich Asians' is loosely based on the childhood of the author, and follows the story of Rachel Chu (Wu) an American-born Chinese economics professor who travels with her boyfriend Nick (Golding) to his home country of Singapore for his best friend's wedding. Rachel then discovers the secret background of her boyfriend when she finds out he comes from an incredibly wealthy family and is the most eligible bachelor in Asia. Mizuno will play the role of Araminta, the fiancée of Nick's best friend Colin, who is a major fashion icon in Singapore. The project is being directed by Jon M. Chu, who previously directed dance features 'Step Up 2: The Streets' and 'Step Up 3D', as well as the concert movie 'Justin Bieber: Never Say Never'. Color Force's Nina Jacobson and Brad Simpson, as well as Ivanhoe president John Penotti, are producing the feature, with Kevin Kwan serving as an executive producer alongside Ivanhoe chairman Robert Friedland. The feature is being distributed by Warner Bros., who are sending in Courtenay Valenti and Jon Gonda to oversee the production. Meanwhile, 'Crazy Rich Asians' will mark the biggest role to date for Mizuno, who was formerly a ballerina before turning her talents to acting. Previously, Mizuno had a role as the cyborg assistant Kyoko in sci-fi thriller 'Ex Machina', and was also seen as Caitlin, one of Emma Stone's roommates in the hit musical movie 'La La Land'. 'Crazy Rich Asians' has yet to be given a release date.



## Vin Diesel still misses Paul Walker

**V**in Diesel is still "reeling" from the death of his 'Fast and Furious' co-star Paul Walker. The 49-year-old actor has starred in every film of the franchise since the first movie back in 2001 and he admits he finds it hard not being able to call his friend - who died in a car accident in 2013 - about any "concerns" he has during shooting on the franchise. Speaking at the New York premiere of eighth movie 'Fate of the Furious' over the weekend, he told 'Entertainment Tonight': "I'm still reeling from the loss, the idea of continuing along without my brother Pablo and what that felt like and the complexities of that. "If I ever had a concern of something I would call him. And I don't have that call now and I don't have that person that's dreaming up the impossible with me. "One of the things that makes this film so magical, the relationships are so powerful that they bleed off screen." At the premiere, Vin introduced the movie and said there wasn't a second during shooting that he and the cast weren't thinking about Paul. He said: "There wasn't a second we made this movie, not a minute, not a day that went by that we weren't thinking about our brother Pablo. "How to bring him into the movie, how to represent him and how to make something that he would be proud of. "Pablo, I hope you are proud tonight." Ludacris, who also stars in the film as Tej, agreed with Vin and said the last movie was for Paul. He said: "The last movie was for Paul, we love to say this movie is from Paul. "So I mean his presence is always going to be felt and at this point we're working hard and trying to make the best movie possible for him, to continue on his legacy." — Bang Showbiz



## Harry Styles' Spotify nightmare

**H**arry Styles' debut single could miss out on the top spot in the Official Charts after a Spotify glitch prevented users from listening to the track. The former One Direction hunk released his debut solo single 'Sign of the Times' on Friday and despite climbing to the top of the UK charts in terms of downloads and sales, figures from the streaming service are set to make the track drop below Ed Sheeran's 'Shape of You' after a glitch on the service's search function left fans unable to find the song. A source told The Sun newspaper: "This is a nightmare start for Harry's solo career and his record label won't be happy. "The Spotify malfunction meant many of his fans simply couldn't find his song to listen to online when they searched for it. "The potential ramifications are big and it's likely he has missed out on hundreds of thousands of streams as a result. That could really affect his chart position come Friday. "He is Number One at the moment but that's only because his streaming stats haven't been included yet, and they have more weight. "Harry's launch is one of the industry's biggest this year and everyone expected him to hit the ground running by topping the charts." According to the publication, as of Sunday 'Sign of the Times' had sold 23,816 copies compared to 6,969 for 'Shape of You', which is the current number one. However, when it came to streams, Ed completely dwarfed the 23-year-old singer with 548,052 streams to Harry's 301,925. Spotify rectified the issue on Saturday and the song is now available on the platform, however the loss of streams on the day of release is believed to have heavily impacted Harry's chances of scoring a number one single.



MUSIC & MOVIES



# Thriller 'Trivisa' wins big at Hong Kong Film Awards

Crime thriller "Trivisa" was the big winner at the Hong Kong Film Awards, taking home five awards including the prize for best film. The movie, which takes place on the eve of the Hong Kong's 1997 handover from Britain, also took home awards for best director and best actor on Sunday evening. News sites in mainland China downplayed their coverage, which Hong Kong media speculated was because one of its directors worked on 2016's "Ten Years," about Beijing's tightening grip on the semi-autonomous city. Best actress went to "Happiness" star Kara Hui. She won her fourth Hong Kong Film Award for playing a middle-aged recluse suffering from Alzheimer's. Family-themed movie "Mad World" was another big winner, receiving trophies for best supporting actor and actress and best new director. — AP

The crew of movie "Trivisa" celebrate after winning the Best Actor and Best Film awards during the Hong Kong Film Awards in Hong Kong, Sunday. — AP photos



Hong Kong actress Kara Wai, left and actor Gordon Lam pose after winning the Best Actress and Best Actor awards.



Hong Kong actor Eric Tsang poses after winning the Best Supporting Actor award for his movie "Mad World".



Hong Kong actor Gordon Lam, center, poses with his colleagues actors Philip Keung, right, and Richie Ren after winning the Best Actress and Best Actor awards.

## Box Office Top 20: 'The Boss Baby' squashes 'Smurfs 3'

"The Boss Baby" continued to dominate the box office in its second weekend in theaters, adding \$26.4 million to take the top spot. The animated flick featuring the voice of Alec Baldwin has earned \$89.4 million from North American theaters to date. It effectively took the family business away from new opener "Smurfs: The Lost Village," which debuted to a dismal \$13.2 million in third place, behind Disney's juggernaut "Beauty and the Beast," which has now grossed \$430.9 million domestically. Not too far behind the third "Smurfs" movie was the Warner Bros. heist comedy "Going in Style" starring Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman and Alan Arkin. "Going in Style" earned \$11.9 million in its first weekend in theaters.



This image released by Disney shows Dan Stevens as The Beast, left, and Emma Watson as Belle in a live-action adaptation of the animated classic "Beauty and the Beast." — AP

Paramount's beleaguered "Ghost in the Shell" rounded out the top five with \$7.3 million. The top 20 movies at US and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in

release, as compiled Monday by comScore:

1. "The Boss Baby," 20th Century Fox, \$26,363,488, 3,829 locations, \$6,885 average, \$89,436,806, 2 Weeks.
2. "Beauty And The Beast," Disney, \$23,652,605, 3,969 locations, \$5,959 average, \$430,946,639, 4 Weeks.
3. "Smurfs: The Lost Village," Sony, \$13,210,449, 3,610 locations, \$3,659 average, \$13,210,449, 1 Week.
4. "Going In Style," Warner Bros., \$11,932,330, 3,061 locations, \$3,898 average, \$11,932,330, 1 Week.
5. "Ghost In The Shell," Paramount, \$7,306,413, 3,440 locations, \$2,124 average, \$31,529,863, 2 Weeks.
6. "Power Rangers," Lionsgate, \$6,199,403, 2,978 locations, \$2,082 average, \$75,095,645, 3 Weeks.
7. "Kong: Skull Island," Warner Bros., \$5,576,182, 2,753 locations, \$2,025 average, \$156,305,906, 5 Weeks.
8. "Get Out," Universal, \$4,057,330, 1,574 locations, \$2,578 average, \$162,889,980, 7 Weeks.
9. "Logan," 20th Century Fox, \$4,021,829, 1,948 locations, \$2,065 average, \$218,029,237, 6 Weeks.
10. "The Case For Christ," Pure Flix, \$3,967,885, 1,174 locations, \$3,380 average, \$3,967,885, 1 Week.
11. "The Zookeeper's Wife," Focus Features, \$2,684,185, 804 locations, \$3,339 average, \$7,398,710, 2 Weeks.
12. "Life," Sony, \$2,371,217, 1,788 locations, \$1,326 average, \$26,940,704, 3 Weeks.
13. "Your Name," FUNimation Films, \$1,688,192, 290 locations, \$5,821 average, \$1,688,192, 1 Week.
14. "Chips," Warner Bros., \$1,376,231, 1,351 locations, \$1,019 average, \$17,114,164, 3 Weeks.
15. "The Shack," Lionsgate, \$1,091,560, 1,108 locations, \$985 average, \$54,950,438, 6 Weeks.
16. "Gifted," Fox Searchlight, \$446,380, 56 locations, \$7,971 average, \$446,380, 1 Week.
17. "The Lego Batman Movie," Warner Bros., \$373,202, 345 locations, \$1,082 average, \$173,317,922, 9 Weeks.
18. "T2: Trainspotting," Sony, \$268,000, 159 locations, \$1,686 average, \$1,605,332, 4 Weeks.
19. "Hidden Figures," 20th Century Fox, \$265,247, 288 locations, \$921 average, \$168,276,311, 16 Weeks.
20. "The Belko Experiment," OTL Releasing, \$204,305, 186 locations, \$1,098 average, \$9,426,895, 4 Weeks. — AP



This image released by DreamWorks Animation shows characters Tim, voiced by Miles Bakshi, right, and Boss Baby, voiced by Alec Baldwin in a scene from the animated film, "The Boss Baby." — AP

## Bangladesh stars' secret marriage sparks web sensation

One of Bangladesh's biggest film stars caused an internet sensation yesterday when she revealed she had wed her on-screen lover, but kept the marriage secret for nine years to protect his career. Apu Biswas told a Bangladesh television station she had a seven-month-old child with Shakib Khan, whom she had married in secret in 2008, and was only going public now because of his neglect. She has starred in at least 40 movies alongside her now estranged husband, known as King Khan in Bangladesh for his dominance of the silver screen. "I kept the marriage secret for his welfare. I've sacrificed a lot," the 33-year-old told News24 in a tearful television interview that has been endlessly replayed and shared on social media in Bangladesh. "But I can't take his negligence to me anymore, so I'm sharing everything." Bangladesh's movie idols have been known to conceal their marriages

before to maintain the illusion of availability to their adoring fans. But the decision appeared to backfire as thousands in the conservative Muslim-majority nation took to social media to condemn the 38-year-old superstar.

Khan initially denied the marriage had taken place, attacking Biswas as a failure. He later admitted the pair were married and had a child, but accused Biswas of trying to bring down his career with her revelations. "It is a plan to destroy Shakib Khan. If Shakib Khan is destroyed, the Bangladesh film is destroyed," he told the NTV news website. Biswas disappeared from the silver screen last year. Khan is known as a one-man film industry in Bangladesh, where he has featured in scores of hits, most of them romance or action movies. — AFP

## Sheryl Crow argues for return to empathy on her new album

Last year, Sheryl Crow started a petition on Change.org to shorten the US presidential election cycle. The Grammy-winning singer-songwriter said she was exhausted by the mudslinging and divisive language that had dominated the discussion about the candidates. "I felt like it was becoming so hateful that I had to watch to make sure my kids didn't pick up the remote and turn the TV on," she said during a recent interview at her home in Nashville. Crow said what upset her was how technology and social media had changed the conversation.

"Now we have this forum for haters to come out and say the worst thing you could possibly say to someone without having the experience of the reaction," she said. "We've learned to be a society without empathy and without compassion." The ways people connect, or fail to connect, became a central theme on her upcoming album, "Be Myself," to be released on April 21, which brings Crow back to her early roots as a rocker after brief stints exploring country music and soul music on her last two records.

"The whole album is very informed by the atmosphere, which is very chaotic, very vitriolic, a lot of fear that was really in the ether while we were making this record," she said. Crow listened to her early records, including her debut, "Tuesday Night Music Club," and "The Globe Sessions," and teamed up with Jeffrey Trott, her longtime songwriting partner and a multi-instrumentalist. She brought in Chad Blake, a Grammy-winning engineer who worked with her in the late '90s. "We wanted to make a really catchy record, but one that had some edge, some grit, in the same way that some of those early recordings had," Trott said.

Crow, who has often peppered her lyrics with political references, said the album helped her after Donald Trump won the presidential election. "I started losing faith and not only for our country, but for the people that voted for him," Crow said. As she sings on her first single, "Halfway There," Crow asks for cooperation and compromise as a solution to the discord. "You may not be an environmentalist and I might be, but at the end of the day, don't we all want the same thing for our

kids?" she said. "We want a healthy future that is secure. And we have to figure out a way to communicate with reason and a modicum of decorum at least." As a mother of two children, ages 6 and 9, she favors an unplugged life as reflected in "Roller Skate," a nostalgic, toe-tapping song about ditching the phone for a good time. "At the end of the day, you're missing out on life experiences if you're constantly checking in with anybody that's not in the room," Crow said. — AP



In this file photo, Sheryl Crow poses in Nashville, Tenn., to promote her upcoming album, "Be Myself," out April 21. — AP

FASHION



File photos show models walking the runway for the Victoria Beckham presentation during the New York Fashion Week in New York City. — AFP Photos

# POSH ON A BUDGET: VICTORIA BECKHAM TEAMS UP WITH TARGET

The Victoria Beckham clothing range for Target is flying off the shelves, the latest high-fashion, high-street collaboration seeking to widen market appeal—even if not everyone is impressed. From Missoni for Target to Versace for H&M and Kate Moss for Topshop, designers on both sides of the Atlantic have for years promoted limited-edition collections at affordable prices as an effective marketing strategy to widen brand recognition and win over new customers. The hook-ups are beloved by style-savvy, fashion-forward shoppers whose expensive tastes are not always matched by fat wallets capable of dropping four if not five figures on a designer outfit.

year-old daughter, the ever fashionable and oft-photographed Harper. "I am overwhelmed by your response," tweeted the 42-year-old mother of four and wife of England football legend David on launch-day Sunday. "Thank you for your patience and sorry for any frustration!"

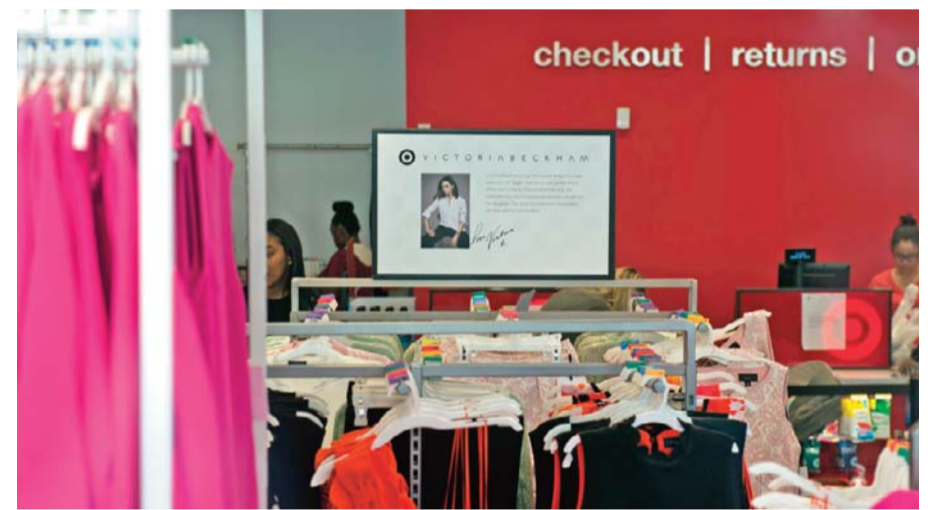
**'Not this'**

Beckham spent weeks promoting the line, donning the clothes and dressing celebrity friends, models and actresses in the outfits. By yesterday, many of the items on her website were out of stock. Fans have salivated over the affordable prices — \$6 to \$70 with most pieces under \$40 — in stark contrast to the four-figure dresses and three-figure tank tops from her ready-to-wear collection. And if the former pop singer herself is rail thin, known for eating little more than fish and fruit, then the collaboration has gone out of its way to cater for women from extra small to a US plus size 3X. Many online reviews have been positive from fans of a designer respected for making flattering clothes that have won over a fashion industry initially ill-disposed towards her post Spice Girls career.

Items are now being resold for profit on eBay. But in the Tribeca branch of Target in Manhattan, a neighborhood where many women can afford the real thing, there were some more discerning customers browsing the racks at lunch time. "I am a big fan of Victoria Beckham. Just not this," said Crystal, who works in fashion and as a result did not want to give her last name.

**'Very picky'**

She called the clothes matronly and criticized the fabrics, saying one loud floral dress in particular looked cheap. She loves high fashion collaborations in general, but said "the crossover didn't translate." "I don't love everything which is a little disappointing," said her friend and fashion colleague Madeleine, 29, despite finding at least one dress that she wanted to buy to try on at home. There were lace bomber jackets, black dresses and shirts with floral prints and bright bubblegum colors, as well as functional dresses with cute Peter



Victoria Beckham's line is seen for sale at Target.

Pan collars, all hitting stores as New York reveled in the onset of spring. "They're good for work," said Nathalie Mancebo, a 23-year-old IT manager and Beckham fan eagerly browsing the racks with her mom. "They're like not expensive at all, so I like that a lot," she added.

"I know she's somebody's husband," laughed secretary Jennifer Curtis, new to Brand Beckham and picking out a frock and romper suit for her six-year-old. "We'll see when we get home. She's very picky," she said. "They're nice and soft, the only thing I don't know about this lining." "I do love that orange shade that she used," agreed Tribeca resident and first time Target buyer Gemma O'Brien, who has some Beckham originals and was happy to splurge on two skirts and two tops. "It's definitely an accessible price point," she said. "I do like her." — AFP



Victoria Beckham's line is seen for sale at Target.

"I normally don't go overboard but this line is AAHHHMAZING! Hope u got everything u wanted!" tweeted one New York self-confessed style blogger on Monday. VB x Target marks the British designer's first foray into the budget market, ditching the British high street to collaborate with mass US retailer Target on a women, girls and baby collection. It also marks Beckham's first foray into children's wear, inspired by her five-

## 'The Odyssey' collection by Daniel Wong



Models parade creations from 'The Odyssey' collection by Daniel Wong at Shanghai fashion week in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP photos



Men sitting in an alley filled with graffiti in Ho Chi Minh City.



A motorcyclist riding past a work of graffiti at "3A Station", a graffiti hub and street art area in Ho Chi Minh City.



Dan Nguyen, a California-born Vietnamese artist who moved to Ho Chi Minh City about five years ago, working on his graffiti at "3A Station", a graffiti hub and street art area in Ho Chi Minh City.



Nguyen Nhu Huy, an independent curator, speaking during an interview with AFP at his home workshop in Ho Chi Minh City.



Dan Nguyen, a California-born Vietnamese artist who moved to Ho Chi Minh City about five years ago, working on his graffiti at "3A Station", a graffiti hub and street art area in Ho Chi Minh City.

## Taggers' delight: Vietnam city turns into graffiti canvas

Shrouded by fumes and surrounded by spray cans, Vietnamese graffiti artist Kong conjures his latest masterpiece, a monkey clutching an aerosol, a color-splashed act of rebellion in a communist country where the youth are expected to follow strict social mores. "Young people want to break the rules," said the 21-year-old, his fingers speckled with paint. "We want to see more interesting things on the street or on the wall, so we do graffiti to express ourselves." Kong belongs to the growing ranks of graffiti artists in Ho Chi Minh City, where subcultures-BMX biking, skateboarding and breakdancing-jostle for space on the hipster scene.

For many the spray can is a tool of rebellion-illicit spray-painting is a way of defying restrictions in an authoritarian country where artists must have their work approved before exhibitions, shows are routinely shut down, and works deemed controversial are replaced by a black 'X' on gallery walls. But Kong knows better than to dabble in politics, opting instead to paint playful images less likely to incur the wrath of censors in the authoritarian nation.

Yet many artists like him believe there is something almost political in the very act of spraying a wall-and rejecting parents' expectations to find a stable job. Kong fell into graffiti as a teenager, bored with online gaming and looking for a creative outlet. But his parents didn't approve, hoping instead he might find a steady office job. "They still don't like it... they think it's a dangerous game and it's bad for my health because of the spray paint," he said with a chuckle.

### From colonial to cool

Ho Chi Minh City is now a graffiti hotspot, thanks to pioneering artists-both local and foreign-eager to fill blank wall space. "It has become a part of Saigon, you can't imagine Saigon without graffiti," said independent curator Nguyen Nhu Huy, using the city's former French colonial name. Today, the city has several hubs for graffiti and street art, such as '3A Station', a collection of colonial buildings that were reportedly occupied by the CIA during the Vietnam War.

The walls are bursting with color and plastered with art-including Kong's wide-eyed primate and a massive rooster wearing sunglasses-luring tourists taking Instagram-worthy selfies. Though not technically allowed, police tend to turn a blind eye. And residents have come to love the free art for the most part, said Danny Daos, a local graffiti artist. "The government doesn't like us... They (used to say) that we make the walls dirty, but the people like us so we do our graffiti," he said.



### Building bonanza

Yet even some seemingly tame images have been subject to vandalism. One mural promoting environmental safety was defaced in the central city of Danang, though the artist doesn't know who took issue with it. Acts like these may deepen the reluctance of some young artists to take on controversial topics. "In school they've been taught how to think and what to think, so I think there's some ingrained censorship for sure," said Dan Nguyen, a California-born Vietnamese artist and DJ who moved to Ho Chi Minh City about five years ago. But perhaps the biggest threat to the artwork today is a construction boom, which some public pieces have already fallen victim to.

"Now the city is growing up, development with a lot of building, a lot of security, so it's really hard for us to paint masterpieces," said Daos. Hemmed in by towering high-rises on all sides, the colonial properties home to '3A Station' have been sold to developers hungry to get their hands on the valuable downtown land. Occupants have been told it will be demolished within weeks. Though heartbroken, 3A's coordinator Mai Do believes Ho Chi Minh's graffiti culture will grow, even after her space is gone, as artists are finding new spots showcase their work. She added: "That's a good way for them to survive." — AFP

A graffiti artist and vendor of spray cans, posing in front of a portrait of US rapper Ice Cube at his home workshop in Ho Chi Minh City. — AFP photos



Visitors walking next to graffiti at "3A Station", a graffiti hub and street art area in Ho Chi Minh City.



A graffiti artist and vendor of spray cans, speaking at his home workshop in Ho Chi Minh City.



A motorcyclist riding along an alley with graffiti in Ho Chi Minh City.



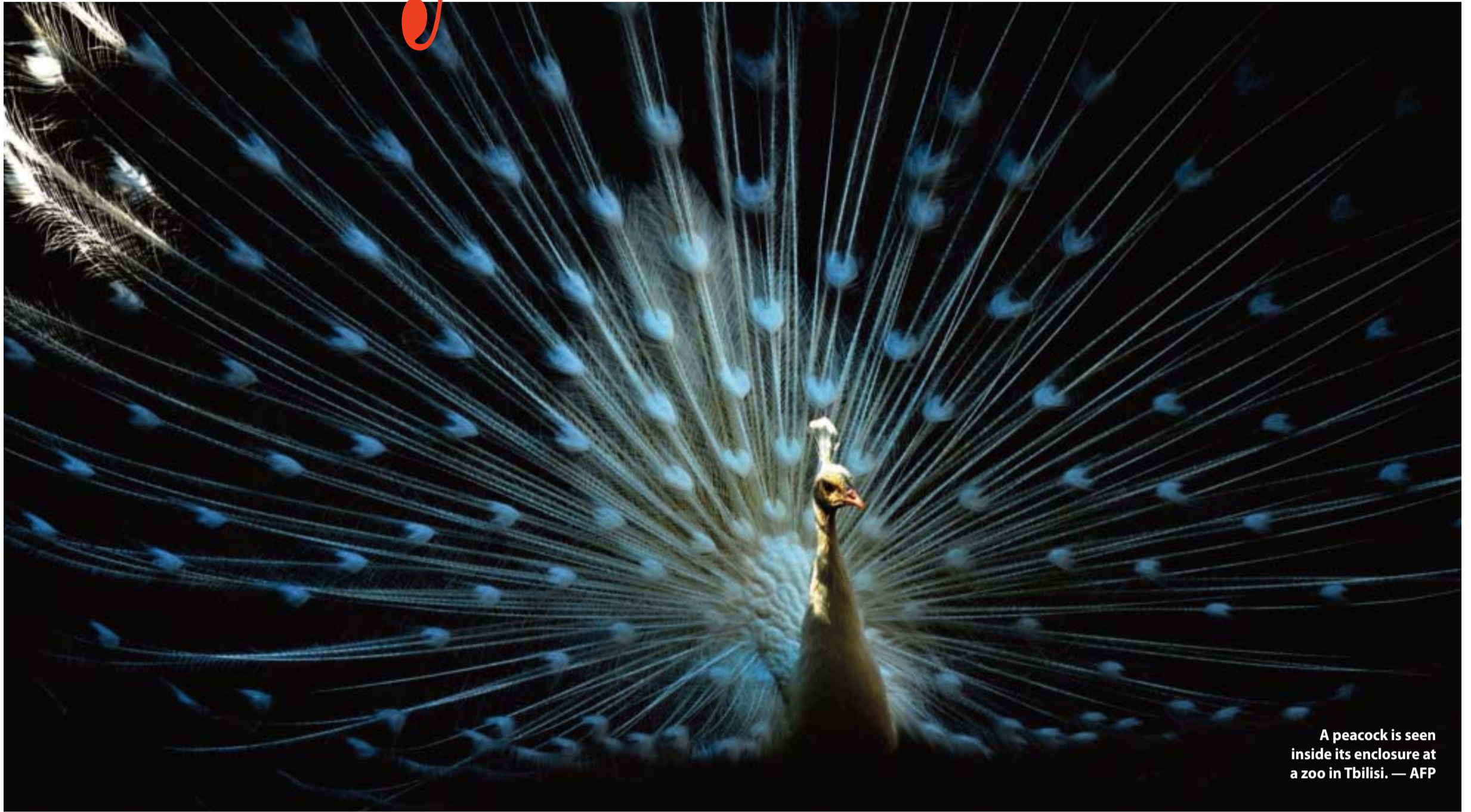
Danny Daos, a graffiti "writer", drawing at his shop in Ho Chi Minh City.

# Lifestyle

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A peacock is seen inside its enclosure at a zoo in Tbilisi. — AFP

## British DJ hosts world's highest party on Everest

Top British DJ Paul Oakenfold braved thinning air and freezing temperatures to host the "highest party on earth" at Everest base camp yesterday, playing to around 100 climbers-all in full mountain gear. The 53-year-old artist, who trekked for 10 days to reach base camp, mixed his beats on a makeshift stone stage set against the spectacular backdrop of the world's highest mountains. With brightly coloured Tibetan prayer flags fluttering overhead, climbers and trekkers danced as best they could in their heavy hiking boots and thick down jackets. "It was truly amazing. I feel very lucky to have played here. We did

a wonderful event and had people from all over the world. I feel very blessed," Oakenfold told AFP by phone from base camp after the performance.

Base camp lies at an altitude of 5,380 meters (17,600 feet), and around 100 climbers and trekkers were there for the gig. "It was pretty cool. I've been here many years but never seen anything like that," 38-year-old American climber Ben Jones told AFP by phone. The number of trekkers at the camp will swell in the coming weeks as the climbing season gets into full swing. Hundreds of climbers spend weeks acclimatizing to the altitude before attempting to reach the summit during the brief spring window when the weather is at its best.

It was a dramatic departure for Oakenfold, who admitted he was more used to playing the world's top clubs and the beaches of Ibiza and Goa than the mountains of Nepal. Oakenfold, who had never trekked before, trained for four months before arriving in Nepal, fitting it in between a hectic schedule of late night gigs. "I'm not going to pretend it was easy to get here... but it has been a wonderful trek. If you could see the view I'm looking at, it is very inspiring," he told AFP on Monday. The gig is the first in the record producer's SoundTrek series, aimed at drawing attention to the effects of global warming and raising money for charities. Oakenfold, whose three-decade long career has included collaborations with Madonna and U2, is also raising funds to help survivors of Nepal's devastating 2015 earthquake, which killed nearly 9,000 people and left thousands homeless. "I want to support in the rebuilding and to shed light on the environment... I would like to do my bit," he said. — AFP

British DJ Paul Oakenfold plays a set to mountaineers and trekkers at Everest base camp yesterday. — AFP



## In Indonesia, pious 'punks' promote Islam

"Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2017 forever," chant the young Indonesian Muslim musicians. But instead of a mosque, the men are singing at an outdoor concert with a mosh pit full of followers of the country's first Islamic punk movement. The movement is the first of its kind in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, and has hundreds of members in three of the country's biggest cities - Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung.

Sporting mohawks, leather jackets and baggy jeans, members of the "Punk Muslim" group claim that they, like the original British punk rockers, are still defined by rebellion and an anti-establishment ideology. But they express it by singing about Islamic values, freedom for Palestine, and other social issues facing the global Muslim community. Ahmad Zaki, one of the movement's founders, believes the genre of punk is often associated with a "tendency towards misbehavior" but he wants to change that.

"We can redirect ourselves to better, more positive things," he said. Many of the group's members used to be street performers, and say they have changed drastically since joining the movement. They are now encouraged to form their own bands and write their own songs. Reza Purnama, a member and a former alcoholic, says others like him are slowly quitting alcohol and their lyrics are becoming more positive. "People aren't looking down on us anymore," he said, referring to a stigma against punks in Indonesia's largely conservative society. After every concert, the head-banging audience bow their heads in prayer and listen to sermons - something the movement's founders hope will redirect their fans on to a more pious path. Muslims make up nearly 90 percent of Indonesia's 250 million people and the vast majority of them practice a moderate form of Islam. — Reuters

### Man jumps in sea to avoid bill

A man jumped into the sea to avoid paying his £375 seafood bill. Terry Peck - who goes by the nickname 2pec - devoured two lobsters, a baby octopus, 21 vodka oyster shots, and some Corona beers at a lavish restaurant in the Gold Cost, Australia, on Sunday before he made a run for it without covering the costs. However, Mr Peck didn't get very far as police managed to detain him and charged him with one count of stealing and two counts of serious assault for resisting arrest after they were forced to chase him around the ocean on jet skis. According to the Courier Mail newspaper, it became known when he appeared in court that Mr Peck was already on parole for an unrelated offence. Despite his behavior, Magistrate Joan White granted Mr Peck bail and he's set to appear in court on May 4.



### A snake is found in supermarket

A woman was shocked to be faced with a 12 foot long snake when she reached for a carton of milk at a supermarket. A customer at Komatipoort in South Africa was surprised to come face to face with the large African Rock Python when she picked out a dairy treat in the refrigerated section in the store, according to the Mail Online. Thankfully the serpent was asleep and remained undisturbed during the shopping spree, but was swiftly removed by a snake catcher who is believed to return the reptile to Kruger National Park. Although it is unknown how the giant animal snuck inside the store, it is rumored it may have slid through the roof or up the drains. A manager at the retailer, Martie Enouf, said: "I don't know it got in there but it could have come in through the roof or the drains and it ended up in the shop fridge."



### A restaurant in Tokyo serves insects with ramen dishes

A restaurant in Tokyo served insects with their dishes during a one-off event. Customers reportedly flocked

### Bizarre News

to the hotspot in Japan to try their unique cuisine, which sees them serve up a ramen feast with a choice of crickets, grasshoppers or silkworm powder titled Insect Tsukemen, during a one-off event. According to The Mirror Online the event came one year after the success of their cricket ramen feast last year, which was organized by restaurant manager, who remains unnamed, and Yuta Shinohara who sets up insect-eating dos. For those with an empty stomach had the opportunity to enjoy the noodle specialty with bugs and soup, a bowl of rice laden with crickets, spring rolls and ice cream all containing creepy crawlies of various species. During the event it is believed 100 bowls of insect ramen were indulged in, and were sold out before lunch time.



### First protein Easter egg made with six egg whites

Leading UK health and fitness retailer Discount Supplements has teamed up with chocolatier Jo Fensome to create the first-ever "supersized protein chocolate egg". The limited edition sweet treat is made from protein powder and is also low in sugar and fat. The amount of protein in the egg is the equivalent of six egg whites, one full chicken breast and a fist-sized portion of lean beef. It is also not hollow but filled with ganache mixture. Jo created the recipe to allow health athletes to enjoy the seasonal treats without the worry of putting on the weight. Jo said: "I bake and cook with chocolate and I like to think I have good taste buds when it comes to the sweeter things in life. I think people will be pleasantly surprised how delicious the protein egg actually is. I am really pleased with the recipe and it is so easy to make, I hope people try it at home." — Bang Showbiz

