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FILIPINOS IN GULF LOOK TO DUTERTE

DOHA: With more than a million Filipino workers spread across Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar, it is small wonder that President Rodrigo Duterte has undertaken a week-long tour of the Gulf. The migrants have been drawn to the region by a combination of factors—drug crime and corruption back home, and the job opportunities and wages on offer in the Gulf. Duterte's deadly war on drugs may have brought him notoriety in the West, but it has earned him the admiration of many Filipino expatriates anxious for change at home.

"I would happily say I'm a 'DDS', a Duterte Diehard Supporter," Harry Ramos, a senior mechanical engineer based in Doha for 12 years said. "His platform of government is simple, and he's got the political will to do it." Duterte's populist agenda went down well with the Filipino diaspora in Qatar, where he received almost 80 percent of the expatriate votes cast in last year's presidential election.

Ramos, 58, speaks happily about how Filipinos returning home no longer have to bribe officials to get through customs, thanks to Duterte's crackdown. Life though has turned sour for some in the Gulf, especially in Saudi Arabia where 760,000 Filipinos live, and



RIYADH: Members of the Filipino community react as they attend Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's meeting in the Saudi capital. Duterte is on a three-day visit to meet Saudi leaders for investment, trade and support for overseas Filipino workers in the Kingdom. (Right) Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud (right) and Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte review the honor guards in the capital Riyadh. — AFP



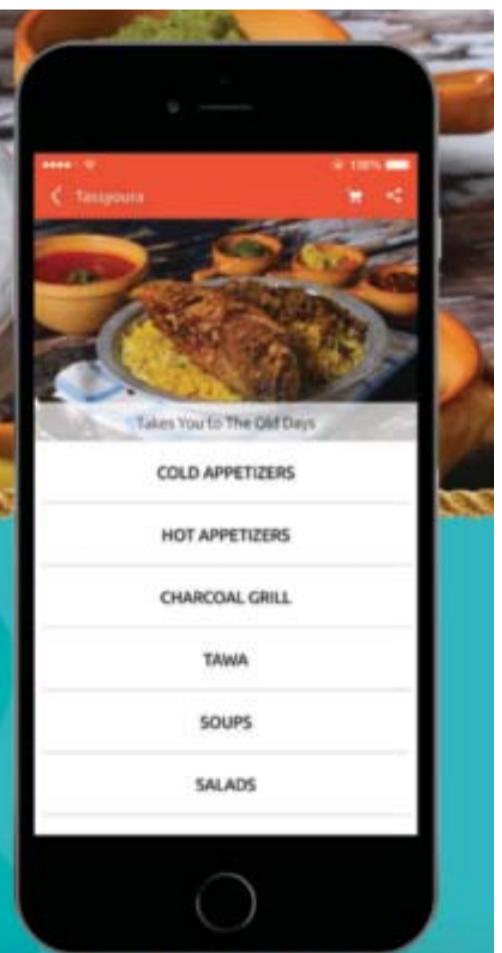
they will be looking to the president to defend their interests in his talks with the region's leaders. A collapse in oil revenues since 2014 has prompted subsidy cuts and delays in major projects.

More than 5,000 Filipino workers were

repatriated from Saudi Arabia last year and most are still waiting to be paid. Duterte held talks with Saudi King Salman on Tuesday and was in Bahrain for talks yesterday. Today, he flies into Qatar. "He will discuss with these leaders matters relevant to the welfare and

dignity of the Filipinos living in their countries, as well as explore avenues of economic and political cooperation," Philippine Assistant Foreign Secretary Hjayceelyn Quintana said.

Continued on Page 8



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PART-TIME MAIDS



By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

Because in case of trouble, you can easily contact the agency and they have all her details. But if you hired a maid through a person that you don't even know or because she knocked on the door and offered her services, then you have to be careful, and this is your right. She might not be a maid and could land you in trouble with her sponsor or the police. How desperately do you need this headache?

Many families employ a maid to help with household duties, either on a full- or part-time basis. If you have one on a full-time and legal basis, then you shouldn't worry, but if you have a part-time one, then you need to read this. The process to hire a maid in Kuwait involves the worker having an appropriate visa and sponsor. But some of these helpers may run away and start working for others, either on a full- or part-time basis. Even though this is against the law, it happens regularly all over Kuwait.

Before you allow a strange woman to enter your house as a part-time maid, please think twice. It is becoming a common phenomenon in Kuwait to hire a part-time maid to run the household or help with the extra work during Ramadan, and this is why you need to know enough about them - if they are runaways or not. After all, the law doesn't protect fools.

If the part-time maid comes through a known and legal agency, then you have nothing to worry about.

breaks. So they run away, but do not want to return to their countries, so they do not go to their embassies.

The fasting month of Ramadan is coming soon, and the season of maid escapes begins in Kuwait. The reasons for this are mainly due to the increase in workload during Ramadan, which means that the maid is required to work long hours and cook and clean the house more. It causes great stress and with lack of enough sleep, some maids end up fleeing the place.

But a shelter for maids will not solve the problem. A new domestic labor law was approved by the National Assembly in 2015 that agreed on the establishment of a joint stock company and other private sector companies to eliminate the problems resulting from recruitment agencies. This will make the maid work for adequate housing, humane treatment, monthly salary and clothing and food.

The recruitment agencies are silent about this phenomenon, stressing that the relationship of the office ends with the delivery of the maid to her sponsor, with a guarantee for a period not exceeding three months. Meanwhile, some of those who are robbed by part-time maids are reluctant to inform the authorities out of fear of legal accountability and fines. The law can't guarantee that the sponsor will grant the maid all her rights as a worker and human being, so the problem of runaway maids will remain.

Working conditions

How much should I pay a maid? You should ask around to get an idea of the salary you should pay her, whether it is on an hourly rate or a monthly sum for a prescribed number of hours. Keep in mind that domestic workers must have a sponsor who allows her to work outside his place. All part-time helpers claim they have the consent of their sponsors, or they don't really care as long as the maids pay them the annual fees. This could be the truth, but not in all cases.

In the recent period, there have been increasing complaints of domestic workers absconding, a phenomenon that many interpret as the desire of these maids to receive higher salaries by working in more than one home and for more freedom, as many sponsors do not allow maids weekly leave, some do not pay salaries, subject them to verbal and physical harassment and make them work long hours without the provision of rest

PHOTO FEATURE

MOST POPULAR PET: CANARIES



Canaries are perhaps the most sought domestic pets in Kuwait due to their beauty and colorful feathers. Originating from the Macaronesia Islands Azores, Madeira, and of course the Canary Islands, these birds are so popular in Kuwait that a federation was established for them in order to partake in regional and international beauty contests. — Kuna



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A LITTLE PIECE OF KUWAIT

Young Kuwaiti entrepreneur targets gaps in souvenir market with innovative designs



By Nawara Fattahova

Visitors to Kuwait often complain that they cannot find decent souvenirs, especially fridge magnets, which are popular as gifts for family back home. Seeing an opening in the market, a creative young Kuwaiti decided to design various souvenirs to sell to visitors and people living in Kuwait who want to take souvenirs for friends and family abroad.

"Kuwaitis are known for their passion for travelling. As we travel frequently, we collect souvenirs, especially magnets, from each country we visit. I have collected tens of them from the various countries I have visited. But when I had visitors over from the United Arab Emirates, I couldn't find nice souvenir items to gift them. So I came up with the idea of making my own souvenirs," Tariq Al-Failakawi, general manager and founder of Kuwaitique, told Kuwait Times in an interview.



Kuwait Times: What did you study and where did you graduate from?

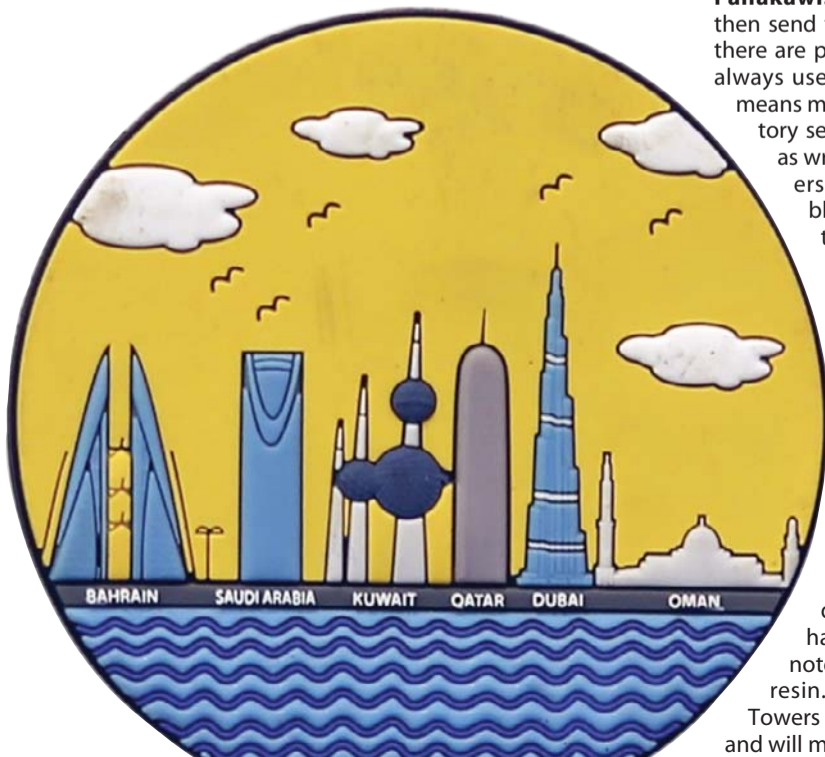
Tariq Al-Failakawi: I have a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the Arab Open University that I obtained earlier this year. Before that, I studied Basic Education at Kuwait University, which I didn't complete, as I didn't like it. My studies helped me a lot in this work, as I started this project of making souvenirs while I was still studying. I applied what I learned from administration, marketing and others.

**KT: How do you design the items?**

Failakawi: I do all the designing myself. I imagine the designs of the magnet and draw it on paper; then my Filipino assistant, who is a professional graphic designer, makes it on the computer. Sometimes he suggests some additions to the design. I was keen that all my items should be high-quality products.

KT: What was the first item that you designed?

Failakawi: The magnet collection was the first. I designed five different models, all including symbols of Kuwait. One of them has the skyline of all GCC countries, which includes a popular landmark of each country, which my sister helped in designing. The letters magnet includes a Kuwaiti landmark in every letter. These took me four months to design, including sending it to China and getting the samples. They are all 3D magnets. I started selling them from January.

**KT: Where do you sell them?**

Failakawi: My problem was where to sell the magnets. I first put them up on Instagram, but I realized we needed sales outlets, as Instagram is mostly used by Kuwaitis, and tourists won't search on Instagram for a souvenir. I first displayed the magnets in a shop called Buqsha at Avenues Mall, as many GCC tourists visit it. I also displayed them at Dar Haa gift shop in the Avenues and in Sanabel Tower. When selling my items, these shops take a percentage of the revenue. Sales were moving perfectly, especially during February.

I'm glad many people liked them and I sold around 600 pieces of each design within a month and half at all the shops and Instagram. I'm planning now to sell my items in Trolley supermarkets that are located at fuel stations and some universities and malls - a total of 15 branches. I'm also planning to sell my souvenirs in hotels.

**KT: Where do you make your items?**

Failakawi: I design all the products myself and then send them to China for production. In China, there are producers of varying quality levels, and I always use high-quality manufacturers, even if it means more expense. Some samples that the factory sent me were done in a wrong way, such as wrong colors or size. For instance, the towers on the magnet were green instead of blue, and the letters magnet was smaller than what I wanted.

I'm planning to design a new item every six months approximately, so I can order twice a year. I aim to have something new all the time. Even tourists who repeatedly visit Kuwait can always find new designs.

KT: What came next?

Failakawi: I designed a notebook 'Ya Biladi' in one color and size. It included a quote by late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. It took me around four months to finish. The quantity is almost sold out, and now I have prepared a new design for another notebook. Then I made a 3D building from resin. I didn't like the first model of Kuwait Towers as it had many mistakes, so I scrapped it, and will make it again in a different factory.

Then I designed my favorite item and one of the most successful items - the moneybox, in the design of Kuwaiti water towers. It was my bestseller in the latest fair that I participated in. I also designed mugs and changed some details as they were almost plain, and in the next edition, I added more details to have more pictures. For apparel, I started with the kids' t-shirts in two designs. For adults, I designed around 10 different images on two colors - white and black. The t-shirts are made from organic cotton in Portugal by a Kuwaiti company. I give them my design and they print it for me. It's of high quality and will not get damaged with washing. Every two months, I think of new items to design.

Items for 2018

I'm now working on packages that include different items such as magnets, a moneybox and a t-shirt to be given as gifts to visitors, especially in hotels or delegations of ministries. The box will be made of steel to protect the items. I'm also working on designing a new moneybox in the shape of an oil barrel, which will also be made of steel. I'm preparing a painting on canvas including Kuwaiti symbols. I made one handmade sample which is not for sale, and I will be selling them in the future after printing them. I'm also thinking of designing snow globes and pens.

KT: What are your plans for this year, in addition to having sales outlets?

Failakawi: I'm planning to add models of traditional Kuwaiti dhows that will be handmade in Kuwait. I already met some of the artisans and I saw that their work is perfect. As these dhows will be handmade, their numbers will be limited. I hope I can open a shop to sell my goods in. I tried at Mubarakiya, but the rent was ridiculously high, and I was disappointed. So I'm thinking to get a booth there, as I see Mubarakiya is the most suitable place for my items. Also, I'm planning to open a shop or stall in the Avenues by next February, as it's visited by many tourists.



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A DAY IN THE LIFE



At your service ...

‘From dealing with customers to cleaning tables, servers like Ashley are always prepared’

By Ben Garcia

On visiting any fast-food, high-end or cozy restaurant in Kuwait, you will surely meet at least one Filipino who is either a server or a chef. Filipinos dominate the hospitality/service industry in Kuwait mainly because employers trust Filipinos with their customers, and also for being reliable and service-oriented people. Just like people of other nationalities, Filipinos love communicating, and even when they work extended hours, they still wear a great smile on their faces.

Michael Ashley Bautista is a 26-year-old server, one of the many Pinoys enjoying his daily routine in the service industry in Kuwait. “I came to Kuwait in 2012 after completing a hotel and restaurant management course in the Philippines. Although I couldn’t imagine living without my mom, I was determined to work abroad as I couldn’t have achieved my dreams if I had stayed in the Philippines,” said Bautista, who prefers to be called Ashley. “People tend to confuse me with a girl on looking at my nametag,” he grinned.

In 2012, Ashley started working as a server at an American restaurant in Kuwait. But just before his contract was about to end in 2014, his family was struck with a tragedy. “My elder brother died due to a ‘medical error’. He was suffering from a gallbladder problem but died when the doctor mistakenly removed something from inside his body,” he said. “I was devastated; my brother and I were very close - we shared almost everything and had no secrets. We were planning about our future and getting married. In fact, I had bought him a second-hand car,” he recalled.

After a year of being terribly affected by the death of his brother, he decided to embark to Kuwait once again, and this time accepted a job as server in an East Asian cuisine inspired restaurant in Salmiya. “This time, I only wanted to save money for my business plan back home. I have a very

As a server, Ashley encounters all types of customers. “Once I came across a customer who was annoying everyone in the restaurant, and as I was not feeling well, I shouted at him and he left disappointed. But he came back the following day and asked for an apology, and we became friends,” he said.

good location for my small-time restaurant business, which is for my mom, who is a well-known cook and runs a small canteen. People trust her with their favorite dishes. I don’t spend a lot of money because I am saving it for my expansion plan,” Ashley said.

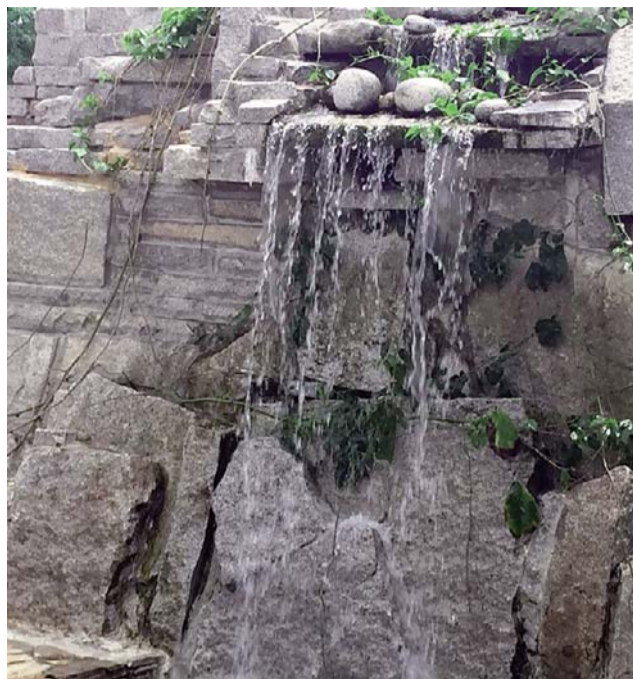
Ashley enjoys working both shifts every day. Besides being a waiter, he also acts as cleaner and makes sure that everything on the dining tables are in the proper place and ready for customers. He works on to tables assigned by his supervisor. He attends to all his guests’ needs and handles them perfectly, according to General Manager Mohammad Ismail. “I work eight hours daily; if my shift is in the morning, I start at 8 am for morning preparation. If there are no customers, we engage ourselves in the ritual of cleaning our station (station is the assigned tables). We have to maintain cleanliness at all times because of surprise municipality checks,” he said.

As a server, he has encountered countless customers - from the most annoying to the kindest people. “I am always prepared to encounter all sorts of customers; we all undergo a training session, so I anticipate the worst,” he said. “Once I came across a customer who was annoying everyone in the restaurant, and as I was not feeling well, I shout-

ed at him and he left disappointed. But he came back the following day and asked for an apology, and we became friends,” he said.

Ashley said in dealing with customers, especially of various nationalities, servers like him should always be prepared physically, mentally and emotionally. “We are doing this on a daily basis, so we are always ready - from the restaurant utensils to the recipes and the crowd. I always come prepared to my job. I wake up early to prepare for my eight-hour shift; grooming takes a lot of time, plus I prepare my lunch or dinner too,” he said.

According to Philippine Embassy records, there are approximately 66,427 Filipinos on visa 18 (work visas) in Kuwait; many of them are in the hospitality/service sector. Some of them work from 8 to 12-16 hours a day - some get paid overtime, others don’t. The hospitality industry in Kuwait has been booming since 2004, immediately after the Iraq war. In fact, Kuwait is known as an emerging capital of foreign restaurants in the Gulf. Since people have very few alternative places to visit, plus the fact that there’s no nightlife, restaurants remain the top place to pass time in Kuwait.



'BAYAN PALACE'S BOTANICAL GARDEN' MAIN ATTRACTION FOR STATE VISITORS

KUWAIT: The botanical garden of Bayan Palace is considered as one of the main attractions for official state visitors. At an area of 170,000 square meters, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah opened the garden on April 24, 2015. Every Thursday morning, the garden is opened for the public which is eager to get lost in this wondrous space filled with exotic plants and trees. —KUNA Photos



Crime

Report

Customs enhances services

KUWAIT: Acting Director of Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) Adnan Al-Qudaibi said yesterday that the administration was taking steps to enhance its services in the country. Al-Qudaibi said that steps were taken to develop security, improve revenues, and reduce smuggling, hoping that the measures will strengthen the national economy. Al-Qudaibi said the new measures included electronic data distribution and notification mechanisms for all outlets. He added that the measures would allow tracking of customs procedures. He said that an electronic monitoring system has been launched using the surveillance cameras at Shuwaikh seaport through an advanced network. KGAC, founded in 1899, is considered as one of the first governmental departments established in Kuwait.

Hot temperatures

KUWAIT: The temperatures during the weekend will be predominantly hot as usual for this time of the year, said the official at the Kuwait Meteorological Department Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi yesterday. Speaking to KUNA, Al-Qarawi said that the highest temperature during day will reach around 37-39 Degrees Celsius, adding that during evening, the temperature will go down to around 23-26 Degrees Celsius. Wind speed will be at 35 kilometers per hour (kph). As for the status of the sea, Al-Qarawi said that waves would be light to moderate at a height of two to five feet. Today will continue the same routine with south to southeast winds at speeds between 12 to 35 kph hitting Kuwait and bringing the high temperatures between 40 and 43 Degrees Celsius, said Al-Qarawi, adding that at evening, temperature will drop to around 21 to 23 Degrees Celsius. The status of sea Friday will be light to moderate winds at heights of one to four feet, said the meteorologist.

Gold price hits \$1,287

KUWAIT: The price of gold had made a considerable hike to \$1,287 per ounce due to geopolitical tensions which swept the world in the last six months, said a precious metals expert yesterday. CEO of Sabaek Al-Kuwait Company for Precious Metals Rajab Hamed said that investors were pushed to purchase gold, which is considered as a valuable commodity during tenuous times. Recent statements by US President Donald Trump regarding the strong value of the US Dollar and the importance of keeping the currency at low interest rates had made investors race towards gold, said Hamed. The price will vary due to the ongoing geopolitical tensions connected with the US and North Korea in addition to Washington's handling of the Syrian file, said the expert, adding that the price of gold might go down if investors decided to gain profits. The low rate of the US Dollar also played a part in the gold price hike, Hamed affirmed.

FILIPINOS IN GULF LOOK TO DUTERTE

Continued from Page 1

In the bustling Souq Waqif area of the Qatari capital Doha, Duterte's trip has prompted an air of expectation. On a balmy early summer evening, with temperatures touching the low 30 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit), conversation outside the busy Manila Supermarket quickly turns to the president's visit. Ray, a 38-year-old civil engineer, said he wanted to meet Duterte in person, something he could never achieve back home.

He admitted there was an issue with the poor treatment of some migrants, especially those in domestic service, but said life was generally good for Filipinos in the emirate. "All Filipinos come here because they want to earn money," he said. "But, if they had to choose the place they will live, of course they will live in the Philippines, they will choose it. Definitely."

Ray, who has been in Qatar six years, said he earns "three or four times more" in Doha than he would back home. Outside the Damascus International Gents Salon,

hair stylist Jim, 27, said he earns around 4,000 Qatari riyals a month (\$1,100, 1,030 euros). Back home he would earn the equivalent of \$190 (180 euros) at a barber shop, he said. Twenty-five-year-old Sunshine, who works in promotions, had never left the Philippines before heading to Qatar. Now she has been in Doha for three years. "It's better to leave first from the Philippines to earn money and then after a few years... you can go back," she said.

Winston Q8 clinics

Apart from the poor treatment, Filipinos migrants have been facing certification problems. According to a Filipino local newspaper, Overseas Filipino workers applying for jobs in Kuwait pay the P5,500 fee to a certification firm before they are examined by the eight accredited clinics. Winston Q8 has collected more than P100 million from 20,000 Filipino workers deployed to Kuwait from August 2016 to February 2017 despite the issuance of Department of Health Circular No. 2016-0627 on Sept 23, 2016 that prohibited the collection of exces-

sive fees for medical examinations for workers bound for Kuwait. Winston Q8 continues to defy the DOH circular and violate provisions of RA 8042 as amended, which prohibits the monopoly of a cluster of clinics to conduct physical-medical exams for certain receiving countries. Recently, the Department of Health was urged to revoke the accreditation of eight clinics affiliated with Winston Q8 - a Bonifacio Global City-based firm that is allegedly a front of extremist Islamic State (IS) members operating in the country.

The local clinics should have their DOH accreditation withdrawn for participating in the illegal medical examination scheme implemented by Winston Q8 Certification System that is being linked to captured alleged IS agent Husayn Al-Dhafiri. They could also be held liable for violating provisions of the Migrant Worker's Act, or Republic Act 8042 as amended by RA 10022. This was the call made by some recruitment agencies after National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and Bureau of Immigration (BI) agents arrested Al-Dhafiri at the Winston Q8 office in Taguig City. —Agencies



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud received is Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the luncheon yesterday. —KUNA

CROWN PRINCE IN SAUDI FOR CAMEL FESTIVAL

RIYADH: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday attended the final ceremony marking the 2017 King Abdulaziz Camel Festival. The festival, held in the Saudi capital Riyadh is aimed at boosting the nation's cultural heritage. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf, accompanied by a delegation of high ranking officials, was received earlier upon his arrival in the Kingdom by Governor of the Riyadh Region Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in addition to the embassy staff. He, along with the senior entourage, later attended a luncheon held by the Saudi King, on the festival occasion. —KUNA

KRCS PAYS FOR IRAQI KIDNEY TRANSPLANT



Photo shows a three-year-old Iraqi child, Amir Bashar About

BEIRUT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) will pay the costs of a kidney transplant for an Iraqi three-year child in Beirut, as part of the society's philanthropic work and support to urgent critical cases. The KRCS delegate to Lebanon Musaed Al-Enzi said yesterday that the society decided to pay the costs of the transplant for Amir Bashar About who has to be operated on as soon as possible. He added that the society has responded to a plea from the child's father.

The society's humanitarian efforts are part of Kuwait's philanthropic initiatives extended to the needy around the globe, Al-Enzi said. On his part, the child's expressed gratitude to the KRCS and the entire Kuwaiti people for the generous assistance offered to his son, and to many other people. He told KUNA that he discovered that his son was suffering kidney failure when the child was still six months old. His case has aggravated since then, and now it is critical.

The poor father had to sell his house in Baghdad and came to Beirut to treat the child, but the costs have been too much than he expected, and he had to make the humanitarian plea. Shebl Murani, the doctor supervising the child's case, told KUNA that the little boy arrived in the Lebanese capital with full renal failure and was admitted to the ICU. He added that the family could not afford a kidney transplant for the kid. The KRCS has provided the costs of scores of refugees in Lebanon over the last years through the kidney dialysis it launched in north of the country. —KUNA

ALC SEEKS 'JOINT VISION' FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CAIRO: The Arab Labor Conference (ALC) has stressed the importance of finding a joint Arab vision to achieve sustainable development based on several pillars, mainly educating and training women in the countryside. This came during the conclusion of the 44th session of ALC held under chairmanship of the Kuwait. The conference urged approving national development projects and programs to benefit poor families and provide new jobs for the people.

The event assigned Director General of the Arab Labor Organization (ALO) to prepare the annual report on the Israeli settle-

ments and their negative social and economic effects on situations of employers and workers in Palestine and at the Golan Heights. It called for translating the report into the languages accredited in activities of International Labor Organization (ILO) to be generalized before International Labor Conference scheduled in Geneva next June.

ALC also called on Arab delegations and members of ILO to make more efforts and intensify contacts on all levels as well as support constantly Palestinian needs and demands in the forthcoming period. Furthermore, the conference referred to the significance of activating resolutions of

ALO Board of Directors, mainly the one regarding dispatching a specialized mission to be acquainted with rights of Palestinian workers under the Israeli authorities since 1970 and until now.

ALC affirmed its condemnation of Israeli systematic attacks on Palestinian workers in the occupied Arab territories, calling on the international community to put an end to such violations. It also approved the report of commission on the status of women on implementing sustainable development programs, taking into consideration observations authorized by the general congress of ALC. —KUNA

Crime

Report

Police hunt for suspects

KUWAIT: State security operatives in coordination with the Traffic Department are looking for two unknown persons who deliberately damaged a car after they forced the American driver to stop. The American said he was driving on the 7th Ring Road near Dhafer area when two persons in a 4WD stopped him, insulted him and damaged his car.

Asian rushed to ICU

Jahra paramedics rushed an Asian expat to Jahra hospital ICU after he fell from the top of a building in Jaber Al-Ahmad area.

Woman detained

A citizen failed in her bid to frame up a police officer. The Kuwaiti woman threw herself on the pavement and started screaming to make passersby believe the officer attempted to beat her. She was detained on charges of insulting a public officer on duty. —Alanbaa/Alrai

FIRST PROFESSIONAL SECRETARY COURSE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The First Professional Secretary Course was concluded under the patronage of Assistant Undersecretary for Education and Training Major General Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and in the presence of Director General of Training department Major General Nawaf Abdellatif Al-Barjas. 26 officers with various ranks and four trainees from Bahrain participated in the course that lasted for one month. Separately, a training program on 'the spread of blood patterns - determining how the crime was committed' was concluded under the patronage of Director General of Forensics Department Major General Shihab Al-Shimmari. 11 trainees from the Forensics Department, 3 from Criminal Evidence, two officers from Bahrain and two from Oman attended the program.

Traffic campaigns

The Traffic Department carried out several campaigns targeting violators. 34,501 various citations were issued. Also, 536 vehicles and 13 motorcycles were impounded while 103 persons were detained.

Friday Times

International

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2017

Divided nationalists hold key for Erdogan in Turkey vote



India's party Mecca Goa bans late night raves in crackdown



Japan PM: North Korea may be capable of sarin-loaded missiles



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump speaks during a news conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in the East Room of the White House, in Washington. — AP

US-RUSSIA RELATIONS AT 'ALL-TIME LOW'

WASHINGTON: Laying bare deep and dangerous divisions on Syria and other issues, President Donald Trump declared that US relations with Russia "may be at an all-time low." His top diplomat offered a similarly grim assessment from the other side of the globe after meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. "Right now we're not getting along with Russia at all," Trump said flatly during a White House news conference Wednesday.

It was stark evidence that the president is moving ever further from his campaign promises to establish better ties with Moscow. Only weeks ago, it appeared that Trump, who praised Putin throughout the US election campaign, was poised for a potentially historic rapprochement with Russia. But any such expectations have crashed into reality amid the nasty back-and-forth over Syria and ongoing US investigations into Russia's alleged interference in America's US presidential election.

Still, Trump quickly reverted to a conciliatory tone yesterday, hinting that he hasn't abandoned hope for warmer ties. "Things will work out fine between the USA and Russia," Trump tweeted. "At the right time everyone will come to their senses & there will be lasting peace!" On Wednesday, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson emerged from a nearly two-hour meeting with Putin saying the two countries had reached a "low point" in relations.

'Certainly possible'

Trump, who last week ordered airstrikes on a Syrian air

base in retaliation for a chemical weapons attack, was asked Wednesday if Syria could have launched the attack without Russia's knowledge. Trump said it was "certainly possible" though "probably unlikely." The newly hardened view of Moscow comes as the president has tried to shake suspicions about the motives behind his campaign calls for warmer relations.

As the FBI and multiple congressional committees investigate possible collusion between Russia and Trump's campaign, the president and his aides can now point to his hard-line stance on Syrian President Bashar Assad as evidence he's willing to stand up to Putin. More than 80 people were killed in what the US has described as a nerve gas attack that Assad's forces undoubtedly carried out. Russia says rebels were responsible for whatever chemical agent was used, which the Trump administration calls a disinformation campaign.

Not long before Trump spoke, Russia vetoed a Western-backed UN resolution that would have condemned the chemical weapons attack and demanded a speedy investigation. The dim view of US-Russia ties from both Trump and Tillerson reflected the former Cold War foes' inability to forge better relations, as Trump until recently has advocated.

Allegations of collusion between Russian officials and Trump campaign associates also have weakened Trump's ability to make concessions to Russia on any issue, lest he be accused of rewarding bad behavior. Russia wants the US to eliminate sanctions on Moscow related to its 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region and support for pro-Russian sepa-

ratists in eastern Ukraine. Until the chemical attack, the Trump administration had sought to step back from the US position that Assad should leave power. But Tillerson repeated the administration's new belief that "the reign of the Assad family is coming to an end."

'Irrefutable evidence'

Beyond Syria, Russia's alleged meddling in the US presidential election also hovered over what was the first face-to-face encounter between Putin and any Trump administration Cabinet member. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov blasted US claims that it has "irrefutable evidence" of election interference. "We have not seen a single fact, or even a hint of facts," he said. "I do not know who saw them. No one showed us anything, no one said anything, although we repeatedly asked to produce the details on which these unfounded accusations lie."

He also rejected American claims of certain evidence that Assad ordered the chemical attack. Still, Tillerson sought to stress the positives from his meetings. He said working groups would be established to improve US-Russian ties and identify problems. He said the two sides would also discuss disagreements on Syria and how to end the country's six-year civil war. But such hopes appeared optimistic as the diplomats outlined their sharply diverging views on Syria. Tillerson said Syria's government had committed more than 50 attacks using chlorine or other chemical weapons over the duration of the conflict. — AP

REBEL COURT SENTENCES YEMEN JOURNALIST TO DEATH

SANAA: A Yemeni court in the rebel-held capital has sentenced a veteran journalist to death on charges of spying for neighboring Saudi Arabia, the press union and rebel media said yesterday. Since March 2015, oil-rich Saudi Arabia has been leading a deadly military intervention against the rebels and their allies in the kingdom's impoverished neighbor.

Yahya al-Jubaihi, 61, was convicted of establishing "contact with a foreign state" and providing Saudi diplomats in Sanaa with "reports that posed harm to Yemen militarily, politically and economically," the rebel-controlled Saba news agency reported. Prosecutors alleged that Jubaihi had been receiving a monthly salary of 4,500 Saudi riyals (\$1,200) from Riyadh since 2010, four years before the rebels overran the capital, Saba added.

The Yemeni press union condemned the "arbitrary" sentence, accusing the rebels of "targeting the freedom of the press." It said Jubaihi was a "veteran journalist with a long record of professional work across Yemen." He was seized from his home on September 6, it added. The rebels and their allies-renegade troops loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh-have controlled all government institutions in Sanaa since they overran the capital in September 2014.

Rival bodies loyal to internationally recognized president Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi operate out of second city Aden or from exile in Saudi Arabia. The Aden-based information ministry said Jubaihi's trial was a "farce" and accused the rebels of looking to "settle political accounts... through a politicized judiciary." Jubaihi wrote regular columns in Saudi

dailies Okaz and Al-Madina, as well as in Yemeni newspapers. He served at the government's press department in the 1990s and 2000s when Saleh was president and Hadi was his deputy.

Press watchdogs and human rights groups have been deeply critical of the rebels' treatment of journalists as the conflict in the Arabian peninsula country has escalated over the past two years. In December, journalist Mohammed al-Absi, 35, died suddenly after publishing reports about alleged corruption. His family and human rights groups said a post-mortem found he had been poisoned. Eight reporters were killed in Yemen last year, according to the International Federation of Journalists. That made the country the fourth deadliest for journalists after Iraq, Afghanistan and Mexico, the watchdog added. —AFP



BARTELLA, Iraq: In this photo, American medical volunteers attend to a civilian casualty of the battle to retake Mosul from Islamic State militants, at the Samaritan's Purse field hospital, in Bartella, Iraq. — AP

CLINIC OUTSIDE MOSUL TREATS THOSE WITH GRAVEST INJURIES

BARTELLA, Iraq: A boy and a woman are delivered to the gates of the clinic by an Iraqi ambulance, bandaged and in pain. They arrive without names, ages and with only the sketchiest details of what had happened to them. Apparently shot by accident outside their house in western Mosul, where fighting continues between Iraqi forces and Islamic State group militants, U.S. medics working in a state-of-the-art field clinic here could only assume they were mother and son.

Situated on the outskirts of Mosul, the facility was set up last December by Samaritan's Purse, a Christian aid organization based in Boone, North Carolina. Its volunteer doctors receive those with the gravest injuries from the field clinics inside or at the very edge of Mosul, where casualties are initially treated. "At home, it's not nearly as critical as this," said Medical Services Director Shelly Kelly, from Mustang, Oklahoma.

Kelly, who is on her second assignment in Iraq, said it took some effort to explain to her family why her new place of work was located behind blast walls. In the end they gave her their support, however. "My parents actually watch my kids and wash my laundry when I'm not there, and make meals for my husband, so it's all good," said the mother of four. Kelly completed several overseas assignments for Samaritan's Purse before coming to this war-torn Middle Eastern nation.

US staff typically come for rotations of four to eight weeks, often using their vacation time to serve. "It's really an easy choice," said Kelly, saying the rewards are much bigger than what a beach vacation could bring. Adrian Curnow, a pediatric surgeon from Boise, Idaho, just started his assignment - his first foreign mission - three days ago. He said he was surprised at the severity of the injuries he was encountering. Preparing to operate on the wounded boy, he faced an issue common to all underage patients: Where are the parents and who will give consent to the operation? In the confusion of war, the answers are not easily found. Curnow managed to speak to the woman and she told him, just before slipping into unconsciousness, that she was not, in fact, the boy's mother. Following US procedure, he decided to go ahead after consulting a colleague and the patients were moved into the operating room. Both patients had already been operated on at the field clinic they were sent from. —AP

DIVIDED NATIONALISTS HOLD KEY FOR ERDOGAN IN TURKEY VOTE

ALPARSLAN TURKES STILL REMAINS ICON FOR NATIONALISTS

ANKARA: To mark the 20th anniversary this month of the death of Alparslan Turkes, the founder of modern Turkish nationalism, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited his grave in Ankara and offered up prayers. Turkes, who founded the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in 1969 and remained its chairman until his death in 1997, is still an icon for nationalists known simply as the "basbug" (chieftain).

The visit to the grave of Turkes, the spokesman of the 1960 military coup that led to the hanging of Erdogan's political idol, former premier Adnan Menderes, may seem surprising and even contradictory. The MHP is a party in opposition to Erdogan's Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP) with, in theory, a starkly different ideology. But it has become an unlikely ally in Erdogan's quest for a presidential system to enhance his powers. Nationalist votes will be crucial in ensuring a 'Yes' vote in the referendum on Sunday on the constitution.

Number one Grey Wolf

The task is complicated by a split in the MHP between those following its enigmatic leader Devlet Bahceli who has led the party since Turkes' death and backs the new system-and an influential dissident faction which does not. The votes of nationalists are crucial for the executive presidential system to be approved, said Samim Akgonul, researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

In another act of stunning political symbolism, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim astonished observers by making the special hand sign of the Grey Wolves-the radical wing of the MHP with a reputation for street violence-in a speech in Ankara. "Erdogan must convince the nationalists that he is the first of the Grey Wolves," Akgonul said. Bahceli's backing of the executive presidency has caused the schism within the MHP, with several members of the party, including lawmakers, dismissed for failing to toe the 'Yes' line.

The top dissident member leading the 'No' wing of the nationalists is former

MHP leadership candidate, Meral Aksener, who was also a former interior minister in the 1990s. A capable orator who sports a henna tattoo of the Turkish flag on the inside of her hand, Aksener has been holding rallies nationwide with the slogan: "80 million times no" referring to the country's population.

this referendum passes, the losers will be the nationalists and the MHP," Okutan added.

Nationalism will be stronger

The deputy chairman of the MHP, Mehmet Gunal, dismissed such arguments as claims made up by bitter ex-



ORDU, Turkey: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses his supporters during a referendum rally in Black Sea city of Ordu, Turkey, yesterday. — AP

Nationalists must say no

MHP supporter Omer Cakiroglu said at an Aksener rally in Istanbul that the party's grassroots were not supporting the changes to the constitution, despite what the top brass had agreed. "I cannot believe that a nationalist would not say 'No,'" the 55-year-old told AFP, adding he was there in support of the 'No' campaign rather than Aksener. Another prominent dissident MHP figure is the dynamic Sinan Ogan, who was ejected from the party last month.

"Over 90 percent of nationalists will say no," Ogan said in an interview in Ankara, after clashes hit one of his rallies on March 26. Former MHP lawmaker Nuri Okutan-dismissed at the same time as Ogan-said that if a 'Yes' vote was agreed the party would end up losing all significance as an opposition force. "If

members. "Now they are trying to make a fuss because they have been kicked out," Gunal said. "Nationalism will be stronger, the Nationalist Movement Party will be stronger." "As a 48-year-old party, the MHP has always been here, it is the ideological base of Turkish nationalists, their political representative." Burak Bilgehan Ozpek, associate professor of international relations at Ankara's TOBB University, said a 'Yes' vote would mean the end of the opposition within the MHP. Some have suggested that with the office of the prime minister to be extinguished under the new system, Bahceli could become a vice president. "Bahceli on this issue will have every kind of legal, political and bureaucratic support," Ozpek said. "In the event of a 'Yes', Aksener especially will have to found a new party and start from scratch," he added. —AFP

TENSIONS SIMMER AFTER ILE-IFE ETHNIC CLASHES IN NIGERIA

ILE-IFE, Nigeria: For his whole life, Hausa trader Bashiru Tanko has lived peacefully alongside the Yoruba people of Ile-Ife in southwest Nigeria. Originally from the northern city of Kano, Tanko's father settled in the Sabo area of the city, where he built a prosperous family business. "I was born and bred in this town. Even though my parents came from Kano, I have not known any other place I can call home," 41-year-old Tanko said.

"We have always settled our differences. We have lived together without acrimony for ages. We marry ourselves and do business together." But last month an altercation between a Yoruba woman and a Hausa trader triggered a bloody conflict that left 46 people dead, around 100 injured and houses razed to the ground, according to the police. "I was shocked that what began as a minor dispute was allowed to snowball into an unprecedented carnage," Tanko said, shaking his head in disbelief.

Locals say that upwards of 200 people—the majority Hausas—lost their lives in the violence. "An accurate number is difficult to get, because most people don't go to hospital when they are injured, or they bury the deceased themselves," said Gbemisola Animasawun, a researcher at the Center for Peace and Strategic Studies in Ile-Ife. "But I can confirm that most killed were Hausas. They were killed inside their homes," Animasawun said. "It's still very tense out there."

Tanko's family house was not spared in the mayhem. As he walked through the streets of ruined buildings, Tanko stopped at a roofless bungalow blackened by smoke and littered with damaged household items. "That heap of rubble used to be my father's house," Tanko said. "I, my wife and our four children, now squat with a relation whose house was not touched," he said.

Unprecedented carnage

Hadi Ali, a local 48-year-old tailor,



NIGERIA: A picture taken shows people sitting beside lock up shops burnt following clashes between Hausa community and ethnic Yoruba people of Ile-Ife in southwest Nigeria.—AFP

said criminals capitalized on the violence, seizing the opportunity to loot houses and shops. "What happened was a small matter between a Yoruba woman and a Hausa trader which was immediately settled," Ali said. "The following morning, the woman's husband, who happened to be a leader in the garage (bus station) went and mobilized his boys and they started killing our people, looting our properties and burning our homes," he said.

"We are still bombarded with reports of missing people. Those killed were our people," he said. Ali said Hausas have fled the town, but would be happy to return if the crisis is resolved. "Our people are leaving because they no longer have anywhere to stay. They are afraid of being attacked again," he said. Ile-Ife's leaders claim that there is no cause for alarm, with prominent politician Bashiru Awotorebo declaring that Yorubas are ready for peace.

Meanwhile, traditional ruler Ooni Adeyeye Ogunwusi has set up a panel to

reconcile the two sides and "prevent a recurrence of this unfortunate incident," said Ooni's deputy Idowu Adediwura. But more needs to be done to assuage fears that the Hausa community remains a threat to Ile-Ife, and in the aftermath of the violence, there has been divisive rhetoric from political leaders. Olajire Awowoyin of Ife Progressive Forum recently blamed an influx of foreigners from Chad and Niger for the unrest.

He also accused the police of being "one-sided and unfair" after arresting only Yoruba suspects. Yinka Odumakin of the Afenifere Yoruba socio-cultural group too has campaigned in favor of the "unconditional release of the suspects to avoid igniting ethnic tensions."

Yet experts say that the root cause of the issue has less to do with ethnicity than with Nigeria's economic recession. "It's the trend all over the world that economic problems lead to social and ethnic tensions," said University of Lagos history lecturer Dapo Thomas.—AFP

PAKISTANI STUDENT ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY BEATEN TO DEATH ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

PESHAWAR: A mob beat a Pakistani student to death at his university campus yesterday after he was accused of sharing blasphemous content on social media, university and police officials said. A group of about 10 students shouted "Allahu Akbar" during the attack on fellow student Mashal Khan, who was stripped naked and beaten with planks until his skull caved in as other students looked on, video obtained by Reuters showed.

Blasphemy is a highly sensitive topic in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where insulting the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is a capital crime that has hundreds languishing on death row and where even an accusation can lead to violence. In recent months, Pakistan's government has been vocal about the issue, with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif issuing an order last month for removal of blasphemous content online and saying anyone who posted

such content should face "strict punishment under the law".

Ten students have been arrested after Thursday's attack the grounds of a university in the northern city of Mardan, local police chief Mohammad Alam Shinwari said. "After severe torture that led his death, the charged students then wanted to burn his body," said Shinwari. At least 65 people have been murdered over blasphemy allegations since 1990, according to figures from a Center for Research and Security Studies report and local media.

It was unclear exactly what online posting had prompted the blasphemy accusation against Khan, who was studying journalism. One of Khan's teachers recalled that he was a passionate and critical student. "He was brilliant? and inquisitive, always complaining about the political system of the country, but I never heard him saying anything controversial against the reli-

gion," said the teacher. In 2011, a bodyguard assassinated Punjab provincial governor Salman Taseer after the governor called for reforming blasphemy laws. Taseer's killer, executed last year, has been hailed by religious hard-liners as a martyr to Islam and a shrine has been erected at his grave. Recently, fighting blasphemy has also become a rallying cry for the government. Pakistani online activists believe blasphemy-related crack downs on social media are veiled attempts by the country's powerful military to limit dissent on human rights violations.

In January, five online activists went missing and were publicly accused of blasphemy while they were absent. Four of them have reappeared and at least one has said he was abducted and interrogated by Pakistan's intelligence agencies. The military has denied any part in the activists' disappearances.—Reuters

SYRIA'S ASSAD SAYS CHEMICAL ATTACK 100% FABRICATION

DAMASCUS: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said a suspected chemical weapons attack was a "fabrication" to justify a US military strike, as Moscow digs in to defend its ally despite increasing strains with Washington. In an exclusive interview with AFP in Damascus—his first since the alleged April 4 attack prompted a US air strike on Syrian forces—Assad said his army had given up all its chemical weapons and that Syrian military power was not affected by the US strike.

"Definitely, 100 percent for us, its fabrication," he said in the interview on Wednesday in reference to the alleged chemical weapons attack. "Our impression is that the West, mainly the United States, is hand-in-glove with the terrorists. They fabricated the whole story in order to have a pretext for the attack." Western leaders including US President Donald Trump have accused Assad of being behind last week's attack in the rebel-held town Khan Sheikhun, saying his forces unleashed a chemical weapon during an air strike.

The suspected attack killed at least 87 people, including many children, and images of the dead and of suffering victims provoked global outrage. Syria denied any use of chemical weapons and Moscow said the deaths had been the result of a conventional strike hitting a rebel arms depot containing "toxic substances."

Fake videos

In the interview, Assad insisted it was "not clear" whether an attack on Khan Sheikhun had even happened. "You have a lot of fake videos now," he said. "We don't know whether those dead children were killed in Khan Sheikhun. Were they dead at all?" He insisted several times that his forces had turned over all chemical weapons stockpiles in 2013, under a deal brokered by Russia to avoid threatened US military action.

"There was no order to make any attack, we don't have any chemical weapons, we gave up our arsenal a few years ago," Assad said. He said his forces had not been diminished by the US strike. "Our firepower, our ability to attack the terrorists hasn't been affected by this strike." Denouncing a "very barbaric" attack, Trump ordered a strike that saw 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles slam into the airbase in central Syria from where Washington accused Assad's forces of launching the attack.

Trump bats aside criticism

It was the first direct US military action against Assad's forces since the start of Syria's civil war six years ago and led to a quick downward spiral in ties between Washington and Moscow. Russia accused the United States of breaking international law with the strike against the Syrian regime, a key ally that Moscow has supported with air strikes since 2015. Trump gave such criticism short shrift on Wednesday, saying: "I felt we had to do something about it. I have absolutely no doubt we did the right thing."

Standing alongside NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in Washington, Trump also said it was "certainly possible" that Russia was aware of the suspected attack. "I would like to think that they didn't know, but certainly they could have. They were there. So we'll find out," he said. The strains in ties were clear as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson received a frosty reception Wednesday on a visit to Moscow.—AFP



DAMASCUS: This file photo shows Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during an interview with AFP in Damascus.—AFP

'SERIOUS FAILINGS' BY RUSSIA IN BESLAN MASSACRE

STRASBOURG, France: The European Court of Human Rights ruled yesterday there were "serious failings" in Russia's handling of the Beslan school siege by Chechen rebels in 2004 in which over 330 people were killed,

many of them children. The court said although Russian authorities had information that an attack was being planned on a school in North Ossetia, they failed to do enough to disrupt the plot and had not suffi-

ciently protected the hostages. Russia reacted furiously to the judgment, saying it was "absolutely unacceptable".

The school was stormed on September 1, 2004 by militants demanding the withdraw-

al of Russian troops from the war-torn republic of Chechnya.

The attackers herded 1,100 people including 800 children into a gymnasium and rigged the building with explosives. —AFP



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THREE YEARS ON, HOPES FADE FOR THOSE TRAPPED IN UKRAINE WAR

UKRAINE WAR MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TO BOTH SIDES

DONETSK, Ukraine: After three years of war, Irina and her husband Arkady have all but lost hope of ever seeing the day the big guns fall silent and Ukraine becomes whole again. The middle-aged couple live in the shelled-out northern outskirts of the Russian-backed separatist rebels' de facto capital city of Donetsk in the eastern industrial heartland of the divided former Soviet state.

Ukraine again," 50-year-old Arkady said without revealing his surname. "Imagine if your neighbor attacked you with a knife and wounded you. Would you stay friends with that person and invite him over for tea?"

Daily journal of grief

Irina has kept a daily war journal that is filled with notes underscored with

hard-to-fathom numbers. One entry describes how her husband was picking apricots when shrapnel from a shell hit him in the head and broke one of his ribs.

"Over time, you tend to forget everything, especially when there is shelling every single day," the 48-year-old says of her diary. The windows of their two-storey house have thick slabs of wood nailed over them to protect the glass through which icons peek out. "Only 40 or 50 people still live here," she says of her Severniy suburb of Donetsk. "Every home has been damaged.

In March alone, they hit our neighbor's house six times. The shelling is more intense now than when the war started," Irina says. Fellow Severniy resident Lidia said the latest fighting caused an electricity blackout-something they have long ago grown used to. "It feels like no one needs us," the 67-year-old pensioner says.

Mutually beneficial war

The European Union and the United States fully back Kiev's claim that Russia started and supported the war in order to meddle and disrupt its Western neighbor's affairs after its February 2014 ouster of a Kremlin-backed regime. Ukraine's subsequent embrace of the West was followed by Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and the takeover of government buildings in the east in April by groups of armed men who swore allegiance to Moscow. Kiev responded by launching a military offensive to win back the separatist region. — AFP



UKRAINE: This file photo shows pro-Russian rebels stationed in the eastern Ukrainian city of Gorlivka, Donetsk region, launching rockets from Grad launch vehicles.—AFP

They speak Russian like those around them and think of the fighting that invaded their lives three years ago yesterday as a permanent conflict that may splinter their homeland for good. "It will be hard for us to be one with

grief and pain from the first page to the last. One of the bloodiest conflicts in Europe since the 1990s Balkans wars has killed more than 10,000 people and driven at least two million from their homes. Irina fills in the details of those



PARIS: A worker removes graffiti outside French far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen's campaign headquarters, yesterday in Paris.—AP

ARSON BID HITS CAMPAIGN HQ OF FRANCE'S LE PEN

PARIS: A building housing French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen's campaign headquarters was hit by a arson attempt yesterday, firefighters and police said, with only minor damage caused. Firefighters were called around 2.40 am (0040 GMT) to the ground floor offices of an insurance company on the upmarket Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honore in central Paris. A fire service spokesman said the fire was "quickly brought under control" and damaged only the door and a doormat.

The upper floors of the building, on one of the French capital's most exclusive streets close to the president's Elysee Palace official residence, house the campaign offices of far-right National Front (FN) leader Le Pen. The anti-globalization, anti-EU Le Pen is neck-and-neck with centrist Emmanuel Macron in polls for the first round of the election on April 23.

A police source said the cause of the fire was "not natural and probably criminal", adding that the graffiti slogan "FN vs KLX" was found nearby. A group calling itself "Fight Xenophobia" contacted AFP to claim the attack, which it said was carried out with "Molotov cocktails". The caller, who refused to give a name, also claimed to have carried out a similar attack on a far-right newspaper and said the action would continue until the election.—AFP

DORTMUND STRUGGLES TO COME TO TERMS WITH BOMB ATTACK ON BUS

MUNICH: Sometimes, it's hard to focus on a soccer game. Borussia Dortmund players had to, though, less than 24 hours after a bomb attack on their team bus. And they will have to do so again on Saturday, when Eintracht Frankfurt visits in the Bundesliga. Dortmund midfielder Nuri Sahin made it clear that his thoughts were far from the field in the rescheduled Champions League quarterfinal match against Monaco on Wednesday - a game Dortmund lost 3-2 after an uncharacteristically hesitant start.

"Until I was on the pitch in the second half, I didn't think about football, to be honest. Because last night I didn't realize what happened, and when I was at home and my wife and my son were waiting in front of the door, there I felt how lucky we were," the visibly shaken Sahin told former Norway international Jan Aage Fjortoft, now a journalist. "I know football is very important. We love football. We suffer with football. We love football. I know we earn a lot of money, we have a privileged life, but we are human beings. There's so much more than football in this world. Last night we felt it."

Dortmund defender Marc Bartra was hit by shrapnel as three explosions hit the bus. The Spaniard was taken to the hospital and had surgery on a broken bone in his wrist. A spokeswoman for federal prosecutors, Frauke Koehler, said metal from one of the

bombs lodged in a headrest. It could easily have been a lot worse. "I can't forget the faces," Sahin said of his teammates, who ducked for cover when the explosions hit. "I will never forget these faces in my life for sure. Oh yeah, when I saw Marc there and I saw Schmelle (Marcel Schmelzer), I sat next to Schmelle and I will never forget Schmelle's face. It was unbelievable."

Schmelzer also highlighted the impact of the attack on his side. "We have to function like puppets," the Dortmund captain said. "You read the whole time of an attack on our bus. But you shouldn't forget there were 30 people sitting in it, so it's an attack on us as people. It makes us incredibly sad but also incredibly fortunate to be standing here today, especially when you hear the details that are coming out (from the investigation). We're just incredibly lucky no one else besides Marc was seriously injured."

Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel was stinging in his criticism of UEFA for going ahead with the Champions League game so soon after the attack. "We had the feeling that we were being treated as if a beer can had hit our bus," said Tuchel, who claimed he wasn't asked about whether to proceed with the game. But Dortmund chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke said Tuesday that a congested calendar meant there was little option for postponing the game further.



GERMANY: In this file photo police officers stand in front of Dortmund's damaged team bus after explosions which injured two people before the Champions League quarterfinal soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and AS Monaco in Dortmund, western Germany.—AP

UEFA spokesman Pedro Pinto said the governing body was in touch with all parties. Tuchel may have been trying to protect his players but it's clear that the attack had an effect on his side. "Most players hardly slept,

myself included," Dortmund midfielder Julian Weigl said. "I tried to come to terms with it with my family, tried to wind down and switch off. In the end in the game we made the best we could of it."—AP

TRUMP BOASTS OF HIRING ONLY THE BEST, BUT PICKS HAUNT HIM

'EVERY EMPLOYEE IS A POTENTIAL LIABILITY ON A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN'

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump likes to boast that he hires only the best people. But his personnel choices keep coming back to haunt him. One of the people Trump hired for the White House was working as a foreign agent while advising him during the election. His campaign chairman caught the Justice Department's attention for similarly surreptitious work. And a third campaign adviser was reportedly under surveillance by the FBI as part of an investigation into whether or not he was a Russian spy.

The tales of Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort and Carter Page - none of whom still work for Trump - have created a steady drip of allegations that have clouded Trump's early presidency and raised persistent questions about his judgment. At worst, Trump's personnel picks appear to have left his campaign - and perhaps his White House - vulnerable to the influence of foreign powers. At best, they expose the long-term implications of his understaffed and inexperienced campaign organization and undermine his promises to surround himself with top-notch talent.

"Vetting new hires is standard procedure for presidential campaigns for exactly this reason," said Alex Conant, who advised Sen. Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign. "Every employee is also a potential liability on a presidential campaign." During the campaign, Trump said he hired "top, top people" and would fill his administration "with only the best and most serious people." Yet Manafort, Flynn and Page have indeed become political liabilities for Trump that he can't shake in the White House.

All three are being scrutinized as part of the FBI and congressional inves-

tigations into whether Trump associates helped Russia meddle in the 2016 election. The president has denied any nefarious ties to Russia and says he has no knowledge that his advisers were working with Moscow during the election. The president's culpability appears greatest with Flynn, a retired US Army lieutenant general who traveled with Trump frequently during the campaign and was tapped as national security adviser after the election.

Foreign lobbying

Flynn had been lobbying for a company with ties to Turkey during the 2016 election and even wrote an editorial on behalf of his client that was published on Election Day. "No one expects them to do the equivalent of an FBI background check, but a simple Google search could have solved a lot of these problems," Dan Pfeiffer, who served as senior adviser to President Barack Obama, said of Trump's team. After Trump's victory, Flynn's lawyers alerted the transition team that he may have to register as a lobbying for a foreign entity, according to a person with knowledge of those discussions.

The White House hired him anyway. After the inauguration, Flynn's lawyers told the White House counsel's office that the national security adviser would indeed have to move forward with that filing. Flynn was fired in February after the White House said he misled Vice President Mike Pence and other top officials about his conversations with Russia's ambassador to the United States. Lobbying for foreign interests is legal and lucrative. Both Republican and Democratic operatives offer their services to overseas clients.

But the Justice Department requires Americans working on behalf of foreign

interests to register, disclosing the nature of their work, the foreigners they dealt with and the amount of money they made. Willful failure to register for foreign lobbying work can carry up to a five-year prison sentence, but the Justice Department rarely brings criminal charges and instead urges violators to register. On Wednesday, a spokesman for former Trump campaign chairman Manafort said that he, too, under pressure from the Justice Department, would formally file for prior foreign lobbying.

Unpaid advisers

Manafort's work for political interests in Ukraine occurred before he was hired as Trump's campaign chairman, spokesman Jason Maloni said, though the US government raised questions about his activities after he was hired by Trump. Manafort was pushed out of Trump's campaign in August after The Associated Press reported that his consulting firm had orchestrated a covert Washington lobbying operation on behalf of Ukraine's ruling political party without disclosing that work to the US government.

The White House did not respond to questions Wednesday about when Trump learned about Manafort's foreign lobbying work and his discussions with the US government about registering as a foreign agent. The questions surrounding Page are perhaps the most serious. On Tuesday, The Washington Post reported that the Justice Department obtained a highly secretive warrant to monitor his communications because there was reason to believe he was working as a Russian spy. In March, Trump personally announced Page as part of a newly minted foreign policy advisory team.

But as questions began swirling about Page's ties to Russia, the campaign started moving away from the little-known investment banker. Trump has since said he has no relationship with him. The New York Times reported Wednesday that the Justice Department only obtained the warrant after the campaign distanced itself from Page. In an interview yesterday with ABC's "Good Morning America," Page described his affiliation with the Trump campaign as having served as "an informal member of a committee which was put together - a team of individuals who were looking at various foreign policy issues."

Chris Ashby, a Republican elections lawyer, said that while it's easy to blame Trump for missing red flags about his campaign advisers, it's not always possible to dig up details that potential hires aren't willing to disclose on their own. "In the ideal world, you could rely on paid background checks, but you'd have to have the money and the time," Ashby said. "The farther down the ranks you go and certainly when you reach the ranks of unpaid advisers, that becomes impractical." —AP



MEXICO: Mexican journalist Noe Zavaleta gestures during an interview with AFP in Xalapa, Veracruz state, Mexico. —AFP

MEXICO REPORTERS DEFY THREATS TO KEEP WRITING

XALAPA, Mexico: Mexican reporter Noe Zavaleta has mourned murdered colleagues and received death threats himself, but he refuses to stop working despite the fear. His is the deadliest country for journalists outside of war zones-but with all the corruption and violence, there is just too much news for him to quit. "I have had to bury colleagues and see other companions leave the country. But you still panic when it happens to you," he says, in his home town of Xalapa in the eastern state of Veracruz.

Like hundreds of other journalists in Mexico, the 36-year-old has been threatened for writing about organized crime. But he keeps cranking out the stories for investigative magazine Proceso: about links between politicians and organized crime, corruption, disappearances and mass graves. "You're constantly discovering more subjects, more injustices, more material."

Bodyguards, panic button

Zavaleta knew what he was getting into when he joined the magazine in 2012 to replace a journalist who had been murdered. His predecessor in the post, Regina Martinez, had reported on corruption and abuses by Veracruz state authorities. Her killing has never been solved. Zavaleta also worked with the photographer Ruben Espinosa, who fled Veracruz after receiving threats from authorities. He was murdered in Mexico City in 2015.

Zavaleta received threats last year for a report about an ex-governor accused of corruption. He saw unknown men stalking around his office, his home and that of his girlfriend. "You panic. You don't know what to do," he says. He fled to the capital and reported the intimidation to the federal authorities. They provided him with two bodyguards who stayed by his side for half the year.

He still carries a panic button to alert authorities if he is in danger. "I am still working," Zavaleta says with a smile. "If I suffer more intimidation and if I have to get out again and make it public, then that is what I will do."

Journalists murdered

International media rights group Reporters without Borders ranks Mexico as the third most deadly country in the world, behind Syria and Afghanistan. Mexico has seen 102 journalists murdered since 2000 — 20 of them in Veracruz. March was a particularly brutal month. Three reporters were murdered and a fourth hospitalized after being shot, authorities said. One regional newspaper shut down for a lack of security. In 2016 in Mexico, 400 journalists were attacked and 11 killed, according to rights group Artículo 19.

Cost of protection

Not all journalists get bodyguards because the authorities' budgets do not always allow it, Zavaleta says-and even the protectors are at risk. One of his former bodyguards was shot dead in late March while protecting another journalist. "They were always complaining that they needed bullet-proof vests and a better vehicle," he says. "That didn't get authorized the whole six months they were with me, because there wasn't the budget for it." —AFP

FOUR BODIES FOUND IN NEW YORK PARK NEAR AREA OF GANG VIOLENCE

CENTRAL ISLIP: The bodies of four men, all described as having suffered "significant trauma," were discovered in a park in a suburban New York neighborhood that has for years contended with a growing problem of gang violence. The victims, who were not immediately identified, were found in a wooded area near a recreation center in Central Islip, east of New York City. Justin Meyers, assistant to the Suffolk County police commissioner, said Thursday that the killings all appeared to be "recent homicides."

The discovery of the bodies comes about a month after the arrest of eight MS-13 gang members in connection with the September killings of two teenage girls in nearby Brentwood. Meyers declined to comment on whether the killings of the four men were gang-related. Gang violence has been a problem in Central Islip, Brentwood and other

Long Island communities for more than a decade, but Suffolk County police and the FBI began pouring resources into a crackdown after the killings of the girls, along with two other Brentwood High School students involved in separate killings, sparked outrage.

Prosecutors said Kayla Cuevas, 16, was targeted last summer by a group of four gang members, including two juveniles, because she had been feuding with MS-13 members at school and on social media. The posse, which had been roving in a car looking for gang enemies, attacked when they came across her walking with Nisa Mickens, 15, in the street. The inseparable best friends were attacked with a machete and baseball bats, officials said. Nisa "was simply at the wrong place at the wrong time, hanging out with her childhood friend," former US Attorney Robert Capers said in announcing the arrests. —AP

MEET MUMBAI'S FIRST FEMALE AUTO DRIVERS

MUMBAI: Chaya Mohite slowly turns the accelerator as she carefully edges the salmon-colored rickshaw forward, one of Mumbai's first female auto drivers to make use of a government scheme aimed at empowering women. The 45-year-old was one of 19 women who recently started jobs ferrying passengers through the notoriously congested streets of India's financial capital in their new three-wheelers.

"This job is much better than doing household work. I can make more money and it helps us secure our futures," Mohite said as she got in some last minute practice. The mother of three has spent the past two months learning how to drive at a training centre in Mumbai's eastern suburbs and is thrilled with her new skills and financial prospects. "I couldn't even ride a bicycle but today I can drive an auto rickshaw. I'm independent and it makes me happy," says Mohite, who hopes to earn 1,000 rupees (\$15) a day.

She is benefitting from a scheme

introduced by the state government of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital that reserves five percent of rickshaw permits for women. It announced the plan in early 2016, saying that 465 licenses would be made available for women in Mumbai and the neighboring district of Thane. Unlike similar schemes in New Delhi and Ranchi, where some pink autos are driven by women for women as a safety initiative, the Maharashtra drivers take both male and female passengers.

Ready to drive anywhere

Services started in Thane last year but Mohite and her new colleagues, who will sport white lab-coat-like uniforms, are the first to ply the streets of India's most populated metropolis. "I've taught them the A to Z of auto-rickshaw driving. They are now experts and have passed an official RTO (Regional Transport Office) test," Sudhir Dhoipode, the women's instructor, said. Dhoipode says he is currently teaching more than



MUMBAI, India: This photo shows an Indian woman rickshaw driver taking part in a training session in Mumbai. — AFP

40 women how to drive while around 500 others have expressed an interest in learning despite some community opposition in the conservative country. "People mocked us for leaving our

homes and choosing to drive rickshaws but we hope we can inspire other women to come forward and take advantage of this great initiative," said driver Anita Kardak. —AFP



GOA, India: This file photo shows western tourists walking past a shopping stall at Anjuna Beach in the Indian state of Goa. — AFP

INDIA'S PARTY MECCA GOA BANS LATE NIGHT RAVES IN CRACKDOWN

LEGAL BAN ON HOLDING PARTIES AFTER 10 PM

NEW DELHI: India's tourist Mecca Goa is pulling the plug on its legendary all-night dance parties as the local government tries to clean up its image as a drug and rave hotspot. Goa chief minister Manohar Parrikar said the government would start enforcing a long-ignored ban on loud music after 10 pm-bad news for bars and clubs blasting out tunes into the early hours on the state's famous beaches. "There is a legal ban on holding parties after 10 pm. The ban will be upheld by the state government," he told reporters Wednesday.

The former Portuguese enclave lures millions of tourists every year with its night life, sandy beaches and laid-back coastal atmosphere. But its reputation as a tropical paradise has been marred by high-profile crimes involving foreigners. Last month the naked body of a 28-year-old Irish woman was found dumped

near a tourist hotspot. She had been spotted at a late night party with a local man who was later arrested for her rape and murder.

In 2008, 15-year-old British schoolgirl Scarlett Keeling was drugged, raped and murdered in a case that made global headlines. Her semi-naked body was found in shallow waters near a popular party beach. Other foreigners have also died in suspicious circumstances, while drug and alcohol-related mishaps are common. The Goa crackdown comes days after a top minister from Parrikar's administration called for the late-night party ban to be enforced. "These parties are against our culture. We need to stop them immediately," Goa's water resources minister Vinod Palyekar said last week. Parrikar said his government had also instructed police to commence a crackdown on drugs, prostitution and illegal gambling in the state. —AFP

NEW ZEALAND BATTENS DOWN AS BIG STORM APPROACHES

WELLINGTON: New Zealand was bracing yesterday for a storm that meteorologists warned could be the worst for almost 50 years, with extreme weather alerts across the entire North Island. The tropical depression, the tail-end of ex-Cyclone Cook which hit New Caledonia this week, has already generated offshore winds of more than 170 kmh. The official MetService said it was expected to make landfall overnight yesterday, generating five meter swells, torrential rain and gale force winds.

It warned the storm could be the most intense since ex-Cyclone Giselle in 1968, which swept a ferry onto rocks in Wellington Harbor, killing 53 people. Cyclone Cook on Monday dumped heavy rain on New Caledonia, where four people were hurt when a tree fell on their car and power supplies were disrupted. Damage, however, was limited. New Zealand emergency services pre-emptively evacuated some small coastal communities in the country's north, and the military was assisting relief efforts.

"This is a very significant event and is likely to produce widespread flooding, (land) slips and wind damage, including to power lines, and may even lift roofs and bring down large trees," MetService said. Many areas of the North Island are already sodden after the remnants of Australia's Cyclone Debbie swept over last week and caused extensive flooding. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the storm is bearing down as New Zealand prepares for the Easter long weekend, meaning roads are likely to be choked with holiday-makers.

The New Zealand Transport Agency urged motorists to stay off the roads if possible, saying conditions would be hazardous. Air New Zealand cancelled all flights from Rotorua, Napier, Hamilton and Tauranga in the North Island, and said it expected disruptions at Nelson and Blenheim in the South Island. The storm system is set to hit the Coromandel and Bay of Plenty regions of the North Island on yesterday night, before tracking south to Wellington early today. —AFP

22 DEAD IN BLAZE AT SENEGAL RELIGIOUS RETREAT

DAKAR: A fire ripped through makeshift shelters at a Muslim religious retreat in Senegal, killing at least 22 people and triggering a stampede, firefighters said yesterday. The blaze broke out on Wednesday afternoon as worshippers gathered in the town of Medina Gounass in the southeastern region of Tambacounda, a senior official with the firefighting service said. The cause was as yet unknown, the official said.

Images of billowing clouds of smoke, the charred corpses of animals and devastation at the

site circulated online, testifying to the fire's impact. While some victims were badly burnt, others were hurt in the panicked stampede triggered by the blaze, the firefighter added. Around 20 of the injured are in a serious state and are being treated at the regional hospital in Tambacounda city, around 80 kilometers away.

The fire ripped through straw shelters constructed for the multi-day event, according to Senegal's local press, allowing it spread rapidly through an open-air gathering packed with people. Senegalese

Muslims gather in their hundreds, even thousands, to worship at the site every year, and pilgrims were weighed down with food and luggage, the local press reported.

A similar incident at the same site in 2010 caused the deaths of six people and several injuries, Le Quotidien newspaper reported yesterday. Senegal's poor record on fire safety was also thrown into the spotlight in 2013 when a fire in a Koranic school killed nine children, triggering an outcry and calls for tighter regulation. —AFP

SOLD INTO SLAVERY: INDIA'S LOST GENERATION OF MISSING CHILDREN

NEW DELHI: It was a balmy August afternoon last year when 11-year-old Piyush Sharma disappeared while playing outside his home in the small east Indian town of Hatia. The skinny little boy, with big brown eyes and an infectious smile, had just returned from school and told his mother he wanted to play outside before lunch. When she called for him 15 minutes later he was gone. "It's been nine months since I saw him. He was still wearing his school uniform - a pink shirt and blue shorts. Someone must have taken him. He always played nearby," said Pinki Sharma, 35, Piyush's mother, by phone from Hatia in Jharkhand state.

"My husband has travelled to many places looking for him, but no one knows anything. But I will look for him until I die." Piyush is one of about 250,000 children registered as missing on the government's Track Child portal between January 2012 to March 2017 - that's five children vanishing every hour. But campaigners say these figures are just the tip of the iceberg, as many cases are not registered by parents or the police, and the children dismissed as runaways.

Most, however, are sold into slavery in a country where poverty prevails and child labor is normalized, despite being banned. The Track Child data also shows nearly 73,000 children - 30 percent - are still missing despite a raft of initiatives to better protect and find these children. A lack of training of police, child welfare and protection officials, poor coordination between agencies in different states, coupled with massive public apathy is hampering the battle to locate India's "lost generation", say campaigners.

Poverty-stricken, then enslaved

Missing children are so common in India that notices printed in classified sections of India's daily newspapers are buried alongside tender notices and job vacancies, with blurred black and white photos alongside a description and a contact number. Pintu, 10, last seen at a Delhi railway station wearing a red sweater and black trousers. Shiwani, 16, who vanished outside her home in southern Delhi, dressed in blue jeans. Pooja, 13, in white salwar kameez, last seen in a Delhi market.

Each notice ends in the same way: Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this missing girl/boy, but no clue has come to light so far. Campaigners say some of these children are abused runaways. Others are abducted. Some come from poor families duped by traffickers with the promise of a good job. Some are girls in love - lured by boyfriends who sell them into prostitution.

Rishi Kant from Shakti Vahini, a Delhi-based anti-trafficking charity, says up to 70 percent of the missing children found are victims of trafficking and slavery. "Most are trafficked by organised gangs who know the system. They know how to lure, transport and sell them on to employers," said Kant, who is involved in rescuing trafficking victims. "As a result, they end up locked in brothels, wealthy homes and small workshops - making it hard to detect them or for them to escape."

India has one of largest populations of children in the world, with more than 40 percent of its 1.2 billion people below the age of 18, according to its 2011 Census. An economic boom of the last two decades has lifted millions out of poverty yet many children continue to be born into dire circumstances with India home to over 30 percent of the world's 385 million most impoverished children, according to a 2016 World Bank and UNICEF report. They make easy prey for traffickers, fed promises of a job and a better life but often ending up in forced labor. While some children manage to escape or are rescued in police raids after tip-offs from activists or local residents, others are not so fortunate, trapped for years. —Reuters



DHAKA: In this file photo, Mufti Abdul Hannan, center, leader of banned radical group Harkatul Jihad al Islami, stands at a court in Dhaka, Bangladesh. — AP

BANGLADESH BURIES ISLAMIST EXTREMISTS AFTER HANGING

DHAKA: Bangladeshi villagers buried the leader of a banned Islamist extremist outfit and two of his aides early yesterday, hours after they were hanged for a 2004 grenade attack on the British ambassador. The explosion at a 14th century Sufi shrine in the northeastern city of Sylhet killed three people and injured the British high commissioner. Mufti Abdul Hannan, the head of Harkatul Jihad Al Islami and his two HuJI associates were sentenced to death in 2008 over the carnage, with Bangladesh's highest court upholding the sentences last month.

HuJI was the first Islamist militant outfit to emerge in Bangladesh, and rose to prominence as Hannan escalated its deadly operations. All three sought clemency from the Bangladesh president in a last-ditch attempt to commute the execution orders to life sentences, but he rejected their pleas. Authorities hanged Hannan and one of his aides Sharif Shahedul Islam at a high security prison outside Dhaka at 10pm (1600 GMT) on Wednesday.

Another associate, Delwar Hossain, was executed at a jail in Sylhet. Their bodies were then taken back to their villages, where they were buried amid tight security, police said. "Hannan was buried in his village at around 5.45am after a funeral prayer attended by 15-20 of his relatives," local police chief Kamrul Faruq said. "We've stepped up security to prevent any violence," he said, adding the funeral passed off peacefully.

Hated figure

He said Hannan was a "hated figure" even in his village due to his roles in a series of deadly blasts and two attempts on the life of then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, who also comes from the same district. Hannan, 60, was a madrasa teacher who studied in India and Pakistan and fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan before returning to join HuJI. Prosecutors said Hannan had headed HuJI since the late 1990s, masterminding deadly attacks on a church, secular gatherings, and

mosques used by Islam's minority sects. In August 2004, in one of the country's deadliest extremist attacks, he masterminded the blasts at a political rally of Sheikh Hasina, now prime minister, outside her party office in central Dhaka. Hasina narrowly survived what she said was an assassination attempt. At least 22 people were killed. By the time Hannan was arrested in late 2005, more than 100 people had been killed in attacks he orchestrated across the Muslim-majority nation.

Tensions in the moderate Muslim country have been running high in recent weeks following a resurgence of extremist attacks, at least three of which have been claimed by the Islamic State group. Al-Qaeda and the IS have claimed dozens of attacks in recent years, but Hasina's secular government insists local groups are to blame. Police have arrested scores of suspected extremists and killed more than 60 people since an attack on a Dhaka cafe last year in which 22 people were killed, many of them foreign hostages. —AFP



PYONGYANG: Korean People's Army (KPA) soldiers walk before the portraits of late North Korean leaders Kim Il-Sung, left, and Kim Jong-Il, right, following the opening ceremony for the Ryomyong Street housing development in Pyongyang yesterday.—AFP

KIM ASSASSINATION SUSPECTS AT THE RISK OF BEING AMBUSHED

KUALA LUMPUR: Two women accused of assassinating the half-brother of North Korea's leader risk being subjected to a "trial by ambush", a defense lawyer said yesterday, accusing the police of failing to share key evidence. Indonesian Siti Aisyah, 25, and Doan Thi Huong, 28, from Vietnam, were taken in bulletproof vests to a heavily guarded magistrate's court for a hearing ahead of a murder trial that could see them hanged.

Police accuse the pair of wiping the banned nerve agent VX on Kim Jong-Nam's face at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on February 13 as he was about to board a flight to Macau, where he was living in exile. Rival South Korea accuses the North of masterminding the killing of Kim, the estranged half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un. Pyongyang denies the accusation, insisting he died of a heart attack.

Siti's lawyer told the court they had not been provided with a report from the police and prosecution on statements taken from three North Koreans who were allowed to leave Malaysia under a deal that defused a diplomatic crisis between the two nations. "The duty of the investigation officer is not to merely bolster up the case for the prosecution so as to secure a conviction but to establish the unvarnished truth of the case so that the justice may prevail," Gooi Soon Seng said.

Gooi also sought the court's intervention in making any CCTV footage in relation to the murder available to the defense to ensure both sides have equal access to evidence. "There shall be no trial by ambush," he said. Doan's lawyer asked the court to alter the murder charge since prosecutors have not identified four people mentioned in charge documents as accomplices to the women, but the judge did not entertain the request.

'She was cheated'

About 100 police officers include commandos in balaclavas and carrying assault rifles, guarded the court compound during the women's appearance. Dressed in a red top and blue jeans, Siti kept her head down throughout the hearing. Doan, also casually dressed, quietly observed the court proceedings. The case is due to be transferred to an upper court where the women will be tried for murder. If convicted, they could face the death penalty, which is carried out by hanging in Malaysia.

The killing sparked a diplomatic row between Malaysia and North Korea which saw both countries banning each other's citizens from leaving and withdrawing their ambassadors. The travel ban was lifted in late March after a deal was struck involving the return of Kim's body to North Korea. Police are still looking for four North Korean men who are suspected to have taken part in the murder plot, but are believed to have returned to Pyongyang.

Three other North Koreans earlier described as "persons of interest", including a diplomat based in Malaysia, were allowed to return home under the deal. Indonesian officials have maintained that Siti was duped into believing she was taking part in pranks for a TV show, while Doan's family said she was invited to Malaysia to be an actress. Tran Huy Hoang, a young Vietnamese man who attended the hearing and described himself as a cousin of Doan, said: "She loves to travel and party but she never do anything violent. "All of us believe she was cheated."—AFP



SEPAANG: Malaysian policemen keep watch during the court appearance of Indonesian national Siti Aisyah and Vietnamese national Doan Thi Huong at the magistrates' court in Sepang yesterday.—AFP

JAPAN PM: NORTH KOREA MAY BE CAPABLE OF SARIN-LOADED MISSILES

CONCERN MOUNTS OVER IMMINENT NUCLEAR TEST

TOKYO: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe warned yesterday that North Korea may be capable of firing a missile loaded with sarin nerve gas toward Japan, as international concern mounted that a missile or nuclear test by the authoritarian state could be imminent. "There is a possibility that North Korea is already capable of shooting missiles with sarin as warheads," Abe told a parliamentary panel on national security and diplomacy. Abe was responding to a question about Japan's readiness at a time of increased regional tension.

A US navy aircraft carrier is heading toward the Korean Peninsula as Pyongyang prepares for the 105th anniversary of the birth of its founder Kim Il Sung this weekend. Citing Syria

where dozens of people died recently in an alleged sarin nerve gas attack, Abe said Japan should take the example seriously, stressing the need to strengthen its deterrence against the North.

North Korea, which is not a signatory to the international Chemical Weapons Convention, has been producing chemical weapons since the 1980s and is now estimated to have as many as 5,000 tons, according to a South Korean defense white paper. Its stockpile reportedly has 25 types of agents, including sarin.

Experts say if North Korea were to attack South Korea, it would likely target Seoul's defenses with chemical and biological weapons dropped from aircraft or delivered via missiles,

artillery and grenades. Japan, under its postwar constitution, has limited the role of its military to self-defense only and relied on the US for offensive and nuclear capability. But recently, Abe's ruling party has proposed that Japan should bolster its missile defense, including upgrading the capability to shoot down an enemy missile and acquiring the capacity to attack the base it was fired from.

With President Donald Trump's administration not ruling out a military option to dealing with North Korea, "tension is certainly rising," Abe said Wednesday to a group of lawmakers from his ruling party who sought increased safety measures for Japanese nationals in case of an emergency.—AFP

JAPAN SCRAMBLES RECORD NUMBER OF MILITARY JETS

TOKYO: Japan's military scrambled a record number of jets last year mostly in response to an increase in approaching Chinese aircraft, the government said yesterday. Tokyo ordered its jets to the skies 1,168 times in the fiscal year through March, the defense ministry said, with 73 percent of the missions against aircraft either known to be or believed to originate from China.

"Activities of Chinese jets are on the rise in terms of their frequency, area, and duration," said Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano, head of Japan's Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Considering the modernizing trend of the Chinese military, we expect this to continue," he told a press conference. The total number of scrambles marked an increase of 295 from the year

before, the ministry said, noting that none of the cases resulted in violations of Japan's airspace.

Japan and China are at odds over a set of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea that sit in rich fishing grounds. The islands, known as the Senkakus in Japan and the Diaoyus in China, are a running sore in Tokyo's relations with Beijing. Japan has administrative control of the islets but China claims they have been part of its territory for centuries. The two countries have clashed diplomatically over their ownership, with both sides sending ships and aircraft to nearby waters to assert their claims. Japanese officials believe China has been trying to analyze the capacity and response patterns of Japan's defense and coastguard personnel.—AFP

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Arab music's alternative ambassadors find fans, and bans

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Hamed Sinno (right), the lead singer of Lebanese band Mashrou Leila, performs on stage at the Dubai International Marine Club during a music festival in the United Arab Emirates. —AFP





Hamed Sinno (center), the lead singer of Lebanese band Mashrou Leila, performs on stage at the Dubai International Marine Club during a music festival in the United Arab Emirates. — AFP photos



Avo Demerjian, bassist and back-up vocalist of Jordanian band Autostrad, performs on stage at the Dubai International Marine Club.

Arab music's alternative ambassadors find fans, and bans



Iraqi-Canadian hip-hop artist Yassin Alsalman, known by his stage name Nancy, performs the chobi, an Iraqi folk dance, to his Arabic and hip-hop beats on stage.



Hamed Sinno, the lead singer of Lebanese band Mashrou Leila, performs on stage.

Their voices narrate the unofficial soundtrack of life as an Arab today. But for the artists leading the Arab world's alternative music scene, their work is not revolutionary—it's a legacy. With the growing popularity of bands like Lebanon's Mashrou' Leila and Jordan's Autostrad, hip-hop artists like Iraqi-Canadian Nancy and Palestinian Muqata3a and solo acts like Yasmine Hamdan, Arab artists not traditionally considered mainstream are increasingly gaining recognition both at home and across the globe. Building on a rich musical history, their fusions reflect experiences in situ and in the diaspora, blending traditional beats and maqams, or modes, with rock, reggae, funk, electropop and hip-hop.

Indie outfit Mashrou' Leila, arguably Beirut's most famous contemporary musical export, sold out at both London's Barbican and The Hamilton in Washington DC after the release of their last album, "Ibn El Leil," in 2015. Multimedia artist Nancy this month landed a Juno, the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy, for directing an equally gripping and entertaining music video for the 2016 hip-hop track "R.E.D.," which spins a complex tale of race, war and migration in under five minutes. But hard-won recognition and rampant misrepresentation are far from mutually exclusive.

"Arab culture is under attack. It's fetishised in the West and all over the world. It's either evil or it's sexy, right?" says Yassin "Narcy" Alsalman, one of the leading voices of Arab hip-hop. "At least while they're killing our children, we try to continue the legacy that our parents put in us," Nancy, formerly known as The Narcycist, adds

shortly after a high-octane gig in Dubai. "If we're alive we might as well do that while we're here, you know?"

'Heart-to-heart'

With their blend of traditional garb and trainers, of maqams and messages, artists not conventionally considered mainstream have reinvigorated the Arab world's music scene. For Avo Demerjian, vocalist and bassist with breakout Jordanian act Autostrad, "it's not a renaissance so much as a return". "It's a heart-to-heart between musicians and the people," Demerjian says of the Arabic reggae funk band's success. "I think this is the moment when music is coming back to our part of the world, when we can stand on our own feet and say what we ourselves have to say, through music."

Autostrad, Nancy and Mashrou' Leila headlined the April 7 closing night of Dubai's STEP 2017 conference, an annual technology, digital and entertainment festival. Overlooking the water of the man-made Dubai Marina canal, festival-goers mingled and cheered as a string of mainly Arab, and mainly male, musicians took the stage. Massively popular Mashrou' Leila sang against a backdrop of animated footage, including a segment that appeared to take the audience through a pink-lit underground sex club. But the most high-energy gig was Nancy's. In a traditional aabaya and his trademark wire-rimmed glasses, the rapper was joined onstage by fans doing the chobi, an Iraqi folk dance, to his Arabic and hip-hop beats.

"The currency is murder/you a man of worth," he rapped in "R.E.D.," a collaboration

with Native Canadian DJ collective A Tribe Called Red. His award-winning music video played on a giant screen behind him, featuring African-American hip-hop artist Yasiin Bey (also known as Mos Def) and drum group Black Bear, who hail from the Atikamekw community of the Manawan First Nation in Quebec. Nancy's final track, "Free", was dedicated to refugees around the world.

'Wave of misrepresentation'

While fans went wild for the politics of "R.E.D." at STEP, the messages behind much of today's Arab indie music are far from universally welcome. Within the Arab world, backlash over gender politics and sexual orientation is not unheard of. And abroad, the threat of anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia remain all too real. "We are still in a very precarious place as a people," says Nancy, whose latest track "Fake News" addresses US President Donald Trump's travel ban against a string of majority-Muslim countries. "We are countering yet another wave of misrepresentation which is more dangerous, more protracted, more violent ... We have a lot of work to do, but we are on our way."

With their openly gay frontman and lyrics that both bait authorities and champion love in all its forms, Mashrou' Leila have faced bans of their own at home. "Our problems tend to be playing in the Middle East, rather than playing in the West" says guitarist Firas Abou-Fakher. The group was banned from performing in the Jordanian capital last year over "the themes that we're talking about and for representing the kind of people or communities we like to be



Hamed Sinno (right), the lead singer of Lebanese band Mashrou Leila, performs on stage.

associated with," Abou-Fakher explains. He pauses briefly, then adds: "I guess it's sometimes a bit intimidating for governments."

And it's not just governments displeased by the band, who sing exclusively in Arabic on all of their albums. "A big record company wanted to change our lyrics before they worked with us," drummer Carl Gerages told AFP. "That's one of the main reasons we didn't sign. That's not an option for us." — AFP

Kidman, Huppert to grace 70th Cannes filmfest

Cannes: Films in the running in 2017

From the tale of a mysterious giant beast to a family drama set against the European migrant crisis, here are the movies appearing in the main competition at next month's Cannes film festival:

'The Beguiled'

Among the titles causing the most buzz at Cannes this year is Sofia Coppola's American Civil War thriller, a remake of the 1971 version starring Clint Eastwood, featuring Colin Farrell as a wounded soldier who seduces the women around him, including Nicole Kidman and Kirsten Dunst.

'Okja' and 'The Meyerowitz Stories'

Netflix is premiering two movies at Cannes for the first time as the streaming giant makes increasing inroads to Hollywood alongside its rival Amazon. "Okja", starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Tilda Swinton, tells the tale of a girl who risks everything to protect a shy giant animal. Adam Sandler, Ben Stiller, Emma Thompson and Dustin Hoffman meanwhile star in "The Meyerowitz Stories", a comedy about siblings dealing with an ageing father.

'Wonderstruck' and 'You Were Never Really Here'

Two Amazon-backed movies have also made the cut for the main competition. Julianne Moore and Michelle Williams star in "Wonderstruck", the story of two deaf children living parallel lives in the 1920s and 1970s. "You Were Never Really Here", the latest feature by "We Need To Talk About Kevin" director Lynne Ramsay, stars Joaquin Phoenix as a war veteran who tries to save a sex-trafficking victim.

'Good Time'

"Twilight" heartthrob Robert Pattinson stars in this crime flick by indie director brothers Benny and Josh Safdie, about a bank robber struggling to evade the police.

'Happy End'

Fresh from winning a string of accolades for "Elle", Isabelle Huppert is back in Michael Haneke's new family drama, set in northern France against the backdrop of the European migrant crisis.

'The Killing of a Sacred Deer'

For the second time at this year's Cannes, Nicole Kidman and Colin Farrell team up for the tale of a boy attempting to bring a talented surgeon into his family, with disastrous consequences.

'Le Redoutable' and 'Rodin'

Two French biopics have made it into the main competition. "Rodin" stars Jacques Doillon as the famed sculptor. "Redoutable" (Redoubtable), about legendary movie director Jean-Luc Godard, is the latest offering from Michel Hazanavicius, the man behind five-times Oscar winner "The Artist".

'Les Fantomes de Ismael' (Ismael's Ghosts) - This drama about a filmmaker disturbed by the return of a former lover features A-list French talent in the form of Marion Cotillard, Charlotte Gainsbourg and Mathieu Amalric.

'In The Fade'

Fatih Akin presents a story of revenge in Germany's Turkish community.

'L'Amant Double' (The Double Lover)

French director Francois Ozon's thriller follows a young woman who falls in love with her therapist before realising he's not who she thought he was.

'120 battements par minute'

A film by French-Moroccan director Robin Campillo following the work of an AIDS charity in Paris in the 1990s.

'Radiance'

The latest film by Japan's Naomi Kawase follows a photographer whose eyesight is failing.

'The Day After'

South Korean director Hong Sang-Soo will be bringing two films to Cannes-his new feature "The Day After", and for a special screening, "Claire's Camera" featuring Isabelle Huppert, which was shot partly during last year's festival.

'Jupiter's Moon'

The latest offering from Hungarian director Kornel Mundruczo, whose movie "White God" won the Cannes newcomers' prize in 2014. — AFP

Nicole Kidman and Isabelle Huppert will top the bill at the Cannes Film Festival next month as the world's flagship movie showcase celebrates its 70th anniversary. The Australian megastar features in Sofia Coppola's Civil War thriller "The Beguiled", while France's Huppert headlines in Austrian filmmaker Michael Haneke's "Happy End", a family drama set against the backdrop of Europe's migrant crisis. Ben Stiller, Julianne Moore and French star Marion Cotillard will also do star turns at the May 17-28 festival on the French Riviera, organizers told a Paris news conference yesterday.

Other movies vying for the prestigious Palme d'Or include Todd Haynes' "Wonderstruck", one of two Amazon-backed films in the lineup. "Wonderstruck", starring Moore and Michelle Williams, tells the parallel stories of two deaf American children in the 1920s and the 1970s. "Redoubtable" by the director of the Oscar-crowned silent movie "The Artist", Michel Hazanavicius, focuses on the love affair between New Wave guru Jean-Luc Godard and actress Anne Wiazemsky.

Opening the extravaganza, out of competition, will be "Ismael's Ghosts" by French director Arnaud Desplechin, about a filmmaker disturbed by the return of his former love. It features A-list French talent in the form of Cotillard, Charlotte Gainsbourg and Mathieu Amalric.

Netflix incursion

Two Netflix-backed features made the cut in a first for Cannes. "Okja", a creature feature by South Korea's Bong Joon-ho, known for his black humor, stars Tilda Swinton as a corporate scientist whose company tries to kidnap a fantastical beast called Okja from a young girl. Jake Gyllenhaal, playing a zoologist, makes his Cannes debut with the film. The other contender from Netflix, which is making ever deeper inroads into Hollywood alongside rival Amazon, is "The Meyerowitz Stories" by independent US



This file photo taken on May 17, 2014 shows US director and member of the Feature films Jury Sofia Coppola posing as she arrives for the screening of the film "Saint-Laurent". — AFP

filmmaker Noah Baumbach. The family drama stars Adam Sandler, Stiller, Emma Thompson and Dustin Hoffman. Amazon, for its part, also proposes "You Were Never Really Here", by Scottish director Lynne Ramsay starring Joaquin Phoenix as a war veteran who tries to save women from the sex-trafficking trade. Variety reported last year that the online retailer bought the rights to the film for around \$3.5 million (3.3 million euros). Out-of-competition selections include a sequel to former US vice president Al Gore's 2006 Oscar-winning documentary "An Inconvenient Truth". A decade later, the stakes are arguably higher with Donald Trump in the White House.

The US leader has dismissed global warming as a fraud invented by the Chinese and nominated climate change sceptic Scott Pruitt to head the Environmental Protection Agency. Coppola, the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola, is a Cannes veteran who previously premiered "Marie Antoinette" (2006)

and her last feature film "The Bling Ring" (2013) at the festival.

Kidman-Farrell double duo

In "The Beguiled", Colin Farrell plays a young soldier who seduces all the women around him, who include Kidman as well as Kirsten Dunst and Elle Fanning. Kidman and Farrell team up again in "The Killing of a Sacred Deer" by Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos, a psychological drama about a charismatic surgeon and a sinister teenager. Coppola and Ramsay are among 12 women directors featured at the festival, compared with nine last year, Fremaux noted. A third woman in the main competition is Japan's Naomi Kawase with "Hikari" (Radiance) about a doctor whose eyesight begins to fail. Providing even more star power are the TV series in the spotlight this year, with the unveiling of the eagerly awaited third season of David Lynch's cult "Twin Peaks" and Jane Campion's "Top of the Lake" in its second episode rollout. Pedro Almodovar, Spain's most celebrated living movie director, will lead the jury at this year's festival. — AFP

General Delegate of the Cannes Film Festival Thierry Fremaux, left and Cannes Film Festival President Pierre Lescure pose during a press conference for the presentation of the 70th Cannes film festival, in Paris, yesterday. — AP/AFP photos





A loggerhead sea turtle heads to the ocean, as onlookers watch at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park in Key Biscayne, Fla.



A loggerhead sea turtle hatchling makes its way into the ocean along Haulover Beach in Miami.

IT'S SEA TURTLE SEASON IN FLORIDA. HERE'S HOW TO SEE THEM

Many Florida beaches welcome a special type of visitor as the weather gets warmer: Sea turtles. Female sea turtles crawl out of the water from spring to early fall to build nests and lay eggs on the beach at night. Babies hatch some 60 days later and crawl back into the sea. It's a fragile process. Only an estimated one in 1,000 turtles survives to adulthood, according to the Sea Turtle Conservancy.

It's a crime in Florida to disturb sea turtle nests or harass turtles. Visitors should keep their distance, staying behind any turtle they might see, and must not shine lights in nesting areas, including flashlights, cellphone lights or camera lights. Some beaches turn off artificial lights to promote nesting activity. There are several sanctioned ways to observe sea turtles. Turtle rehab facilities around the state sometimes hold public releases when an injured turtle has recovered enough to return to the sea.

And public sea turtle watches take place at night on a number of Florida beaches, typically with participants registering in advance for the walks, which tend to fill up quickly. Trained guides who hold special permits scout for nests, looking for a turtle that's far enough along in the process that she won't be distracted. Tour participants are then escorted to the area for a look. The tours usually take place between 8 p.m. and midnight.

Sign-ups open May 1, for example, for weeknight walks June 1-July 27 in Melbourne Beach, Florida, hosted by the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge. The walks cost \$15 and are limited to 20 people a night. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Commission lists guided sea turtle walks as well as facilities that house captive sea turtles at <http://myfwc.com/education/wildlife/sea-turtle/where-to-view/>.

In many areas where nesting takes place, turtle patrols hunt for nests by day and rope them off so they can't be disturbed. In Gulf County in northwest Florida, where sea turtle season runs from May 1 to Oct. 31, the St. Joseph Peninsula Turtle Patrol on Cape San Blas takes a "turtle walkabout" each morning at dawn looking for signs of crawls. Nests are marked, and small groups of visitors can join part of the patrol, which includes measuring and marking nests with posts and caution tape so beachgoers know to stay away. Three varieties of sea turtle, green, leatherback and hawksbill, are classified as endangered. Two varieties, loggerhead and olive ridley, are listed as threatened.

Sometimes, visitors may simply stumble across a nest or nesting turtle. For example, it's not unusual to see loggerhead turtles on Florida's central east coast, where they nest by the thousands. "When it's high season for nesting," said Visit Florida spokesman Tim Declaire, "all you need is a late-night walk on the beach." Just remember: Don't get too close and don't shine any lights. When nesting is disrupted, a turtle may fail to lay her eggs or may not fully camouflage her nest. Hatchlings face additional challenges: They may die before reaching the water or be caught by predators. — AP



File photo shows Bill Ahern, a conservation specialist for the Miami-Dade County Parks, holds a loggerhead sea turtle egg as he prepares to relocate the nest on Haulover Beach in Miami.— AP photos



This undated photo shows the Myrtle Beach Airport Quiet Room in South Carolina. — AP photos



Photo shows Ryan Cunningham in the Sensory Room at Shannon Airport in Shannon, Ireland.

Quiet rooms for autistic children popping up at airports

Quiet rooms for children on the autism spectrum are popping up at airports. Shannon Airport, which serves the southwestern region of Ireland, opened a "sensory room" for children and adults with neurodevelopmental challenges, including autism, on March 29. The room is located off the airport's departure lounge. It's designed to be a soothing place, with features like a wavy wall and color-changing lights. The official opening of the room came ahead of World Autism Day on April 2.

On this side of the Atlantic, there are quiet rooms at airports in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and in Atlanta. Delta opened a multi-sensory room at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in April 2016 in partnership with The Arc, an autism advocacy group. The room, located in a quiet space on F Concourse, contains a mini-ball pit, bubbling water sculpture, a tactile activity panel and other calming features.

The quiet room at the Myrtle Beach airport also opened in April 2016. It came about after a local mom, Becky Large, approached airport administrators about providing "some sort of support for families." "We came up with a quiet room at baggage claim, which has worked out wonderfully," said Large, who runs a group called Champion Autism Network and has two children, one of whom has Asperger's. A caregiver can stay with a child in the room while someone else "retrieves bags and rental cars. There are cubbies and seating and a glass door so the child can be cordoned off and can't run away. It gives them a place to decompress."

'Wings for All'

London Heathrow opened a quiet room in 2013 as part of a family lounge in Terminal 3. Though it's mainly for children, it's not necessarily for those with autism. It's open to any family that

would like to use it. Some airports and airlines also offer families with travelers on the spectrum opportunities to become familiar with airport experiences that may be stressful. Harrisburg International Airport in Pennsylvania, for example, offers a "Wings for All" program that allows children with autism and sensory processing disorder to experience a run-through of what it's like getting on a plane, getting ticketed and getting seated so that they'll know what to expect when it's time for a real trip. A similar program took place at Myrtle Beach earlier this year, and Shannon launched a customer care program last year, providing special caps and wristbands for travelers with autism and other special needs so staff can identify them and interact appropriately.

"Going through security even for those without autism can be challenging," said Michael Schiferl of Chicago, whose daughter is on the spectrum, but it's even more challenging for kids who are easily overwhelmed by beeping machines, taking off shoes and crowds. He said TSA workers have been "very helpful" when told of his daughter's special needs. Large also had her hometown, Surfside Beach, which is near Myrtle Beach, declared an "autism-friendly destination" last year, after restaurants, hotels, parks and other venues participated in training on how to interact with children with autism. For example, she said, they may "become overstimulated by light, sounds, smells, crowds," so a restaurant might seat their family in a "low-traffic area away from the kitchen."

Large said a bigger goal is to increase understanding at all levels for special-needs children who may exhibit unusual or awkward behavior. "Many times when we leave the house with our kids, people look at you like you're a horrible parent," she said. "It results in a lot of judgment. Many people stay home. Our mission is to have them come out and play with us." — AP

Esperanto alive and well, 100 years after inventor's death

Instead of a hello, the head of the Esperanto association in the Polish city of Bialystok opts for "saluton", a sign that the universal language created by Ludwik Zamenhof is alive and well a century after the Jewish doctor's death. "Zamenhof created Esperanto as a counterweight to national languages, which he believed divided people and were a source of conflict," says association president Przemyslaw Wierzbowski. "Today, we know that it's economic, ethnic or religious differences that divide people, but Esperanto still has the goal of uniting us, helping us communicate," the 30-year-old added.

Wierzbowski spoke from a table at Esperanto Cafe, which is located in a tower within the eastern city's market square, just steps away from where Zamenhof was born in 1859. During the 19th century, the tower was at the heart of a market packed with stalls manned by German, Jewish, Lithuanian and Polish merchants. Bialystok belonged to the Russian empire at the time and was the scene of ethnic tensions. This local Tower of Babel is said to have inspired Zamenhof to construct his universal language to promote exchanges between people and bring peace to the world. Zamenhof left Bialystok to study medicine in Moscow and Warsaw. Then, in 1887, he published his first book on the international language under the pseudonym Doktoro Esperanto (the one who hopes).



The market square of Bialystok, eastern Poland.

'Language of heaven'

By 1905, there were more than 300 Esperanto associations around the world. That same year, nearly 700 people from about 20 countries attended the first Esperanto world congress, in the northern French city of Boulogne-Sur-Mer. This year the 102nd congress will take place in Seoul at a time when more than one

million people speak the language and Esperanto is even an option on Google Translate. The Japanese Shinto-based religion Oomoto considers Zamenhof to be a god and propagates Esperanto as a "language of heaven" that will help build a conflict-free world.

Known for his idealism, Zamenhof was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 13 times before his death on April 14, 1917. Among the 3,200 books in the Esperanto library in Bialystok, there are classics like J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (La Mastro de l'Ringo). Tolkien actually took an interest in Esperanto and once wrote that the artificial language was "necessary for uniting Europe". He was also among the signatories of a 1932 Esperanto document that said: "We heartily associate ourselves with the efforts that are being made to introduce Esperanto as a regular subject of instruction, and to encourage its use in the schools of the world."

Easy to learn

Retired lawyer Elzbieta Karczewska, who volunteers at the Esperanto library in Bialystok, says she recently went to Nepal to meet with other Esperanto speakers. "I always dreamt of travelling around the world, and I did it through Esperanto. Rare are the countries that I have yet to see," she told AFP.

Wierzbowski says he met people from countries like Iran, Senegal and South Africa at his first Esperanto congress. "I understood that there was more we had in common than what separated us and that the differences were less important," he said. The artificial language is exceptionally easy to learn. It has 16 basic rules, no exceptions and only 1,000 root words. Some 75 percent of the vocabulary comes from Latin and Romance languages and around 20 percent from Germanic tongues. The remainder is drawn from Slavic languages, while most of its scientific terms come from Greek. Every year a few dozen people sign up for Esperanto lessons in Bialystok. "Cu vi havas cevalon?" said one student recently, using the phrase for "do you have a horse?", as the class played a card game to learn word construction.

Esperanto estas mirinda!

"At first, you have to build up a word bank. After, with just one word we can create 10 new ones by adding prefixes and suffixes," said Esperanto teacher Iwona Zalewska. "I learnt Esperanto in a month and a half, two months max," said 22-year-old French student Amelie Chartier, who came to Bialystok to work at the Esperanto association through a European volunteer program.

"It's a language that also helps you learn other languages." A few Esperanto words have even made their way into everyday life. "In Warsaw, the municipal bike system is called Veturilo (vehicle in Esperanto), while the name of the soft drink Mirinda means 'amazing'," Wierzbowski said, adding that Esperanto continues to evolve. "Recently, we were discussing what word to use for drone. 'Drono' won out in the end." — AFP



Esperanto teacher Iwona Zalewska instructs a class of students learning the language of Esperanto in Bialystok, eastern Poland. — AFP photos



Historic Esperanto text books at the Esperanto library inside the Ludwik Zamenhof centre in Bialystok.



A mural depicting Ludwik Zamenhof on the wall of the house in Bialystok, eastern Poland, where the creator of the language of Esperanto was born in 1859.



A young woman visits an exhibition inside the Ludwik Zamenhof centre in Bialystok.



ORANGE AND CUCUMBER LAYERED SALAD WITH SHRIMP

Ingredients

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Servings: 2

1 medium naval or cara cara orange (or grapefruit), peeled, sliced, membrane and seeds removed

1 medium blood red orange, peeled, sliced, membrane and seeds removed

1/2 English cucumber, thinly sliced

1/4 medium avocado, sliced

1/4 fennel bulb, core removed, thinly sliced

1/4 small red onion, thinly sliced

1 cup watercress

6 ounces steamed shrimp

1 tablespoon toasted pumpkin seeds (or other nut or seed)

1-2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice or orange juice

2 teaspoons high quality extra virgin olive oil

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Preparation

Layer the orange slices and cucumber on a platter. Top with the avocado slices, fennel slices, watercress, shrimp and pumpkin seeds. Squeeze the lemon or orange juice over the whole salad, and then drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, and fennel fronds, if using. — AP

STUCK FOR A SIDE DISH? GRAB A FEW ORANGES AND ADD TOPPINGS

By Melissa D'arabian

My mom was a wannabe urban farmer long before it was cool. Living in the city limits didn't stop us from growing our own veggies in a backyard garden that flanked a huge handmade chicken coop, where we raised hens for eggs. (I'll take this opportunity to apologize to our neighbors, especially for the year we accidentally acquired a rooster, and the year after when we ended up with 38 clucking egg-layers as a result of said rooster.)

Today, raising your own food is trendy, but back then we did it because it was cheap. As a kid, I remember being sent to the backyard to grab a snack. I'd forego the plethora of fuzzy zucchini, and grab either a tomato or orange. Biting into a sun-warmed fruit, laced with just the tiniest bit of clinging dirt (I never bothered with the hose), sweet juice dripping down my chin in the dry heat of Tucson, Arizona, is a memory stuck in my bones. No surprise oranges and tomatoes were interchangeable snacks, both of them sweet, acidic, and juicy. Turns out, oranges and tomatoes are worthy swaps for each other in a host of raw recipes.

So if you are out of tomatoes, or they are simply out of season, consider using oranges instead, tasty year-round. The additional sweetness is a welcome twist in most recipes - try oranges in your caprese salad - but if you want a less sweet option, use grapefruit, or a combination of cucumber and oranges instead.

When you are stuck for a side dish, grab a few oranges from the fruit basket, slice them up and lay them out on a platter, and add whatever tasty toppings you have on hand - avocado, chopped scallions or shallots, nuts, seeds, fresh herbs, spicy greens, leftover rotisserie chicken, a drizzle of pesto are just a few ideas. Try this week's Orange and Cucumber Layered Salad with Shrimp, but use the ingredient list as a mere suggestion to start your own creative version.

Roasted Asparagus Toasts makes an elegant brunch

By Sara Moulton

Here's a special dish tailor-made for an elegant spring brunch. It requires slightly more than the usual amount of work, but it's so worth it. Most of the recipe's several components can be prepared ahead of time, then reheated and assembled at the last minute.

The base is artisanal toast brushed with olive oil and topped with roasted asparagus. The asparagus can be prepped and pre-roasted, then warmed in the oven before serving. The bearnaise can be prepped just short of stirring in the fresh tarragon and kept covered and chilled until the moment of truth. You can poach your eggs as much as a day ahead. I have an idiot-proof method for poaching eggs that will change your life if you love eating poached eggs but you're wary of making them. So if nothing else here grabs you, please pay attention to the poaching.

The only tricky part of this recipe is breading the eggs without breaking the yolks. You need to move slowly and delicately when transporting them. Lift them carefully in and out of the ice water with a large slotted spoon. Coat the poached eggs by gently lifting up the edges of the parchment paper, which causes the eggs to roll over in the flour and bread crumbs. Move the coated eggs into and out of the oil using that slotted spoon (now well-dried). Resist the temptation to turn the eggs in the oil - they'll brown on both sides without being turned. I encourage you to coat and deep-fry the eggs for a taste of something ethereal and to put this dish over the top. But if you're not a fan of deep-frying, poaching the eggs will be enough. Your guests will be delighted anyway.



Roasted Asparagus Toasts with Poached Fried Eggs and Cheating Bearnaise

Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 1/2 hours

Servings: 4

For the asparagus:

16 thick asparagus, trimmed and peeled

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and black pepper

4 slices artisanal bread, toasted and brushed with extra-virgin olive oil

For the bearnaise:

1/4 cup finely chopped shallot

2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

2 tablespoons dry white wine

2 teaspoons dried tarragon

4 ounces Neufchatel cheese

1/4 cup whole milk

2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh tarragon leaves

Black pepper

For the eggs:

5 large eggs

Vegetable oil for deep-frying

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup coarse fresh bread crumbs

1/4 teaspoon salt

Preparation

Roast the asparagus: Preheat the oven to 425 F. On a rimmed sheet pan toss the asparagus with the oil and salt and pepper to taste and roast on a shelf in the top third of the oven until just tender but not browned, about 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and set it aside. Reduce the oven to 350 F.

Make the bearnaise: In a small saucepan, combine the shallot, vinegar, wine, dried tarragon and a hefty pinch of salt. Bring the mixture to a boil; reduce the heat to low and simmer 3 to 4 minutes until the liquid has been reduced to about 1 tablespoon. Add the Neufchatel, a tablespoon at a time, and whisk until it has been incorporated. Whisk in the milk, fresh tarragon, and salt and pepper to taste and remove the sauce from the heat while you prepare the eggs.

Prepare the eggs: In a deep, straight-sided skillet, add 2 inches water and bring it to a boil. Break an egg into a fine mesh strainer set over a bowl. Tilt the egg around in the strainer and bang the strainer a few times on top of the bowl to let all the loose egg white fall through the strainer. (This ensures that the poached egg

has no straggly white; if you don't mind straggly whites, skip this step.) Repeat with 3 of the remaining eggs, transferring the drained eggs to individual ramekins or small bowls. Discard the loose whites. When the water has come to a boil, turn off the burner, very gently slide the eggs into the water and cover the pan. Cook the eggs, in the residual heat for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until they have reached the desired degree of doneness. Using a slotted spoon carefully transfer the eggs to a bowl of ice and water to cool for 5 minutes and then to a plate lined with paper towels. Return the asparagus to the oven to reheat it and warm the bearnaise on the stove.

In a large deep saucepan heat 2 inches of oil to 365 F. In a shallow bowl beat the remaining egg with 1 tablespoon water. Spread the flour on a piece of parchment. Spread the bread crumbs on a second piece of parchment and toss with the salt. Working carefully so as not to break the yolk, coat each egg with the flour, dip it in the beaten egg and finally coat it with the crumbs. Working in two batches, gently transfer the breaded eggs with a large slotted spoon to the oil and let them fry for 15 to 20 seconds or until golden. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain. — AP

COMIC CORNER: The Walking Dead

By Aakash Bakaya

For me, the backbone of any story or fictional universe is its characters. Be it fantasy, sci-fi or in this case - a zombie apocalypse. Create compelling and relatable characters and you've got me hooked for the long run. 'The Walking Dead' succeeds tremendously in this aspect because series creator Robert Kirkman does not shy away from showing the difficult stuff. The immediate reactions to the death of a loved one, the toll of loneliness and depression and making life-saving (and ending) decisions are just a few of the situations Kirkman puts his creations through. Most times they don't come back the same and other times they don't come back at all.

Rejuvenating the mythsos

'The Walking Dead' comic series created by Robert Kirkman and Tony Moore and published by Image Comics birthed the much loved 'Walking Dead' universe. Set right after an outbreak of a disease that brings the dead back to life, the story begins and subsequently follows our protagonist Rick Grimes, a police officer who awakens from a comatose state in an abandoned hospital and is left to fig-

ure out how to survive and find his family. It's your typical 'zombie-story' setting where the world has been destroyed by the outbreak and the few people still alive are doing whatever it takes to survive another day. Eventually Rick finds his family along with a group of survivors and his best friend and partner Shane who helped 'take care' of his wife and son during the outbreak.

This focus on larger group of survivors and the dynamic

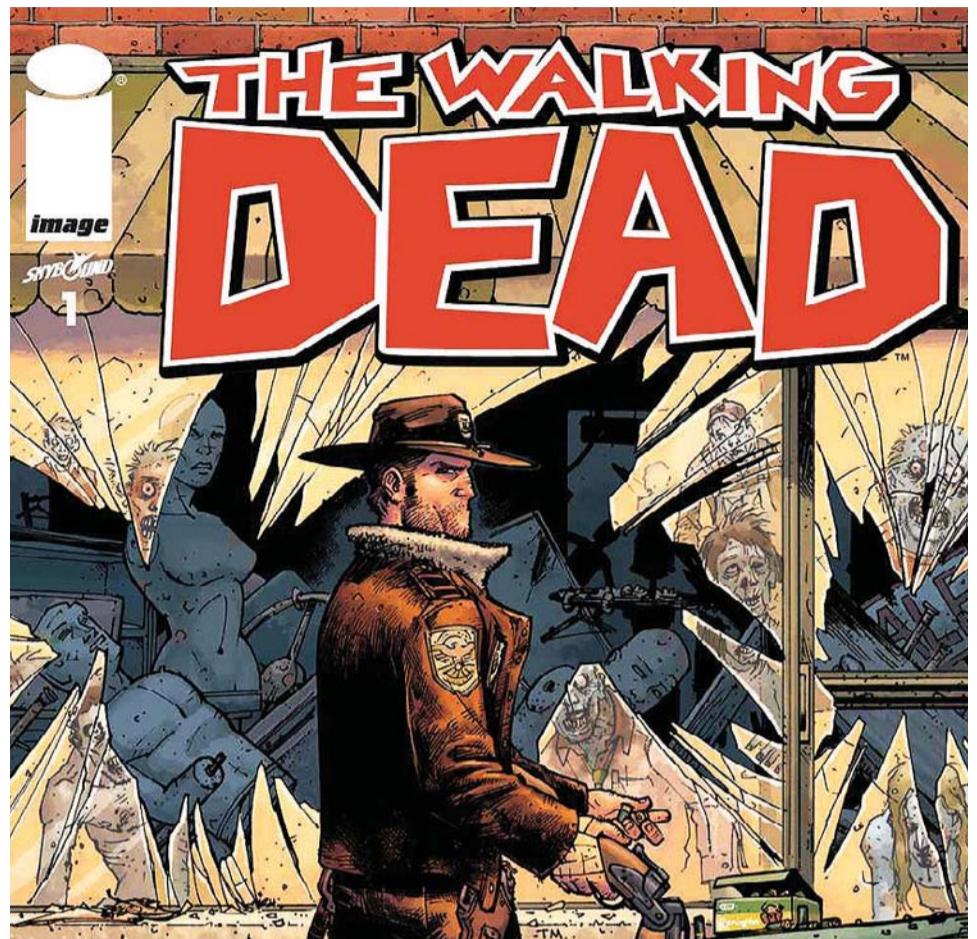
way people either co-operate or combat one another is what sets this universe apart from other zombie mythsos. From families and couples (both old and new) to vagabonds and make-shift communities, there are a lot of names and faces to keep track off. In most circumstances, this might have come off as a bit daunting to the reader but Kirkman's talented writing and superb story-telling abilities keep the plot tight and the characters memorable.

Creeping Death

It's a harsh, bleak world in the 'Walking Dead' universe, full of death, lunacy and danger. No one and no place lasts long enough and happiness hangs on nothing but temporary moments of respite. The dead are slow and stupid but a single misstep can easily end a life. It might sound like a surprise to most but zombie stories don't usually explore the devastating aspects of death. Romero's trilogies are more inclined towards social commentary while others lean closer to action/sci-fi tropes. In worlds literally surrounded by the living dead, most stories forget how those left alive have to deal with the simple fact they must go on living - either for themselves or for their loved ones.

Ironically, death is one of the beating hearts of the series. It comes suddenly and tragically to our main cast time and time again. After reading this series, you'll chuckle at those that say George RR Martin (author of the Song of Ice and Fire saga aka 'Game of Thrones') is a remorseless killing machine hell-bent on destroying his creations. Here, characters you've grown attached to can suddenly and brutally be murdered when you turn the page and it's a sucker punch to the gut every time that happens. Brains get smashed in, heads get chopped off and eyes are taken out of skulls with spoons, and none of this is done by zombies. When it comes to killing, the dead are pretty tame when compared to the living.

Death is also the only constant that remains in the world. Every major city and town has been destroyed by the undead and so survivors are left to band together to stay alive. It plagues the living both in a literal and emotional sense. Some entire issues focus solely on the toll it's taking on the living and the attempts to handle its ever lingering presence. The plots are condensed into arcs that switch up locations or bring in new faces. But no matter how far our main characters go, they can't escape the one rule that hasn't changed from the old world. That we either get busy living or we get busy dying.





New rules, old habits

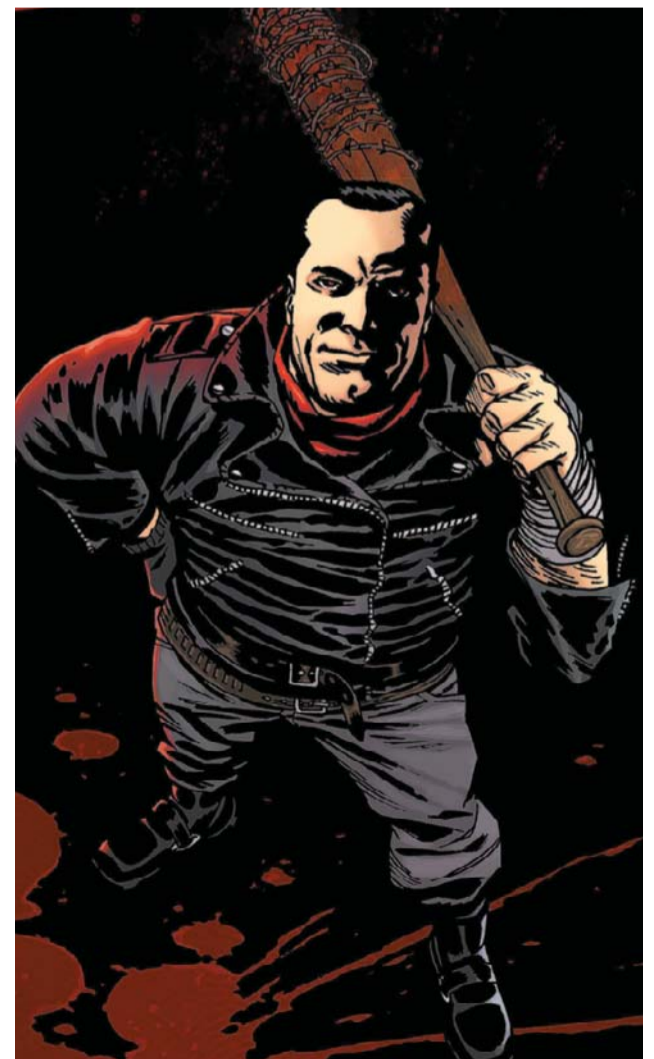
Survival plays a key part of the story as well. With no real place to go and no proper food to eat, groups are left to ask themselves - what rules from the old world should we still use? What should be changed? And most importantly - who gets to make these decisions? The answers to these questions change throughout the story and they change our cast in startling but realistic ways.

Human nature is continuously tested and folks both inherently good and evil are drawn closer to the abyss. A few turn

brave and embolden while many break, unable to face the consequences of their choices. Don't let the zombie covers fool you, under the surface lies some extremely deep observations on the human psyche. Kirkman isn't afraid of taking major risks during his story arcs and even though some are better than others, he constantly manages to keep me devouring issue after issue.

Comics are a dicey endeavor especially when you're starting a universe from scratch. At times, the pressure of keeping sales up stalls creators into rushing their work or doing it half

heartily. I've seen it happen many times. Thankfully, this is not the case with 'The Walking Dead'. The quality remains outstanding and whatever well of ideas Kirkman has stored in his brain has certainly not dried up, not by a long shot. The series (currently at issue number 164) is still going strong and has become the foundation of a massive multi-media phenomenon. If you're a fan of sprawling worlds, excellent horror writing and realistic characters do yourself a favor and check out 'The Walking Dead'.



Friday Times

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2017

Travel



Galicia: Exploring the crossroads of Spanish and Celtic culture

Vineyards of the Casal de
Arm-n winery overlook San
Andr's village and its
church near Ribadavia



San Andr's de Teixido village nestles in green countryside on the dramatic coastline near Cabo Ortegal in the R'as Altas.



Galicia isn't quite a separate country, but this distinctive northwest corner of Spain, separated from the rest of the nation by both geography and culture, is a far cry from stereotypical Spanish images. The regional capital, Santiago de Compostela, is world-famous: An enchanting city whose soaring Romanesque cathedral is the ultimate goal of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route. Dig a little deeper and you'll discover a region that uniquely blends modern Spain and Celtic roots, complete with its own language and cultural flavor. Galicia is a fascinating secret waiting to be explored.

Cliffs & capes

Entering Galicia across the hills that divide it from the arid plains of Castile, your first surprise is the countryside: it's green, gentle and threaded by rivers. Then you reach the coast. Galicia's 1200km shoreline frequently rears up in some of Europe's most awe-inspiring cliffs and capes - as at Cabo Ortegal, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Bay of Biscay, or Cabo Fisterra on the savagely beautiful Costa da Morte (Coast of Death, named for the hundreds of ships that have foundered on its jagged shores). Between the lighthouse-crowned capes, the coastline penetrates inland thanks to a series of rias. The inlets along the west-facing coast, named the Rias Baixas, stretch up to 30km inland, while those along the north-facing coast, the Rias Altas, are generally shorter but backed by more dramatic scenery.

The coast is strung with hundreds of mostly sandy beaches, ranging from the glorious 2km sweep of Praia A Lanzada to remote cliff-foot coves such as Praia do Picon. It's a superb coast for meandering. The many scenic marked footpaths include the recently inaugurated Camiño Natural da Ruta do Cantabrico running 133km from Ribadeo to O Vicedo. There's surf too: Praia de Pantín hosts a World Surf League event every August/September. Wetsuits required - this is the north Atlantic! Several archipelagos off the Rias Baixas comprise Galicia's only national park, the Parque Nacional de las Islas Atlánticas de Galicia. The park's jewel is the vehicle-free Illas Cles, a bird sanctuary where you can walk to panoramic viewpoints and laze on gorgeous, lagoon-backed Praia das Rodas.

Europe's best seafood

Thanks to all that coast and dozens of fishing villages, Galician markets and tables are loaded with seafood whose variety, quality and freshness have few serious rivals in Europe. You never dreamed octopus could

taste as good as it does in pulpo - feira - tender slices of tentacle sprinkled with olive oil and paprika. You can find this quintessential Galician dish elsewhere in Spain, where they call it pulpo a la gallega, but it never tastes half as good outside Galicia.

There's a multifarious variety of crabs, good fresh fish and masses of shellfish. The most prized delicacy is percebes (goose barnacles), courageously gathered from wave-lashed rocks by specialist percebeiros.



Praia da Mar de Fora beach near Fisterra on the Costa da Morte.



Celtic hill-fort village on Monte de Santa Trega in Galicia's far southwest corner.

Percebes bear a disconcerting resemblance to claws - you hold the claw, twist off the other end and eat the succulent bit inside. Galicia is also famed across Spain for the quality of the meat from its rich inland pastures. And it isn't resting on the laurels of its top-class ingredients: A generation of 'Nova cocina galega' chefs are concocting innovative taste sensations in restaurants all around Galicia. Try Abastos 2.0 and O Curro da Parra in Santiago de Compostela, and you'll find others listed at Grupo Nove (nove.biz).

Wines of the Galician soil

Galician wines are not (yet) as well known as some other Spanish wines but they are enjoying a big resurgence - and they're perfectly suited to Galicia's cuisine and ambience. Best known are the fruity albarino whites of the Rias Baixas DO - whose attractive little 'capital', Cambados, was chosen as 2017's European City of Wine. But you shouldn't miss the rich mencla reds from the precipitous hillsides of the Ribeira Sacra DO, or the whites of Ribeiro. Many Galician wineries welcome visitors for tastings and/or tours.

Art in stone

No whitewashed villages here. In these damp northern climes it's pure natural stone that stands up best to the elements. (Yes, Galicia's rainy reputation is justified - but you could easily strike a warm sunny spell, and if you don't, the rain showers will often be spaced between sunny intervals.)

Two millennia ago, Galicians fortified the Roman town of Lucus Augusti (today Lugo) with a 2km circuit of stone walls and 85 towers that still stands strong today. Some 800 years ago a stonemason, known simply as Maestro Mateo, carved the portico of Santiago de Compostela Cathedral with 200 biblical sculptures that add up to one of the greatest works of Romanesque art. There's barely a village anywhere that isn't adorned by a little old stone church. Centuries-old manor houses dot the coun-



Fishermen work on their nets in the harbour at Fisterra on the Costa da Morte

tryside, and some of them are now among Galicia's most delightful places to stay.

The roadsides are liberally decorated with pretty, carved-stone wayside crosses known as *cruceiros* - a distinctive Galician art form that reaches its highest expression in the 19th-century *Cruceiro de Hio*, delicately sculpted with key Christian scenes from Adam and Eve to the crucifixion. Stone grain stores on stone stilts are another picturesque feature of the countryside - the biggest *hurreo*, at Carnota, is 34.5 meters long.

A different people

Galicians think of themselves as Celts, distinct from other Spaniards, tracing their origins to a wave of migration from the east in the first millennium BC, and earthwork forts from that period, known as *castros*, dot the landscape. Scenic Monte de Santa Trega in Galicia's far southwest offers the most spectacular examples of these relics.

The Galician language, *galego*, is, like Portuguese and Castilian Spanish, a Romance tongue derived from the colloquial Latin spoken in Roman times - but it also includes many words of non-Romance, Celtic origin. The flower of Celtic culture today is Galician music, led by the bagpipe (*gaita*). Top pipers such as Carlos N'nez and Susana Seivane are Galician folk heroes. The skirl of busking bagpipers swirls around Santiago de Compostela's grand square, *Praza do Obradoiro*, daily. For memorable Galician folk jam sessions dive into Santiago's *Casa das Crechas* on a Wednesday night. And if you're here in mid-July, you can head to the *Rias Altas* for the four-day *Festival Ortigueira*, bringing together musicians from all over the Celtic world.

— (www.lonelyplanet.com)



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your love of a certain language may create the strong desire to travel and study in the country of that language. You may have nothing holding you back from this project except the need for better funds. This could be your birth-year goal and an extra job would help put those funds right where you want them. The long-term results could mean that you will have a better earning capability as a translator or interpreter. Your understanding of the politics of that nation would be helpful when political negotiations occur. You have many friends that have the same interests in common with you. There might be an opportunity to travel with one or two of them during this next year. They express good cheer and wishes for your success.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your career is in flux and you may be spending too much time on your own or with friends. An outgoing and very expressive cycle of experience has begun for you. Now, more than ever, you want to be appreciated by others. You are extremely artistic and may have never given yourself time to learn and grow in this area. Consider making your next vacation a time of creative adventure. Take an art class, attend a variety of museums, move in close to a subject and discover if you might like to express yourself in some new way. Consider the art of clay, dolls, plants, etc. It is the new discoveries of your talents that will make the difference in your daily work. Real insight into your own psychology could surface in a manageable form.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You show a propensity towards hard work in order to secure a future income. Impractical but workable ideas will begin to come to you from time to time. Keep a notebook near you because these ideas will be taking a practical form in your mind later. You have a heightened desire to succeed professionally as well as in personal matters. Communicating successfully with others is important to you. Your timing should be perfect and those around you should find you most receptive. Quick answers, great wit and a surplus of insights and solutions are present with you. This evening is a good time to begin writing that novel you always wanted to write or just to begin a journal. Any love relationship that has been shaky may now begin a steady return.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

There are good indications that this is one of your best days at your work. You may show an interest more in cultural or literary affairs from time to time but this day you have suggestions that higher-ups cannot refuse. You are apt to obtain financial benefits through the simple power of attraction today. Your ability to communicate with superiors or describe what you see is accurate and on target. Spontaneity is an essential part of your makeup and you may decide to do something really fun. It could be time to take that hot-air balloon ride! This is a very lucky day for making plans or decisions and finding your way through just about anything you may discover. If you need advice, a guide or older person is available for you now.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You could be spreading yourself too thin with your work this day. Consider planning some fun time for yourself this afternoon. As for your work day, try to come to a compromise, when a compromise is needed. Your ability to communicate your position and come to a successful resolution is key to your success. Confront issues and negotiate settlements based on terms to that all can agree. You may have an opportunity to take on a better position within the company for which you work or to change your employment for the better. You might be watchful for new internal work opportunities that become available. You won't need to be working overtime this evening so you will be free to enjoy some relaxing time. Be with your loved ones this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The hairs on the back of your neck seem to stand at attention today. You know what you want and you pay close attention to the meeting or organizational discussions that may concern you or your department. Your goals are important and it is about time to see some positive changes that would place you in a more successful stance. Patience may be difficult until you realize that there are others with some of your skills that have not advanced as much as you have. Your friends will help give you encouragement. Much has been enjoyed, endured and accomplished with your friends. Friends are our only true riches, and the satisfaction that comes from accomplishing things in cooperation with others is something no one can take away from you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today you seem more adaptable to change. You could be creating a few changes yourself. This may mean changing offices or changing projects. An idea of yours gains momentum and attention. If you are performing a service for a customer, remember that the customer is an individual, not a project, so to speak. Give as much attention to your customer as you do the paperwork it takes to process the outcome. You enjoy diving into some creative efforts this afternoon. You may find that the creative efforts you endeavor to achieve will help to bring about a good balance to your life. This creative effort can be used to help teach difficult children. You are due for some wonderful surprises. Take a friend out for some real ice cream this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have certainly been involved in lots of activities lately. Think about ways in which you could benefit best from the breaks that you take. Perhaps a quick walk or a quick snooze would be a good energizer. New ideas and an independent or pioneering mental orientation take on more importance in your life at this time. You will be receiving some really nice surprises today, as well as some monetary rewards-perhaps a bonus for your hard work. On your way home from work this afternoon, think about places where you could add a little color to your living area, perhaps with the planting of flowers or a new paint job. Writing or reading or taking in a movie is a wonderful way to enjoy your evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Financial responsibilities and investments need close attention now. Play it safe where such things are concerned, or you could find yourself in a hole. You may spend too much time trying to decide whether to trust your intuition on some risk or not. This time, make sure you have all the information you need before taking any risks with your hard-earned money. You have a new level of awareness at this time. You are encouraged to use your resourcefulness to adapt to the new changes you see coming into your life. A new family member, a marriage or a new job is available for you now. Mental patterns and communication skills play a major role in your life now. They can change things forever, so make sure you develop to your highest potential.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Make it a point to take your breaks today, especially the noon break. You will progress just as quickly with a break as without, so take your allocated breaks and you will feel more rested and refreshed. You can feel free to forge ahead in your professional life now. You will find that your energy is high and the creative juices are flowing. Carpentry, repair or maintenance on the home and planting or trimming plants could create secure and in-control feelings. This is an especially positive period for you and much can be accomplished this whole month. A friend may drop by later this evening. Close relationships offer a lot of potential for growth and good fortune. People close to you are optimistic and have good prospects.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

The plans you make today will be successful. Group activities are accented. Teaching, learning, communicating and social contacts have a way of outlining new directions in your life and there is much activity and involvement with these kinds of matters. New ideas and an independent or revolutionary mental orientation take on more importance in your life. You have a desire to free yourself and create a new name for yourself. You may suddenly find yourself reacting to things you used to feel were the normal or expected things to do. Your originality is heightened and you may find yourself changing direction in some of the routine things in which you participate. Deep feelings of responsibility make you careful with money.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

If you want to plan a job change or start a business, whether it is from your home or not, you may want to delay turning in a resignation until your plans take better shape. You could find yourself at the library today, perhaps checking out the process of beginning a home business. This is a good opportunity for weighing the options and planning. A new sense of self, a more assertive personal style, a more dynamic approach to life are the hallmarks of the cycle that begins now. If you are not married or do not have a significant other, you may become more interested in affairs of the heart. If you are looking for a significant relationship, think about how you interact with others. This will give you an idea of what works and what does not. Smile, it is contagious!

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Kuwait	00965
Albania	00355	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Algeria	00213	Laos	00856
Andorra	00376	Latvia	00371
Angola	00244	Lebanon	00961
Anguilla	001264	Liberia	00231
Antigua	001268	Libya	00218
Argentina	0054	Lithuania	00370
Armenia	00374	Luxembourg	00352
Australia	0061	Macau	00853
Austria	0043	Macedonia	00389
Bahamas	001242	Madagascar	00261
Bahrain	00973	Majorca	0034
Bangladesh	00880	Malawi	00265
Barbados	001246	Malaysia	0060
Belarus	00375	Maldives	00960
Belgium	0032	Mali	00223
Belize	00501	Malta	00356
Benin	00229	Marshall Islands	00692
Bermuda	001441	Martinique	00596
Bhutan	00975	Mauritania	00222
Bolivia	00591	Mauritius	00230
Bosnia	00387	Mayotte	00269
Botswana	00267	Mexico	0052
Brazil	0055	Micronesia	00691
Brunei	00673	Moldova	00373
Bulgaria	00359	Monaco	00377
Burkina Faso	00226	Mongolia	00976
Burundi	00257	Montserrat	001664
Cambodia	00855	Morocco	00212
Cameroon	00237	Mozambique	00258
Canada	001	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Cape Verde	00238	Namibia	00264
Cayman Islands	001345	Nepal	00977
Central African Republic	00236	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Chad	00235	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Chile	0056	New Caledonia	00687
China	0086	New Zealand	0064
Colombia	0057	Nicaragua	00505
Comoros	00269	Niger	00227
Congo	00242	Nigeria	00234
Cook Islands	00682	Niue	00683
Costa Rica	00506	Norfolk Island	00672
Croatia	00385	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Cuba	0053	North Korea	00850
Cyprus	00357	Norway	0047
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Oman	00968
Czech Republic	00420	Pakistan	0092
Denmark	0045	Palau	00680
Diego Garcia	00246	Panama	00507
Djibouti	00253	Papua New Guinea	00675
Dominica	001767	Paraguay	00595
Dominican Republic	001809	Peru	0051
Ecuador	00593	Philippines	0063
Egypt	0020	Poland	0048
El Salvador	00503	Portugal	00351
England (UK)	0044	Puerto Rico	001787
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Qatar	00974
Eritrea	00291	Romania	0040
Estonia	00372	Russian Federation	007
Ethiopia	00251	Rwanda	00250
Falkland Islands	00500	Saint Helena	00290
Faroe Islands	00298	Saint Kitts	001869
Fiji	00679	Saint Lucia	001758
Finland	00358	Saint Pierre	00508
France	0033	Saint Vincent	001784
French Guiana	00594	Samoa US	00684
French Polynesia	00689	Samoa West	00685
Gabon	00241	San Marino	00378
Gambia	00220	Sao Tome	00239
Georgia	00995	Saudi Arabia	00966
Germany	0049	Scotland (UK)	0044
Ghana	00233	Senegal	00221
Gibraltar	00350	Seychelles	00284
Greece	0030	Sierra Leone	00232
Greenland	00299	Singapore	0065
Grenada	001473	Slovakia	00421
Guadeloupe	00590	Slovenia	00386
Guam	001671	Solomon Islands	00677
Guatemala	00502	Somalia	00252
Guinea	00224	South Africa	0027
Guyana	00592	South Korea	0082
Haiti	00509	Spain	0034
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Sri Lanka	0094
Honduras	00504	Sudan	00249
Hong Kong	00852	Suriname	00597
Hungary	0036	Swaziland	00268
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sweden	0046
Iceland	00354	Switzerland	0041
India	0091	Syria	00963
Indian Ocean	00873	Taiwan	00886
Indonesia	0062	Tanzania	00255
Iran	0098	Thailand	0066
Iraq	00964	Toga	00228
Ireland	00353	Tonga	00676
Italy	0039	Tokelau	00690
Ivory Coast	00225	Trinidad	001868
Jamaica	001876	Tunisia	00216
Japan	0081	Turkey	0090
Jordan	00962	Tuvalu	00688
Kazakhstan	007	Uganda	00256
Kenya	00254	Ukraine	00380
Kiribati	00686	United Arab Emirates	00976



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 What On Earth?
02:00 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
02:50 The Wheel: Survival Games
03:40 Fast N' Loud
04:30 Storage Hunters
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 World's Top 5
06:50 You Have Been Warned
07:40 Gold Rush: Remembering John Schnabel
08:30 What On Earth?
09:20 Idris Elba: No Limits
10:10 The Wheel: Survival Games
11:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
11:50 The Island With Bear Grylls
12:40 Supertruckers
13:30 Wheeler Dealers
14:20 Diesel Brothers
15:10 Harley And The Davidsons
16:00 Wheeler Dealers
16:50 Wheeler Dealers
17:40 Wheeler Dealers
18:30 Wheeler Dealers
19:20 Wheeler Dealers
20:10 Wheeler Dealers
21:00 Wheeler Dealers
21:50 Diesel Brothers
22:40 Harley And The Davidsons
23:30 Supertruckers



00:00 The First 48
01:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
02:00 Homicide Hunter
03:00 It Takes A Killer
04:00 The First 48
05:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
06:00 My Crazy Ex
08:00 Evil Up Close
09:00 It Takes A Killer
10:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
11:00 The First 48
13:00 My Crazy Ex
14:00 Evil Up Close
15:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
16:00 It Takes A Killer
16:30 It Takes A Killer
17:00 The First 48
18:00 The First 48
19:00 Evil Up Close
20:00 Shannon Matthews: The Disappearance
21:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
22:00 Crime Stories
23:00 Monster In My Family



00:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
01:20 Strip The Cosmos
02:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
03:25 Destroyed In Seconds
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Dirty Jobs
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Doki
07:25 Bear Grylls Survival School
07:50 My Cat From Hell
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 My Cat From Hell
12:00 Ultimate Survival
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Dirty Jobs
14:30 Doki
14:55 Bear Grylls Survival School
15:20 Mythbusters
16:10 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
17:00 Battle Bots
17:50 Deception With Keith Barry
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters
21:10 Battle Bots
22:00 Deception With Keith Barry
22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
23:15 Destroyed In Seconds



00:00 Binny And The Ghost
00:25 Hank Zipzer
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:25 Hank Zipzer
05:45 The Hive
05:50 The 7D
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Jessie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 The Zhuzhus
07:20 Elena Of Avalor
07:45 Bizaardvark
08:35 Stuck In The Middle
09:25 Disney The Lodge
09:50 Bunk'd
10:15 Bunk'd
10:40 Disney's Descendants
12:35 Welcome To The Ronks
12:45 Jessie
13:10 Austin & Ally
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Liv And Maddie
14:50 Sunny Bunnies
14:55 The Zhuzhus
15:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
15:45 Elena Of Avalor
16:10 Liv And Maddie
16:35 Descendants Wicked World

16:40 High School Musical 2
18:40 Welcome To The Ronks
18:50 Jessie
19:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
19:20 Backstage
19:45 Austin & Ally
20:10 The Next Step
20:35 Cracked
20:40 Best Friends Whenever
21:05 Girl Meets World
21:30 That's So Raven
21:55 Star Darlings
22:00 Good Luck Charlie
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:10 Hank Zipzer
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:55 Zou
01:05 Loopdidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Zou
02:05 Art Attack
02:30 The Hive
02:40 Loopdidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:35 Loopdidoo
03:50 Calimero
04:05 Art Attack
04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:45 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Zou

06:15 Calimero
06:30 Loopdidoo
06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
07:25 Sofia The First
07:50 The Lion Guard
08:15 PJ Masks
08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:05 Goldie & Bear
09:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
09:35 The Lion Guard
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Doc McStuffins
10:55 Miles From Tomorrow
11:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
11:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
12:15 Gummi Bears
12:40 Miles From Tomorrow
13:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
14:30 The Lion Guard
15:00 The Legion Of Pirate Villains
15:50 Unbungalievable
15:55 Goldie & Bear
16:20 Miles From Tomorrow
16:50 PJ Masks
17:15 Sofia The First
17:40 Doc McStuffins
18:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
18:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
19:00 The Lion Guard
19:25 The Lion Guard
19:50 Doc McStuffins
20:05 Goldie & Bear
20:35 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
21:00 Gummi Bears
21:30 Miles From Tomorrow
22:00 Doc McStuffins
22:25 Doc McStuffins
22:55 PJ Masks
23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
23:35 The Hive
23:45 Loopdidoo



06:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy
06:25 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
06:50 Atomic Puppet
07:15 Gravity Falls
07:40 Supa Strikas
08:05 Two More Eggs
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
09:00 Walk The Prank
09:25 Right Now Kapow
09:50 Lab Rats
10:15 Two More Eggs
10:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
10:45 Mighty Med
11:10 K.C. Undercover
11:35 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
12:00 Wendy Wu: Homecoming Warrior
13:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
13:45 K.C. Undercover
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 K.C. Undercover
14:40 Lab Rats
15:05 Lab Rats
15:30 Supa Strikas
15:55 Supa Strikas
16:25 K.C. Undercover
16:50 Walk The Prank
17:15 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
17:40 Milo Murphy's Law
18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:10 Gravity Falls
18:35 Mighty Med
19:00 Atomic Puppet
19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
19:55 K.C. Undercover
20:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
20:45 Mighty Med
21:10 Walk The Prank
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
22:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
22:35 Boyster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

16:55 Surprise Surprise
17:50 Come Date With Me Australia
18:45 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Guess This House
21:00 It's Not Rocket Science
21:55 Surprise Surprise
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:40 Coronation Street



00:15 This Is Brazil
01:05 Miguel's Feasts
01:30 Dog Whisperer
02:20 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
02:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
03:35 Sara's Australia Unveiled
04:25 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
04:50 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
05:20 The Wine Show
06:15 One Man & His Campervan
06:40 One Man & His Campervan
07:10 Miguel's Feasts
07:35 Dog Whisperer
08:30 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
09:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
09:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
09:55 Sara's Australia Unveiled
10:20 Sara's Australia Unveiled
10:50 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
11:15 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
11:45 One Man & His Campervan
12:10 One Man & His Campervan
12:40 Miguel's Feasts
13:05 Dog Whisperer
14:00 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
14:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
14:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
15:25 Sara's Australia Unveiled
15:50 Sara's Australia Unveiled
16:20 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
16:45 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
17:15 The Wine Show
18:10 One Man & His Campervan
18:35 One Man & His Campervan
19:05 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
19:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
20:00 Sara's Australia Unveiled
20:30 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
20:55 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
21:20 The Wine Show
22:10 One Man & His Campervan
22:35 One Man & His Campervan
23:00 Miguel's Feasts
23:25 Dog Whisperer



00:05 Mariah's World
01:50 E! News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 WAGs
04:40 WAGs
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 EJ NYC
06:55 E! News
07:10 EJ NYC
08:10 E! News
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 E! News
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
14:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
15:00 E! News
15:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
19:00 E! News
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 E! News



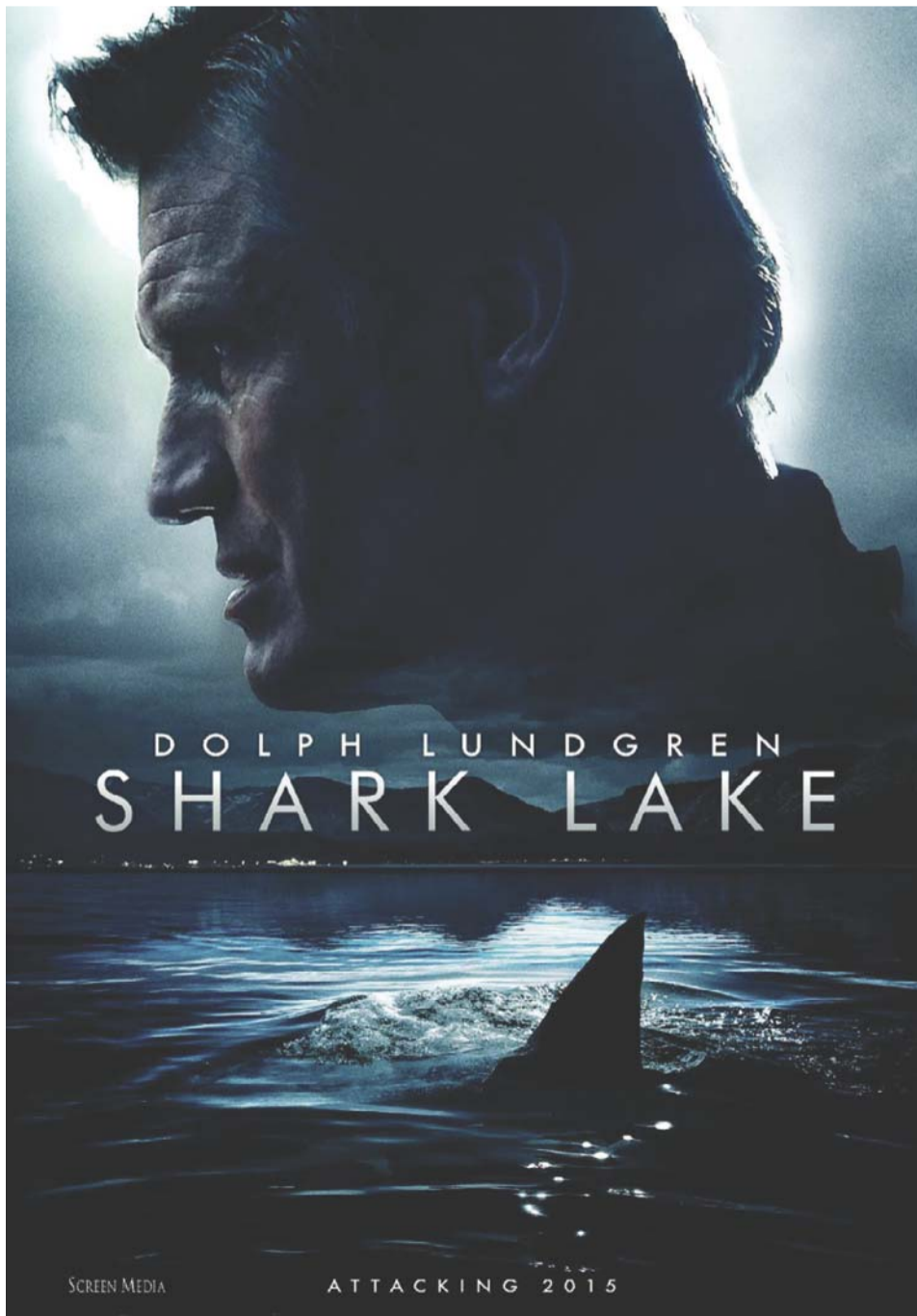
00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 Guess This House
03:25 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
04:20 5 Star Family Reunion
05:15 Come Date With Me Australia
06:10 The Chase
07:05 Guess This House
08:00 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
09:00 5 Star Family Reunion
10:00 Come Date With Me Australia
10:55 The Chase
11:50 Guess This House
12:45 Emmerdale
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 The Chase
15:10 Guess This House
16:00 It's Not Rocket Science



00:20 Storm Cats
01:10 Expedition Wild
02:00 Turf War- Lions And Hippos
02:50 Animals Gone Wild
Compilations
03:45 Man V. Monster
04:40 The Lady With 700 Cats
05:35 Turf War- Lions And Hippos
06:30 Animals Gone Wild
Compilations
07:25 Man V. Monster
08:20 The Lady With 700 Cats
09:15 Snakes In The City
10:10 Wild Indochina
11:05 World's Deadliest Killers
12:00 I, Predator
12:55 Revenge Of The Lioness
13:50 Animals Gone Wild
Compilations
14:45 Man V. Monster
15:40 Vacations Gone Wild
16:35 Animal Fight Club
17:30 The Desert Sea
18:25 World's Deadliest: Jaws & Sins
19:20 Man V. Monster
20:10 Vacations Gone Wild
21:00 Animal Fight Club
21:50 The Desert Sea



00:15 Access 360 World Heritage
01:05 What's For Sale?
01:30 Dog Whisperer
02:20 World's Best Beaches
03:10 The Game Chef
03:35 Street Food Around The World
04:00 Bondi Rescue Outback Adventure
04:50 Lucky Chow
05:20 Hotel India
06:15 Taste Of The Tropic: Taiwan
07:10 What's For Sale?
07:35 Dog Whisperer
08:30 World's Best Beaches



SHARK LAKE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

09:25 The Game Chef
 09:55 Street Food Around The World
 10:20 Bondi Rescue Outback Adventure
 11:15 Lucky Chow
 11:45 Hotel India
 12:40 What's For Sale?
 13:05 Dog Whisperer
 14:00 World's Best Beaches
 14:55 Street Food Around The World
 15:25 My Dubai
 15:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
 16:45 Lucky Chow
 17:15 Hotel India



00:03 Max & Ruby
 00:26 Wanda And The Alien
 00:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 00:47 The Day Henry Met
 00:52 The Day Henry Met
 00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 01:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 01:42 Zack & Quack
 02:04 Team Umizoomi
 02:26 Olive The Ostrich
 02:31 Olive The Ostrich
 02:36 Paw Patrol
 02:59 Little Charmers
 03:11 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 03:23 Dora The Explorer
 03:45 Max & Ruby
 04:08 Bubble Guppies
 04:31 Shimmer And Shine
 04:43 Shimmer And Shine
 04:54 Dora And Friends
 05:17 Zack & Quack
 05:28 The Day Henry Met
 05:32 The Day Henry Met
 05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 06:00 Rusty Rivets
 06:13 Paw Patrol
 06:37 Dora The Explorer
 07:00 Zack & Quack
 07:21 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
 07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 08:07 Paw Patrol
 08:30 Shimmer And Shine
 08:40 Shimmer And Shine
 08:53 Dora The Explorer
 09:15 The Day Henry Met
 09:22 Paw Patrol
 09:45 Rusty Rivets
 09:57 Bubble Guppies
 10:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
 10:40 Zack & Quack
 10:52 Team Umizoomi
 11:15 Team Umizoomi
 11:38 Louie
 11:45 Louie
 11:53 Olive The Ostrich
 11:58 Olive The Ostrich
 12:03 Max & Ruby
 12:26 Wanda And The Alien
 12:35 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 12:46 The Day Henry Met
 12:51 The Day Henry Met
 12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 13:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 13:41 Zack & Quack
 14:03 Team Umizoomi
 14:25 Olive The Ostrich
 14:30 Olive The Ostrich
 14:35 Paw Patrol
 14:58 Little Charmers
 15:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 15:22 Dora The Explorer
 15:44 Max & Ruby
 16:07 Bubble Guppies
 16:31 Shimmer And Shine
 16:43 Shimmer And Shine
 16:54 Dora And Friends
 17:17 Zack & Quack
 17:29 The Day Henry Met
 17:34 The Day Henry Met
 17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 18:00 Rusty Rivets
 18:13 Paw Patrol
 18:37 Dora The Explorer
 19:00 Zack & Quack
 19:21 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
 19:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 20:07 Paw Patrol
 20:30 Shimmer And Shine
 20:53 Dora The Explorer
 21:15 The Day Henry Met
 21:22 Paw Patrol
 21:45 Rusty Rivets
 21:57 Bubble Guppies
 22:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
 22:40 Zack & Quack
 22:52 Team Umizoomi
 23:15 Team Umizoomi



BLOOD DIAMOND

BLOOD DIAMOND SUN OSN MOVIES HD



ACTION

00:30 As Above, So Below
 02:15 Shark Lake
 04:00 Reign Of Fire
 06:00 Insurgent
 08:00 Rivers Nine
 10:00 DCU: Justice League vs Teen Titans
 11:30 Reign Of Fire
 13:15 Insurgent
 15:30 Fast & Furious 7
 18:00 Gone In Sixty Seconds
 20:00 Run All Night
 22:00 Starship Troopers



FAMILY

01:15 Pirates Of The Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest
 03:45 Return To Oz
 05:45 Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules
 07:45 Mickey's Twice Upon A Christmas
 09:00 Brother Bear
 11:00 Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules
 13:00 Ice Age
 15:00 Peter Pan
 17:00 High School Musical 3: Senior Year
 19:00 Underdog
 21:00 The Incredible Adventures Of Professor Branestawm
 22:00 Peter Pan



00:45 Adult World
 02:30 War Of The Worlds
 04:30 Finding Forrester
 06:45 October Sky
 08:45 The Chronicles Of Narnia: Voyage Of The Dawn...
 10:45 War Of The Worlds
 12:45 Up Close And Personal
 15:00 McFarland, USA
 17:15 S.W.A.T.
 19:30 Blood Diamond
 22:00 Straight Outta Compton



COMEDY

00:00 Hot Tub Time Machine 2
 02:00 Twins
 04:00 The Duff
 06:00 Ricki And The Flash
 08:00 Twins
 10:00 The Duff
 12:00 Ricki And The Flash
 14:00 Outside Bet
 16:00 Accidental Love

18:00 Valentine's Day
 20:15 It's Complicated
 22:30 She's Funny That Way



FESTIVAL

00:30 Inherent Vice
 03:00 WarGames
 05:00 Healing
 07:00 Le Weekend
 09:00 WarGames
 11:00 Late Bloomers
 13:00 The Express
 15:15 Ironweed
 17:45 The Theory Of Everything
 20:00 Ed Wood
 22:15 The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou



KIDS

00:45 The Tale Of Despereaux
 02:30 Worms
 04:15 Hey Arnold! The Movie
 06:00 Garfield
 07:30 Bark Ranger
 09:00 Evolution Man
 10:45 The Tale Of Despereaux
 12:30 Worms
 14:00 Oops Noah Is Gone
 16:00 Evolution Man
 18:00 Yugo & Lala 2
 19:30 Hotel For Dogs
 21:15 Oops Noah Is Gone
 23:00 Bark Ranger



00:40 Mythbusters
 01:30 How Do They Do It?
 01:55 Food Factory
 02:20 Food Factory USA
 02:45 Food Factory USA
 03:10 Close Encounters
 03:35 Close Encounters
 04:00 Kings Of Construction
 04:48 Mythbusters
 05:36 How Do They Do It?
 06:00 Food Factory
 06:24 Food Factory USA
 06:49 Food Factory USA
 07:12 Close Encounters
 07:37 Close Encounters
 08:00 How Do They Do It?
 08:26 Kings Of Construction
 09:14 Mythbusters
 10:02 Close Encounters
 10:27 Close Encounters
 10:50 How Do They Do It?
 11:14 Food Factory
 11:38 How The Earth Works
 12:26 Kings Of Construction
 13:14 Mythbusters
 14:02 How Do They Do It?
 14:26 Food Factory
 14:50 Close Encounters
 15:15 Close Encounters
 15:38 Kings Of Construction
 16:26 Food Factory USA
 16:51 Food Factory USA
 17:14 Mythbusters
 18:02 Close Encounters
 18:27 Close Encounters
 18:50 Kings Of Construction
 19:40 Mythbusters
 20:30 Mythbusters
 21:20 How Do They Do It?
 21:45 Food Factory
 22:10 Close Encounters
 22:35 Close Encounters
 23:00 Mythbusters
 23:50 Kings Of Construction



00:20 Iyanla: Fix My Life
 01:10 90 Days To Wed
 02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
 02:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
 02:50 Love, Lust Or Run
 03:15 Cake Boss
 03:35 Iyanla: Fix My Life
 04:20 Little People, Big World
 04:45 Little People, Big World
 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
 06:00 Little People, Big World
 06:25 Little People, Big World
 06:50 Little People, Big World
 07:15 Little People, Big World
 07:40 Little People, Big World
 08:05 Little People, Big World
 08:30 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
 09:20 Sister Wives
 10:10 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
 11:00 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
 11:50 Love At First Swipe
 12:15 Love At First Swipe
 12:40 Love At First Swipe
 13:05 Love At First Swipe
 13:30 Love, Lust Or Run
 13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
 14:45 Iyanla: Fix My Life
 15:35 Cake Boss
 16:00 Cake Boss
 16:25 Cake Boss
 16:50 Cake Boss
 17:15 Cake Boss
 17:40 Save My Style
 18:05 Save My Style
 18:30 Little Miss Atlanta
 19:20 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
 20:10 Sister Wives
 21:00 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
 21:50 Sister Wives



00:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
 01:00 Ancient Discoveries
 02:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
 02:50 Ancient Aliens
 03:40 Million Dollar Genius
 04:30 The Universe
 05:20 America: The Story Of The U.S.
 06:10 The Universe
 07:00 Ancient Discoveries
 08:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
 09:00 Ancient Aliens
 10:00 Million Dollar Genius
 11:00 The Universe
 12:00 Ancient Top 10
 13:00 Ancient Top 10
 14:00 Ancient Top 10
 15:00 Ancient Top 10
 16:00 Ancient Top 10
 17:00 Ancient Top 10

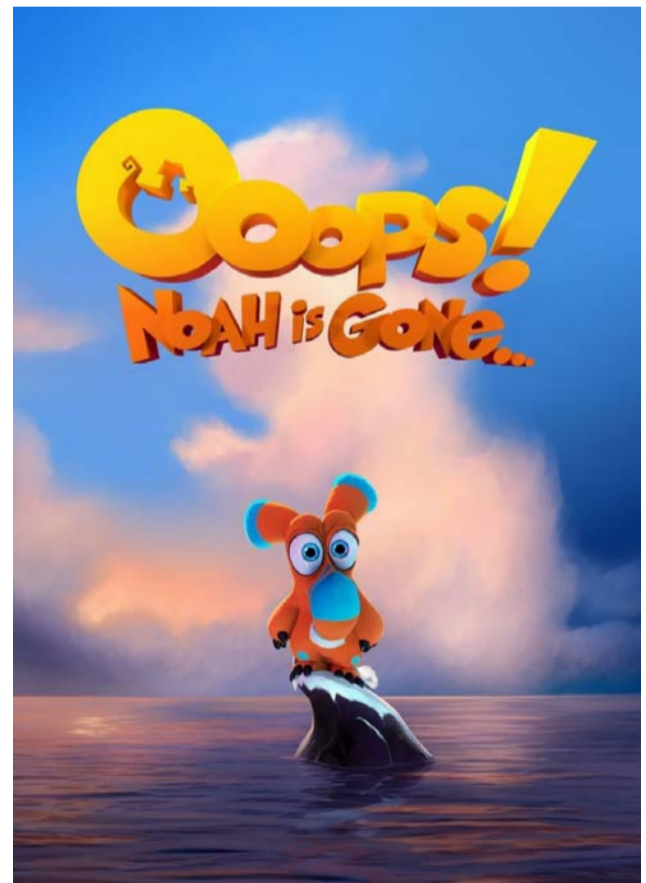
18:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
 19:00 Ancient Discoveries
 20:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
 21:00 Ancient Aliens
 22:00 Smartest Guy In The Room
 22:30 Smartest Guy In The Room
 23:00 The Universe



00:20 Lost Worlds
 01:10 Sean Bean On Waterloo
 02:00 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
 02:50 Storage Wars
 03:15 American Pickers
 04:05 Pawn Stars
 04:30 Pawn Stars
 05:00 Mountain Men
 06:00 Lost Worlds
 06:50 Time Team
 07:40 Battle 360
 08:30 Ax Men
 09:20 Ice Road Truckers
 10:10 Aussie Pickers
 11:00 American Pickers
 11:50 Big Easy Motors
 12:15 Big Easy Motors
 12:40 Pawn Stars
 13:05 Pawn Stars
 13:30 Swamp People
 18:30 Shipping Wars
 19:20 Leepu And Pitbull
 20:10 Ice Road Truckers
 21:00 American Pickers
 21:50 Ozzy & Jack's World Detour



00:00 Tia Mowry At Home
 01:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 03:00 Man Fire Food
 04:00 Chopped
 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
 06:00 Barefoot Contessa
 07:00 The Kitchen
 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
 09:00 Cooking For Real
 10:00 Siba's Table
 11:00 The Kitchen
 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
 13:00 Siba's Table
 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 15:00 Chopped
 16:00 The Kitchen
 17:00 Cooking For Real
 18:00 Chopped
 19:00 Iron Chef America
 20:00 Ching's Amazing Asia
 21:00 Reza, Spice Prince Of Thailand
 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 23:00 Guy's Grocery Games



OOPS NOAH IS GONE ON OSN MOVIES KIDS HD

Word Search Puzzles

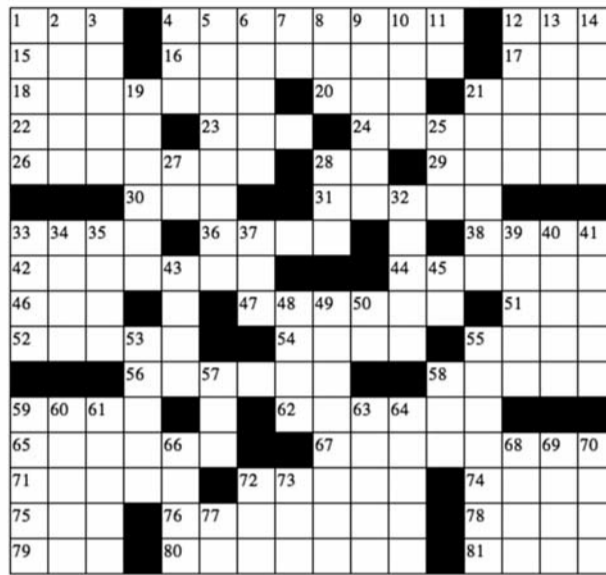
Types of Music 1

Find and circle all of the different types of music that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 14 letters spell an additional type of music.

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R J S A M T S I R H C L A R O H C
H A K L O P D N A B G I B H C A Y
T Z C T H N E W W A V E M I I B W
E Z O A V A N T G A R D E P T M A
R A R M E R E N G U E A N H S A L
A C C I L E D E H C Y S P O U S T
B A I I D A I A B N G P Y P O H Z
A P S B N D T R C A A L U O C E T
C E S S N O O I N I L I C N A A A
T L A I A A R G N I D N D N K V N
N L L L D R S T B M E R A N G V G
E A C W O T G A C M U C O O I M O
I C A S A U K E A E I S T C K E C
B Y N R O C N L U X L H I L K T S
M L A A O U F G E L I E O C U A I
A P E R D S L M E C B F W O R L D
```

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| ACAPPELLA | CHRISTMAS | HIP HOP | PSYCHEDELIC |
| ACID ROCK | CLASSIC ROCK | INDIAN | PUNK |
| ACOUSTIC | DANCE | INDIE | ROCKABILLY |
| AMBIENT | DISCO | JAZZ | SAMBA |
| AVANT-GARDE | ELECTRONICA | LATIN MUSIC | SOUL |
| BIG BAND | FLAMENCO | LOUNGE | TANGO |
| BLUEGRASS | FOLK | MERENGUE | WALTZ |
| BROADWAY | GANGSTA RAP | MEXICAN | WORLD |
| CABARET | GOthic | NEW WAVE | |
| CHORAL | HEAVY METAL | POLKA | |

CROSSWORD 1571



ACROSS

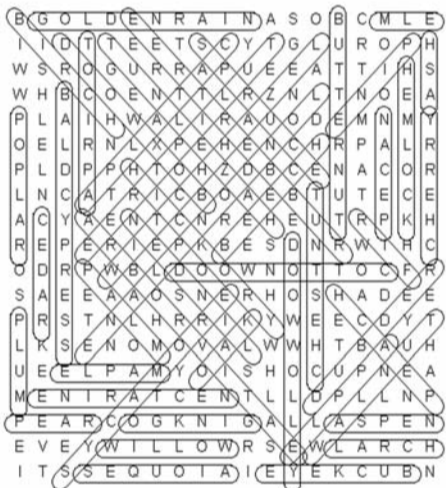
- An enclosed space.
- A source of the dye archil and of litmus.
- Uncastrated adult male sheep.
- A type of submachine gun that is designed and manufactured in Israel.
- Oblivious of dangers or perils or calmly resolute in facing them.
- The compass point midway between east and southeast.
- A constituent (proton or neutron) of an atomic nucleus.
- A change in the electrical properties of the skin in response to stress or anxiety.
- Antibacterial agent (trade names Mandelamine and Urex) that is contained in many products that are used to treat urinary infections.
- An elegantly dressed man (often with affected manners).
- A spot that is open late at night and that provides entertainment (as singers or dancers) as well as dancing and food and drink.
- Spread or diffuse through.
- An analytic or interpretive literary composition.
- One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
- The act of rewriting something.
- Cut the head of.
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- A Turkish river flowing south southwest into the Mediterranean.
- The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.
- Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
- (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir and avenger of Balder.
- A small hole (usually round and finished around the edges) in cloth or leather for the passage of a cord.
- United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
- A motley assortment of things.
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- A hormone secreted by the pancreas.
- The basic unit of money in Nigeria.

DOWN

- The first light of day.
- Of a deep somewhat purplish blue color similar to that of a clear October sky.
- Chick-pea plant.
- European strong-scented perennial herb with gray-green bitter-tasting leaves.
- A member of the Iroquoian people formerly living between Lake Chaplain and the Saint Lawrence River.
- Small and light boat.
- A radioactive transuranic element.
- A cgs unit of work or energy.
- An East Indian sailor.
- The basic unit of money on Malta.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- The process of shedding tears (usually accompanied by sobs or other inarticulate sounds).
- Widely distributed lichens usually having a grayish or yellow pendulous freely branched thallus.
- Inferior in rank or status.
- Being eight more than sixty.
- The quarter of many North African cities in which the citadel is located.
- Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- The cry made by sheep.
- Port city in the United Arab Emirates on the Persian Gulf.
- Make anew.
- The part of the eye that contains the iris and ciliary body and choroid.
- Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
- Fiber from an East Indian plant Hibiscus cannabinus.
- Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
- A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
- A carriage consisting of two wheels and calash top.
- Half the width of an em.
- At any time.
- A long Turkish knife with a curved blade having a single edge.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 100 liters.
- Hungarian composer of light operas (1870-1948).
- A state of Uganda and site of a former Bantu kingdom.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
- An upward slope or grade (as in a road).
- Any of various organs that synthesize substances needed by the body and release it through ducts or directly into the bloodstream.
- A city in northwestern Turkey.
- Round object that is hit or thrown or kicked in games.
- A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- A quantity of no importance.
- An advanced law degree.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.

Yesterday's Solution

Trees



- | | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| APPLE | CEDAR | LINDEN | POPLAR |
| APRICOT | CHERRY | LONDON PLANE | REDBUD |
| ASH | CHESTNUT | MAPLE | RUBBER TREE |
| ASPEN | COTTONWOOD | NECTARINE | SEQUOIA |
| ARBORVITAE | ELM | OAK | SPRUCE |
| BALD CYPRESS | FIR | PALM | SYCAMORE |
| BEECH | GINKGO | PEACH | TULIPTREE |
| BIRCH | GOLDENRAIN | PEAR | WALNUT |
| BOXWOOD | HAZELNUT | PECAN | WITCHHAZEL |
| BUCKEYE | HEMLOCK | PLUM | WILLOW |
| BITTERNUT | HICKORY | PINE | YELLOWWOOD |
| CATALPA | LARCH | | |

The hidden sentence is: A SOCIETY GROWS GREAT WHEN OLD MEN PLANT TREES WHOSE SHADE THEY KNOW THEY SHALL NEVER SIT IN

Daily SuDoku

9		6	3			5		
	4			7				3
				4			8	9
4	9		6					
		1				4		
					7		9	8
7	5			6				
3				5			2	
		9			4	6		7

Yesterday's Solution

4	1	7	2	8	5	3	6	9
8	9	3	6	1	7	4	5	2
6	5	2	4	9	3	7	1	8
1	7	9	3	4	6	2	8	5
2	3	6	8	5	1	9	4	7
5	8	4	9	7	2	1	3	6
9	6	8	7	3	4	5	2	1
3	2	1	5	6	9	8	7	4
7	4	5	1	2	8	6	9	3

Yesterday's Solution

B	P	S		F	A	B	A	C	E	A	E		S	P	A		
L	A	C		U	G	A	R	I	T	I	C		P	E	P		
A	R	A		L	A	I	C		A	G	O	N	I	S	E		
B	A	B	K	A		Z	E	D		I	N	O	C	O	R		
				U	N	F	E	D		G	N	O	M	E			
I	S	C	H	I	A			B	R	A	M	A		C	M		
S	O	O	N		C	H	E	L	A		I	D	A	H	O		
A	L	S		N	A	B		O	P	E	C		M	O	N		
A	F	E	A	R	D			I	C	E	D		R	U	S	T	
C	A	C	K	L	E	R				Y	E	N	I	S	E	I	
				A	B			A	B	C		N	O	V	E	N	A
A	H	A	B		T			C	A	M		P	A				
P	A	R	A		S	O	L			A	M	A	L	G	A	M	
P	I	D			H	O	U	S	E	F	U	L			A	B	A
A	D	E			A	N	S	E	R	I	N	E			F	E	S
L	A	B			M	A	H	A	R	A	J	A			F	D	A

SCIENTISTS SEEK HOLY GRAIL OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN OMAN

WADI ABDHAH: Deep in the jagged red mountains of Oman, geologists are drilling in search of the holy grail of reversing climate change: An efficient and cheap way to remove carbon dioxide from the air and oceans. They are coring samples from one of the world's only exposed sections of the Earth's mantle to uncover how a spontaneous natural process millions of years ago transformed CO2 into limestone and marble.

As the world mobilizes to confront climate change, the main focus has been on reducing emissions through fuel efficient cars and cleaner power plants. But some researchers are also testing ways to remove or recycle carbon already in the seas and sky. The Hellisheidi geothermal plant in Iceland injects carbon into volcanic rock. At the massive Sinopec fertilizer plant in China, CO2 is filtered and reused as fuel. In all, 16 industrial projects currently capture and store around 27 million tons of CO2, according to the International Energy Agency. That's less than 0.1 percent of global emissions - but the technology has shown promise.

"Any one technique is not guaranteed to succeed," said Stuart Haszeldine, a geology professor at the University of Edinburgh who serves on a U.N. climate body studying how to reduce atmospheric carbon. "If we're interested as a species, we've got to try a lot harder and do a lot more and a lot of different actions," he said.

The mantle of the Earth

One such action is underway in the Al-Hajjar Mountains of Oman, in a quiet corner of the Arabian Peninsula, where a unique rock formation pulls carbon out of thin air. Peter Kelemen, a 61-year-old geochemist at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, has been exploring Oman's hills for nearly three decades. "You can walk down these beautiful canyons and basically



This March 1, 2017 photo shows a drilling site of the Oman Drilling Project in the Al-Hajjar mountains of Oman. — AP

descend 20 kilometers into the earth's interior," he said. The sultanate boasts the largest exposed sections of the Earth's mantle, thrust up by plate tectonics millions of years ago. The mantle contains peridotite, a rock that reacts with the carbon in air and water to form marble and limestone. "Every single magnesium atom in these rocks has made friends with the carbon dioxide to form solid limestone, magnesium carbonate, plus quartz," he said as he patted a rust-colored boulder in the Wadi Mansah valley. "There's about a billion tons of CO2 in this mountain," he said, pointing off to the east.

Rain and springs pull carbon from the exposed mantle to form stalactites and stalagmites in mountain caves. Natural pools develop surface scum of white carbonate. Scratch

off this thin white film, Kelemen said, and it'll grow back in a day. "For a geologist this is supersonic," he said. He and a team of 40 scientists have formed the Oman Drilling Project in order to better understand how that process works and whether it could be used to scrub the earth's carbon-laden atmosphere. The \$3.5 million project has support from across the globe, including NASA.

Carbon crime

Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas driving climate change, which threatens political instability, severe weather and food insecurity worldwide, according to the United Nations climate body. Natural CO2 levels have risen from 280 to 405 parts per million since the Industrial Revolution, and current esti-

mates hold that the world will be 6 C hotter by 2100. In 2015, 196 nations signed the Paris climate accords, agreeing to curb greenhouse gas emissions to levels that would keep the rise in the Earth's temperature to under 2 C.

That has injected new urgency into the work underway in Oman, where Kelemen's team recently spent four months extracting dozens of core samples, which they hope to use to construct a geological history of the process that turns CO2 into carbonate. "It's like a jigsaw puzzle," said Nehal Warsi, 33, who oversees the drilling process.

Around 13 tons of core samples from four different sites will be sent to the Chikyu, a state-of-the-art research vessel off the coast of Japan, where Kelemen and other geologists will analyze them in round-the-clock shifts. They hope to answer the question of how the rocks managed to capture so much CO2 over the course of 90 million years - and to see if there's a way to speed up the timetable. Kelemen thinks a drilling operation could cycle carbon-rich water into the newly formed seabed on oceanic ridges far below the surface. Just like in Oman's mountains, the submerged rock would chemically absorb carbon from the water. The water could then be cycled back to the surface to absorb more CO2 from the atmosphere, in a sort of conveyor belt.

Such a project would require years more of testing, but Kelemen hopes the energy industry, with its offshore drilling expertise and deep pockets, will take interest. "Ultimately, if the goal is to capture billions and billions of tons of carbon, that's where James Cameron comes in," he said, half joking, referring to the "Titanic" and "Avatar" director who has also pioneered undersea technology. Cameron himself piloted a submersible to the deepest point on Earth in 2012 and retrieved samples while filming "Deepsea Challenge." "He hasn't responded to my messages yet," Kelemen said. — AP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
استشاري أطفال
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FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2017



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (13/04/2017 TO 19/04/2017)

Channel	Time	Program	Time	Program	Time	Program
SHARQIA-1	12:00 PM	FEIN QALBY	12:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	1:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	2:15 PM	FEIN QALBY	2:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	4:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	4:30 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	4:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	7:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	6:15 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	6:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	9:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	8:15 PM	FEIN QALBY	8:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	12:30 AM	
	10:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE	10:00 PM	AL-KOUT.2		
	12:30 AM	FEIN QALBY	12:15 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:45 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
				RABBIT SCHOOL	2:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
				RABBIT SCHOOL	4:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
				FAST & FURIOUS 8	6:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
				FAST & FURIOUS 8	8:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
				FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:30 PM	
SHARQIA-2	11:45 AM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	1:00 PM	AL-KOUT.3		
	1:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	1:45 PM	GOING IN STYLE	12:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE
	4:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	3:45 PM	GOING IN STYLE	2:30 PM	THE BELKO EXPERIMENT
	7:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	6:30 PM	THE BELKO EXPERIMENT	4:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM
	10:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	9:15 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM	6:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM
	12:45 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	12:05 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	8:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM
					10:30 PM	THE BELKO EXPERIMENT
					12:30 AM	
SHARQIA-3	12:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	12:00 PM	BAIRAQ-1		
	1:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE	2:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	12:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	3:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	3:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	2:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	6:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	5:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	5:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	9:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	8:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	8:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	11:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	8:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
				Special Show "FAST & FURIOUS 8"	11:00 PM	
MUHALAB-1	11:45 AM	FEIN QALBY	12:00 PM	AVENUES-1		
	2:00 PM	FEIN QALBY	2:00 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	12:00 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL
	2:15 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	3:45 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	2:00 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL
	4:15 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	5:30 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	3:45 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL
	6:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	7:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM	5:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM
	8:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	9:45 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM	7:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM
	10:00 PM	FEIN QALBY	12:15 AM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM	9:45 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM
	12:15 AM	FEIN QALBY		AVENUES-2		
MUHALAB-2	12:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	1:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX	1:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX
	3:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	1:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -3D-4DX	1:45 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE -3D-4DX
	5:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	3:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX	3:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX
	8:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	6:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX	6:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX
	11:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	9:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX	9:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX
			12:05 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX	12:05 AM	
MUHALAB-3	11:30 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:45 AM	AVENUES-3		
	2:00 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	2:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:45 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	4:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	5:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	2:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	6:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	8:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	5:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	9:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	8:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	12:15 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8		FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
FANAR-1	12:00 PM	FEIN QALBY	12:00 PM	AVENUES-4		
	2:30 PM	FEIN QALBY	2:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	12:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	4:45 PM	FEIN QALBY	5:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	2:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	7:00 PM	FEIN QALBY	5:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	5:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	9:15 PM	FEIN QALBY	8:15 PM	Special Show "SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE"	5:30 PM	Special Show "SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE"
	11:30 PM	FEIN QALBY	11:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	8:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
				FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
FANAR-2	12:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE	11:30 AM	360° 1		
	2:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	2:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:30 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	2:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE	5:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	2:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	4:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	7:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	5:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	6:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	10:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	7:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
	8:30 PM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	1:15 AM	GET OUT	10:30 PM	GET OUT
	10:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE			1:15 AM	
	12:30 AM	GOING IN STYLE				
FANAR-3	1:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	1:30 PM	360° 2		
	1:30 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	3:45 PM	AFTERMATH	1:30 PM	AFTERMATH
	3:30 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	6:45 PM	THE GREAT FATHER- Malayalam	3:45 PM	THE GREAT FATHER- Malayalam
	5:15 PM	RABBIT SCHOOL	9:45 PM	THE GREAT FATHER- Malayalam	6:45 PM	THE GREAT FATHER- Malayalam
	7:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	9:45 PM	THU+FRI+MON	9:45 PM	THU+FRI+MON
	9:30 PM	THE BELKO EXPERIMENT	12:45 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	9:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND
	11:15 PM	THE BELKO EXPERIMENT		NO THU+FRI+MON		NO THU+FRI+MON
	1:00 AM	THE BELKO EXPERIMENT		AFTERMATH	12:45 AM	AFTERMATH
FANAR-4	11:45 AM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	12:15 PM	360° 3		
	1:45 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	2:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE	12:15 PM	GOING IN STYLE
	4:30 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	4:45 PM	GOING IN STYLE	2:30 PM	GOING IN STYLE
	7:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	7:00 PM	GOING IN STYLE	4:45 PM	GOING IN STYLE
	10:00 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	9:15 PM	AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	7:00 PM	AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic
	12:45 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	11:30 AM	GOING IN STYLE	9:15 PM	GOING IN STYLE
				AL-KOUT.1	11:30 AM	AL-KOUT.1
				SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE	11:30 AM	SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE

CHANGE OF NAME

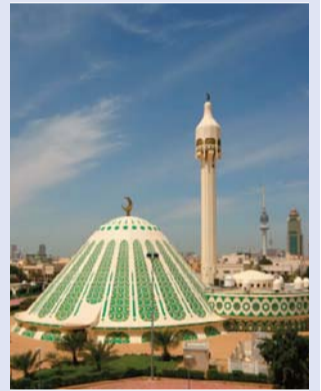
The public is hereby notified that ANNALEE VILLAREAL HER-NANDEZ has filed with the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, State of Kuwait, a Migrant Petition for Change of First Name of her daughter, from LIRY to LYRA ABBYGAIL in the Report of Birth filed with the Embassy on 11 April 2017 under Registry Number 2012-4140291. Any person having knowledge and/or claiming interest or may be adversely affected by said Petition, file a written opposition with the Philippine Embassy within ten (10) working days. (C 5295) 13-4-2017

I, Khalilulla Nabujan Sayyed 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

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	04:01
Shorook	05:24
Duhr:	11:48
Asr:	15:23
Maghrib:	18:14
Isha:	19:34



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
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381

Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2017

CHINA ECONOMIC BRIGHTENS AS TRADE UP, TENSIONS DOWN

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Million-dollar teachers:
Cashing in with lessons



TAIF: Hajji Moussa harvests Damask rose flowers, at Al-Shafa farm, in Taif, Saudi Arabia, yesterday. Taif is known for its roses and yearly millions are harvested for local factories that produce rose water, essential oil, cosmetics and natural medical products. —AFP

SAUDI RAISES \$9 BN IN ISLAMIC BOND ISSUE

ANALYSTS SAY MOVE COULD EASE PRESSURE ON FOREIGN RESERVES

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia raised \$9 billion in its first global Islamic bond issue, the government announced yesterday, a move analysts say could ease pressure on foreign reserves. The sale of Islamic bonds, known as sukuk, comes after the kingdom in October turned to the conventional global debt market for the first time, raising \$17.5 billion in a bond issue. Saudi Arabia has also sold domestic bonds and drawn on its accumulated reserves, all in an effort to reform the economy and address budget deficits caused by a collapse in oil revenues since 2014.

"The ministry of finance received significant interest for the first international issue of the sukuk program with an order book from

investors in excess of \$33 billion," the official Saudi Press Agency said. There will be two tranches of \$4.5 billion, one maturing in 2022 and another in 2027, reflecting "the strong fundamentals of the Saudi economy," it said. Islamic financial instruments including sukuk are structured to comply with Islamic law, which does not allow the payment of interest.

Alleviating the pressure

Riyadh has forecast a budget deficit of \$53 billion this year, after an even bigger shortfall last year prompted subsidy cuts and delays in major projects. In a report this month, Saudi firm Jadwa Investment said the kingdom's foreign reserves, including securities, bank

deposits and gold, had fallen to a near six-year low. Reserves dropped to \$514 billion in February, down \$10 billion from the previous month and the lowest level since August 2011, Jadwa said. "Any new international sovereign bond, or indeed sukuk issuance, should alleviate the pressure on foreign exchange reserve withdrawals," the researchers said. Patrick Dennis, lead Middle East economist at Oxford Economics in London, told AFP the sukuk sale helps put Saudi Arabia "in a strong position in terms of funding".

While easing the rundown in reserves, it should also continue to reduce the need for borrowing through domestic bonds, which now has not occurred for about six months, he

said. Domestic bond purchases put pressure on the liquidity of banks, threatening their ability to lend and constraining economic growth as a result. Dennis said the foreign exchange reserves are still "quite a lot to play with over the next few years."

Attention should rather be on whether the kingdom can diversify its economy without greatly harming growth, so that it can continue overseas borrowing at attractive rates, he said. Saudi Arabia last year began a wide-ranging economic and social reform effort. Known as Vision 2030, it calls for development of non-oil industries, small and medium enterprises, and a broader investment base, all of which should employ more Saudis. — AFP

US WEEKLY JOBLESS CLAIMS SHOW TIGHT LABOR MARKET

WASHINGTON: The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits unexpectedly fell last week, suggesting the labor market remains strong despite a sharp slowdown in job growth in March.

Other data yesterday showed producer prices falling in March for the first time in seven months. Prices, however, recorded their biggest year-on-year increase in five years. The reports pointed to a steadily firming economy and could allow the Federal Reserve to increase interest rates again in June.

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits slipped 1,000 to a seasonally adjusted

234,000 for the week ended April 8, the Labor Department said. That was the third straight weekly decline in claims and left them not too far from a 44-year low of 227,000 hit in February. "Claims remain low, adding to the evidence that the slowing in payrolls in March was due to weather effects," said Jim O'Sullivan, chief US economist at High Frequency Economics in Valhalla, New York. Claims have now been below 300,000, a threshold associated with a healthy labor market, for 110 straight weeks. That is the longest such stretch since 1970, when the labor market was smaller. The labor market is near full

employment, with the unemployment rate close to a 10-year low of 4.5 percent.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast first-time applications for jobless benefits rising to 245,000 last week. Claims tend to be volatile around this time of the year because of the different timings of spring and Easter holidays. The four-week moving average of claims, considered a better measure of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, fell 3,000 to 247,250 last week.

The low level of claims suggests that a sharp slowdown in job growth in March was

an aberration and that the labor market continues to tighten. Nonfarm payrolls increased by 98,000 jobs last month, the fewest since last May. US financial markets were little moved by the data as investors continued to digest comments by President Donald Trump to the Wall Street Journal late on Wednesday that the dollar was "getting too strong" and that he preferred a "low-interest rate policy." The Fed raised its benchmark overnight interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point last month and has said it expected to increase borrowing costs at least twice more this year. — Reuters

FRENCH VOTE HAS POTENTIAL TO STIR UP GLOBAL ECONOMY

LAGGING ECONOMY FORMS BACKDROP TO ELECTION

LONDON: If Donald Trump's election in the United States and Britain's decision to quit the European Union stirred the global economic waters, then there is the potential for a tsunami on the near horizon. The coming week is the last before the first round of France's presidential election on April 23. It has already been a barrel of surprises—an incumbent not running, the far right in ascendance, an independent seen as likely winner, a scandal hampering the early favorite.

But the latest twist—one with arguably the most potential global economic impact—could conceivably see a far-left candidate, one-time communist Jean-Luc Mélenchon, make it through to the May 7 run-off against a far-right nationalist, Marine Le Pen. The potential economic shock stems from the fact that both are against the euro and the European Union, threatening the stability and even existence of both. The word Frexit—the Gallic version of Brexit—has been doing the rounds.

Boosted by a strong performance in televised debates, Mélenchon has gathered momentum in the past week. One poll on Tuesday showed his support as high as 19 percent, within four points of centrist Emmanuel Macron and within five of Le Pen; the latest survey on Thursday put him on 17 percent. "For France, Europe and markets, a run-off between Mélenchon and ultra-right Marine Le Pen on May 7 would be a choice between bad and ugly," Berenberg bank said in a note on Thursday.

The odds are still strongly against it happening: the polls show former economy minister Macron winning the big prize. But the fact is that perennial outsider Mélenchon and Le Pen are in the frame. France's economy offers a mixed bag. Unemployment is at 10 percent and has been around that mark for five years. Projected economic growth of just 1.4 percent for this year puts France down at 25th equal (with Belgium) out of 28 EU countries.

Other data shows the strain too. A study by World Economics of the relative value of euros within the euro zone, shows a yawning gap between Germany and France, making the latter far less competitive. But although growth is weak, France performs much better than other economies such as the



PARIS: People walk in front of the Eiffel tower. — AFP

United States and Britain in terms of income equality. One recent study, for example, found that the median French income in 2012 was about 17 percent higher than in 1996, while the median U.S. income was just 2 percent above its 1996 level. How all this plays with the French equivalent of the angry, left-out voters who went for Trump and Brexit remains to be seen.

Bright spot

One recent bright spot for France has been the Purchasing Managers' Index, which has shown a degree of rising optimism among businesses as the euro zone also improves. On Friday in the coming week—just before the first round vote—flash PMIs for April are released. Last time around all three of France's readings—manufacturing, services and composite—were well in the expansion range, particularly services.

Early Reuters polling suggests the services and manufacturing reports will essentially be unchanged, possibly as a result of election uncertainty. The euro zone and Germany will also report. The former is expected to improve slightly on a composite basis, which would add

to the overall view of a steadily recovering economy. German manufacturing could show a tiny dip.

Outside the euro zone, British retail sales data for March, released on Friday April 21, should provide another glimpse of how consumer sentiment is holding up as Brexit negotiations loom. Economists and others were surprised by the tenacity of British consumers after last year's vote to leave the EU, but there have been recent signs of a tailing off.

The British Retail Consortium said in the past week that its gauge of first-quarter consumer shopping showed the slowest growth since 2008. It was put down to inflation rising as a result of the post-Brexit vote fall in the pound. There were also some seasonal impacts relating to when Easter fell last year. Snapshots of the state of the US economy, meanwhile, will come from New York and Philadelphia Federal Reserve reports and from March industrial output data. The latter is expected to climb, reflecting an economy that has recovered well enough for the US Federal Reserve to begin a tentative rate-tightening cycle. — Reuters

OIL MARKET 'CLOSE TO BALANCE' DESPITE OPEC CUTS SAYS IEA

PARIS: Supply and demand in the oil market are close to matching up, the IEA said yesterday, as landmark OPEC-led production cuts are mitigated by rising US supply and slipping worldwide demand growth. The compliance rate with the agreement among OPEC members and some non-members, including Russia, "has been impressive", the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its monthly oil market report, giving a lift to oil prices.

But oil at above \$50 a barrel has, in turn, attracted higher-cost producers in the United States back to the market, and frantic American drilling will push non-OPEC supply to surprisingly high levels throughout the year, the IEA predicted. "It can be argued confidently that the market is already very close to balance, and as more data becomes available this will become clearer," it said in the report. "Although the oil market will likely tighten throughout the year, overall non-OPEC production, not just in the US, will soon be on the rise again," it said.

At the end of November, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed to cut output by 1.2 million barrels per day (mb/d) from January 1, initially for a period of six months. Then in December, non-OPEC producers led by Russia agreed to cut their own output to 558,000 barrels per day. The aim was to reduce a glut in global oil supply that had depressed prices. Reports this week said that OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia is pushing the cartel's producers to extend the agreement by another six months at their meeting in May.

A less oil-thirsty world

The IEA made no prediction about such a likelihood, but said that a consequence of OPEC "hypothetically" renewing the deal would be to support prices more and give further encouragement to US shale oil producers. This means that non-OPEC oil production will soon be on the rise again.

"Even after taking into account production cut pledges from the eleven non-OPEC countries, unplanned outages in Canada as well as in the North Sea, we expect (non-OPEC) production will grow again on a year-on-year basis by May," the report said. Oil inventories fell in March but probably showed a rise in the first quarter of this year overall because oil consumers stockpiled crude before the OPEC-led cuts took effect properly, the IEA said. "The net result is that global stocks might have marginally increased in 1Q17," it said.

On the demand side, the IEA revised down its estimates for the worldwide thirst for oil, meaning there will be more oil available than previously thought. "New data shows weaker-than-expected growth in a number of countries including Russia, India, several Middle Eastern countries, Korea and the US, where demand has stalled in recent months," it said. Demand growth for 2017 is now expected to be 1.3 million barrels per day, down from the IEA's previous forecast of 1.4 million.

Oil prices declined yesterday, with US benchmark WTI futures down 10 cents at \$53.01 per barrel, and Europe's Brent contracts four cents lower at \$55.82. Analysts cited the IEA report and also OPEC's warning Wednesday that the cartel's efforts to fight a global glut are threatened by American firms pumping oil with gusto. — AFP

EARTHQUAKE-HIT FARMERS IN ITALY REST HOPES ON LENTILS

CASTELLUCCIO: Over seven months after a devastating earthquake hit the central parts of Italy, farmers from the Umbria region are hoping that their fields of lentils can help revive local agriculture and tourism. Escorted by the military through unstable tunnels along the road, around 20 tractors reached the plains at the foot of the Sibillini mountains for the first time since October, to ready the land for sowing the lentil seeds.

The lentils grown near the village of Castelluccio are one of the many typical regional products, including saffron and cured hams, whose production and sale have been hit by multiple earthquakes last year which killed nearly 300 people and destroyed thousands of homes and businesses. Italy's main farming association Coldiretti has estimated at 2.3 billion euros (\$2.4 billion) the cost of the direct and indirect damage done to rural areas, barns, machinery, mills, storehouses and infrastructure and the destruction of animals and crops.

"Returning to Castelluccio ... is a rebirth for everyone, it is truly a symbolic moment. We need to go up to start the work anew, to start the new crops and to give our youth the possibility to start a new life," said Gianni Coccia, president of the Cooperative of Castelluccio Lentils. Much of Castelluccio was destroyed by especially powerful quakes in August and October, which lowered the land in the area by up to 70 cm and ripped up many access roads.

The territory around the quake epicentre is mainly used for agriculture and animal rearing, with over 25,000 small companies, the majority of which are family-run, and almost 300,000 hectares of crops. Known across the country and abroad, the tiny lentils are a symbol of the area and are grown over 500 hectares on an upland area 1,400 meters above sea level.

Seeds this year will be planted a month later than usual but locals trust it will be done in time for the fields to burst into the bright colors of the so-called "Fiorita" - stunning blossoms created by rows of poppies, gentians and narcissus that sprout in June next to the lentil plants. The natural show of reds, yellow and blues usually attract hundreds of thousands of visitors and is a key date in the local tourism calendar.

"It is important to support the area so that reconstruction of towns goes in parallel with the recovery of the economy, which in this area is linked to food and tourism," Coldiretti president Roberto Moncalvo said. Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni has approved a draft law to help people affected by the quakes, including 35 million euros to compensate farmers for lost income. —Reuters

JPMORGAN CHASE AND CITIGROUP PROFITS UP

NEW YORK: Strong trading results in the first quarter drove profits higher at JPMorgan Chase and Citigroup, which also got a boost from a decline in funds set aside for bad energy loans, the banks reported yesterday. But in the wake of its fake accounts scandal, Wells Fargo's net income was flat, also reflecting the bank's smaller presence in trading and investment banking, which buoyed results for the other two banks.

"The momentum we saw across many of our businesses towards the end of last year carried into the first quarter, resulting in significantly better overall performance than a year ago," Citigroup chief executive Michael Corbat said. JPMorgan chief executive Jamie Dimon said the results reflected the fact US consumers and businesses were "healthy overall." At Citigroup, net income for the quarter ending March 31 rose 16.8 percent from the same three-month period last year to \$4.1 billion.

At JPMorgan net income for the quarter ending March 31 was \$6.5 billion, also up 16.8 percent. At Wells Fargo, net income came in at \$5.5 billion, the same as the year-ago level. JPMorgan cited higher debt and equity underwriting fees and gains in trading revenues tied to fixed income and the trading of other products. Citigroup also pointed to strength in investment banking and trading.

All three banks benefited from a decline in reserves set aside to cover bad energy loans compared with the year-ago period, when low oil prices threatened petroleum producers. Wells Fargo's results came three days after the bank released a report on the factors that led to scandal over the opening of about two million deposit and credit card accounts without the customers' approval or knowledge. — AFP



NEW YORK: In this Monday April 3, 2017, photo, Mary Beth Nerone, a former middle-school teacher from Rochester, shows materials from her online store. — AP

MILLION-DOLLAR TEACHERS: CASHING IN WITH LESSONS

TURNING BASIC SCHOOL SUBJECTS INTO GOLD

NEW YORK: Miss Kindergarten is in the million-dollar club. So are Lovin Lit, the Moffatt Girls and about a dozen other teacher-entrepreneurs who are spinning reading, math, science and social studies into gold by selling their lesson plans online to fellow teachers around the world. Despite worries from some educators, such online marketplaces are booming, driven by rising standards and the willingness of teachers to pay out of their own pockets for classroom-tested materials.

"I am so thankful and blessed that it came into my life and that my passion and career can kind of mesh into one," says Miss Kindergarten, aka 32-year-old Hadar Hartstein, of Lake Forest, California, who says she has earned more than \$1 million in sales over the past six years, enough to take this year and maybe the next few off from her teaching job to be with her newborn daughter.

Her more than 300 offerings on the popular Teachers Pay Teachers site range from free alphabet flash cards and a \$1.50 Popsicle party counting activity to a \$120 full-year unit on math and literacy, all of them widely promoted on her blog and social media accounts. "You definitely have to look at it as another full-time job," she says. "You have to put a lot of effort into it."

Monetizing of lessons

Teachers Pay Teachers contends that it hit a milestone last year, when its 80,000 contributors earned more than \$100 million, and that at least a dozen have become millionaires since the site launched a decade ago. Other major sites including Teachwise and Teacher's Notebook, and recently such corporate players as Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Amazon, have launched sites of their own. But some educators worry the increasing monetizing of lessons will stifle the longstanding practice of teachers freely sharing their ideas. And legal experts question whether teachers actually have ownership of the lessons they are selling.

For teachers buying the materials, however, it's a major time saver, allowing them to reclaim the nights and weekends otherwise spent starting lessons from scratch, often for no more than the price of their morning coffee. Ann Arbor, Michigan, middle school teacher Samantha Cucu said that when she first started teaching three years ago, she created her own materials but was swayed by colleagues who made a compelling argument: "Why are you reinventing the wheel?"

She has since bought about 120 resources and gotten 132 others from Teachers Pay Teachers' free offerings. "Sometimes they're super-easy small purchases, like \$1.20 here, \$2.50 there, and sometimes they're larger. I try not to spend over \$15," says Cucu who estimated that her prep time for school plummeted from 20 to 30 hours a week to two hours if she can find what she needs online. "It's huge," says Cucu, who has a year-old baby.

Online store

At Teachers Pay Teachers, teachers set their own prices for 2.5 million resources and give a commission to the site. With a \$59.95 premium membership, the commission is 15 percent. With a free basic membership, it's 40 percent. "My first sale was 80 cents. It was the best 80 cents I've made in my entire life!" says Mary Beth Nerone, who has been stocking her online store, Brain Waves Instruction, on the site with writing, poetry and other exercises for three years after budget cuts eliminated her job as a middle-school language arts teacher near Rochester, New York. "Some people are psyched and say I get Starbucks money each week ... some people get to a space where they can meet or surpass their teaching income," Nerone says. "And some people get to a space beyond their wildest dreams of income." Teachers trust and support other teachers, says Hanna Hudson, editorial director of the We Are Teachers online bulletin board, and accessing individual resources from the web is less expensive and easier than going to the district for new textbooks or resources.

"Honestly, it's going after the money that teachers are spending out of their own pockets on their classroom," Hudson says. But Bob Farrace, spokesman for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, says taking "proprietary rights over ideas and lessons" could disrupt the traditional collaborative atmosphere of schools. "You want teachers to collaborate and share ideas freely." In fact, some school districts have language in their teaching contracts that bar teachers from selling their lesson plans. Some legal experts argue that the resources teachers produce while working for a school district may actually be the property of the school district. Mark Bartholomew, who teaches copyright law at the University at Buffalo, says that without explicit contract language, the law looks at factors such as whether products were created within the scope of employment or on a person's own time. —AP



PARIS: This Wednesday, June 17, 2015, file photo shows an interior view of the Business Class seats on the second floor deck of an Airbus A380 of Qatar Airways presented at the Paris Air Show. —AP

AVIATION POISED FOR THIRD REVOLUTION: AIRBUS BOSS CEO HOPEFUL TO PLAY LEADING ROLE IN THE FUTURE

AMSTERDAM: The aerospace industry is on the brink of a “third revolution” and Airbus boss Tom Enders is determined his giant company will play a leading role in its future. “I do genuinely believe that we are at a point where those technological changes and breakthroughs in electric propulsion, autonomous flight, artificial intelligence, machine learning, new materials, all come together, plus the data usage, (and) will be nothing less than a third revolution in aerospace,” Enders told AFP in an interview.

“Of course, we will only know that probably 20 years from now, when we look back and say ‘Gee, did we get this, did we understand this, did we prepare for it or did we miss it, and why did we miss it?’,” he said on the sidelines of an Airbus annual general assembly in Amsterdam. “Obviously I don’t want to look back in 20 years and say ‘Jesus, I was at the controls of this company and we missed it, how could that happen?’”

This has led to some frenetic activity within the group, which has seen the Airbus chief executive officer targeted by criticism. In November, Airbus announced it was cutting more than 1,100 jobs in Europe and closing one of its sites in Suresnes, near Paris, as part of an ongoing restructuring program. Unions accused Airbus of cutting jobs at a time when its order book is worth nearly 1.0 trillion euros (\$1.05 trillion), equivalent to eight to 10 years of production. Airbus however

is running into headwinds, prompting the search for cost-cutting opportunities. Its helicopter division has suffered from a weak market, the company has had to set aside nearly two billion euros to cover the cost of its military A400M model, and its A380 flagship has been slow to take off.

Investment in future

But Enders insisted the company was not cutting back on investment. “Overall we are investing much more in innovation and digitalization than we’ve done in previous years,” he said. “It’s inevitable to prepare for the future.” He highlighted a number of projects such as a Pop Up venture for a flying car, and the launch of a partnership with Uber for helicopters.

The future is “more about partnership and ... aeronautic companies who are engaging in urban mobility like we do, and automotive companies, have a lot of potential for cooperation.” He added: “I think in the near future, we will be able to go overground, ie airspace in cities, because technologically it is possible.” The pace of change is accelerating, he argued. “There’s a lot of projects, a lot of noise and a lot of activity, but that is inevitable. Because at this juncture, hardly any large industrial company knows exactly what its future will look like.”

Enders also told AFP that Madrid talks last month with representatives from seven countries buying Airbus’s troubled A400M military plane had

been “constructive”. “This is basically an area where we want to negotiate, or discuss, with the nations how we can mitigate that.” The A400M was commissioned jointly in 2003 by the governments of Germany, Belgium, France, Britain, Luxembourg, Spain and Turkey, but since a delayed launch in 2013 it has run into difficulty, with behind-schedule deliveries.

Not giving up on A380

Enders also voiced optimism over the Airbus A380 double-decker super-jumbo, even though production is due to be halved next year amid falling demand. “We haven’t given up on the A380 because the trend which we saw clearly when we started the project is visible in every area, i.e. a larger aircraft, with larger capacity,” he said.

Airbus was “working on making the aircraft more attractive” and studies on how to add 80 more seats “obviously would boost the economics of the aircraft”. In July, Airbus said it would cut the A380 production rate to one a month from 2018. The group has seen a slowdown in demand for long-distance carriers due in part to falling fuel prices which have impacted on the renewal of ageing fleets, but also as a result of weakening demand from Gulf carriers. Enders said however he believed Airbus still has time to find new customers for the A380. “While airlines are skeptical about it because their problem is they’re not sure they can fill it, customers love it,” he said. —AFP

UBER CEO’S IRON GRIP POSES A CHALLENGE IN COO SEARCH

SAN FRANCISCO: Help Wanted: A chief operating officer to help change a Silicon Valley giant’s now-notorious “bro” culture, but who can thrive in a power dynamic that hands the boss overwhelming control. At Uber Technologies Inc, co-founder and CEO Travis Kalanick commands everything from board decision-making to the exact hour the beer taps will open at the company’s San Francisco headquarters. That management approach is rooted in more than just a cult of personality.

Uber’s governance and share structure, and the “founder-friendly” terms of the \$13 billion in equity the company has raised, give Kalanick, his co-founder and a fellow employee ultimate control over the company, according to company documents and an Uber investor with knowledge of the matter. As the company searches for a chief operating officer who can in theory take on some of Kalanick’s sweeping authority, that looks to be a problem.

Power circle

“A COO would report into Travis, so structurally, there’s the rub,” said Dave Carvajal, an executive recruiter for venture-backed tech companies. “This COO is going to need to have influence at the board level to effect change.” Kalanick’s near-total control at Uber is made possible largely by a dual-class share structure that gives certain owners 10 votes per share, according to the company’s certificate of incorporation filed with the State of Delaware.

Kalanick, along with Garrett Camp, Uber’s co-founder who is now working on another startup, and Ryan Graves, Uber CEO prior to Kalanick, together hold enough of those super-voting shares to give them control of the company, according to an Uber investor with knowledge of the matter. The documents say Uber’s executive board may have eleven voting members, including nine seats controlled by shareholders with super-voting rights.

But Kalanick has kept the power circle small, leaving four board seats empty. In addition to Kalanick, Camp and Graves, the board includes venture capitalist Bill Gurley of Benchmark, David Bonderman of TPG Capital, Yasir Al Rumayyan of the Saudi Arabian public investment fund and media impresario Arianna Huffington. Leaving control with founders has become popular in Silicon Valley in recent years, both because of the success of founder-led enterprises like Facebook Inc and Alphabet Inc’s Google and because investors compete with each other to fund entrepreneurs by offering them the best terms.

Those circumstances helped Uber obtain a \$68 billion valuation, the biggest of any private venture-backed company. But with Uber rocked by scandals, including detailed accusations of sexual harassment from a former female employee and a video showing Kalanick harshly berating an Uber driver, Kalanick just weeks ago promised to “grow up” and hire a COO who would offer “leadership help.”

The COO search is ongoing, but Uber’s human resources chief told reporters last month that Kalanick, 40, is already showing a more collaborative style. The share structure leaves investors with few options if they lose patience with Kalanick, though there is little sign of that happening. With two public exceptions, investors have either supported Kalanick or stayed silent as the company’s all-important rider numbers continue to grow even in the face of controversy. Mitchell Green, a partner at Lead Edge Capital that invested in Uber at a \$40 billion valuation, believes the controversies will blow over and he even wants to buy more stock. “We believe that Travis continues to drive shareholder equity value higher,” said Green.

Control a COO deterrent?

The most effective COOs have broad authority and direct access to the board, governance experts say. At Facebook, for example, COO Sheryl Sandberg works in partnership with founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg and holds a board seat. At Uber, it’s not so easy to envision what a power-sharing arrangement would look like, or how the brash founder could be an agent of managerial change under such a governance structure, the experts said.

“People don’t like to correct their own homework,” said Bill Aulet, managing director of the entrepreneurship center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “This is a situation where the checks and balances are not really in place.” An Uber spokesman declined to comment for this story. A string of high-level executive departures - including company president Jeff Jones last month and top communications chief Rachel Whetstone this week - has centralized even more authority with Kalanick and raised questions about the staying power of his deputies.

Kalanick is known to obsess over details like office decor alongside big issues like pricing strategy and driver relations. Kalanick at one point ordered the beer taps in the office locked during certain hours, controlling when employees could pour themselves a pint, after expressing displeasure with one imbibing staff member, said one former employee. The CEO closely managed Uber’s logo redesign last year, despite himself not being a designer, according to a source close to the company. Design chief Andrew Crow announced he was quitting the day after the new logo was unveiled. —Reuters

CATHAY PACIFIC SHARES RISE AFTER MANAGEMENT CHANGE

HONG KONG: Shares in Hong Kong carrier Cathay Pacific were up yesterday, a day after the airline announced a management shakeup on the heels of its first loss in eight years. Last month the troubled airline posted its first annual net loss since 2008, citing intense competition as lower cost carriers, particularly from mainland China, eat into its market share.

It reported a \$74 million net loss for 2016 and warned that 2017 would be similarly "challenging", later saying it would slash staff costs by 30 percent. Cathay announced a major restructuring program in January, but it has not said how many jobs it intends to axe. Its shares were up 2.56 percent near the break in Hong Kong at HK\$11.20 (\$1.44), after recovering from a mid-morning dip following the appointment of its new chief executive officer.

The move will see its current CEO Ivan Chu, who has been in the job for three years, replaced by the airline's chief operating officer Rupert Hogg starting May 1. "Rupert will lead the airline through its three-year corporate transformation program with the aim of becoming more agile and competitive in the challenging market place," Cathay chairman John Slosar said in a statement Wednesday.

Financial analyst Jackson Wong told AFP the airline had made the right move, but investors remain cautious, awaiting further details on its restructuring plans. "They cut the CEO, that sends a signal to the investors that they are committed to reshaping the whole company," Wong of Huarong International Securities said. Shares in Cathay have fallen 29 percent since Chu was appointed as CEO in 2014 despite an 11 percent gain in the benchmark Hang Seng Index in the same period, Bloomberg News reported.

Companies like China Eastern and China Southern Airlines are offering direct services to Europe and the United States from the mainland, while budget carriers like Spring Airlines have targeted regional travelers, undermining Cathay's position. The airline is also losing premium travelers as it comes under pressure from Middle East rivals which are expanding into Asia and offering more luxury touches. —AFP



BEIJING: People buy strawberries at a market in Shunyi on the outskirts of Beijing. —AFP

CHINA ECONOMIC BRIGHTENS AS TRADE UP, TENSIONS DOWN DONALD TRUMP SOFTENED HIS STANCE ON BEIJING

KOREA RAISES 2017 GROWTH OUTLOOK AMID TRADE FEARS

SEOUL: South Korea's central bank yesterday raised its growth forecast for this year but warned the pace of recovery could be affected by rising protectionism. The Bank of Korea said it expected expansion of 2.6 percent in 2017, up from its earlier projection of 2.5 percent given in January, marking the first upward revision in three years. It left its key interest unchanged at a record-low 1.25 percent for the 10th consecutive month in a move aimed at maintaining financial stability with uncertainty both at home and abroad.

"The Board sees the global economic recovery as likely to be affected by factors such as the directions of the new US government's economic policies," it said in a statement following a monthly board meeting. The bank said the pace of monetary policy normalization by the US Federal Reserve and "movements toward spreading trade protectionism" were other factors that could hamper the global economy. The Trump administration's "America first" focus has raised the specter of protectionism to reduce the large US trade deficit, which could see higher tariffs on imports.

While South Korea's economy has shown moderate growth, the central bank warned growth in exports and domestic demand is "expected to be limited, owing to changes in conditions related to trade with major countries". Exports rose for the fifth consecutive month in March while retail sales expanded 3.2 percent in February from a month earlier, signaling a pick up in consumer sentiment. Strained economic ties with China following Seoul's decision to deploy a US missile defense system remains a key factor that could put a damper on South Korea's economic recovery.

Beijing launched a series of measures against the South seen as economic retaliation, forcing dozens of South Korean retail stores in China to shut their doors and banning Chinese tour groups from visiting. "We will use all possible measures to counter (Beijing's retaliatory measures) but we will not let go of our economic cooperation with China," the country's finance minister Yoo Il-Ho told a government meeting. —AFP

BEIJING: Chinese exports surged in March, the largest jump in two years, in the latest sign of robust global demand as concerns ease over a possible trade war with the US after President Donald Trump softened his stance on Beijing. The new figures, released yesterday, boost hopes that the world's number two economy is getting back on track after a recent slowdown-it grew last year at its slowest pace in a quarter of a century.

Trump, who had a cordial summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping last week, reversed course on an election campaign promise to label Beijing a currency manipulator and slap punitive tariffs on Chinese imports. He traded in his acerbic denunciations of the Asian giant's "rape" of the US economy for warm praise, telling a press conference he was "very impressed" and shared "a very good chemistry" with Xi.

In a positive sign for the Chinese economy, exports jumped 16.4 percent year-on-year to \$180.6 billion in March, the country's customs agency said, marking a dramatic turnaround from the 1.3 percent year-on-year drop recorded in February. Imports also rose 20.3 percent year-on-year to \$156.7 billion last month, Customs said, while the trade surplus increased to \$23.9 billion.

A pickup in external demand, surging import prices, and a stable domestic economy boosted the figures, Customs spokesman Huang Songping told a press briefing on Thursday. The March data "reflects strong domestic demand, particularly investment demand," Zhao Yang of Nomura said in a note. "China has finally caught up with the rest of Asia with the end of the trade recession," Raymond Yeung of Australia & New Zealand Banking Group told Bloomberg News.

Softening rhetoric

While recent data has suggested China's slowdown may be stabilising, the tough language deployed by Trump had raised concerns that growing friction between the world's two top traders could tank the global economy. On the campaign trail, the billionaire politician frequently took Beijing to task for its business and fiscal policies, branding the country a currency manipulator and threatening to slap 45 percent tariffs on its imports.

China for years was accused of keeping its currency artificially low to make its exports cheaper and more competitive compared to US goods. But in an interview published on Wednesday in The Wall Street Journal,

Trump said: "They're not currency manipulators." He added that Beijing had not been manipulating its currency for months—a point economists have been making for a much longer time. "The risk of a trade war has diminished substantially" following recent discussions between the two leaders, said Australia & New Zealand Banking Group's Yeung.

Nevertheless, the situation remains fluid. Trump has continued to hit out at China for its massive trade deficit with the US, which was \$17.7 billion in March, according to the customs data. "The foreign trade situation in China is still complex with many instabilities and uncertainties, and the difficulties that China faces are not short-term ones," the agency's spokesman Huang said, adding that foreign trade expansion is likely to fall back in the second quarter.

Trump and Xi have agreed to pursue a 100-day plan on trade, which could include measures to reduce the deficit. But it remains unclear how far China will go to increase US imports. "The reality is that China's domestic investments and property markets are the dominant growth drivers this year instead of trade," Betty Wang and David Qu of ANZ Research wrote in a note. —AFP



MANAMA: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (right) speaks with McLaren Honda's Spanish driver Fernando Alonso (center) and Force India's Mexican driver Sergio Perez (left) during a practice session as part of the Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix, at the Sakhir circuit in the desert south of the Bahraini capital, Manama. —AFP

REVAMPED F1 ALREADY LIVING UP TO ITS HYPE

SAKHIR: A pair of multiple world champions level on points, Mercedes and Ferrari neck-and-neck. This season's revamped Formula One is already living up to the hype. Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel have won a race each so far, and will continue what looks set to be a gripping title race at this weekend's Bahrain Grand Prix. Both like this track and, with evenly matched cars, will be expecting another victory.

Hamilton won in Bahrain in 2014 and 2015, on his way to his second and third world titles with Mercedes. Vettel, then with Red Bull but now with Ferrari, won in 2012 and 2013 during a glittering run of four straight world titles. Vettel has one more title than Hamilton, who has 54 race wins compared to 43 for the younger Vettel. There is little to separate them and they are clearly relishing the battle. Hamilton's title fights over the last three years were within his own Mercedes team, twice beating Rosberg to the title - once easily and once in the last race of the season - only to lose it to the German driver last year.

That loss to Rosberg in the final race of last season in Abu Dhabi still bothers Hamilton, evident in the way he has publicly expressed how much he enjoys racing against Vettel - another way of saying he considers him a significantly better driver than Rosberg was. "The respect for one another is the highest that I have felt from another

er driver, especially of his caliber," Hamilton said of Vettel. "It's amazing sportsmanship. When you win you enjoy it, and you also acknowledge the person next door. And even when you lose it's the same thing. We're both doing that, and that's a great place to be. "He's performing at his best, he is rapid out there, so when I'm able to get ahead, it only compliments you, and vice versa."

After winning last weekend's Chinese GP, where Vettel finished second, Hamilton drove up alongside Vettel's car and gave him a thumbs up. Such an overtly friendly gesture of sportsmanship and such gushing praise of a direct rival would never have happened with Rosberg, who stunned F1 by announcing his retirement days after securing his only title and thus depriving the fiercely driven Hamilton a chance to get his own back. When he talks up Vettel in the way he does, Hamilton is also reminding Rosberg of what he will never achieve.

"I'm fighting against a four-time world champion. He is at his best and he is phenomenally quick. And Ferrari are at their best in years, in a decade, pretty much," Hamilton said. "The ultimate fighter always wants to go up against the best battle that he can have, because then when you come out on top, it's just so much more satisfying." How long the mutual admiration will last remains to be seen. Sunday's race promises to be an

intriguing one. With major rule changes increasing the speed of the cars and revving up the noise level, fans are already enjoying much more value for money than in previous seasons. On top of that, they now have a new major rivalry brewing.

Hamilton has both pole positions so far this season, but lost the season-opening Australian GP to Vettel, who earned his first Ferrari win since the 2015 season. Pole is not as crucial in Bahrain as in other races, but a good start is. Last year, Hamilton secured pole in Bahrain but Rosberg won after getting away quickly. The dash to the first corner is 400 meters and flat out fast, and braking at the right time heading into it will be crucial. With very hot temperatures expected, there is little chance of drivers experiencing the same hazardous weather conditions that played havoc in the first two practice sessions in China last weekend.

As well as the tussle between Hamilton and Vettel, eyes will be on teenager Max Verstappen after his astonishing drive in Shanghai. The 19-year-old Dutchman finished third after carving his way through the field from 16th on the grid. The way he overtook nine drivers on the very first lap showed the astonishing ability that makes Verstappen the sport's rising star. If only Red Bull could up its speed, he could be a serious championship rival to Hamilton and Vettel this season.—AP

ALONSO'S INDY MOVE 'ALSO A CONSEQUENCE OF FAILURE'

MANAMA: McLaren's decision to let Fernando Alonso miss the Monaco Grand Prix and race in the Indianapolis 500 is an extraordinary step that, while triggering a rush of excitement, is also a reflection of the team's current predicament. If the unthinkable has become possible, it is because the team are so far off the pace in Formula One. The double world champion said as much in a conference call on Wednesday after McLaren broke the news ahead of Sunday's Bahrain Grand Prix.

"To be honest, if we were fighting for a world championship, we cannot afford to lose a 25 points possibility," said the Spaniard. "Yet we are not in that position, unfortunately." McLaren, the second most successful team after Ferrari in the history of Formula One in terms of wins and titles, have not won a race since 2012 and look a long way off doing so. They are last in the current standings after two races without points and their once-great partnership with Honda, revived in 2015, has been beset by unreliability and a lack of engine power.

Monaco is the slowest race on the calendar but also the most glamorous and one that packs in the sponsors. It is unheard of in modern times for a top driver to miss it of his own volition or for a team to let him. McLaren do have 2009 champion and former Monaco winner Jenson Button as a potential stand-in, however, even if nothing has been confirmed, with the Briton technically only on sabbatical. No team has won Monaco more than McLaren and Alonso's race switch would have been inconceivable under former boss Ron Dennis, who said last May that "what always tops everything for me is Monaco."

The team have a different hue now, however, under American executive director Zak Brown while the sport has new American owners in Liberty Media with plans to expand in the United States. Alonso still ranks, despite his struggles with a recalcitrant car, as one of the top three drivers but his patience is finite and he is out of contract at the end of the year. There has long been speculation that he could walk away early from McLaren but an entry in the most high-profile single-seater race in North America, in a much more competitive car, might tilt the balance.

Win/Win

"This is a win/win situation for McLaren as a team, the partnership McLaren/Honda .. and for me also a great opportunity to experience this race," Alonso said. "It's good also for the sport ... for the Indy its good news, for Formula One its good news." Only one driver has ever won the Formula One championship, the Indy 500 and Le Mans-Damon Hill's late father Graham - and, with his dreams of a third F1 title fading, Alonso has begun to focus on that. —Reuters

MIDDLESEX OPPOSE NEW ENGLISH TWENTY20 EVENT

LONDON: Middlesex have become the first English county to voice their outright opposition to existing plans for a new domestic Twenty20 tournament. The eight-team event, which the England and Wales Cricket Board plan to launch in 2020 - not a marketing trick but rather the year after their existing broadcast deals expire - has already proved highly controversial. That's because, if it becomes a reality, it will mean that for the first time there is a major domestic cricket tournament in England that does not feature all 18 first-class counties.

For critics, that's the thin end of a wedge that leads to the destruction of the nationwide county system that has underpinned English cricket for more than a century. But supporters of the new event, having seen the success of the Indian Premier League and especially Australia's Big Bash Twenty20 tournaments, believe the English game needs something similar if it is to recapture a 'lost' generation of younger fans. The ECB needs 31 of its 41 constituent members, including the 18 first-class counties, to support a rule change that will allow it to proceed with an eight team, city-based, event. Several clubs have already given their approval, with the ECB promising counties will receive £1.3 million (\$1.6 million, 1.5 million euros) annually for five years if the tournament comes into being.

But if the new tournament gets the go-ahead, Middlesex could miss out on additional revenue as they do not own their Lord's home ground in north London but are tenants instead of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC). A statement on Middlesex's website confirmed the reigning first-class county champions' opposition to the proposed ECB rule change, with the vote on whether to alter the existing regulations now in progress. —AFP

ORIOLES CRUSH RED SOX 12-5

BOSTON: Trey Mancini hit two of Baltimore's five home runs as the Orioles crushed knuckleballer Steven Wright and the Boston Red Sox 12-5 on Wednesday. Mancini hit one of the four home runs yielded by Wright (0-1) in 1 1/3 innings. Mancini hit his fifth homer in 29 major league plate appearances, off reliever Ben Taylor in the third. He has 10 RBIs in 10 major league games. Chris Davis also homered among his three hits while Jonathan Schoop and Adam Jones also went deep for Baltimore.

Brewers 2, Blue Jays 0

Chase Anderson allowed three hits in seven innings as Milwaukee shut out Toronto, which is off to the worst start in club history at 1-7. Anderson (1-0) allowed two walks (one intentional) while striking out seven as the Brewers swept the two-game series. The Blue Jays wasted a complete-game effort from right-hander Marcus Stroman (1-1), who allowed seven hits, one walk and two runs, while striking out four in his first complete game since 2014.

Cardinals 6, Nationals 1

Stephen Piscotty had three hits, including a homer, and drove in a career-high five runs, and Mike Leake pitched seven scoreless innings as St. Louis salvaged the finale of the three-game series. The Nationals scored 22 runs in the first two games but Leake gave up four hits and no walks, striking out seven, to lift the Cardinals, who had lost three in a row and six of seven. Max Scherzer allowed three runs (one earned) and four hits, with 10 strikeouts, in six innings for Washington.

Dodgers 2, Cubs 0

Andrew Toles homered to lead off the first inning and his hustle in the ninth helped provide the second run as Los Angeles defeated Chicago on a night the Cubs got their World Series rings. Toles took Cubs right-hander John Lackey's third pitch into the right-field bleachers for his first career game-opening homer. Dodgers starter Brandon McCarthy (2-0) worked six strong innings, and three relievers contributed to Los Angeles's first shutout of the season.

Yankees 8, Rays 4

Aaron Judge hit a mammoth two-run home run with two outs in the seventh inning as New York rallied to beat Tampa Bay. Judge homered for the third straight game when he drove a 1-1 pitch from Erasmo Ramirez well over the wall in center field and onto the netting above Monument Park.

Giants 6, Diamondbacks 2

Starter Matt Cain doubled in the fifth inning to spur a go-ahead, three-run rally as San Francisco beat Arizona. The victory over the hot Diamondbacks meant the Giants avoided dropping a third consecutive series to start the season for the first time since 2007.

Astros 10, Mariners 5

Jose Altuve had three hits and scored three times, and Carlos Beltran drove in three runs as Houston shook off a shaky start to beat Seattle. Altuve scored his third run on a two-run double by Beltran in the eighth for the final margin as the Astros totaled 16 hits (13 singles) and overcame a 5-0, third-inning deficit. Houston reached double digits in hits for the second game in a row.

Rangers 8, Angels 3

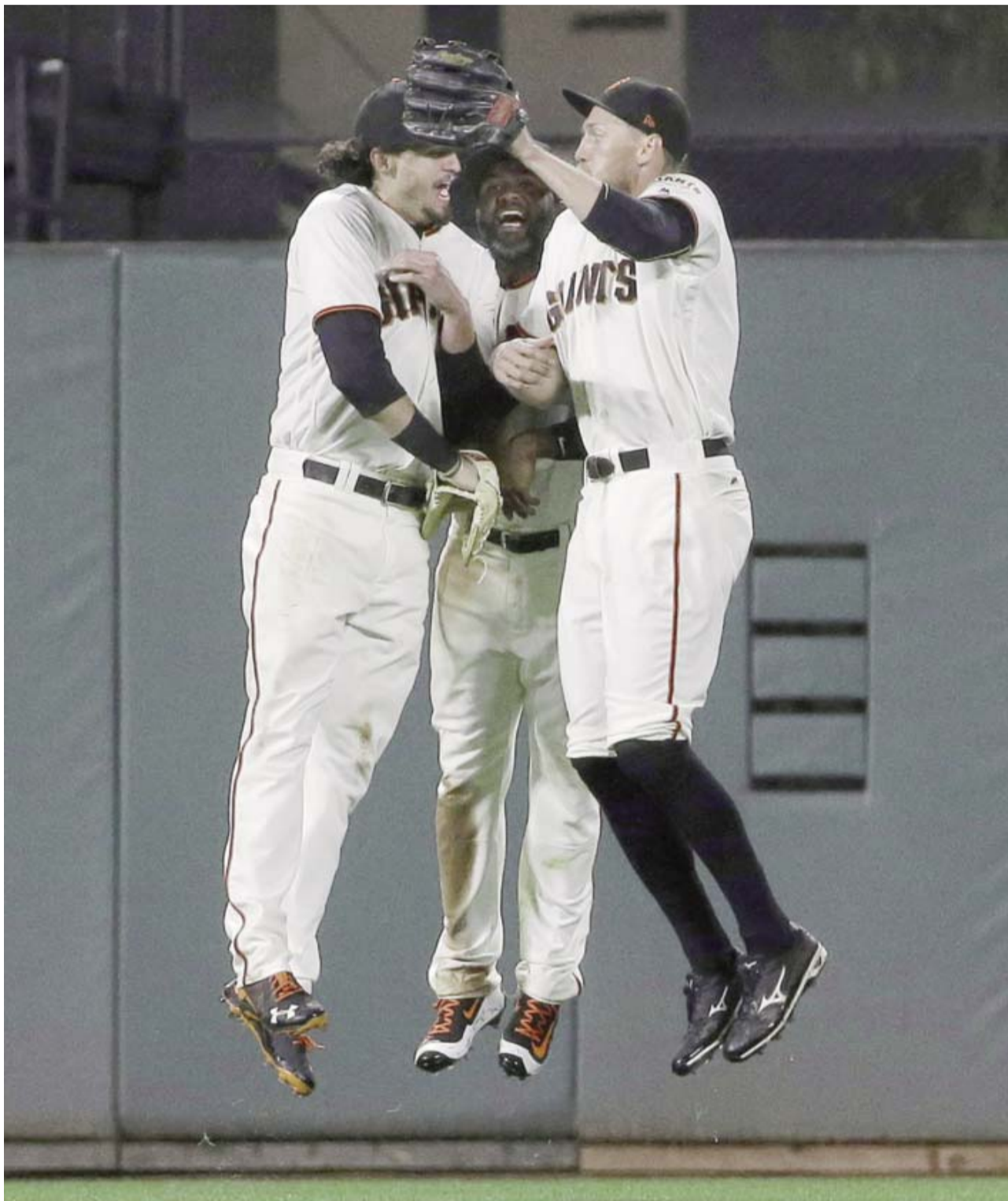
AJ Griffin allowed four hits over six innings and was supported by three home runs as Texas defeated Los Angeles. Mike Napoli, Elvis Andrus and Carlos Gomez all went deep for Texas, which won for only the third time in eight games.

Athletics 8, Royals 3

Andrew Triggs pitched six scoreless innings and Jed Lowrie drove in three runs as Oakland continued its domination of Kansas City. The Athletics extended their winning streak to eight over the Royals and have outscored Kansas City 53-15 in winning their past six games at Kauffman Stadium. Triggs (2-0) has not allowed an earned run in 11 2/3 innings in his two starts.

Braves 5, Marlins 4

Ender Inciarte slugged two home runs and Tyler Flowers



SAN FRANCISCO: San Francisco Giants outfielders Jarrett Parker, Denard Span and Hunter Pence, (from left), celebrate after a baseball game against the Arizona Diamondbacks on Wednesday, April 12, 2017. — AP

drove in the go-ahead run with a ninth-inning single to lead Atlanta past Miami. Flowers' two-out, game-winning single came on a 93 mph fastball from Marlins closer AJ Ramos (0-1). Aroldys Vizcaino (1-0) picked up the win in relief and Jim Johnson posted his first save.

Mets 5, Phillies 4

Michael Conforto homered and scored three runs, Yoenis Cespedes drove in a pair of runs and New York held off Philadelphia. The Mets won their fourth consecutive game in completing a three-game sweep over the Phillies. Zack Wheeler (1-1) surrendered two hits through his first five innings as his offense built a 5-0 lead on Philadelphia's Vince Velasquez (0-2).

White Sox 2, Indians 1

Derek Holland and three relievers combined on a three-hitter as Chicago beat Cleveland. Holland pitched six scoreless innings, allowing one hit with four strikeouts and four walks. Indians starter Danny Salazar struck out 11 in six innings but took the loss.

Tigers 5, Twins 3

Andrew Romine hit his first career grand slam and Detroit held on to defeat Minnesota. The utility man's seventh career homer erased a 3-1 deficit in the fourth and made a winner out of starter Michael Fulmer (1-0), who finished strong after allowing three runs in the first three innings.

Padres 6, Rockies 0

Zach Lee took the mound with a four-run cushion in making a spot start after San Diego batted around in the first inning against Colorado's Kyle Freeland. The Padres turned to Lee after putting scheduled starter Luis Perdomo on the 10-day disabled list with shoulder inflammation.

Reds 9, Pirates 2

Amir Garrett gave up five hits in 6 2/3 innings in his second major league start as Cincinnati routed Pittsburgh. Garrett (2-0), who struck out five, pitched 12 2/3 innings and produced a 1.42 ERA with nine strikeouts this season. Jose Peraza's two-run double capped a four-run fifth inning that gave Cincinnati a 4-0 lead. — Reuters

SHARKS BEAT OILERS 3-2 IN OVERTIME

EDMONTON: The veteran San Jose Sharks taught the upstart Edmonton Oilers a lesson in playoff intensity on Wednesday, spotting them two early goals before coming back to win 3-2 in overtime. Melker Karlsson scored at 3:22 of overtime in the opening game of the first-round Western Conference series. "We got the chance and I snuck it in," said Karlsson, who fired a snap shot from the top of the right circle past goalie Cam Talbot. "I got a little space and (Joe Pavelski) saw me in the middle. It was a half-breakaway. It was nice."

The Oilers took a 2-0 lead in the first period only to get outshot 34-9 the rest of the way. The Sharks came back and tied the game with just more than 15 minutes left in regulation. Joel Ward and Paul Martin also scored for San Jose. Milan Lucic and Oscar Klefbom scored for the Oilers before 18,347 fans at sold-out Rogers Place. Edmonton center Connor McDavid, the NHL's leading scorer in the regular season, had one assist in his playoff debut to extend his point streak to 15 games. For the most part, however, he was held in check by the Sharks. "We did a good job starting the game but we've got to finish," McDavid said. "They had the puck all night. They played in our zone. When you don't have the puck you're not going to get many shots on goal." It was the first playoff game in the Oilers' new downtown arena and the team's first post-season game in almost 11 years.

The Sharks played without star center Joe Thornton, who is day to day with a left knee injury. But center Logan Couture returned to the lineup with a full face cage. He missed seven games after having his mouth and teeth smashed by a deflected puck. The teams were headed in opposite directions coming into the playoffs. The Oilers won 12 of their last 14 regular-season games, while San Jose dropped nine of 13. The Sharks, however, are the defending Western Conference champions with 1,169 games of playoff experience on their roster compared with 342 for Edmonton. Game 2 is today in Edmonton.

Blues 2, Wild 1 (OT)

Goalie Jake Allen had a season-high 51 saves and Vladimir Sobotka scored in regula-



MONTREAL: Montreal Canadiens' Brendan Gallagher (left) and New York Rangers' Mats Zuccarello collide during the second period of Game 1 of an NHL first-round hockey playoff series on Wednesday, April 12, 2017. —AP

tion for the St. Louis Blues, giving them a 1-0 lead in their best-of-seven series against Minnesota. The Blues were less than a minute from winning in regulation, but Wild left winger Zach Parise's goal with 22.7 seconds left forged a tie after Minnesota's first 43 shots had been turned aside by Allen.

Penguins 3, Blue Jackets 1

Marc-Andre Fleury, a last-minute starter after goaltender Matt Murray got hurt during the pregame warmup, stopped 31 of 32 shots as Pittsburgh beat Columbus in Game

1 of a first-round Eastern Conference playoff series. The Penguins built a 3-0 lead in the second period with goals from Bryan Rust, Phil Kessel and Nick Bonino. Evgeni Malkin added two assists. The Blue Jackets spoiled Fleury's bid for his ninth career playoff shutout when Matt Calvert scored from the slot at 12:41 of the third.

Bruins 2, Senators 1

Brad Marchand scored with 2:33 left in regulation as Boston rallied in the third period for a victory over Ottawa. Bobby Ryan

scored for the Senators, while Frank Vatrano also scored for the Bruins. Tuukka Rask made 26 saves in the Boston net while Craig Anderson stopped 23 shots for Ottawa.

NY Rangers 2, Canadiens 0

Tanner Glass' first-period goal helped New York beat Montreal in the opener of an Eastern Conference playoff series. Michael Grabner added a late empty-net goal for the Rangers, who got 31 saves from Henrik Lundqvist. Carey Price stopped 29 shots for the Canadiens. —Agencies

NHL ADDING IPADS ON BENCHES FOR PLAYOFFS

NEW YORK: NHL coaches have been given more technology on the bench in time for the Stanley Cup playoffs. The league is making three iPad Pros available for coaches on every bench and officials will also have them to review coach's challenges. The Associated Press has learned. All 16 playoff arenas were outfitted with the iPads and also Macs for video coaches as part of a collaboration with Apple. This season, coaches have been able to use video monitors on the bench to help them decide when to challenge offside and goaltender interference situations. The iPads, which were tested late in the regular season, provide real-time video capabilities to show players how they're performing.

"By the time the player gets off his shift, that content is available within a minute, I guess, from the time it actually took place," NHL executive vice president and chief technology officer Peter DelGiaccio said. "Today generally speaking a lot of that would be done between periods and there's a limited amount of time. ... This kind of gives the coaches and the players real-time access so that they can make adjustments."

The monitors had already become a game-changer for coaches, giving them more information on challenges and for player feedback. The technology is even more valuable in

the playoffs when goals are scarce and the offside and goaltender interference challenges can decide a game - or a series. The St. Louis Blues lost Game 2 to the Chicago Blackhawks last year when a coach's challenge wiped out a go-ahead goal by Vladimir Tarasenko, and even though they won the series they felt the attrition of needing seven games to advance. "It's going to be huge in the playoffs," Washington Capitals coach Barry Trotz said. "The referees, the league wants to get it right, the coaches want to get it right."

League cracks down

During the season, 86 of 313 coach's challenges were successful in overturning calls. With the aid of the monitors, headsets and video coaches watching live, each team developed its own step by-step process in deciding when to challenge a goal for goalie interference or offside and tried to perfect it. Speed will be key as the league cracks down on coaches who dawdle before deciding to challenge. "When you have challenges, to have the ability to quickly look at what you're doing and now they're trying to expedite it even that much more," Arizona Coyotes coach Dave Tippett said. "When you're in those critical moments, you've got to make that decision in a hurry. You better

have somebody good back there that knows what you want to see and the ability to make the decision quick."

Having iPads in the hands of assistant coaches will provide a crucial benefit for player adjustments. Late in the season, Ottawa Senators winger Bobby Ryan looked at film of Pittsburgh Penguins goaltender Matt Murray on the bench before a shootout, and coach Guy Boucher has also used the advanced technology beyond challenges. "We look at it because sometimes we're not seeing everything that's going on the ice,"

Boucher said. "It's good also for feedback with our players and, yeah, it's good for challenges and all that. I think it's been important since the beginning of the year. It helps is also between periods because instead of looking at 12 different things between periods, we might have to look at five or six, so it's quicker for us to get back to our players and tell them about adjustments because sometimes we already know a few adjustments and a lot of times we'll address it right on the bench." David Lehanski, NHL senior VP of business development, global partnerships and sponsorship sales, said the move got done in time for the playoffs but the league would have also been OK starting next season. —AP

CELTICS CLAIM TOP SEED IN THE EASTERN CONFERENCE

PACERS, BULLS GRAB PLAYOFF SPOTS

BOSTON: Gerald Green scored 18 points as the Boston Celtics clinched their first Eastern Conference title in nine years with a 112-94 win over the Milwaukee Bucks on the final night of the NBA regular season. The Celtics finished with a 53-29 record as they claimed the top seed in the East for the first since the 2007-08 season, when they won the last of their NBA best 17 championships. Green scored 10 of his 18 points during a 25-2 fourth quarter surge by the Celtics on Wednesday, as there was plenty to be decided on the last night of the regular season.

The win, and a loss by the Cleveland Cavaliers earlier in the evening, gives Boston home court advantage through the first three rounds of the postseason. The Cavaliers could have taken the No. 1 seed in the East with a combination of a Cleveland win and a loss by the Celtics. However, Cleveland waved the white flag Wednesday as they sat out their stars, including LeBron James, in their final game against the Toronto Raptors.

Norman Powell tallied 25 points to power the Raptors to a 98-83 win over the Cavs. Cleveland is 0-8 without James in the lineup. "I think there's a pride in being consistent," coach Brad Stevens said. "It's a real positive. We'll talk about what was accomplished later. We'll focus on whenever we play this weekend to get ready." The Celtics will face the Chicago Bulls in the first round of the playoffs while the Cavaliers battle the Indiana Pacers, who routed the Atlanta Hawks 104-86.

The Bulls manhandled the Brooklyn Nets 112-73 to help punch their ticket to the postseason. Jae Crowder and Amir Johnson each had 16 points, Isaiah Thomas finished with 13 points and eight assists, and Al Horford added 12 points for Boston. "It's very special to me. I've never been a number one seed," said Thomas, who was picked last in the 2011 NBA entry draft but finished third in the NBA in scoring with 28.9 points per game behind Russell Westbrook and James Harden.

Spencer Hawes and Michael Beasley each had 15 points for Milwaukee, who had already claimed the sixth seed in the East following a Hawks victory Tuesday. Rashad Vaughn had 14 points and Malcolm Brogdon added 11 for the Bucks, who will face the third-seeded Raptors in the first round. Thomas, who extended his franchise record by making a three pointer in his 57th straight game, promised the Boston crowd a postseason they would remember. "We got a big playoff run coming for you guys," he said.

Bulls 112, Nets 73

Jimmy Butler scored a team-high 25 points as the Chicago Bulls clinched a berth in the Eastern Conference playoffs with a 112-73 victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Wednesday. Rookie forward Paul Zipser added a career-high 21 points off the bench as the Bulls (41-41) earned the number eight seed. They will meet top seeded Boston. Archie Goodwin scored 20 points to lead the Nets, who benched a half-dozen players in their final game. Brooklyn (20-62) finished with the worst record in the NBA and the fourth-most losses in franchise history.

Pacers 104, Hawks 86

Paul George tallied 32 points and 11 rebounds, and Jeff Teague added 19 points and seven assists before rolling his left ankle late in the fourth quarter, leading Indiana to a playoff-



MIAMI: Miami Heat guard Josh Richardson (left) and Washington Wizards guard Trey Burke battle for a loose ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Wednesday, April 12, 2017. — AP

clinching victory over Atlanta. The Pacers earned the seventh seed in the Eastern Conference and will open against the second-seeded Cleveland Cavaliers. Teague went directly to the locker room after being injured with 2:06 to play. Having clinched the number five spot in the East on Tuesday, Atlanta rested Kent Bazemore, Tim Hardaway Jr, Dwight Howard, Paul Millsap and Dennis Schroder. The Hawks will begin the playoffs against the fourth-seeded Washington Wizards.

Jazz 101, Spurs 97

Gordon Hayward scored 14 points and Rudy Gobert, George Hill and Shelvin Mack added 13 apiece to help Utah extend its home winning streak to a season-best nine games with a victory over San Antonio. LaMarcus Aldridge scored 18 points and Kawhi Leonard and Tony Parker added 14 apiece to lead the Spurs, who have lost four straight as they prepare to open the playoffs against the Memphis Grizzlies. The fifth-seeded Jazz will oppose the fourth-seeded Los Angeles Clippers in a first-round Western Conference playoff series.

Heat 110, Wizards 102

Goran Dragic scored 28 points but Miami fell short of reaching the playoffs despite a win over Washington. The Heat became the first team in league history to finish .500 or above after being at least 12 games below parity. Miami reversed an 11-30 record the first half of the season with a 30-11 finish. Trey Burke scored 27 points for the playoff-bound Wizards, who played without John Wall and Bradley Beal. Otto Porter Jr, who was inactive in Washington's previous two games, scored 11 points in 15 minutes.

Raptors 98, Cavaliers 83

Norman Powell led all scorers with 25 points as Toronto pounded Cleveland. Cleveland was without LeBron James, Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love. Iman Shumpert was the Cavs' leading scorer with 11 points. The Cavaliers will be the second seed entering the Eastern Conference playoffs. The Raptors are the third seed.

Magic 113, Pistons 109

Aaron Gordon had 32 points and 12 rebounds in leading Orlando over Detroit. Elfrid Payton scored 21 points, including six in the final 1:10 to ice the victory. The Pistons trailed throughout the night and never led by more than two points.

Knicks 114, 76ers 113

Maurice Ndour's step-back jumper with 18.3 seconds remaining lifted New York over Philadelphia. The Knicks trailed by nine entering the fourth quarter and tied the score three times before Ndour's game-winner. Carmelo Anthony, who may have played his final game with New York, scored 17 points.

Mavericks 100, Grizzlies 93

Dallas snapped a five-game losing streak with a season-ending win over Memphis. Nicolas Brussino scored 15 points and Devin Harris had 15 points and eight assists off the bench for the Mavericks. The Grizzlies will be the seventh seed in the Western Conference playoffs, where they will meet the second-seeded San Antonio Spurs in the first round.

Rockets 123, Timberwolves 118

James Harden recorded his 22nd triple-double and Houston tuned up for the post-season

with a win over Minnesota. Harden posted 27 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists to pace a balanced scoring attack for the Rockets (55-27), whose win total matched the fourth-most in team history.

Nuggets 111, Thunder 105

Nikola Jokic scored 29 points to lead Denver over Oklahoma City. Jokic went 9-of-14 from the field and 11-of-14 from the free-throw line and had 16 rebounds and eight assists. Jamal Murray added 27 points for the Nuggets.

Clippers 115, Kings 95

It took until the final night of the season to make it official but Los Angeles secured home-court advantage for the first round of the playoffs with a win over Sacramento. DeAndre Jordan tallied 18 points and 17 rebounds. J.J. Redick added 18 points, and Chris Paul 17 for the Clippers, who will host the Utah Jazz in the opening round.

Warriors 109, Lakers 94

Kevin Durant stamped himself ready for the post-season with 29 points in 27 minutes, lifting Golden State over Los Angeles. Stephen Curry added 20 points for the Warriors, who will begin the playoffs with home-court advantage in any matchup based on their best-in-basketball 67-15 regular-season record.

Pelicans 103, Trail Blazers 100

New Orleans erased a nine-point deficit in the final eight minutes to beat Portland. Jordan Crawford came off the bench for 15 points and Cheick Diallo contributed 12 points and 16 rebounds for the Pelicans, who ended a five-game losing streak. — Agencies



MUNICH: (Left to right) Real Madrid's defender Sergio Ramos, Bayern Munich's Spanish midfielder Javi Martinez, Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale and Real Madrid's defender Nacho Fernandez vie for the ball during the UEFA Champions League 1st leg quarter-final football match FC Bayern Munich v Real Madrid on April 12, 2017. —AFP

BAYERN SEEK TO STAY ON TITLE COURSE

BERLIN: Bayern Munich will need to put the disappointment of losing midweek in the Champions League behind them to keep on course for the Bundesliga crown as German football reels from Tuesday's attack on Borussia Dortmund's team bus. Bayern, on the cusp of a fifth successive title, are away to Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday as they seek to maintain a 10-point lead at the top of the standings and move closer to securing the championship well before the close of the campaign. But both Bayern and Dortmund were beaten at home in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-finals on Wednesday, just a day after three explosions went off as the Dortmund bus made its way to their match against AS Monaco.

There is little doubt that the attack had an impact on the German performances and there is likely to be a somber, if defiant, atmosphere at grounds around the country at the weekend. "Of course the events in Dortmund and the consequences of the attack were shocking for the clubs of the Bundesliga. We have great confidence in the work of security agencies in football matches and in the activities of the investigative authorities," German football league chief executive officer Christian Seifert said. Bayern, seeking a seventh victory from their last eight league games, are effectively three wins away from taking the title but it could come earlier if they

keep winning and second placed RB Leipzig stumble. But Bayern's immediate focus is likely on next Tuesday's return leg at Real Madrid where they will hope to pull off an unlikely comeback from the 2-1 defeat in Munich. Injured leading scorer Robert Lewandowski and international defender Mats Hummels will sit out again at the weekend in a bid to be ready for the second leg, Coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "We have six days, I think they can recover by then," he said. Leipzig will make sure of securing a first Champions League berth if they beat Freiburg on Saturday, although their opponents also have aspirations of a place in European club competition next season, having moved up to sixth on the back of victories in their last two matches.

Hoffenheim are third, one point above Dortmund, and also looking to consolidate Champions League participation by beating Borussia Mönchengladbach on Saturday. Dortmund's ability to bounce back from the shock of the bus attack and the subsequent 3-2 loss to Monaco will be closely watched as they host Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday. One piece of positive news, according to German media, is the likelihood that coach Thomas Tuchel, who has been linked to a bevy of clubs elsewhere in Europe, is expected to sign a contract extension in the next days. —Reuters

PSG KEEP THE PRESSURE ON LIGUE 1 LEADERS MONACO

PARIS: Paris St Germain can keep the pressure on Ligue 1 leaders Monaco with a win at Angers on Friday and will hope their rivals suffer from Champions League hangover when they host Dijon on Saturday as the title run-in intensifies. Monaco beat Borussia Dortmund 3-2 away in their Champions League quarter-final first leg on Wednesday, but while the victory puts them in pole position to advance, their continental exploits may yet affect their domestic title prospects. The match at the Westfalenstadion was originally set for Tuesday only to be pushed back after Dortmund's bus was hit by three explosions en route to the stadium, injuring defender Marc Bartra. The delay left Leonardo Jardim's side with one day less to prepare for their weekend fixture.

Their midweek exertions also represent an opportunity for champions PSG who play on Friday and can move level with Monaco on 74 points. "If Monaco win, we'll congratulate them," PSG's Marco Verratti told beIN Sports. "If that

happens we will have failed to reach our objective, but we have had four historic years in France. "We have won everything. In football, the possibility of not winning is always there." A positive result for Unai Emery's side would doubtless represent yet another test for Jardim's Monaco team, few of whom have experience of the final testing weeks of a title challenge.

PSG, by contrast, are aiming for a fourth consecutive French title, and Emery can call upon a well-rested squad following their Champions League elimination by Barcelona last month. He may also harbor hopes that PSG's crushing 4-1 League Cup final victory over Monaco on April 1 can also give them the mental edge during the final weeks. "It's the home stretch," Presnel Kimpembe told the club's official website (www.psg.fr). "Experience will play a part in the last stage of the season. "(Angers will) be waiting for us, but we're confident. We know what we have to do." —Reuters

Extras

Dybala extends deal

MILAN: Argentina forward Paulo Dybala yesterday extended his contract with Juventus by two years, keeping him at the club until 2022, the Serie A champions announced. Dybala, who struck twice in the 3-0 Champions League quarter-final first-leg win over Barcelona on Tuesday, signed a five-year deal with Juventus when he joined the Turin giants from Palermo in June 2015 for 32.5 million euros (\$34.6m, £27.6m). "La Joya (The Jewel) has signed a new deal that will see him remain for another five seasons at the club and expire in June 2022," said a brief statement by Juventus. Dybala has scored a total of 39 goals for Juve, who are bidding for a record sixth consecutive scudetto, a third consecutive league and Cup double and an unprecedented treble. With the Italian club he has won one league title, one Italian Cup and the Italian Super Cup.

Madrid crowd trouble

LONDON: Leicester are working with UEFA and local authorities in Spain to discover why their fans were involved in crowd trouble before the Champions League quarter-final at Atletico Madrid. There were clashes between Leicester supporters and police on Tuesday evening and Wednesday afternoon ahead of the Foxes' 1-0 first leg defeat. Social media videos show a blue smoke bomb was let off while objects were also thrown at police in the Plaza Mayor on Wednesday, where Leicester supporters had congregated. Before fresh trouble on Wednesday Spanish police reportedly said eight Leicester fans were arrested for "causing a mess" on Tuesday night. "We are working with UEFA and the local authorities to establish the full facts of what took place and the reasons for the police response," a Leicester spokesman said yesterday. "We will also be liaising with travelling supporters before deciding on any course of action."

Antonio's hamstring injury

LONDON: West Ham United midfielder Michail Antonio will miss the rest of the season with a hamstring injury, manager Slaven Bilic said ahead of tomorrow's Premier League visit to bottom-placed Sunderland. But Bilic will be able to call on striker Andy Carroll, who is expected to return to the starting lineup after a groin injury. Antonio, the club's top scorer with nine goals, limped off in the first half of West Ham's 1-0 victory over Swansea last weekend. Hamstring problems had also forced him to withdraw from the England squad last month. "He's one of our best players and of course it is a big blow that we are going to be without him until the end of the season," Bilic told a news conference yesterday. West Ham were on a seven-game winless run before the Swansea win, which pushed them up to 14th in the league and eight points clear of the relegation zone.

Man Utd fans warned

LONDON: Manchester United fans without tickets have been warned not to travel to the Europa League quarter-final against Anderlecht amid high security around the game in Belgium. Around 1,300 English supporters are gathering in the Belgium capital Brussels for the game with the city on high alert following Tuesday night's bomb attack on the Borussia Dortmund team bus ahead of their Champions League quarter-final against Monaco. There are also fears about the chances of clashes between supporters following several incidents involving fans of another English team, Leicester City, in Madrid before Wednesday's game against Atletico. Spanish police used baton charges to clear part of Madrid's Plaza Mayor of Leicester fans, some chanting "Gibraltar is ours", a reference to the recent diplomatic spat between Britain and Spain over the British Overseas Territory. BBC presenter Gary Lineker, a Leicester City fan and former player, tweeted: "Just saw the footage of some Leicester fans behaving despicably in Madrid. The few idiots ruin it for the decent majority. Sickening."

NORTHERN GIANTS CLASH WITH EPL RETURN IN SIGHT

MANCHESTER: It will be a Premier League game in all but name when Newcastle United face Leeds United at St James' Park today, with two of the traditional powers of northern English football seeking a return to the top flight. Newcastle, relegated from the Premier League last season, are second in the Championship and well placed for an immediate return, while Leeds, in fifth place, will look to get through the play-offs and end their 13 years in the lower divisions. The two clubs have histories that make them known well beyond their passionate local support bases.

Both are both former champions of England, with Leeds having won the last title before the creation of the Premier League in 1992. They have both won European trophies - Leeds twice capturing the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, the forerunner of today's Europa League, while Newcastle won the same competition in 1969. In more recent years, the clubs have featured in the Champions League, which Newcastle's Spanish manager Rafa Benitez won as manager of Liverpool in 2005. While Benitez and Newcastle have quickly healed the pain of relegation with a strong challenge for direct promotion this season, life outside the Premier League has been tough for Leeds.

The financial troubles which caused the team's relegation from the top flight in 2004 were also to blame for a slump into the third tier (League One) for three seasons, until they returned to the Championship in 2007. It has hardly been smooth progress since, with instability at both boardroom and managerial level reflected in lower half finishes in the past five campaigns. But manager Garry Monk has succeeded this year in keeping the team well within the play-off positions throughout the campaign, even if he is wary of raising expectations of promotion this season.

"That will always be the ambition of the club, it's a huge club. The ambition will always be to get this club back in the Premier League. But it doesn't just happen," he said this week. "That's what we are trying to do. But we are not thinking about that, we are only thinking about this weekend. Overall we have exceeded expectation, the group has improved massively." Newcastle won the corresponding fixture at Elland Road in November 2-0 thanks to two goals from their impressive striker Dwight Gayle, who misses today's match due to injury. The match drew the first sell-out crowd for Leeds in several years and Monk believes his team were overawed by the occasion.

"Maybe we played the occasion a little bit and didn't have our full focus on the football. We want to go up there and make sure we don't make the same mistake," he said. Newcastle are well used to playing in front of their capacity 52,000 home crowd and their squad still has plenty of top-flight experience. Benitez knows the job has to be finished off but believes Newcastle have a bright future ahead of them. "The fans are incredible, the stadium is superb, the staff, everything is in place to allow this club to achieve great things," he said recently. "But first we have to reach the target, we have to remain focused on only one thing and that is securing promotion". —Reuters



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho (left) walks away as his players take part in a team training session at their Carrington base in Manchester, north west England. —AFP

FIRED-UP MOURINHO RENEWS BATTLE WITH CONTE'S CHELSEA

LONDON: By the time Chelsea walk out at Old Trafford on Sunday their Premier League lead may again have been cut to a slender four points. For the second weekend running, Antonio Conte's side kick off after their main pursuers Tottenham Hotspur but, unlike last Saturday when they were always odds-on to restore their advantage by beating Bournemouth, real danger lurks in the form of Manchester United - and ex-manager Jose Mourinho. When the teams last met the Portuguese appeared unusually relaxed, eschewing the regulation collar and tie he always wore as Blues manager for gilet and trainers. But he still ended up squaring up with Conte on the Stamford Bridge touchline during a fractious FA Cup quarter-final that saw Ander Herrera sent off.

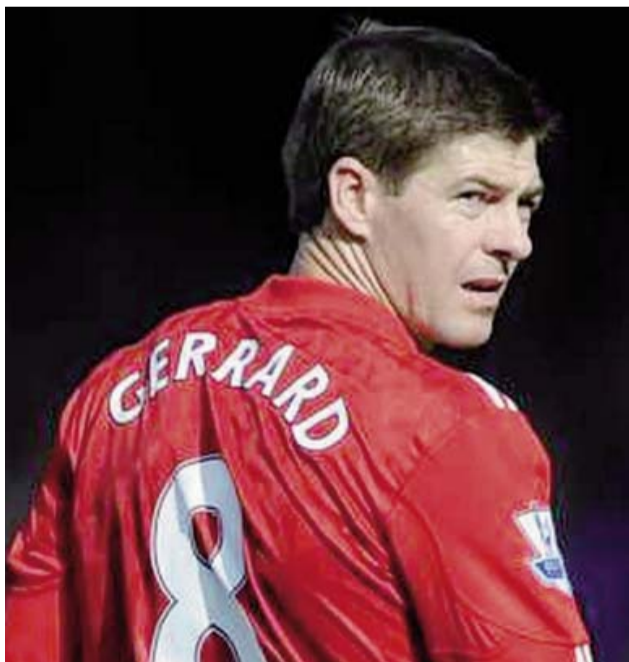
Chelsea's 1-0 win was their second over United this season and although the result was much closer than the 4-0 league drubbing, the chasm that has opened between the teams was clear. Sunday marks the start of a testing period for United with fixtures against City, Arsenal and Spurs looming, alongside their continuing Europa League campaign. Mourinho will respond to the workload by rotating his squad. In the process he will highlight one of the big differences between United and Chelsea this season: while the Portuguese has made 85 team changes in his Premier League line-ups, Conte has switched personnel just 31 times, an average of one per game and the fewest in the league.

That consistency has provided the bedrock of their title challenge and Conte can approach Sunday's game knowing it is Mourinho's United who must take the initiative on a ground where they have already drawn nine times this season. Even their wins have often been scratchily unimpressive

and Chelsea will set up to play on the counter-attack with N'golo Kante prowling and ready to pounce in midfield. Much has been made of Kante's impact this season, when he has perfected the art of perfect tackling at a time when referees punish the slightest aberration. He is expected to be named on the PFA player of the season shortlist along with Eden Hazard later this week.

You can probably bet Paul Pogba's transfer fee on United's midfielder not joining them on the six-man shortlist because despite costing 59 million pounds (\$73.77 million) more than Kante, he has made a fraction of the impact. Sunday provides Pogba with the perfect opportunity to make the big-match statement that has been lacking for United, who are unbeaten in 21 league games but still 18 points adrift of the leaders in fifth place. Nothing irks Mourinho more than suggestions that Conte represents the future while he encapsulates the past, a once great manager out of tune with current sensitivities.

But his recent public criticism of Luke Shaw and David de Gea has added to the narrative and he too has something to prove on Sunday. If his brain is really big enough to do Shaw's thinking for him, as he bizarrely claimed recently, then surely it can come up with a plan to outwit Conte? Success would hand a huge boost for Spurs, who entertain Bournemouth in Saturday's early kickoff knowing they can again pile the pressure on Chelsea. Third-placed Liverpool travel to West Bromwich Albion on Sunday while Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger must wait until Monday's match against Middlesbrough for the chance to silence his detractors and check a disastrous run of four away defeats. —Reuters



Steven Gerrard

TALENTED LIVERPOOL MISSING A 'GERRARD'

MUMBAI: Liverpool have some amazing talent but are missing a leader cast in the same mould as Steven Gerrard, the Premier League side's former attacking midfielder Luis Garcia said. The Merseyside club dominated English football for two decades from the 1970s and are one of the world's most successful clubs but have found winning trophies much harder to come by since claiming their last league title 27 years ago. Former Spain international Garcia was part of the Liverpool side that won one of the most memorable Champions League finals, against AC Milan in Istanbul in 2005, when the English side came from 3-0 down at half-time to win the trophy on penalties.

That, however, remains five-time winners Liverpool's last success in Europe's elite club competition and they have failed to even qualify for the tournament in the last two seasons. Under German manager Jurgen Klopp, Liverpool are currently third in the Premier League standings and well positioned with six matches remaining to claim a

Champions League berth with a top-four finish. Garcia feels that while captain Jordan Henderson is doing a good job, Liverpool need someone with world class leadership qualities to guide a squad he believes is brimming with talent.

"This Liverpool side lacks players with character like Steven Gerrard and Jamie Carragher, or even Kenny Dalglish in the past," Garcia said in an interview. "We don't see leaders like them much on the pitch. We have amazing talent like (Phillippe) Coutinho, (Roberto) Firmino, (Adam) Lallana, (Daniel) Sturridge... so much talent. "I haven't been in that dressing room but I am sure a Steven Gerrard-like character would be amazing. He would lead the team when things were not going well." Liverpool's former talismanic captain Gerrard made 710 appearances for his boyhood club during a 17-year spell at Anfield and returned to his roots in February as part of the coaching set-up at the academy.

He scored 186 goals for Liverpool, helping them win two FA Cups, three League

Cups, a UEFA Cup and the Champions League, and remains idolised at the Merseyside club. He was also capped 114 times for England, 40 as captain. According to Garcia, it was imperative for Liverpool to qualify for the Champions League, not just to keep hold of their best players but also to attract the highest quality transfer.

"If Liverpool qualify, I'm sure all the top players will stay. Because it's a special club. Playing Champions League for Liverpool, it's very special," Garcia added on the sidelines of the Champions League Trophy tour by sponsors Heineken. "Champions League qualification is very important. Not because of the players who stay but because of the players who want to come. Top players want to play Champions League, all of them." Liverpool are unbeaten in 10 games against top-six teams this season, having won five and drawn five, claiming seven more points than closest rivals Chelsea in that mini-league but they have struggled to dispatch teams further down the table. —Reuters

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DESPITE GOALS, RONALDO WANTS MORE

MADRID: Not even a pair of goals and an away victory over Bayern Munich in the Champions League were enough to keep Cristiano Ronaldo happy. Despite scoring twice in Real Madrid's 2-1 win to become the first player to reach 100 goals in European club competition, Ronaldo lamented the chances squandered by his team in the first leg of the quarterfinals.

"He was happy, but not too happy because he could have scored the third goal, too," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "That is how ambitious he is." Ronaldo's second-half goals allowed him to end a six-game scoring drought in the Champions League, and left Madrid on track to defend its European title. It also helped end Bayern's 16-match winning streak at home. Madrid could have taken an even bigger advantage into next week's second leg at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium if it hadn't missed so many chances. The team also had a goal

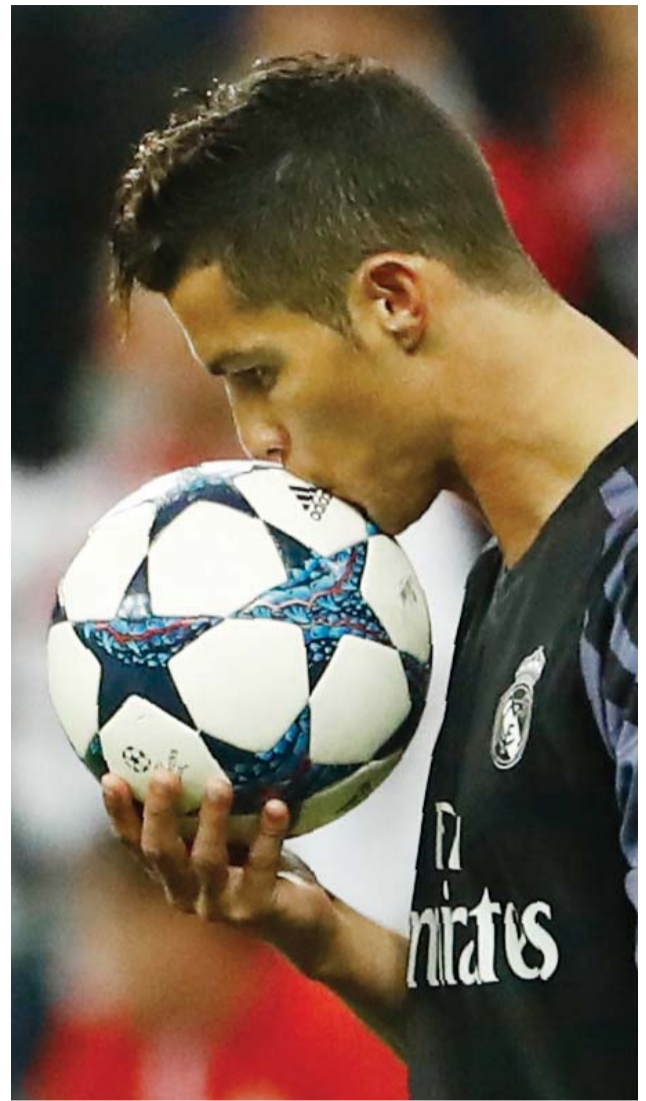
from Sergio Ramos disallowed for offside not long before the final whistle.

Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer was key to keeping Wednesday's game close as the hosts played the final 30 minutes with 10 men following the sending off of Javi Martinez with consecutive yellow cards. "We did well to earn the comeback," Ronaldo said. "But we leave with a sour taste because we could have scored more goals. I think if Neuer hadn't been on such a good night we would have scored more." Neuer made two remarkable saves on shots by Ronaldo and Karim Benzema a few minutes apart toward the end of the match in Munich.

Ronaldo scored in the 47th and 77th minutes after Bayern had taken the lead in the 25th on Arturo Vidal's goal. Vidal then missed a penalty kick late in the first half. The goals were the 99th and 100th for Ronaldo in European club competition, giving him the milestone nearly seven months

after he had scored his last Champions League goal in a 2-2 group-stage draw at Borussia Dortmund. He hadn't scored for Madrid in three matches, since a 2-1 win over Real Betis in the Spanish league last month. "I trained hard to be playing well in this final month-and-a-half of the season," Ronaldo said. "The results are going our way and I'm happy for that."

Madrid has gone 53 straight games scoring at least one goal and is closing in on Bayern's European record of 61 consecutive games with at least a goal, from March 2013 to April 2014. The last time Madrid failed to score was in April, in a 0-0 draw at Manchester City in the Champions League semifinals. Zidane didn't say whether he will rest Ronaldo or any other regular starter for the team's away game at relegation-threatened Sporting Gijon on Saturday in the Spanish league. The return match against Bayern is on Tuesday. — AP



MUNICH: Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo kisses the ball before taking a free kick during the UEFA Champions League 1st leg quarter-final football match FC Bayern Munich v Real Madrid in Munich. — AFP

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