



**World Bank:
Improving
business will
hike GDP**



**Kill rewards,
staged crime
scenes in
drug war**



**Mummies
found in
ancient tomb
near Luxor**



**Ronaldo fires
Real Madrid
into Champions
League semis**



MPs READY PLAN TO TACKLE DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCE

EXPATS FACE LAYOFFS, CUT IN NUMBERS • HEALTH INSURANCE FOR VISITORS 'SOON'



Min 21°
Max 28°
High Tide
02:20 & 13:31
Low Tide
08:08 & 21:42

150 FILS
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40 PAGES



AMIR MEETS NEW KJA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hosts the new board of directors of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) at Bayan Palace yesterday. Seen from left are Duhairan Abalkhail, Jassem Kamal, KJA Chairperson Fatima Hussein Al-Essa, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah, Rabea Al-Jumaa, Adnan Al-Rashed, Owayyed Al-Seleili and Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. — KUNA (See Page 2)

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources said a parliamentary plan is ready for discussion at the National Assembly with the aim of urging the government to take immediate actions to resolve the demographic imbalance problem. The sources added that the plan will be discussed in a regular session to come up with recommendations to be put into immediate practice, especially in view of lawmakers' dissatisfaction with earlier statements by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh about resolving the problem over a 30-year period.

The sources explained that the plan would mainly depend on not hiring expats for advisory and consultancy positions at various ministries and senior officials' offices. The plan also recommends reducing the number of expats annually by 30 percent, laying off unnecessary expat workers and replace those in administrative positions with Kuwaitis. In addition, the plan will also ban ministries from contracting companies to provide administrative staff (such as the case at the Public Authority for Civil Information and the health ministry), unless they only employ Kuwaitis.

"Health service fee increases and health insurance fees for visitors are coming soon," stressed the sources, adding that private companies would be compelled to provide healthcare for their staff. Treatment of expats will be banned at public hospitals once the health insurance hospitals are ready. Finally, the sources highlighted that the plan will be discussed in the November parliamentary term after the parliament tackles the grilling motions and discusses the state budget in the current term, and the passage of Ramadan.

OIL OUTPUT CUTS PRESSURE GROWTH IN MIDEAST: IMF

DUBAI: Economic growth in Saudi Arabia and most other Arab oil exporters will slow this year following production cuts aimed at propping up energy prices, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday. In its latest World Economic Outlook report, the IMF cut its 2017 growth forecast for the region comprising the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan to 2.6 percent, down from the 3.1 percent projected in January. "The subdued pace of expansion reflects lower headline growth in the region's oil exporters, driven by the November 2016

OPEC agreement to cut oil production," the Washington-based IMF said.

It "masks the expected pickup in non-oil growth as the pace of fiscal adjustment to structurally lower oil revenues slows," the IMF added, referring to measures to cut budget deficits. Members of the OPEC cartel of oil exporters, mostly from the region, agreed last year to reduce output by 1.2 million barrels per day from Jan 1 for six months, to support crude prices that had shed half of their value since mid-2014.

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UK PM CALLS SNAP JUNE 8 POLLS

News

in brief

12 Saudi officers killed in Yemen copter crash

DUBAI: A Saudi helicopter came down during military operations in Yemen yesterday, killing 12 officers aboard, Saudi media reported, and a Yemeni defense ministry news website said the cause was friendly fire. The official Saudi news agency SPA quoted a statement from the Saudi-led coalition as saying the Black Hawk came down in Marib province, east of the Houthi-controlled capital Sanaa. "As a result, four officers and eight non-commissioned officers from the Saudi armed forces were martyred," it said, adding the possible cause of the crash was under investigation. HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah later sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

Kuwait quizzes IS suspect deported from Philippines

KUWAIT: Authorities in Kuwait were set to begin questioning yesterday a suspected Islamic State group militant deported from the Philippines as it remanded four relatives in custody, local media reported. Hussein Al-Dhafiri was arrested in an upscale district of Manila late last month along with his Syrian wife Rahaf Zina on suspicion of being members of IS and of planning attacks in both countries. He was deported to Kuwait on Friday to stand trial in his home country on charges of membership of a banned organization and of plotting attacks. Judicial authorities in Kuwait have remanded four relatives of Dhafiri in custody for 21 days pending further inquiries, Al-Qabas newspaper reported. They face similar charges to Dhafiri, the paper added.

Indian tycoon Mallya arrested, granted bail

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI: Flamboyant businessman Vijay Mallya, pursued by Indian authorities over \$1.4 billion in unpaid loans tied to his defunct Kingfisher Airlines, was arrested in London yesterday and appeared in court for an extradition hearing. A source close to Mallya said he attended a police station voluntarily and the arrest was a technical procedure. Mallya, 61, was arrested on behalf of the Indian authorities over accusations of fraud and appeared in Westminster Magistrates' Court, British police said. Indian television channels said the liquor and aviation tycoon was granted bail at the hearing. Mallya, in a message on Twitter, called the news of his arrest "usual Indian media hype".



Vijay Mallya

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May called yesterday for a snap election on June 8, in a shock move as she seeks to bolster her position before tough talks on leaving the EU. May is apparently aiming to cash in on her 20-point lead over the main opposition Labour party to increase her majority and give her a stronger hand in the Brexit battles with Brussels ahead. Britain started the formal process of leaving the EU last month, but negotiations are not due to begin for weeks - giving

the prime minister a narrow window for a lightning election campaign.

"We need a general election and we need one now," May said in a dramatic announcement outside her Downing Street office that caught the whole country off-guard. "We have at this moment a one-off chance to get this done while the European Union agrees its negotiating position and before the detailed talks begin," she said.

Continued on Page 13



LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May speaks to the media outside 10 Downing Street yesterday. — AFP

US 'FACEBOOK KILLER' TAKES OWN LIFE AFTER BRIEF CHASE

NEW YORK: A US hunt for the gunman accused of murdering a grandfather and posting the crime on Facebook ended yesterday with the suspect killing himself after a brief pursuit with police in Pennsylvania. Steve Stephens, 37, thought to have been mentally unstable, had been on the run after allegedly shooting dead 74-year-old Robert Godwin Sr on Easter Sunday, seemingly at random in broad daylight in Cleveland, Ohio. The murder and a video later posted to Facebook sparked outrage across the world and renewed scrutiny of the growing number of grisly videos being posted on social media.

Facebook has since removed the footage, and chief executive Mark Zuckerberg acknowledged yesterday

that the world's largest social network had a role to play in stemming the worrisome trend. "There is a lot of work to do here," he told a developers' conference. "And we will keep doing all we can to prevent tragedies like this from happening."

Authorities in Cleveland have urged a nationwide debate on the issue of violence posted to social media, and to find answers to the plague of gun crime rocking America. The manhunt ended when police received a tip off shortly after 11:00 am (1500 GMT) that Stephens was sitting in a white Ford Fusion vehicle in a McDonald's parking lot near Erie Pennsylvania, just over the border from Ohio.

Continued on Page 13



Steve Stephens



NEW YORK: People look at a Google Earth map of Venice, Italy on a screen as Google Earth unveils the revamped version of the application yesterday at an event at the Whitney Museum of Art. — AFP

GOOGLE EARTH REINVENTED

SAN FRANCISCO: Google yesterday launched a re-imagined version of its free Earth mapping service, weaving in storytelling and artificial intelligence and freeing it from apps. "This is our gift to the world," Google Earth director Rebecca Moore said while giving AFP an early look at the new version of the program that lets people range the planet from the comfort of their computers, smartphones or tablets. "It's a product that speaks to our deepest values around education and making information available to people."

A new 'Voyager' feature enables people digitally exploring the planet to be guided on interactive stories told by experts, boasting partners including BBC Earth, NASA, Sesame Street, and the Jane Goodall Institute. Google artificial intelli-

gence will be put to work for Earth users in the form of "knowledge cards" that let them dive deeper into online information about mountains, countries, landmarks or other places being virtually visited. It will also make suggestions on other locations armchair explorers might be interested in based on what they have searched in the past.

"This is the first time we have done this deep integration with the Google Knowledge Graph," Earth engineering manager Sean Askay said. "Everything Google knows about the world, you can know about the world." There is also a newly installed "Feeling Lucky?" feature for people who want to let the software suggest hidden gems such as Pemba

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the new board of directors of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA). —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief and member of the board of directors of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA).



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the new board of directors of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA).

AMIR MEETS NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF KUWAIT JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION

FRUITFUL MEDIA CONTRIBUTES TO STATE DEVELOPMENT: CROWN PRINCE

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hosted the new board of directors of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) at Bayan Palace yesterday. The new board later met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who stressed the significance of fruitful media that contributes to building and developing the State. His Highness the Crown Prince also emphasized that it is necessary to report news in full accuracy, sovereignty, neutrality and objectivity, and to observe relevant laws in a world that has been swarming with challenges. Furthermore, the board members met with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Minister of Oil, Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq, CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Nizar Al-Adasani, CEO of Kuwait Oil Tankers Company (KOTC) Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and KOTC Chairman Badr Nasser Al-Khashti on the occasion of the company's 60th anniversary. During the meeting, His Highness the Amir commended the vital role played by the KOTC in pushing forward the wheel of the national economy and providing strategic support to the oil sector. Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah was present at both meetings.

Later, the oil officials met with His Highness the Crown Prince, and KOTC executives briefed him about the company

accomplishments and its future plans. His Highness the Crown Prince lauded KOTC's sincere efforts in the vital sector and boosting its status in the international energy market, wishing they would perform further excellent work for service of the homeland, its progress and prosperity. The officials then met with His Highness the Prime Minister as well.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince separately received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister received former Secretary-General of the Arab League Dr Nabil Al-Araby. The meeting was attended by Undersecretary at His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikhha Etimad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah and Director General of Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also met with Araby. The meeting was attended by Director General of Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Ambassador Aziz Rahim, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Foreign Minister Bureau Affairs, Ambassador Saleh Salem Al-Loughani, in addition to Foreign Ministry senior officials. In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister received Chairman of the Employees' Syndicate of Kuwait Airways Talal Al-Hajri and several other union members. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq, as well as oil officials Nizar Al-Adasani, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Badr Nasser Al-Khashti.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq, as well as oil officials Nizar Al-Adasani, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Badr Nasser Al-Khashti.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq, as well as oil officials Nizar Al-Adasani, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Badr Nasser Al-Khashti.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the new board of directors of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA).



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with former Secretary-General of the Arab League Dr Nabil Al-Araby.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of the Employees' Syndicate of Kuwait Airways Talal Al-Hajri and several other union members.



KUWAIT: 'Team Nocturne' from the American University of Kuwait, winners of Microsoft's Imagine Cup 2017 in Kuwait. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Team TechnoFunGames from GUST.

IMAGINE CUP CONTINUES TO SPARK INNOVATION AMONG KUWAITI YOUTH

'TEAMS NOCTURNE' BAGS MICROSOFT'S IMAGINE CUP 2017 IN KUWAIT

By Ben Garcia, Agencies

KUWAIT: 'Team Nocturne' from the American University of Kuwait (AUK) bagged Microsoft's Imagine Cup 2017 in Kuwait, a global technology competition that aims to deliver educational, entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for students and youth by acquiring critical skills. The event was held at Al-Shaheed Park under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information. 'Team Nocturne' took first place for their project 'Artopia', a location-based application where users can create 3D paintings in augmented reality and save them in the real world. After taking first place, 'Team Nocturne' will go on to meet the region's top talent at the Imagine Cup MEA semifinals in Lebanon in May, on a path to compete with the best young innovators in worldwide finals, in Seattle, Washington, for the coveted Imagine Cup trophy and a prize of \$100,000.

Imagine Cup becomes a venue for Kuwaiti youth to showcase innovative applications using the latest Microsoft technologies, to solve some of the greatest societal challenges. The second prize was won by FEHOT from the American University of Middle East for their facial, emotional, human, object, tracking system project, designed to integrate facial recognition, emotion extraction and human irregular body contours identifica-

tion algorithms. Team Beyond Sight of Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) received the third prize for their project, which captures and converts instructor's writing on the board to PDF format or raw text and then converts it to Microsoft Office Word so the user can use and read it through his preferred screen reader.

The competition took Kuwaiti students on a rewarding journey, providing them with a unique opportunity to think about their place in the world, their strengths and weaknesses and also to learn about the importance of creativity by leveraging technology. The winning teams attending the regional and worldwide finals will get a chance to network with many other young, passionate people from all around the world, and create valuable connections that inspire new skills for the future.

"Technology is a critical enabler for youth, and at Microsoft, we recognize its profound role in teaching and learning. Imagine Cup is an ideal way to discover talent, giving a chance to young people from around the world to aim big and become more innovative," said Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait. "We are honored to have the support of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak-Al Sabah, for this year's finals, endorsing our commitment to support Kuwaiti youth towards leveraging technology for acquiring critical skills that pave the way for driving innovation and growth in the country."



Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait speaks during the event.

Finalists

Seven finalists; Team Trifocal, Team Electronic nose and Team FEHOT from AUM, Team TechnoFunGames and Team Beyond Sight from GUST, Team Nocturne from AUK and Team Nisa-n-Tech from AOU, were shortlisted to compete in Kuwait finals. The team of judges for the Kuwait finals to select the winners included Yacoub Al-Bash, IT Team Leader, Kuwait Oil Company; Srood Sheriff, Group CIO, Kuwait Finance House; Dr Maytham Safar, Head of Computer Engineering Faculty, Kuwait University; and Ahmad Marafi, Co-Founder at Coded. Microsoft's Imagine Cup challenges entrants, who must be 16 years or older or enrolled as a



Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information speaks.

permanent student, to collaborate in teams and submit imaginative ideas in the field of technology. Competitors need to develop the concepts from scratch and defend their usability and market draw to a panel of judges.

Many proposals were received by Microsoft from Kuwait entrants. This year, Microsoft's Azure cloud platform was a mandatory tool for all the submitted projects. The Imagine Cup forms a pivotal part of Microsoft's Youth Spark program, a global CSR initiative launched in 2003, aimed at delivering opportunities for more than 300 million young people all around the world. In February, Microsoft

conducted roadshows in five different universities across Kuwait; American University Middle East (AUM), Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), American University Kuwait (AUK), Arab Open University (AOU) and Kuwait University (KU). The presentations reached a wide range of students and created awareness amongst them to encourage participation in the competition, with ideas that will fuel the Kuwait government's vision for an aspired modern state. Interested students were able to attend intensive training sessions to prepare for submission of ideas. The sessions covered contest rules and criteria, and informed competitors about the processes of conceptualization, design, development and testing, which help lead to the most viable solutions.

Good reputation

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Nahas said the event has a very good reputation in terms of ideas and innovation in the world of IT. "It is an event Microsoft created 15 years ago - it is taking place in Kuwait for six years now. It is about sparking innovations in students. Bill Gates was a student when he came up with this idea. This goes back to the roots of Microsoft - reaching out to students, helping them create new ideas and new innovations," he said.

Nahas said Imagine Cup is shaping ideas of what technology could look like in the next couple of years and how it

could impact the global market. "We have seven finalists from Kuwait. We have a panel of judges that selected the best, and the winner will go South Africa to compete regionally. Last year, the regional meet was in Egypt. Winners in the regional level will fly to Seattle to compete worldwide. Most of the students are now software-savvy and we are happy that every year, the number of interested students gets bigger and better," he said.

Imagine Cup, according to Nahas, is one of the most exciting events of Microsoft annually. "This is the venue to come up with new ideas - young talents that can showcase their innovations to the world. Everyone is proud about it. It can create success stories. It saw a lot of success stories in the past years with Talabat.com and Souq.com. There are many other companies and we can support them if they have some new ideas to launch in the market," he added.

Asked about the major achievements of Microsoft in Kuwait, Nahas mentioned the spark of innovation and entrepreneurial skills among Kuwaiti youth and the technological rebirth here. With regards to its CSR broader approach, Nahas said is Microsoft continuously reaching out to every sector of the society, from funneling technology to boosting its SME (small and medium enterprises) initiatives. It is also helping the government to introduce new services to better serve the population smartly.



Participants awarded during the event.



Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information is seen during the event.



Gulf Bank's representatives along with students from Ja'afar Bin Abi Talib.

GULF BANK EXCLUSIVE SPONSOR OF INJAZ-KUWAIT'S 'ENTREPRENEURSHIP MASTERCLASS COMPETITION'

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is proud to have exclusively sponsored INJAZ Kuwait's 'Entrepreneurship Masterclass Competition', for high school students in government schools. The two-day competition took place on 12 and 13 April 2017 at the Community Development Centre in Bayan and the top entrepreneurial teams were named in the boys and girls categories.

The 'Entrepreneurship Masterclass Competition' is a one-day event organized by INJAZ Kuwait and delivered by 30 volunteers including several Gulf Bank employees. The competition follows a series of workshops which introduced the high school students to the concept of self-employment and entrepreneurship and afforded them the opportunity to meet volunteers who are pioneers in the business community. The interactive workshops also enabled students to engage in thought-stimulating activities to help them expand their horizons, while also considering their future professional careers. These series of workshops were followed by multiple competitions between teams of students during the academic year of 2016-2017, leading to the selection of different teams to participate in the final competition.

As a result, 'Entrepreneurship Masterclass

Competitions' for boys and girls were held to select top winners. The two-day competitions convened 19 teams of 250 students and showcased their business projects. A panel of judges, which included five managers from Gulf Bank, selected the winners. The criteria for winning was based on creativity and feasibility of the students' projects.

In the boys category, Ja'afar bin Abi Talib was selected as the winning school for their project entitled 'Eventkom', which is an event planning application designed to assist with party planning. Ibrahim Al-Duwaisan, Bader Shaaban, and Ahmed Al-Matari were the judges from Gulf Bank. As for the girls' competition, Asma's Bnt Abi Bakr was selected as the winning school for their project entitled 'Global Aid' which is a mobile application that arranges wheelchair services for clients across airports, hotels, malls, and other locations. Ahmad Mulla Ali, Mubarak Al-Ghareeb, and Jennah Al-Mattar were the judges from Gulf Bank.

As a token of appreciation and gratitude, INJAZ Kuwait awarded Gulf Bank for its exclusive sponsorship and longstanding support of the organization. The Bank has been committed to INJAZ Kuwait with yearly contributions and active involvement through its staff.

Commenting on this occasion, Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank said: "Gulf Bank is delighted to have sponsored the exciting two-day competition for governmental high school students. The Bank is proud of its longstanding partnership and support of INJAZ Kuwait who is dedicated to training the youth of Kuwait to help them build successful careers. Last year our employees participated in over 50 INJAZ programs and impacted over 1,500 students. We also are the Financial Literacy Champions leading 14 personal finance courses for hundreds of students in public and private schools across Kuwait. We are committed to continuing to support these vital programs and work of INJAZ-Kuwait."

INJAZ Kuwait has contributed to the education of 9,000 students for the academic year 2015-2016. This was made possible with the contributions over 800 volunteers from the Kuwait private sector, where 413 students in schools and universities have successfully completed the Company Program in 2015-2016. INJAZ-Kuwait will continue to empower youth through different means and channels, fulfilling its pledge to this ambitious segment of society.

IMPROVING BUSINESS IN KUWAIT WILL HIKE GDP: WORLD BANK

KUWAIT: A World Bank official has lauded the State of Kuwait's political will for boosting business, indicating such progress will increase the gross domestic product (GDP) by seven percent during 2019. Mohamed Abdulkader, a World Bank official tasked with developing the private sector in the World Bank Group in Kuwait, said in an interview that the group, along with Kuwaiti officials, had exerted intensive efforts at the level of "doing business in Kuwait."

The goal is to improve Kuwait's status in business environment rating which dropped four points, in the latest report by the World Bank, said the official. The World Bank's Doing Business Environment Index, released by the bank in October each year, determines states' business status on basis of 11 criteria, largely depending on information solicited from the private sector, particularly with respect of facilities provided for launching businesses and enterprises.

Abdulkader said that he has recently sensed desire from the Kuwaiti political leaders to press ahead with reforms and take necessary measures as well as enact legislations needed to shore up the business environment as a government priority. However, he indicated that Kuwait's ranking in the World Bank group's list would be marginally affected in the upcoming report, noting that data of all enlisted countries had been assembled for the 2016-2017 index.

The State of Kuwait has taken a series of steps to improve the business environment. Last May, the higher committee for improving the business environment was established. In August, it completed the national agenda for refurbishing this environment. The cabinet endorsed it in January.

The 48-recommendation agenda advises improving six criteria out of the 11 ones set by the World Bank. Up to 60 percent of the national agenda recommendations have been met, in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. "This is a grand achievement, done in a short period of time," he said.

Elaborating, Abdulkader explained that the recommendations include ratification of a large number of crucial legislations namely the recent amendment to corporate laws. Moreover, he lauded various measures intended to trim red tape, such as setting up the single counter for municipal transactions.

Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) chaired the higher committee for improving business, grouping officials from 18 government departments. KADIPA's studies have revealed that the GDP will grow by seven percent in 2017, provided the business environment has been overhauled. Kuwait's ranking in the latest World Bank Doing Business report dropped from 98 to 102, among 190 enlisted states. The UAE came first among Arab states and 26th globally.



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait Warren Hauck and Education Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Faris inaugurate the exhibition. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Adnan Saad, Deputy General Manager of Kuwait Times speaks with officials at the event.

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY, KUWAIT TIMES ORGANIZE 'COLOURS OF AUSTRALIA' PAINTINGS EXHIBITION

GALLERY HOSTED AT BAYAN SECONDARY SCHOOL CAMPUS

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Australian Embassy, in cooperation with Kuwait Times, organized the 'Colours of Australia' paintings exhibition yesterday at Bayan Secondary School. "The

competition allowed for cultural exchange between Kuwait and Australia," Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait Warren Hauck said. "Student of Kuwait learned more about cultures and civilizations, and became able to identify with communities in other parts of

the world through arts." During his speech, the Australian Ambassador expressed gratitude for the 'great cooperation' between Kuwait Times and Bayan School for introducing students to a different culture and art.

Meanwhile, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Faris praised the participating students for their hard work. "I admire the opportunity that was offered to students in Kuwait to draw the nature of Australia, as 6,500 students participated in this competition."



Adnan Saad, Deputy General Manager of Kuwait Times takes the officials in a tour at the exhibition.



Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Faris delivers his speech.

Adnan Saad, Deputy General Manager of Kuwait Times and organizer of the 'Colours of Australia' student art competition, thanked Bayan Secondary School for providing the opportunity to organize an exhibition at their campus in order to showcase the drawings

entered in the competition. He said that students submitted beautiful works that demonstrated amazing painting skills. "Students from public and private schools put huge effort, passion and time in order to present paintings and artworks of great value. Through this competition, they explored Australia with all of its deserts, forests, animals, enchanting scenery, world-famous monuments in addition to aspects of a new culture and an old civilization."

The theme for the "Colours of Australia" arts competition encouraged students to express their knowledge of Australia by drawing a landscape, natural scene, or any other form of expression they would find suitable.

During the event, Bayan School announced that it became a smart school where the admission process will be converted from paperwork to electronic transaction in order to save time, effort as well as papers and printing ink.

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The Middle East's Largest Students' Art Competition

KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

March 19th Till April 20th, 2017

HELLO ARTISTS...

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

Good luck to you, our young artists.

- Competition is open to ages from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) (15 - 17) and Special needs.
- The competition is open for all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
- The competition will start on March 19th and will continue till April 20th 2017.
- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
- All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- All schools participating in the competition will receive an appreciation plaque.
- Any school or individual interested to participate in this competition is welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheets.
- Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
- Only drawing sheets provided by the Kuwait Times will be allowed.
- You can use any kind of color pencils, paint brushes or crayons.

* For all Jazeera Airways tickets terms and conditions are applied

Kuwait Times Participation Form

If you are interested to participate fill the form and send it to Kuwait Times.

From:

We would like to confirm our participation in the above mentioned activity with the total number of participating student's so the corresponding number of drawing sheets can be delivered to our school.

School:

Tel: Fax:

Address:

Total number of interested students are

6 - 8 years 9 - 11 years 12 - 14 years 15 - 17 years Special need

Name: Signature:

For more information contact Kuwait Times Tel: 24835616/7 Fax 24835620/1 or send an email to: ads@kuwaittimes.net

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Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait Warren Hauck leaves a note at a board at the exhibition.



Adnan Saad, Deputy General Manager of Kuwait Times leaves a note as well.



Students perform during the event.



Officials attend the event.





RABAT: Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh (left) and Saudi Arabia's Finance Minister Ibrahim Abdulaziz Al-Assaf arrive at the opening of The annual joint meetings of Arab financial institutions in Rabat, Morocco, yesterday. — AP

MOROCCAN KING URGES ARAB FINANCIAL GROUPS TO BOOST DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

RABAT: Moroccan King Mohammad VI called on Arab financial institutions yesterday to increase their funding for development projects in Arab countries. King Mohammad VI, in a speech before a meeting of Arab Finance Ministers and central banks' governors but read on his behalf by Finance Minister Mohammad Busaeed, said the increase of development projects' funding would honor growing needs of Arab countries. He said operations carried out by Arab financing institutions reached the African countries. The Moroccan King called for further strengthening of the South-South cooperation to boost Arab-African cooperation. Kuwait's delegation is headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh. He is joined by officials from the central bank and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

Abdulrahman Al-Humaidi, Director General and Board Chairman of the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), said the Arab finance ministers' meeting would help develop economic and financial performance in Arab countries. He said regional and international financial and economic turmoil, including decline of oil prices, have affected the Arab economies. AMF predicts that the deficit of the Arab countries' budgets exceeded 10 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016, he said.

Humaidi called on Arab countries to diversify economies, carry out structural reforms and improve business environment to attract local and foreign investment.

Yesterday's meeting in Rabat will touch upon implementation of a resolution of the Arab economic summit, which was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2013 regarding the increase of capitals of Arab financial institutions by 50 percent. — KUNA

KUWAIT SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA: JARALLAH

MOSCOW: The visiting Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister yesterday affirmed the Gulf State desire to cement relations and cooperation with Russia in various spheres. "We have always aspired to strengthen and boost the bilateral relations (with Russia) in various spheres," said Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah during a scheduled meeting of political consultations with Russian President's Special Envoy for the Middle East and Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov.

Current consultations constitute an opportunity to ponder issues of common concern for Russia and Kuwait, said

Jarallah, noting existing cooperation in investment, economic, commercial, energy and military sectors. Jarallah indicated that the consultations with the Russian side also dealt with Gulf and Middle Eastern issues, underscoring Moscow's "effective and vital role" on the regional arena.

Meanwhile, Bogdanov praised the Kuwaiti leadership for adopting a sagacious, balanced, objective and constructive external policy. "The Kuwaiti side has clear perception about developments in the region in which we have interest for getting acquainted with," he added. — KUNA

UNIFYING PRICES AT CO-OPS KILLS COMPETITION: AUTHORITY HOUSING APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO DROP

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies (UCCS) Saad Al-Shabo said he received a letter from the competition protection authority declaring that he is under investigation over earlier statements about unifying the prices of goods at various co-ops. The competition protection agency's chairman Nayef Allafi asked Shabo for detailed information about the decision to unify prices, because this would prevent competition and represents a clear violation of article 4 of the competition law which bans unifying or freezing prices, so that merchants could compete in satisfying consumers' needs and provide high quality products.

Partnership Projects

Chairman of the parliamentary budgets and final statements committee Adnan Abdulsamad said that the committee discussed the budget of the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) for the fiscal year 2017-2018 and its final statement for the fiscal year 2015-2016. Abdulsamad said the State Audit Bureau noticed that some of the contracts signed by the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) had been wrongly done without referring to KAPP's supreme committee. Audit Bureau reports also showed that the lease value of three contracts - Jahra and Ahmadi slaughterhouses and Mubarakiya Market had been increased from KD 137,000 to around KD 6 million. Meanwhile, the report found that Al-Zour North power plant's lease contract value was only KD 138,000, while the state pays

around KD 26 million for the power it purchases from the investment company.

Housing applications

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) announced that total pending housing applications till the end of the previous fiscal year dropped to 98,516, compared to 103,000 in the first quarter of the same year, which was due to the increased pace of distributing housing units - 11,338 during the year. In this regard, the housing authority's report said the authority had signed contracts to develop the South Mutlaa City project and build and maintain road infrastructure for 18,000 units. The report also showed that the authority signed a contract to expand Wafra, including the construction of roads, parking spaces, infrastructure grids and 183 power stations.

OVER 1,000 SECURITY RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry commented on queries about the ministry placing security restrictions on some citizens and expats due to their political stands, which was mentioned by MPs. The statement said the legislator commissioned the ministry to uphold security and law and order domestically, in order to prevent crime and protect lives and property. It said concerned bodies at the ministry, on the orders of the interior minister, examined complaints it received and lifted restrictions on more than 1,000 cases. The rest of the cases are being examined, and the ministry will accept any complaint.

Roundabout open

The traffic department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Works, will open the health ministry roundabout on Jamal Abdalnasser Road near Garnata today. Traffic from the UN roundabout to the psychiatric hospital roundabout will be diverted.

Brewery busted

Ahmadi security raided a liquor brewery in Wafra after patrols caught an Asian man carrying a sack who attempted to escape. He confessed to distilling liquor. Police found 40 drums, nine distillation drums and 244 bottles in the house. The suspect and the liquor were sent to concerned authorities.

Crackdowns

Ahmadi security carried out a campaign covering several areas of the governorate, resulting in issuing 128 traffic violations and arrested 17 on debt charges, while three cars were impounded. Six persons were arrested with drugs. Separately, Kuwait Municipality conducted a crackdown on restaurants and shops in Sharq, Qibla, and Shuwaikh, during which 62 kilograms of expired food products were confiscated.



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Jordanian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Major General Mahmoud Freihaat. — KUNA

DEFENSE MINISTER HOSTS JORDANIAN ARMY CHIEF

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with visiting Jordanian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Major General Mahmoud Freihaat. During the meeting, they discussed several issues of mutual interest, mainly military aspects, and ways of developing and

promoting Kuwaiti-Jordanian military relations, the Defense Ministry said in a press release. Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher also met with the visiting Jordanian general to discuss bilateral military cooperation. A number of Kuwaiti army generals attended the meeting. — KUNA

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الانباء Al-Anbaa
TOMORROW BECAME YESTERDAY
By Salah Al-Sayer

Arabs' detachment and 'divorce' from enlightenment happened as early as during their 'honeymoon', and hardly had we boarded the locomotive of modernization when it stopped moving and is still waiting at the terminal. The slight elements of enlightenment the society used to have are now obscured by darkness and forgetfulness. When the world was moving forward quickly, our societies were moving backwards while fighting an illusory battle against 'Westernization' and 'protecting identity and genuineness' became a slogan often misused, which revived 'backwardness'. Thus Arab societies antagonized modernity, refrained from stepping into the future... and tomorrow became yesterday!

It is a disastrous case because this particular patient lying on the world's 'hospital bed' refuses to die and goes on living. Apparently, its brain started liking its comatose state and no longer wishes to recover, because it lost civilized sensitiveness due to long years of lack of enlightenment and domination of stillness in Arab societies. It is exactly like the case of some types of eyeless fish I saw at the Al-Hoota Cave in Oman. Because they lived inside a dark cave where vision is unnecessary, their eyes disappeared through genetic modifications and adaptation over generations!

Such a disastrous state will not come to an end unless we get struck by revolutionary enlightenment. Unfortunately, there is no such hope within the foreseeable future and the calamity will remain unsolved, because we do not really feel in trouble. I would, here, like to remind of the bombs dropped on Germany during World War II and stress that the German people learned their lessons from them, while the ones dropped on Afghanistan taught nobody anything because people's senses, feelings, thoughts, culture, reactions, dreams and determination are different. Nations are not all the same and if someone feels superior, prettier, most perfect and ideal, why would he need change or development then?!

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

MAN ACCUSES BROTHER OF ATTEMPTED MURDER

KUWAIT: A citizen pulled a pistol in the face of his brother and threatened to kill him. He then fired at the walls after the two had a dispute over inheritance. The citizen called police for help to save him from his brother, who attacked

him in his diwaniya. The suspect escaped before the arrival of police. Detectives are looking to charge him with possessing an unlicensed firearm and attempted murder.

— Translated from the Arabic press

الجريدة Al-Jarida
KEEPING PEOPLE BUSY
By Dr Bader Al-Daihani

At the time regional peoples are kept busy with vexatious issues and illusory dangers at the expense of their joint national and everyday concerns, or distracted by secondary matters leading to domestic conflicts and making them waste time and effort in a sophisticated debate of controversial issues that date back several centuries earlier, governments are putting the instructions dictated by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank into practice through so-called development plans mainly based on full privatization.

This means selling states' assets and properties to groups of family businesses (the majority of GCC private sector companies are family businesses) that can only exist and prosper through public spending, state support, imposing taxes such as the value added one, imposing new fees or increasing current ones, reducing social subsidies or cancelling them.

Moreover, at a time when the public and powers in our societies are busy with useless, overused and endless debates, political corruption is prevailing. Governments are moving forward in binding our states and peoples with extremely dangerous foreign debts without knowing how their interest, which may sometimes exceed the value of the debts itself, would be paid.

They do not even know whether they would be able to pay them off within the foreseeable future, because they are mostly used to finance projects without real economic value that do not involve production or exports, achieve no public benefit such as creating new job opportunities or even capable of solving the problems of education, healthcare and housing. So, how will such loans be paid and who will pay for the state's failure to pay it, such as the case of Greece a few years ago?!

In addition, at a time when some local influential and conflicting bodies that monopolize the media raise racist and sectarian issues that lead to domestic disputes about origins, sects and the priority of their great, great ancestors' arrival to the country, dangers threatening our states', peoples' and governments' mere existence are surrounding us. Our region is extremely and unprecedentedly boiling and it seems that a new regional division is imminent!

Moreover, Western weapon factories and their local agents are striking deals worth millions of dollars with our governments for the sake of resolving their suffocating financial problems, which will drain our national wealth and public budgets. Governments claiming to suffer from deficits will be forced to seek foreign loans, sell public assets cheaply and reduce or cancel necessary social subsidies. So will our peoples and powers realize these national concerns instead of wasting precious time and effort on marginal or illusory useless issues?

— Translated by Kuwait Times

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- 7.50pm Success Story Talks by the Competition's Alumni
- 8.20pm Announcement of Winners followed by a networking dinner

10TH ARAB STARTUP COMPETITION Supporting partner STARTUP BAHRAIN

BAHRAIN HOSTS 10TH MIT ENTERPRISE FORUM ARAB STARTUP COMPETITION AWARD CEREMONY

BAHRAIN, BEIRUT, JEDDAH, KUWAIT: The MIT Enterprise Forum (MITEF) for the Pan Arab Region will be announcing the lucky winners of the 10th MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Startup Competition in a final award ceremony to be held at the Kingdom of Bahrain's International Circuit on the 27th of April.

The competition is held in partnership with Community Jameel, a social enterprise organization that operates a wide range of initiatives which promote and contribute towards positive societal change and economic sustainability; Zain Group, a leading telecommunications innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa; and Tamkeen, an organization tasked with developing Bahrain's private sector and positioning it as the key driver of economic development.

The 74 semi-finalists from 11 Arab countries will undergo another round of training present their work over a three-day period from April 25th till the 27th to a jury that brings together some of the Arab world's key investors and businessmen. This year's edition, which is of special importance as it celebrates the competition's 10th anniversary, registered years of success and excellence while serving generations of young Arabs and their creative entrepreneurial ideas.

Hala Fadel, Chair of the board of MITEF Pan Arab stressed on technology and innovation as drivers of entrepreneurship in the region saying, "For our 10th anniversary, we want to gather the best entrepreneurs from the region, for them to learn from each other and from the global ecosystem. We insist on technology and innovation as the main drivers going forward for entrepreneurship in the region, and we think we are best positioned to lead this new trend."

Fady Jameel, President of Community Jameel International, commented on the anticipated event: "The final award ceremony of this grand competition is just around the corner. The number of participants this year exceeded all expectations and we are absolutely delighted to be part of this exciting event, yet again, for the

tenth year. Together we can truly give birth to an outstanding generation of young entrepreneurs."

Zain Group CEO-Operations, Scott Gegenheimer said: "We are delighted to partner other esteemed organizations in the holding of this event in Bahrain, supporting the Kingdom's 2030 Economic Vision, which is based on sustainability, fairness and competitiveness. Zain recognizes that technology, innovation and youth are key drivers for entrepreneurship across the region and our collaboration with MIT Enterprise Forum reflects Zain's strategic vision of supporting young aspiring entrepreneurs to achieve their dreams."

Chief Executive of Tamkeen, Dr Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi emphasized the importance of this competition and said: "This year, Tamkeen chose to be a strategic partner for this prestigious competition. This is at the heart of our goals as a firm, to offer our support to all entrepreneurial initiatives in all vital sectors. We are proud to host this regional competition for the first time in the Kingdom of Bahrain stemming from our belief that such competitions inspire entrepreneurs to challenge themselves enabling them to develop and present their ideas in a competitive environment."

The 74 teams from 11 Arab countries competing in the semi-finals are distributed as follows: Egypt (20), Lebanon (11), Saudi Arabia (9), United Arab Emirates (9), Jordan (7), Tunisia (5), Morocco (5), Bahrain (3), Sudan (2), Libya (2) and Algeria (1). All the qualified teams participated in special trainings and preparatory activities that were held in Egypt, Jordan and the UAE.

The cash prizes, which exceed \$160,000, will be distributed among three finalists who will be selected in each of the three tracks: Startups, Social Entrepreneurship and Ideas. The winners will also benefit from advanced training sessions, personal mentorship and guidance not to mention a great deal of media coverage and excellent networking opportunities.

Crime Report
MAID, DRIVER FACE ADULTERY CHARGES

KUWAIT: An Indian driver had a relationship with a Filipina domestic helper, who got pregnant out of wedlock. The Filipina was in pain, so she was taken to hospital, where it was discovered she is four months pregnant. She said the father is the house driver. The driver and maid were arrested and charged with adultery.

Accident
A Nepalese woman suffered fractures and lacerations after she was run over by a Lebanese driver and was admitted to the ICU. The driver said she was surprised with the girl crossing the street and could not avoid her. She was detained and charged with running over a person and causing injury.

Insult
A traffic police officer was challenged by a traffic violator, who beat him when he decided to confiscate his driving license. The suspect was brought under control and arrested. The traffic police officer was in Taima when he stopped the man for a traffic violation, and decided to keep his license, but the man attacked him, twisted his arm and grabbed the license. Police backup arrived and he was arrested.

Doctor assaulted
A patient attacked a doctor at Mubarak Hospital, and is being sought for questioning. The doctor went to Jabriya police station and told them that a citizen insulted him in front of other patients and employees, and he gave them his information.

Threats
An Egyptian woman asked police for protection from a man who threatened to harm her. The woman told Salmiya police that she met an Egyptian man she knows, and a heated argument ensued. When she was leaving, he threatened to harm her. Detectives were asked to arrest him.

Bootlegger arrested
An Indian man set up a vending stand in front of his Khaitan residence to sell liquor to passersby, besides his own regular customers. Police received a call from a citizen who said he was angered by the man's brazen behavior. Police responded, but the vendor escaped when they arrived. A chase took place and he was arrested. He was sent along with 26 bottles to concerned authorities.

Theft
Criminal detectives resolved several theft cases after arresting two Jordanians, while three others who were in the country on visit visas escaped. A source said the arrest was made when a Palestinian said KD 800 was stolen from him while at a mosque. The source refused to say how the suspects were identified. The suspects confessed to entering the country with the intention to steal. Detectives mingled among garage workers in industrial Shuwaikh, and investigations uncovered the gang of pickpockets.

Domestic violence
A female citizen was beaten by her boyfriend after she left a cinema hall and went to her car. While she was driving, a car obstructed her. The suspect got out of the car, pulled the girl out of her car and beat her. The girl went to Salmiya police station and lodged a complaint. Meanwhile, a girl lodged a complaint at Dhafer police station against her brother-in-law for beating her. She submitted a medical report stating her injuries.

— Translated from the Arabic press



Thwarted attack rattles France; 2 suspects arrested

HARDLINE HINDU YOUTH CALL THE SHOTS ON STREETS OF NORTH INDIA

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ERDOGAN'S NEW POWERS BECOME REALITY

TRUMP CONGRATULATES TURKEY PRESIDENT • OPPONENTS SEEK TO ANNUL VOTE

ANKARA: Turkey's main opposition began a battle yesterday to annul a referendum handing President Tayyip Erdogan sweeping new powers, while the bar association and an international monitor said an illegal move by electoral authorities may have swung the vote. A defiant Erdogan, whose narrow victory exposed the nation's deep divisions, has said Sunday's vote ended all debate on the more powerful presidency he has long sought, and told European observers who criticized it: "Talk to the hand".

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, whose job will cease to exist once the constitutional changes take full effect, said Erdogan would be invited to rejoin the ruling AK Party as soon as official results are announced, a sign the government has no intention of waiting to see the outcome of opposition appeals. Under the outgoing constitution, the president had been required to remain impartial and renounce party political ties.

Trump congratulates

In contrast to the tensions with the EU, Trump called Erdogan to "congratulate him on his recent referendum victory" the White House said in a statement. Donald Trump congratulated his counterpart while the European Union kept its distance. The European Union, worried also by threats from Erdogan to restore capital punishment, has been far from effusive in its response, yet Trump late Monday congratulated Erdogan in a phone call.

Few in Turkey expect legal challenges to the referendum to lead to a recount, let alone a re-run. But if unresolved, they will leave deep questions over the legitimacy of a vote which split the electorate down the middle, and whose polarizing campaign drew criticism and concern from European allies. Turkey's bar association said a last-minute decision by the YSK electoral board to allow unstamped ballots in the referendum was clearly against the law, prevented proper records being kept, and may have impacted the results.

"With this illegal decision, ballot box councils (officials at polling stations) were misled into believing that the use of unstamped ballots was appropriate," the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (TBB) said in a statement. "Our regret is not over the outcome of the referendum, but because of the desire to overlook clear and harsh violations of the law that have the potential to impact the results," it said. The main opposition People's Republican Party (CHP), which has said it will take its challenge to the European Court of Human Rights if necessary, said it

would present a formal appeal to annul the vote to the YSK later.

YSK Chairman Sadi Guven said on Monday the last-minute decision to allow unstamped ballots was not unprecedented and the government had previously permitted such a move. It was not immediately clear how many unstamped ballots the electoral board had accepted as valid. The head of the board said it had received many complaints that polling stations didn't have stamps and made the decision to accept the ballots after an appeal from a ruling AK Party official.

An Austrian member of the Council of Europe observer mission said up to 2.5 million votes could have been manipulated,

almost double the margin of Erdogan's victory, and that the YSK decision on unstamped ballots appeared illegal. "These complaints are to be taken very seriously and they are, in any case, of such an extent that they would turn around the outcome of the vote," Alev Korun told ORF radio.

'Considerable complaints'

Election authorities have said preliminary results showed 51.4 percent of voters had backed the biggest overhaul of Turkish politics since the founding of the modern republic, a far narrower margin than Erdogan had been seeking. Erdogan

argues that concentration of power in the presidency is needed to prevent instability. Opponents accuse him of leading a drive toward one-man rule in Turkey, a NATO member that borders Iran, Iraq and Syria and whose stability is of vital importance to the United States and the European Union.

Speaking in parliament yesterday, Yildirim said "rumors" of irregularities were a vain effort to cast doubt on the result. "The people's will has been reflected at the ballot box, and the debate is over," he said. "Everyone should respect the outcome, especially the main opposition". The YSK said on its website on Sunday, as votes were still being cast, that it had received "considerable complaints" that voters had been given slips and envelopes without official stamps and that it would accept unstamped documents as long as they were not proven to be fraudulent. —Agencies



ANKARA: People queue outside the High Electoral Board in Ankara yesterday, in order to submit their personal appeal for annulment of the referendum as Turkish policemen stand guard at the entrance. —AFP

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ISRAEL VOWS NOT TO NEGOTIATE WITH HUNGER STRIKERS



TEL AVIV: Marwan Barghouti waves as he enters a Tel Aviv court. Gilad Erdan, Israel's minister of public security said yesterday, that he will not negotiate with hundreds of Palestinian prisoners who launched a hunger strike to press for better conditions. —AP

JERUSALEM: Israel vowed yesterday not to negotiate with hundreds of Palestinian detainees on the second day of a hunger strike led by prominent prisoner and popular leader Marwan Barghouti. More than 1,000 Palestinians in Israeli prisons launched the hunger strike on Monday, issuing a list of demands ranging from better medical services to access to telephones. Issa Qaraqa, head of prisoner affairs for the Palestinian Authority, said on Monday that around 1,300 prisoners were on hunger strike and the number could rise.

The Palestinian Prisoners' Club put the number at 1,500. A spokesman for the Israel Prisons Service said around 1,100 prisoners started the hunger strike and roughly the same number were believed to be continuing on Tuesday. Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan vowed that Israeli authorities would not negotiate with the prisoners and said Barghouti had been moved to another prison and placed in solitary confinement.

"They are terrorists and incarcerated murderers who are getting what they deserve and we have no reason to negotiate with them," Erdan told army radio. He said Barghouti had been placed in solitary confinement because calling for the hunger strike was against prison rules. Some 6,500 Palestinians are currently detained by Israel for a range of offences and alleged crimes. Of those, 62 are women and 300 are minors. Some 500 are held under administrative detention, which allows for imprisonment with-

out charge. Thirteen Palestinian lawmakers are also among the detainees.

'Will not surrender'

Palestinian prisoners have mounted repeated hunger strikes, but rarely on such a large scale. Barghouti's call for the strike has given it added credibility, with the 57-year-old serving five life sentences over his role in the second Palestinian intifada or uprising. He was convicted of attacks that killed five people. He is popular among Palestinians, with polls suggesting he could win the Palestinian presidency.

Graffiti showing the iconic image of his cuffed hands raised above his head flashing a peace sign during his trial in 2003-4 has been daubed on walls across the occupied West Bank. "Decades of experience have proved that Israel's inhumane system of colonial and military occupation aims to break the spirit of prisoners and the nation to which they belong, by inflicting suffering on their bodies, separating them from their families and communities, using humiliating measures to compel subjugation," Barghouti wrote in a New York Times opinion piece. "In spite of such treatment, we will not surrender to it." Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip, saluted the "brave prisoners" on hunger strike. Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas issued a statement on Monday calling on "the international community to save the lives of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails."

Death penalty debate

The start of the hunger strike coincided with Palestinian Prisoners Day. Thousands of Palestinians demonstrated in support of the prisoners. It also comes ahead of commemorations this summer marking the 50th anniversary of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including now annexed Jerusalem, in the Six-Day War. The hunger strike has met with harsh criticism from members of Israel's right-wing government. Beyond Erdan's vow not to negotiate, Transport and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz called for a change in the law to allow for the death penalty for "terrorists." While many Palestinians view Barghouti as a hero, Israelis point to the bloody suicide attacks of the second intifada of 2000-2005 and his role in the uprising.

For Palestinians, the prisons have become a stark symbol of Israel's occupation. Barghouti refused to defend himself at his trial and did not recognize the court's legitimacy. Some Israeli analysts have sought to highlight the rivalry between Barghouti and Abbas within their Fatah party, suggesting his call for a hunger strike was also related to internal politics. Those close to Barghouti have dismissed such suggestions. Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts have been at a standstill since a US-led initiative collapsed three years ago. Abbas is due to meet US President Donald Trump in Washington for the first time in the coming weeks as the White House seeks a way forward with peace efforts. —AFP

EXILED BAHRAIN CLERIC POINTS TO IRAN'S WIDENING INFLUENCE

US PUTS SANADI ON PROSCRIBED 'TERRORIST' LIST

MANAMA: At a wake in Iran's holy city of Qom in February, a small group of Bahraini emigres and clerics mourned a young militant killed in a gun battle with Bahrain's security forces. The eulogy was delivered by an exiled Bahraini cleric who has called for the island's Shiite Muslim majority to uproot the Sunni Al-Khalifa monarchy in a holy war. "The choice of resistance is widening and spreading on the ground," said the cleric, Murtada Al-Sanadi, who has been named by the United States as a "specially designated global terrorist" backed by Iran. The ceremony shines a light on Iran's widening influence over an armed fringe of the opposition in Bahrain, a country with a strategic value that belies its small size. It hosts a US naval base and is a close ally of Saudi Arabia, Iran's main regional rival.

government has asserted he was fleeing to Iran. A confidential assessment by Bahrain security officials, reviewed by Reuters, names Sanadi as the leader of the Ashtar Brigades, a militant group that has carried out bombings and shootings directed at the kingdom's police. In a statement online, the group hailed Ghasra as a "martyr commander" on his death. According to the security assessment, Sanadi tasked Ghasra with forming militant cells with Iranian help. Iran's foreign ministry called Bahraini government accusations that Iran had any role in supporting Sanadi or the Ashtar Brigades in violent acts "baseless and fabricated." Sanadi did not respond to requests for comment.

Supreme Leader
An uprising by some in Bahrain's

like Sanadi based in Iran. Recruited on religious pilgrimages or study trips to Iran, Bahrain's prosecutor has said, the suspects were given weapons and explosives training in Iran or neighboring Iraq. Iran denies the accusation. Sanadi has powerful allies in Iran, where he has lived since he went into exile in 2012. The official website of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei published an editorial by Sanadi in December accusing the US of helping repress Shiite activism in Bahrain.

The US State Department put Sanadi on its proscribed "terrorist" list on March 17. His name appears alongside leaders in Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. The US cited Sanadi's links to the Ashtar Brigades which, it said, "receives funding and support from the Government of Iran." Bahrain accuses Sanadi of having organ-

ized training of Bahraini militants in Iran by the IRGC and in Iraq by the Hezbollah Brigades militia. The Ashtar Brigades announced an alliance with the Iran-backed Hezbollah Brigades via an online statement in February. Sanadi spoke of his relationship with Ghasra in a communication to his followers on messaging app Telegram, dated in March and seen by Reuters. "I found him a lover of (Shiites), ready for the highest sacrifice and dedicated to the choice of resistance." Ghasra's brother Yasser, speaking to Reuters from Iran, acknowledged that his brother Reda was a fighter but denied he received Iranian help. He declined to comment on links between his brother and Sanadi.

Proud to be enemy

Speaking to Iranian state TV channel Al-Alam in March Sanadi said: "I'm proud that America considers me an enemy." While not commenting directly on the state department accusations, he said the US was using "so-called terrorism and ... an imaginary danger they claim is coming from the Islamic Republic of Iran" to sell arms to Gulf allies and maintain influence. Sanadi is the only official of his party to have eluded a long-term jail sentence, though he spent six months behind bars amid 2011 protests on rioting charges.

Six months later he departed legally for Iran. Chronicling his experiences in a prison manifesto called "Pain and Hope" published in Iran last year, he said he suffered torture and watched fellow detainees killed at the hands of Jordanian and other foreign officers he scorns as "mercenaries." Bahraini security officials denied to Reuters that Sanadi suffered torture in custody. "There have been isolated abuses which have been investigated and addressed but this is not a systematic phenomenon," said one official.

In January, Sanadi called on Bahrain's opposition to abandon mostly peaceful protests in public squares and to take up arms. "From today and hereafter, the period has changed. We in the Islamic Wafa Movement announce that we have begun a new phase as a tribute to the martyrs: one grip on the squares and one grip on the trigger!" he said in a speech in Qom. Iran's promotion of Sanadi appears to point to an endorsement of his agenda. Next to an Iranian flag and a banner reading "Death to the House of Saud," referring to Saudi Arabia's rulers, Sanadi delivered a sermon at Friday prayers in the country's most prestigious mosque in Qom in September - an exceptional honor. —Reuters



IDLIB: Syrians, who were injured in a suicide car bombing that targeted buses carrying evacuees from besieged government-held towns, sit in a tent on the Syrian-Turkish border in Idlib province. —AFP

US-LED COALITION SYRIA STRIKES KILL 20 CIVILIANS

BEIRUT: Air strikes by the US-led coalition fighting the Islamic State group killed 20 civilians in Syria's eastern Deir Ezzor province, a monitor said yesterday. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the deaths came in two separate incidents on Monday. It also reported 10 civilians, among them nine children, were killed in a suspected Russian air strike yesterday on a town in the rebel-controlled province of Idlib. The Observatory, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria for its information, says it determines whose planes carry out raids according to type, location, flight patterns and munitions used.

The Britain-based monitor said a US strike on Monday night on the Deir Ezzor town of Abu Kamal had killed 13 civilians, among them five children. The strike also killed three members of IS, which controls the town by the Syria-Iraq border, the monitor said. Earlier Monday,

a US-led coalition strike killed seven civilians, including a child, in the village of Husseinyeh, the monitor said. The US-led coalition has been carrying out air strikes against IS in Syria since 2014 and is providing air support for a Kurdish-Arab alliance advancing on the jihadist bastion of Raqqa.

Last month, the coalition said its campaign against IS in Syria and Iraq had unintentionally killed at least 220 civilians, but monitors say the real number is far higher. Most of the oil-rich province of Deir Ezzor, in Syria's east, is held by IS, including parts of the provincial capital, Deir Ezzor city. The jihadists have besieged the remaining government-held parts of Deir Ezzor city, trapping civilians inside with limited access to supplies. More than 320,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011. —AFP

PENCE REASSURES JAPAN AS NORTH KOREA THREATENS 'WEEKLY' TESTS

TOKYO: US Vice President Mike Pence reiterated his country's commitment to the security of Japan yesterday, as North Korea intensified concerns over its weapons program with a vow to launch missile tests "every week." The North, which is intent on developing a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile capable of reaching the mainland United States, defied international pressure Sunday with a test that failed immediately after launch. As fears grow that it may also be preparing for its sixth nuclear weapons test, Vice Foreign Minister Han Song-Ryol said that its program would only escalate. "We'll be conducting more missile tests on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis," Han told the BBC in an interview, threatening "all-out war" if the US took any action against it. Arriving in Tokyo for talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Pence hailed the two countries' longstanding security ties. "The alliance between the United States and Japan is the cornerstone of peace and security in Northeast Asia," he said. The Japanese leader called for a peaceful resolution to the North Korea tensions but did not rule out the need for tough measures. "It is a matter of paramount importance for us to seek diplomatic efforts as well as peaceable settlements of the issue," he said.

"At the same time dialogue for the sake of dialogue is valueless and it is necessary for us to exercise pressure." In South Korea on the first leg of an Asian tour, Pence on Monday visited the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas and warned Pyongyang against further provocations, saying "all options are on the table". North Korea could react to a potential US strike by targeting South Korea or Japan, and officials in both countries have been ill at ease with the more bellicose language deployed by President Donald Trump's administration.

Pence pointed to Trump's recent strikes on a Syrian airbase and an Islamic State complex in Afghanistan as a warning to Pyongyang not to underestimate the administration's resolve. But at a press conference with Japanese Deputy Prime

Minister Taro Aso yesterday, Pence also played up the importance of coordination. The administration "believes the most productive pathway forward is dialogue among the family of nations that can isolate and pressure North Korea into abandoning permanently and dismantling" its nuclear and missile programs, he said.

'Gotta behave'

Throughout his bareknuckle election campaign, Trump repeatedly called into question a mutual defense treaty between Japan and the United States, suggesting Tokyo should pay for its own security. But Pence reassured his jittery hosts that those decades-old security commitments are ironclad, a necessity made more acute after Washington's refusal to rule out military action against the North. Tensions between Pyongyang and Washington have soared in recent weeks as a series of North Korean missile tests have prompted ever-more severe warnings from Trump's administration.

Asked by a reporter what message he had for North Korea's young leader Kim Jong-Un on Monday, Trump replied "Gotta behave". North Korea's deputy ambassador to the United Nations reiterated on the weekend that the North is ready to respond to any US missile or nuclear strike. "If the United States dares opt for a military action... the DPRK is ready to react to any mode of war desired by the Americans," Kim told a news conference, using the abbreviation of the country's official name.

Like South Korea, Japan already faces a direct threat from the secretive regime. In early March, the North simultaneously fired four ballistic missiles off its east coast, three of which fell provocatively close to Japan, in what it said was a drill for an attack on US bases in the country. The Pentagon has not discussed which missile blew up after the North's launch on Sunday from a base near Sinpo on its east coast, and the White House has said only that it was a medium-range device. —AFP



TEHRAN: Iranian F-4 Phantom fighter jets perform during a parade on the occasion of the country's Army Day yesterday. —AFP

A quickening tempo of mostly crude bombing and shooting attacks has accompanied a government crackdown, which culminated last year in the dissolution of the main opposition bloc.

The dead 29-year-old militant, Reda Al-Ghasra, was shot and killed when security forces ambushed the speedboat carrying him and fellow fugitives at dawn on February 9. Ghasra had just a few weeks earlier escaped from a prison where he was serving a life sentence for terrorism. Ghasra's two brothers, both wanted on militant charges, also appeared at his wake in Qom. They played a recorded phone call of Reda saying his boat was on its way. The Bahraini

Shiite majority was quelled in 2011 with the help of a Saudi intervention. Low-level protests followed. Clashes with police killed scores of activists and suspected militants, while Bahrain says 24 of its officers have been killed. Most clashes involve youths throwing rocks and molotov cocktails, but there has been a series of bombings in recent years. Opposition activists say these attacks show that a government crackdown is pushing Shiite youths into the arms of extremists.

An analysis of years of statements by Bahrain's public prosecutor on Ashtar Brigades suspects suggests that the group operates in cells of fewer than 10 young men overseen by emigre militants

ized deadly attacks on police and smuggling arms from Iran. According to Bahraini security dossiers on Ghasra and Sanadi reviewed by Reuters, Bahraini authorities consider the Ashtar Brigades to be the armed wing of Sanadi's Islamic Wafa Movement, a political party that is banned in Bahrain.

Wafa and the Ashtar Brigades did not respond to requests for comment about their relationship. A Wafa party representative contacted by Reuters agreed to relay questions to Sanadi but did not ultimately reply. Sanadi, the security documents say, receives funding from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and commissioned Ghasra to organize the mil-

AUTHORITIES IN AZERBAIJAN USE JAIL, MILITIA TO STIFLE PROTESTS

QUBA: Falling oil prices sparked rare demonstrations over the rising cost of food in Azerbaijan last year, but a police crackdown and the deployment of a Soviet-style civilian militia have snuffed out the protest movement. "Who wants to spend the rest of his life in prison?" said Uzbek, a taxi driver who said he was jailed for a month for protesting against galloping flour prices in the town of Quba.

The protests, which erupted across the oil and gas-producing country in January last year, raised the spectre of instability in Azerbaijan, ruled by the same family since the early 1990s. Police broke the demonstrations up using water canon, batons and tear gas. The heavy-handed response poses a potential problem for the European Union and EU firms cooperating with Azerbaijan to link a chain of pipelines due to carry Azeri gas to European markets by 2020.

The EU wants the project to work because it will cut Europe's dependence on Russian energy. But it does not want to be seen to be enriching a government that outlaws peaceful protests and jails anyone who defies it. Interviews with some

of the protesters in three different areas-Quba, Siyazan and Shabran-suggest Azeri authorities cracked down in a way that is likely to alarm policymakers. They spoke of mass arrests and jailings, police brutality, punitive bans on work in state institutions, and police threats of more jail terms.

The authorities, resurrecting a Soviet practice, drafted local volunteers into a community militia. On the face of it, the militia is supposed to help police deal with minor law and order issues, but some residents said their function is to notify police about any stirrings of dissent. Arun, a student in Siyazan, a town 90 kilometers from Baku, said about 50 people there had been arrested. Most people he knew had been jailed for around a month, but some had been held for as long as six months, he said, and some had been beaten in prison.

Ehsan Zahidov, a spokesman for the Azeri Interior Ministry, said allegations of police excess were wide of the mark. "We did not get any complaints from those who had been arrested," he told Reuters. "Why they did not complain if they were treated badly? They could also have taken

their cases to courts. This information is not true." The Italian office of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline firm, responsible for developing infrastructure to carry Azeri gas to southern Italy, declined to comment on the crackdown. Italian energy firm Snam, a 20 percent shareholder in the same project, also refused to comment, as did the Italian industry ministry.

Political consolidation

Soon after the unrest, President Ilham Aliyev, who took over when his father died in 2003, moved to consolidate his family's grip on power. He changed the constitution via a referendum last year to lengthen presidential terms to seven from five years and made his wife First Vice President in February. Diplomatic sources say Aliyev plans to further consolidate his power by appointing a close ally as prime minister after Artur Rasizade, the veteran incumbent, retires. "He will be replaced by a person who is close to the ruling family," Leyla Aliyeva, an independent analyst said. —Reuters

VENEZUELA BRACES FOR THE 'MOTHER OF ALL PROTESTS'

ARMY DECLARES LOYALTY TO MADURO

CARACAS: Venezuela's defense minister on Monday declared the army's loyalty to President Nicolas Maduro, who ordered troops into the streets ahead of a major protest by opponents trying to oust him. Venezuela is bracing for what Maduro's opponents vow will be the "mother of all protests" today, after two weeks of clashes between police and demonstrators protesting against moves by the leftist leader and his allies to tighten their grip on power.

The center-right opposition has called on the military—a pillar of Maduro's power—to turn on the president amid an economic and political crisis that has triggered severe food shortages, riots and looting. But Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said the army "confirms its unconditional loyalty to the president." He made the comment before thousands of rifle-carrying members of the pro-Maduro "Bolivarian militia," who cheered with fists raised at a rally outside the presidential palace. Maduro thanked the army and the militia for their support and announced he planned to expand the latter civilian force to half a million armed members. "Loyalty is repaid with loyalty," he said.

Maduro rallies army

The rally came hours after Maduro ordered the military into the streets to defend the leftist "Bolivarian revolution" launched by his late mentor Hugo Chavez in 1999. "From the first reveille (on Monday morning), from the first rooster crow, the Bolivarian National Armed Forces will be in the streets... saying, 'Long live the

Bolivarian revolution," he said Sunday night in a televised address. He called for the militia to be in "permanent training" and "permanent deployment" to defend Venezuela against "any imperialist aggression"—a thinly veiled reference to the United States. Senior opposition leader Henrique Capriles dismissed Maduro's announcement. "The old fogey has announced one rifle for every militia member. He is more desperate than ever," Capriles wrote on Twitter. "Venezuela does not want rifles, it wants food and medicine!"

'Repression'

Venezuela has been rocked by unrest since March 30, when Maduro's camp moved to consolidate its control with a Supreme Court decision quashing the power of the opposition-majority legislature. The court partly backtracked after an international outcry, but tension only rose further when authorities slapped a political ban on Capriles. Five people have been killed and hundreds wounded in the ensuing protests as demonstrators clashed with riot police firing tear gas, water cannon and rubber bullets. Non-government groups have accused the authorities of repression of protesters and of using firearms to put down the rallies. Padrino Lopez on Monday blamed the violence on criminals, retorting that "action by the state to restore public order cannot be called repression."

Major protest called

Maduro's opponents have called for a massive protest today, a national holiday that marks the start of Venezuela's independence struggle in 1810. The president's supporters have called a counter-demonstration the same day. It is a touchy date in Venezuela, where Chavez and Maduro have built a politics of populist, left-wing nationalism around the fight for independence from colonial Spain and around the hero of the struggle, Simon Bolivar.

Eleven Latin American countries on Monday asked Venezuela to guarantee the "right to peaceful demonstration," lamenting deaths that have already occurred during the protests. Maduro's Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez on Twitter called the statement from the 11 countries "political selectivity," accusing the group of endorsing "the violent vandalism of the opposition." Maduro is fighting efforts to force him from power as Venezuela flounders through a crippling three-year recession and confronts the world's highest inflation rate. Venezuela has the world's largest oil reserves, but the fall in global crude prices since 2014 has laid bare its overwhelming dependence on its chief export.—AFP



CARACAS: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro delivers a speech during the seventh anniversary of the Bolivarian Militia in Caracas. Venezuela's defense minister on Monday declared the army's loyalty to Maduro, who ordered troops into the streets ahead of a major protest by opponents trying to oust him.—AFP



ATLANTA: Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff speaks with the media after holding an election day kickoff rally as he runs for Georgia's 6th Congressional District in a special election to replace Tom Price, who is now the secretary of Health and Human Services.—AFP

TRUMP, REPUBLICANS FACE A REFERENDUM IN GEORGIA

DEMOCRATS AIM FOR UPSET

ALPHARETTA: Republicans are bidding to prevent a major upset in a conservative Georgia congressional district where Democrats stoked by opposition to President Donald Trump have rallied behind a candidate who has raised a shocking amount of money for a special election. The jungle-style primary lumps all 18 candidates on one ballot and is expected to be more competitive than Republicans' single-digit victory in Kansas last week that also tested both parties' strategies for the 2018 midterm elections with Trump in the White House.

Trump underperformed other Republicans in the suburban Atlanta district, an affluent, well-educated swath filled with the kind of voters Democrats need if they hope to reclaim a House majority next year. Republicans essentially concede that Democrat Jon Ossoff, a former congressional staffer, will lead the voting. That leaves 11 Republican candidates hoping the 30-year-old investigative filmmaker fails to reach a majority. If he doesn't, Ossoff and the top GOP vote-getter would meet in a June 20 runoff.

Five Democrats will appear on the ballot, but Ossoff is the GOP's greatest threat. He raised more than \$8.3 million, most of it from outside the district. Two independent candidates also are running. The winner will succeed Tom Price, who resigned to become Trump's health secretary.

Ossoff has enough momentum to draw attention from Trump himself. The president took to Twitter on Monday to blast the "super liberal" Democrat in the contest without naming names.

He said the "super liberal" Democrat "wants to protect criminals, allow illegal immigration and raise taxes!" In a statement, Ossoff, who has used anti-Trump sentiments in his campaign, answered that Trump is "misinformed," but added that he's "glad the president is interested in the race." Republicans and Democrats alike see the contest as an important barometer of Trump's standing ahead of 2018 midterm elections, when Democrats will try to regain control of Congress.

Both major parties have dispatched paid field staffers. Republican groups are running a blitz of ads trying to tie Ossoff to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi; a political action committee backed by House Speaker Ryan has spent more than \$2 million. Karen Handel, Georgia's former secretary of state, has led the Republican field. Technology executive Bob Gray; and two former state senators, Dan Moody and Judson Hill - are polling closest to Handel in a fight for the No 2 spot. The GOP scramble has been intense, with GOP rivals accusing Handel of being a political opportunist and the conservative Club for Growth spending six figures on ads to defeat her.

National Republicans say any of the four competitive GOP candidates could defeat Ossoff in a second round of voting. GOP voters, they predict, would be energized in a Republican vs Democrat scenario, making it harder for Ossoff to run above the fray as he has leading up to the primary. Handel said Monday that she is confident enough Republicans will cast ballots to hold Ossoff short of a majority, thus setting up a June 20 runoff between the Democratic upstart and the top Republican performer. "Republican voters are not going to sit by and let this district go to a Democrat," Handel said.

Ossoff has tried to walk a line between liberals looking for a chance to oppose Trump and Republicans who couldn't support him in November. Ossoff pledges to fight Trump when he "embarrasses" the country. But he tells voters in one ad, "I'll work with anybody in Washington who respects your tax dollars."

Handel is among the Republican candidates trying to maintain some distance from Trump, rarely discussing him unless asked. Gray has instead tried to portray himself as a "willing partner" for the president. Other Republican candidates, though, have questioned whether Gray always backed Trump or is simply strategizing a path to a runoff election. Polls will be open from 7 am to 7 pm.—AP



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THERESA MAY: BRITAIN'S 'NO-NONSENSE' LEADER

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May, who yesterday called for a snap election, has forged a reputation as a no-nonsense pragmatist seeking to lead the country through one of the most tumultuous periods of its history.



LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May speaks to the media outside 10 Downing Street in central London yesterday. — AFP

But after stepping into the political vacuum left by David Cameron's decision to quit-becoming prime minister without winning an election-her constant refrain was "Brexit means Brexit". She faced a struggle to keep together a country deeply divided by the referendum, with Scotland planning to hold a new referendum on its independence.

this moment a one-off chance to get this done... before the detailed talks begin," said May in a dramatic announcement outside her Downing Street residence.

'Bloody difficult woman' The clergyman's daughter was once labeled by senior Conservative Kenneth Clarke in an unguarded moment, a

"bloody difficult woman." But the 60-year-old claimed this was the very quality which would stand her in good stead for the battles ahead. May was born Theresa Brasier in the southern English seaside town of Eastbourne in 1956.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Her education-at a series of little-known state and private schools-has been contrasted with the elite Etonian background of Cameron and many in his so-called "Notting Hill Set" circle.

Like Cameron, she attended Oxford University but kept a low profile. It was here that she met her husband Philip, a banker - they were reportedly introduced by Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto. The couple married in 1980 but were unable to have children. May's rival Andrea Leadsom withdrew from the leadership race two days after comments were published suggesting this made her less qualified to be prime minister.

'The nasty party'

May worked in finance, including at the Bank of England, before being elected as MP for the London commuter town of Maidenhead in 1997. As Conservative chairwoman in 2002, she made waves by suggesting the Tories were seen as "the nasty party" and needed to overhaul their image - although under Cameron's leadership, they did so. When the Conservatives won the 2010 general election, May was named home secretary, seen as one of the hardest jobs in government which has wrecked a string

of other political careers. But May kept the job for six years-the longest serving interior minister since 1892. Supporters say her achievements in that post include deporting radical cleric Abu Qatada to Jordan-where he was later freed after a decade of legal cases-and standing up to the Police Federation, the powerful police officers union, to try to address a string of scandals. In 2013, May revealed she has type 1 diabetes but insisted it would not affect her career, saying it was a question of "head down and getting on with it".

While widely respected, she is not part of any clique in the corridors of power in Westminster, acknowledging that she does not drink in parliament's many bars or "gossip about people over lunch". A source who has worked closely with her once told AFP on condition of anonymity that she was "incredibly hard-working". She's always got up three hours before everybody else and knows five times more than anyone else in the room," the source said. "Theresa is not going to do anything radical... she's incredibly risk-averse, a safe pair of hands." May has little time for hobbies but is well known for her collection of leopard-print kitten heels and enjoys cooking and taking walking holidays with her husband. — AFP

THWARTED ATTACK RATTLES FRANCE DAYS BEFORE POLLS

TWO ARRESTED OVER PLOT

PARIS: French security services yesterday swooped on two men accused of plotting an attack just five days before the first round of the presidential election. The men were arrested in the southern city of Marseille by agents from France's domestic intelligence agency. Interior

the pack closing behind frontrunners Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen, while a quarter of voters remained undecided. For weeks, centrist former banker Macron and National Front (FN) leader Le Pen have been out in front but opinion polls now show there is a very real chance that

to around 21 percent and Melenchon surging as high as 20 percent in some polls.

EU fears

With Le Pen expected to reach the second round, polls continue to indicate that whoever faces her will win, although after Brexit and Donald Trump's US election win, no one is taking anything for granted. Melenchon has made the most remarkable breakthrough in recent weeks, surging as high as 20 percent in some polls with a far-left program that involves huge public spending and a pledge to re-negotiate all European Union treaties.

Le Pen wants to pull France out of the eurozone and also foresees a mass re-negotiation of EU treaties, sparking fears in Brussels that a victory for the far-right coming hot on the heels of Brexit could be fatal for the European bloc. In contrast to Le Pen, Macron on Sunday told 20,000 people in Paris that France's future lay firmly in Europe, albeit one that suited French interests. "We need Europe, so we will remake it," Macron told the crowd. "I will be the president of the awakening of our European ambitions." In a reference to Le Pen, Macron said voters had the choice of "hope and courage over resignation".

Abstention fears

Polls also show that more than a quarter of voters have yet to decide who they will support on Sunday. Analysts say there is a growing danger of a high abstention rate affecting the result, possibly tipping the scales in favor of Fillon. "The behavior of people who are currently planning not to vote is a major factor. If those on the right (who were going to abstain) decide to vote for Fillon, it changes things," Ifop's Dabi said.

"It is one of the unknowns of a vote that has many unknowns." Fillon, a 63-year-old former prime minister, has been charged over allegations he gave his wife Penelope a fictional job as his parliamentary assistant for which she earned nearly 680,000 euros (\$725,000) in public money. Having led the polls at the turn of the year, the scandal hit his support hard. But voters appear to be warming to his message that he is a safe pair of hands in an election of largely untested candidates. Fillon said Sunday he was confident he would upend the polls and reach the second round. — AFP



ARKANSAS: Arkansas Governor's spokesman JD Davis speaks after the news that the US Supreme Court stayed the scheduled Monday, April 17, 2017 execution of Don Davis, scuttling efforts to resume capital punishment after nearly 12 years. — AP

APEX COURT REJECTS ARKANSAS REQUEST TO ALLOW EXECUTION

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court on Monday denied a last-minute request from Arkansas state authorities for permission to carry out its first execution in more than a decade. The US high court decision is the latest in a flurry of legal setbacks to the southeastern state's original plan to carry out eight executions between April 17 and 27, an unprecedented pace. Justices declined an appeal from the state's attorney general to lift a stay barring the execution of Don Davis, who was slated to be the first of several inmates to die this month.

minute appeals and efforts to block justice for the victims' families," Hutchinson said in a statement. He said the state would continue towards carrying out the executions of the other inmates.

The Arkansas Supreme Court on Monday had blocked the executions of Davis and one other inmate, after lawyers had requested the executions be delayed until the US Supreme Court hears a separate case concerning prisoners' access to mental health experts who are independent of the prosecution. But Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge swiftly filed an application with the US Supreme Court to obtain permission to proceed with the execution of just Davis.

Hours prior to the US Supreme Court decision, state courts had lifted obstacles to continuing those plans. The US Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit on Monday reversed a federal judge's broader stay on the executions, clearing the path for deaths scheduled to take place later this month to proceed. The state's Supreme Court on Monday also vacated an order blocking the use of the drug vecuronium bromide as part of a lethal-injection protocol.

As he awaited the court to decide his fate Davis ate fried chicken, mashed potatoes and strawberry cake-what could have been his last meal. The US Supreme court's denial of the state's request came minutes before Davis's execution warrant expired at 12:00 am local time (0500 GMT), wrapping up a day of legal wrangling among state and federal courts over the state's accelerated execution plan.

Drug expiration nears

The drugs used in lethal injections by some American states - 19 of the 50 no longer execute prisoners-have become increasingly difficult to obtain. Many pharmaceutical companies, particularly in Europe, ban their use for executions. While lethal injection was meant to be painless, death-penalty opponents say the risk of badly botched executions, with inmates writhing in agony for long minutes, is unacceptably high. Arkansas's plan to reduce the number of its death-row prisoners by some 20 percent in the space of a week and a half has drawn sharp protests around the world. The European Union on Wednesday urged Hutchinson to commute the death-row inmates' sentences. Amnesty International called on Arkansas to urgently halt "the conveyor belt of death which it is about to set in motion".

The court battles are playing out on multiple fronts as the state's supply of midazolam expires on April 30. Critics say that midazolam, a sedative meant to render a condemned person unconscious before other drugs are used to stop the heart, does not always work. — AFP

'An exhausting day'

The legal roadblock constitutes yet another setback for Arkansas's Republican governor, Asa Hutchinson, who had pushed for the accelerated executions as the expiration of the state's supply of midazolam drew near. "While this has been an exhausting day for all involved, tomorrow we will continue to fight back on last



This combination of two handout documents released by the French Police yesterday shows the wanted notices for Clement Baur (left) and Mahedine Merabet arrested in Marseille, southern France, on suspicion of preparing an attack just days ahead of the first round of France's presidential vote. — AFP

Minister Matthias Fekl said the attack was to be carried out in the "next few days" by the two men, aged 23 and 29, who are known to be "radicalized". He gave no further details on the nature of the plot.

any of the four leading candidates could reach the second-round runoff on May 7.

More than 230 people have been killed in terror attacks in France since January 2015. Candidates have been heavily guarded during the election campaign, but so far there have been few security scares. "Everything will be done to ensure security" for the election, Fekl said. The race was narrowing ahead of Sunday's vote, with

Scandal-plagued conservative Francois Fillon and far-left firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon have closed the gap substantially in the last two weeks. "We have never seen a four-way contest like this in the first round of a presidential election," Frederic Dabi of the Ifop polling institute said. "There has been a real tightening of the race with four candidates between 19 percent and 23 percent," he added. Macron and Le Pen are tied on 22-23 percent, with Fillon improving

BUS ATTACK LEAVES DORTMUND FIGHTING BLOOD, TEARS BATTLE

DORTMUND: Marc Bartra gave blood, other Borussia Dortmund players have nightmares about the bomb attack on their bus and now the German team may need the sweat of Marco Reus to pull off a fairy tale place in the Champions League last four. The scars left by three bombs that scorched the side of the bus and fired metal shards inside before the quarter-final against Monaco have gone much further than Bartra's fractured wrist.

psychologists. "We have very good counselors we can ask for help," said the goalkeeper.

The game was postponed but Dortmund were forced to play 24 hours later. The shock was apparent in the 3-2 defeat that has left the German side facing a stiff challenge in Wednesday's return leg. So far nobody has been caught-one Islamist suspect was discounted-and no claim of responsibility has proved convincing. "I wake up every night," Dortmund's Swiss goalkeeper Roman Burki said. "Without any reason, I am jolted awake in terror. Then I can't get back to sleep and I am just relieved I am at home in my own bed." Burki recalled the horror of the "huge bang" in an interview with Swiss newspaper Der Bund.

And the team bounced back with a 3-1 Bundesliga win over Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday. But getting over the attack will be a slow process. For Bartra, football is a key part of the therapy. "I'm happy to have something I can focus on. It is very important to be able to take your mind off things, think less about what has happened."

The team gathered to hold up a Bartra jersey after Saturday's win. Many of them were in tears. "During the 90 minutes of the game it was easier. But at the end, everything you have kept inside under pressure comes out," said captain Marcel Schmelzer. "Against Frankfurt we showed a lot of joy playing because we are happy to be here. We talk a lot about it to each other. I think it will weld us together as a team," the skipper added.

"The pressure made all our heads turn to one side. Then there was a long silence and then a cry-it was Bartra." Burki says he cannot understand why a football team would be the target of "a terror attack." Dortmund are getting help from

German international Sven Bender said the whole team deserved praise for playing against Frankfurt so soon after the near miss that experts said could have been deadly. "For me, it was even harder than Wednesday, because we had more time to think about the terrible things which have happened," he said. Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel believes the first game against Monaco should not have



DORTMUND: Windows with bullet holes are seen at a house near the hotel l'Arrivee in Dortmund, western Germany yesterday, where the bus of Borussia Dortmund was rocked by three explosions last week. — AFP

gone ahead so soon. But he has had to concentrate on Wednesday's return. Some specialists say the players' shock should start to "stabilise" after two or three days, according to Tuchel. "For the players, it's easier when they play, than after the whistle when they feel they have to talk" about their ordeal.

The Greece international scored from a screaming 23 metre shot that he labeled "the most beautiful goal of my career" and dedicated it to Bartra. And then there was Reus, who scored just 122 seconds into his comeback from six weeks on the sidelines with a hamstring injury. Reus at his best can be a match-winner. The 27-year-old forward has the experience, the play-making skills and above all, he was not on the ill-fated team bus last Tuesday-and that could make all the difference. — AFP

BREXIT, SCOTLAND, ELECTIONS: A TUMULTUOUS 3 YEARS IN BRITAIN

LONDON: Prime ministerial resignations, historic referendums and of course Brexit: Here are the main events from a seismic few years in British politics:

Scotland votes to stay

After a bruising campaign, Scots voted by 55 percent to 45 percent against independence in September 2014. In the aftermath of Britain's June 2016 vote to leave the European Union, Scotland asked for a second referendum.

Cameron election

Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservatives perform surprisingly well in the May 2015 general election, winning an overall majority in parliament after years of coalition government with the Liberal Democrats.

Brexit referendum

In a historic referendum, Britain votes to leave the European Union by 52 percent to 48 percent, ending more than four decades of memberships and plunging the bloc into turmoil.

Cameron resigns

The morning after the referendum, Cameron, who had campaigned for Britain to stay in the EU, says he is stepping down. This sparks a Conservative leadership race won in surprisingly quick time by Theresa May, formerly home secretary (interior minister).

Article 50

On March 29, 2017 Britain's ambassador to the EU hands over a historic letter to the EU president, formally starting the process of Britain leaving the European Union, the first country in the bloc's history to do so.

Snap election

In a surprise announcement, May calls for an early general election on June 8 as Britain prepares for delicate negotiations on its EU departure. "We need a general election and we need one now. We have at this moment a one-off chance to get this done... before the detailed talks begin," May said. — AFP

HR & Admin Coordinator
 Post Services Company
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for ensuring proper implementation of the company's policies and procedures, maintaining accurate company files and employees' information, attending to employees' requests and supporting the HR manager in preserving a healthy work environment etc.

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Supply Chain Manager
 GIPCS
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for directing and coordinating production, purchasing, warehousing, distribution, financial forecasting services or activities to limit costs and improve accuracy, customer service, examining existing procedures and opportunities for streamlining activities to meet product distribution needs, directing the movement and storage of inventory etc.

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Marketing Executive/Social Media Specialist
 Al Sirhan Shoes - Kuwait

You will be responsible for planning all social media activities within the brand guidelines and following up on success, questions, clarifications, executions, building the corporate database, developing and supporting new projects like : mobile app, website and loyalty program etc.

Apply Now [JB3636972](#)

Field Service Engineer
 Environment World Company
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for servicing, troubleshooting, calibrating, adjusting, testing and maintaining equipment, components, devices and systems especially Gas Analyzers, operating related equipment; conducting tests and reporting data in the prescribed format, performing calibration and alignment checks; making adjustments, modifications and replacements as directed.

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Sales Account Manager
 Hasibat
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for the management of sales and relationships with particular customers, maintaining the company's existing relationships with a clients or a group of clients, so that they will continue doing business with the company, etc.

Apply Now [JB3637517](#)

Contracts Specialist
 O&G Engineering W.L.L.Ltd
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for leading a client's clarification, negotiation and contract formation, arranging meetings and post contract issues resolution with the client, preparing and reviewing of contracts against available supporting documentation and advising the concerned to apply the recommended changes, etc.

Apply Now [JB3637165](#)

Area Sales Manager - HVAC
 Randstad MENA
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for managing the overall day-to-day operations and sales target of Kuwait in line with powers delegated by the GCC Country Sales Manager, reporting to the GCC Country Sales Manager with periodic reports, performing sales activities in the assigned branch and ensuring the achievement of regional sales targets by branch, etc.

Apply Now [JB3637054](#)

Fleet Sales Executive
 IPF HR Consulting LLC
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for understanding and gaining a good technical knowledge of vehicles and competition / systems and procedures, performing customer needs analyses and developing key account strategies, working as a team to meet sales targets, developing a strong and long-term business relationship with key territory accounts, etc.

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Corporate Sales Manager
 Qatar Airways
 KSA

You will be responsible for rewarding opportunity to driving sales revenue for key corporate clients for Qatar Airways across the competitive KSA market, driving the acquisition of new Corporate and TMC Accounts whilst maintaining the profitability of existing ones, leading and coaching a team of sales staff in order to achieve the overall objective etc.

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Service Advisor
 MYNAGHI Group
 KSA

You will be responsible for any commercial transaction for each and every vehicle, down payment on pro-forma invoice or quotation, parking charges, storage of the vehicle, cannibalization of the vehicle, deciding to decline to sign, returning the vehicle to the customer assuming all diagnostics and evaluations are charged and amounts received etc.

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Technical Support Engineer
 Gulf Marketing Group
 KSA

You will be responsible for establishing a networking environment by designing system configuration, directing system installation, defining, documenting and enforcing system standards, designing and implementing new solutions and improving resilience of the current environment etc.

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Purchasing Officer / Finance Assistant - MiSK Schools
 KSA

You will be responsible for analyzing price proposals, financial reports and other information to determine reasonable prices and negotiating contracts on behalf of MiSK Schools, preparing and sending all purchase orders to vendors, attending meetings, trading shows and conferences to learn about new industry trends and make contacts with suppliers etc.

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Transportation Modeler / Planner - Parsons International Limited - UAE

You will be responsible for performing operational analysis using standard techniques and packages like SYNCHRO, SIDRA, HCS and VISSIM, preparing traffic impact studies for small and large developments including data collection and analysis, developing and analyzing mitigation measures, handling urban / metropolitan transportation planning and traffic engineering tasks, etc.

Apply Now [JB3632426](#)

Quantity Surveyor
 Hydroserv
 UAE

You will be responsible for ensuring to take off quantities for new projects, preparing the contract documents for all projects, negotiating with main contractor & sub-contractors and consulting for any variations, ensuring to review the subcontractors & suppliers payment application, preparing and issuing the payment certificate to subcontractors, etc.

Apply Now [JB3636890](#)

Digital Marketing Executive (Female Only) - Flipside Corporation ME - UAE

You will be responsible for overseeing all company social media accounts management, developing creative, engaging and innovative content for regularly scheduled posts which enlighten audiences and promote brand-focused messages, coordinating social media messaging with a quarterly or seasonal company goal, analyzing social media campaigns with tracking systems, etc.

Apply Now [JB3636934](#)

Building Technical Supervisor
 Mansions Technical Services LLC
 UAE

You will be responsible of supervising the building installation, repairing, planned preventive maintenance work, managing subcontractors for following activities : HVAC systems, including chilled water system, cooling tower system, split type A/C system, different kinds of pumps, water piping, power supply and electrical system, ventilation and building automation systems, etc.

Apply Now [JB3636962](#)

Senior Structural Engineer
 Qatar Technical Aluminum
 Qatar

You will be responsible for preparing structural calculations for facade work including but not limited to : glass structural design, aluminum steel and stainless steel structures and tension cables, supervising junior structural engineers and guiding them through their duties, reviewing their work, attending design meetings with the client/contractor and preparing reports for submittal etc.

Apply Now [JB3637226](#)

Manager Product Development
 Qatar Airways
 Qatar

You will be responsible for supporting, researching, creating, developing and implementing products and servicing concepts across various service areas especially product development and service design, product enhancements, product redesign, managing professionals who will assist the department in developing products of high standard and setting a niche in the market of aviation, etc.

Apply Now [JB3637449](#)

Assistant Finance Executive
 The Blue Group
 Qatar

You will be responsible for processing trade finance documents (Letter of Credit, Bank Guarantees, Term Loans, etc), updating Facility Utilization Report, handling banking requirements and all banking correspondences, processing Bank Account and Corporate Credit Card opening and closing documents etc.

Apply Now [JB3637603](#)

Debt Collector
 Almana Group
 Qatar

You will be responsible for carrying out debt collection to ensure the debts are obtained from individuals / parties / companies, coordinating with accounts department on client payments and receivables, going to the respective client or their representative to check and follow up on payment receivables, and escalating non-payments to the Legal department for further action.

Apply Now [JB3637616](#)

HARDLINE HINDU YOUTH CALL THE SHOTS ON STREETS OF NORTH INDIA

MUSLIM MEN 'SINGLED OUT FOR COURTING' HINDU WOMEN

UNNAO: One recent afternoon, dozens of young Hindu men, swords drawn and saffron scarves draped around their necks, rode motorcycles through a Muslim neighborhood near the capital of India's most populous state and chanted "Hail Lord Ram!" In the preceding weeks they and their peers had acted as informers, police officials say, helping them identify thousands of Muslim-run butchers'

roots and putting pressure on police. The appointment of the 44-year-old, known for his fiery anti-Muslim rhetoric and a campaign against "Love Jihad" - or the conversion of Hindu women to Islam - has shocked some Indians, who say it undermines the country's secular status. They worry that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "development for all" agenda will be overtaken by radical, Hindu-first policies with

ered a resounding victory to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In return for his successful campaign, the party handed the priest one of India's most powerful positions, emboldening his militia to act and speak more openly than it did under the previous administration. Based in Uttar Pradesh and funded by members who want to win favour with local power brokers, the youth

hopes will drag India into the modern era and create enough jobs for a swelling workforce.

Adityanath represented the BJP during the Uttar Pradesh state polls earlier this year, and helped Modi consolidate power as he bids for re-election in a national ballot in 2019. The priest, however, has often defied BJP discipline and is not part of the RSS machine, raising fears that Modi may have unleashed radical "Hindutva", or religious-nationalist forces that he will struggle to contain. "The BJP has no command over this organization. They respond to Adityanath and no one else," said Gilles Verniers, assistant professor of political sciences at Ashoka University.

A close aide to Modi said it was Adityanath's job to maintain law and order in the state. "The onus lies on him. It is his duty to take care of his vigilante group," said the aide. Daljit Singh Chawdhary, additional director general of police for Uttar Pradesh, dismissed the threat of the youth force acting outside the law. "We are not tolerating any vigilante group taking the law into their (own) hands, while at the same time anyone is free to provide us with tip-offs," he said. "We have had no recent complaints against the Hindu Yuva Vahini, so there is no reason for us to take action against them."

Devotion and power

The original source of Adityanath's power is an ancient temple in Gorakhpur, eastern Uttar Pradesh, where people treat the shaven-headed priest with reverence. Soon after he was named chief minister last month, a devotee collected dust from the rug on which Adityanath had walked, so as to worship it. Built on such devotion, the youth force has evolved into a powerful group that dispenses justice and has proved itself a formidable vote-getter.

The BJP's national spokesman, Nalin Kohli, said the party's victory in Uttar Pradesh was not only thanks to Adityanath and his private militia. But Singh expressed little doubt about the group's importance in securing the result. "Modi won Uttar Pradesh because of Adityanath's ground force," Singh said. One of Adityanath's first directives after becoming chief minister was to impose a ban on Uttar Pradesh slaughterhouses that operated without licences. Most Indian states have laws that ban the slaughter of cows, considered sacred by Hindus, while buffalo slaughter requires permission from state governments.

Butchers in Uttar Pradesh have long complained that authorities failed to issue new licences, although the outgoing government allowed them to continue operating anyway, ensuring employment and food for the Muslims who dominate the industry. —Reuters



TRIPURA, India: An Indian Hindu devotee runs over smouldering charcoal during the ritual of Shiva Gajan in the village of Pratappgarh on the outskirts of Agartala. Devotees believe that by enduring the pain, Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction, will grant their prayers. —AFP

shops that have since been shut and urging officers to stop Muslim youths talking to Hindu girls in the street.

Their organization is the Hindu Yuva Vahini (Hindu Youth Force), a private militia set up in 2002 by Yogi Adityanath, a local priest and politician, to assert the dominance of India's main religion which he felt was being eroded by minority faiths. Since Adityanath's promotion last month to chief minister of Uttar Pradesh state, home to 220 million people of which a fifth are Muslims, the group has become emboldened, openly proclaiming its Hindu

potential to stoke communal tensions that have erupted sporadically through India's 70-year history. Adityanath declined to be interviewed for this article.

"Blood can be shed, and Muslims will feel the pain," Pankaj Singh, a senior leader of the Hindu Youth Force, told Reuters in an interview on the sidelines of the rally in Unnao, an hour's drive southwest of the capital Lucknow. Such comments have sent a chill through some in the Muslim community, on the defensive in Uttar Pradesh since this year's election in which Adityanath rallied the Hindu majority and deliv-

force says it is 2 million strong and growing. In Unnao, police stood back as members blocked traffic, honked horns and shouted pro-Hindu slogans on the busy streets. Muslims who came out to watch did so quietly from their doorways.

Hindu right, Hindu radical

Modi himself is the product of the Hindu right, coming from the BJP and its powerful parent movement, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), that nurtured him early in his career. But since sweeping to power in 2014, he has focused on economic reforms that he



BEIJING: Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang attend a meeting at the Zhongnanhai leadership compound in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

FEW WESTERN LEADERS TO ATTEND CHINESE SUMMIT

BEIJING: Leaders of 28 countries are set to attend a Chinese summit next month showcasing President Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy initiative, but few will hail from major Western countries. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said yesterday that Vladimir Putin of Russia, Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and Spain's Mariano Rajoy are among those slated to appear next month in Beijing to discuss Xi's "One Belt, One Road" program to stitch together the Eurasian continent with infrastructure investment.

The May 14-15 summit is seen as a measure of China's international prestige at a time when Xi has positioned China as a rising outward-looking regional power, and as questions have arisen over President Donald Trump's commitment to maintaining the United States' traditional global leadership. Wang said leaders from France and Germany will not attend due to their domestic election schedules, not because they snubbed China.

"This is a positive, cooperative conference, it shouldn't be politicized," Wang told reporters in Beijing, in response to a question asking if China felt insulted by the absence of top leaders from the US and its allies, including Japan, Britain and Australia. China has sought to frame Xi's vision for the China-led development program as an inclusive, mutually beneficial project rather than a statement of geopolitical ambitions that should arouse Western

suspensions. The program aims to build roads, railways, ports and other infrastructure along the ancient Silk Road's maritime and overland routes with close to \$100 billion in funding.

The program is closely linked to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, China's version of a global financial institution that faced similar Western skepticism upon its formation last year. In the year since, the bank has succeeded in attracting US allies as members, including Germany, Canada and Britain, although Washington continues to maintain its distance. Xi unveiled the first outlines of his Belt and Road plan as early as 2013, but the inaugural summit next month will provide the Chinese leader the most high-profile stage so far to deliver a focused pitch to a world audience.

"This is an economic cooperation forum, an international cooperation platform that everyone is paying attention to, supports and hopes to participate in," Wang said, characterizing the summit as an effort to uphold globalization. Aside from Putin, other Chinese allies including Pakistani President Nawaz Sharif and Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi will attend, as will Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Wang said. British Finance Minister Philip Hammond will also attend in the place of Prime Minister Theresa May. —AFP

'DIRTY' JAKARTA ELECTION LOOMS; RELIGIOUS POLITICS RESURFACES

JAKARTA: Luar Batang is one of the Indonesian capital's oldest neighborhoods, founded in the 17th century to collect tolls from ships sailing in from the Java Sea when the city was the centre of the Dutch East Indies spice trade. Now, it is being demolished and many of its residents are being evicted to make way for a giant seawall meant to keep Jakarta from sinking under rising sea levels. That has made it ground zero for the election of the city's governor, dubbed one of the most divisive election campaigns Indonesia has ever seen.

The incumbent governor, Basuki "Ahok" Purnama, was cruising towards a decisive election victory last September when he allegedly criticized a verse from the Quran that warns Muslims against allying with Christians and Jews. Hardline Islamist groups responded with mass protests demanding that Purnama, an ethnic Chinese and Christian, be prosecuted. Police eventually did charge him with blasphemy. It was Purnama who ordered the evictions from Luar Batang's slums to make way for one of his many infrastructure projects aimed at modernizing this clogged and chaotic city.

Many of those who filled the streets of Jakarta to protest against him late last year were among the displaced, and violence broke out in Luar Batang after one of those demonstrations. Luar Batang residents had just about given up their fight against evictions when the controversy

over the Quran comments erupted, said one woman who did not want to be named, sitting outside a small shack amid the rubble. "We see it as a gift from God," she said, describing the slur as a means to bring down Purnama.

Neck and neck race

Opinion surveys show Purnama running neck and neck with his challenger Anies Baswedan, who, like some 85 percent of Jakartans, is a Muslim. Purnama, 50, inherited the governorship after Joko Widodo was elected president in 2014. His brash talking style, a contrast with the soft-spoken Javanese politicians who dominate the ruling class, has grated on some voters. Purnama won the first round of voting in February in a three-way race with 43 percent of the ballots to set up today's second round with Baswedan, who won 40 percent.

The campaign has been "the dirtiest, most polarizing and most divisive the nation has ever seen," the Jakarta Post said in an editorial yesterday. Calling the capital "the barometer of Indonesia's political pulse", the daily said the election would have a bearing on the next presidential election in 2019. Police on Monday blocked plans by hardline Islamist groups to guard polling booths, citing the risk of clashes after a campaign fraught with religious tensions, and said around 66,000 police and military personnel will be deployed on voting day. —Reuters



BANDA ACEH, Indonesia: One of four Acehese teen gets whipped for spending time in close proximity with her boyfriend who is not her husband, which is against Sharia law. Aceh on Sumatra island began implementing Sharia law after being granted special autonomy in 2001, an attempt by the central government in Jakarta to quell a long-running separatist insurgency. —AFP

News

in brief

Australia toughens foreign worker visas

SYDNEY: Australia will abolish a temporary work visa popular with foreigners and replace it with a new program requiring better English-language and job skills, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said yesterday. Turnbull, struggling with poor voter approval ratings, rejected suggestions the visa policy change was in response to far-right wing political parties, such as One Nation, demanding more nationalistic policies. But in a Facebook announcement Turnbull said: "Our reforms will have a simple focus: Australian jobs and Australian values." In a similar vein, US President Donald Trump will sign an executive order yesterday directing changes to a temporary visa program used to bring foreign workers to the United States to fill highly skilled jobs. The order is an attempt by Trump to carry out his "America First" election campaign pledges.

Spain's PM called as witness in fund trial

MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has been called to stand as a witness in a trial of members of his ruling People's Party (PP) following a long investigation into an alleged party slush fund, a court spokeswoman said yesterday. The appearance, on a date yet to be decided, will be embarrassing for Rajoy, who has sought to distance himself from a string of corruption scandals surrounding his party. Rajoy heads a minority government, having lost support to newcomer parties in a general election last year where Spaniards' weariness with perceived institutional corruption played a major role. The long-running investigation into kickbacks-for-contracts, known as the Gurtel case, went to trial in October after a probe lasting nearly a decade, with dozens of suspects including business people and PP members in the dock. The PP denies any senior party officials were involved in any cases of alleged corruption. It says only a tiny number of its politicians are corrupt and that it is tackling the problem.



Volunteers help survivors and retrieve victims from a passenger bus that fell in a ravine killing dozens in Carranglan township, Nueva Ecija province, northern Philippines yesterday. —AP

At least 26 die as bus plunges into ravine

MANILA: At least 26 people were killed and 21 injured when a passenger bus crashed into a deep ravine in the mountainous northern Philippines yesterday, authorities said. The bus plunged about 24 meters in the upland province of Nueva Ecija before noon after its brakes failed while travelling on a winding road, police and local officials said. "The vehicle is totally wrecked," said senior inspector Robert De Guzman, police chief of the town of Carranglan where the accident occurred. The impact appeared to have ripped the top off the vehicle, he added. "Almost all of the passengers, both dead and injured, were found outside the bus." Authorities were still investigating the cause of the accident but Carranglan Mayor Mary Abad told ABS-CBN television there were 60 passengers onboard although the bus had a capacity of only 45. Abad added the wounded, some of whom sustained critical injuries, were rushed to nearby hospitals.

Laos drug kingpin denies Thai smuggling charges

BANGKOK: An alleged Laos drug lord linked to some of Thailand's rich and famous denied being a major player in the regional narcotics trade when he appeared in a Bangkok court yesterday. Xaysana Keopimpha, 42, was nabbed by Thai police on his way through Bangkok's main airport in January, shining a rare spotlight on communist Laos' shadowy role in the Southeast Asian pill trade. Narcotics cops alleged he was an "international drug kingpin" and trumpeted his capture in a part of the world where major cartel figures are not big names in criminal folklore and are rarely caught. The heavy-set Xaysana faces a string of charges including drug smuggling and possession-mainly of methamphetamine, which is known in Thai as "yaba" or crazy medicine for its effect on addicts. "He denies all the charges," said his lawyer Vorakon Phongtanakul, adding his client had also backtracked on a confession he allegedly signed in police custody.

Lanka death toll hits 30 as garbage piles up

COLOMBO: Hundreds of tons of rotting garbage piled up in Sri Lanka's capital yesterday after the main rubbish dump was shut following an accident that killed at least 30 people. Authorities sealed the massive 300-foot (90-metre) rubbish mountain on the northeastern edge of Colombo after it collapsed Friday, destroying 145 homes nearby and burying victims in a garbage landslide. Military spokesman Roshan Seneviratne said hundreds of troops were still searching for six people missing since the accident, but authorities were not hopeful of finding any survivors four days on. The Colombo Municipal Council was scrambling for new locations to dump the roughly 800 tons of garbage produced every day in the capital, as crows and stray dogs picked through bags of reeking garbage left on city streets. The council sought permission yesterday from a local magistrate to access another tip outside the city limits, promising it would clear the four-day backlog of trash within 24 hours.

Police helicopter carrying 12 crashes in east Turkey

ISTANBUL: A Turkish police helicopter with 12 people on board, including police officers and a judge, crashed yesterday in eastern Turkey, the local governor's office said. The chopper, whose passengers included seven policemen, one judge and one non-commissioned officer, crashed at around 0840 GMT in the eastern province of Tunceli, the governor's office said in a statement. The other three people on board were crew members. No signals were received from the Sikorsky helicopter approximately 10 minutes after it took off. It is believed to have crashed because of unfavourable weather conditions, according to the statement.

OIL OUTPUT CUTS PRESSURE GROWTH IN MIDEAST...

Continued from Page 1

"Growth in Saudi Arabia, the region's largest economy, is expected to slow to 0.4 percent in 2017 because of lower oil production and ongoing fiscal consolidation, before picking up to 1.3 percent in 2018," the IMF said. It said that growth is likely to dip in most Gulf Cooperation Council member states, which also include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. One bright spot is gas-rich Qatar which is expected to register 3.4-percent growth this year, compared with 2.7 percent in 2016. Kuwait's economy, in contrast, is forecast to shrink by 0.2 percent.

In Algeria, the IMF sees economic growth of 1.4 percent this year, down from 4.2 percent last year. Growth is also predicted to slow sharply in Iran, to 3.3 percent in 2017, from 6.5 percent last year when the Islamic republic won a boost from the lifting of economic sanctions. Iraq's economy is expected to contract by 3.1 percent in 2017 after surging by 10.1 percent last year on the back of

expanding oil exports after sharp contractions in the previous two years.

The overall figure for the region overshadows a faster pace in many of its oil-importing countries. Morocco's economic growth is forecast to jump from 1.5 percent last year to 4.4 percent this year, while Tunisia's economy is seen expanding by 2.5 percent compared with just one percent the year before. On the other hand Egypt, whose currency plummeted in value after authorities floated it in November, will see slower growth of 3.5 percent this year, compared with 4.3 percent last year. "In Egypt, comprehensive reforms are expected to deliver sizable growth dividends, lifting growth ... to 4.5 percent in 2018," it said.

The IMF, whose forecasts exclude war-torn Syria, noted that "continued strife and conflict in many countries in the region also detract from economic activity". Meanwhile, a "broad-based recovery is expected to continue at a healthy pace" in Pakistan, the IMF said, forecasting growth of five percent this year, and 5.2 percent in 2018, "supported by ramped-up infrastructure investment." — AFP

GOOGLE EARTH REINVENTED

Continued from Page 1

Island off the Swahili coast or the Oodaira Hot Spring in Yamagata, Japan. People can choose to fly around the world in Earth, using a 3-D button to see the Grand Canyon, chateaux of the Loire Valley and other stunning spots from any angles they wish. "Because we're doing a lot of the computing in the cloud, it allows you to have Google Earth right on your phone, so you can literally carry the whole world in your pocket," Earth product manager Gopal Shah told AFP at the New York launch. "The new version of Google Earth is really about education, it's really about immersing yourself in places you haven't been before to get a little bit of an exposure," he added.

Online explorers cruising the mobile version of Earth can also



Kara Koch, producer with Sesame Workshop, demonstrates features on Google Earth. — AP

capture pictures on their travels, sending friends digital postcards. New Earth was launched on Google's Chrome and Android software, with versions tailored for Apple devices and other Internet browsing software promised soon. It's the first time that Earth can be

reached on a web browser instead of through applications installed on devices. The move allows Google to tap into more powerful computing power at data centers in the internet "cloud" instead of relying on the capabilities of smartphones and other devices. — AFP

UK PM CALLS SNAP JUNE 8 POLLS

Continued from Page 1

The U-turn caps a tumultuous few years in British politics that has seen two historic referendums - one on Brexit, one on Scottish independence - and a prime ministerial resignation. An early election would be the fourth big vote in four years and there are signs that the British public is beginning to suffer from election fatigue. In a BBC video widely shared on social media, a woman called Brenda told her interviewer in Bristol when asked about the election: "Not another one! Oh for God's sake. I can't stand this!"

MPs will vote on the move today and May needs two-thirds of lawmakers to support her, but Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has already said he is behind the plan. "We look forward to showing how Labour will stand up for the people of Britain," said Corbyn, a veteran socialist who became leader in 2015 and has strong support in the party's leftist grassroots but has struggled to secure wider appeal. And recent opinion polls over Easter weekend showed the size of the challenge ahead of him. The Conservatives polled at 38 percent to 46 percent, while Labour stood at 23 percent to 29 percent, according to the polls by YouGov, ComRes and Opinion.

May explained her policy U-turn with an attack on her domestic political opponents, many of whom support Britain's continued membership of Europe's single market, accusing them of "game-playing" over Brexit. "I have concluded that the only way to guarantee certainty and stability for the years ahead is to hold this election and seek your support for the decisions I must take," May said.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, the leader of the pro-independence Scottish National Party which has 54 of 59 Scottish seats in the Commons, said May was making a "huge political miscalculation". But in a boost to May, the IMF also yesterday significantly raised its forecast for

Britain's growth in 2017 to 2.0 percent from a previous estimate of 1.5 percent. The pound, which has fallen because of the Brexit vote and plunged ahead of May's announcement yesterday, rose sharply against the euro and the dollar after it. Stocks instead suffered their worst fall since the Brexit vote last June, since the rising value of the pound hits multinationals.

European Council President Donald Tusk tweeted that he had a "good phone call" with May following her announcement. He then likened the latest twist in British politics to a movie by Alfred Hitchcock, often referred to as the "Master of Suspense". "It was Hitchcock who directed Brexit: First an earthquake and then the tension rises". The Brexit negotiations themselves are not expected to start until June at the earliest - and Brussels said this timetable would not change.

The European Commission has said it wants the exit talks to be concluded by Oct 2018 at the latest, to allow time for the deal to be ratified. But while May secured the parliament's support to trigger Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty last month, eurosceptics and europhiles alike are gearing up for further battles over the details of the negotiations.

German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said in a statement that "hopefully" the new elections "will lead to more clarity and predictability in the negotiations with the European Union". One European source said yesterday that May would be better placed to enter the negotiations - and give "concessions" - if she had a stronger hand. "We have some hope that this will lead to a strong leader in London that can negotiate with us with strong backing by the electorate," said another. The other 27 EU leaders are set to hold a summit on April 29 where they will agree on a strategy for negotiating Britain's expected departure in 2019. — AFP

US 'FACEBOOK KILLER' TAKES OWN LIFE AFTER...

Continued from Page 1

"There was a short pursuit in which the vehicle was stopped. As the officers approached that vehicle, Steve Stephens took his own life," Cleveland police chief Calvin Williams said.

Stephens, who had been described as armed and dangerous, had been on the FBI's Most Wanted list with authorities offering up to \$50,000 in rewards for information leading to his arrest. According to a timeline of events pieced together by police and Facebook, Stephens posted a video on Sunday afternoon saying he intended to kill, and followed up two minutes later with video of Godwin's shooting. In a third video 11 minutes later, streamed live from Stephens's car, he said he intended to kill others.

Police currently believe that Godwin is the only known victim. Stephens' mother told CNN she called him after learning about the video, and he had told her he was shooting people because he was "mad with his girlfriend". The incident was the latest in a string of disturbing crimes captured on Facebook video, including the alleged gang rape of a 15-year-old girl, two fatal shootings, and the kidnapping and torture of a disabled 18-year-old man.

"I think everybody has learned from this," said Williams. "This is something that should not have been shared around the world, period. Our kids, although they should not have seen this, I'm sure a lot have. They need to take this as a lesson. We can't do this in this country. We just can't." Facebook took down Stephens's videos and disabled his account about two hours after he first started uploading.

Justin Osofsky, vice president of global operations for the social media giant, acknowledged in a company blog post, that the delay was too long. "As a result of this terrible series of events, we are reviewing our reporting flows to be sure people can report videos and other material that violates our standards as easily and quickly as possible," he said. More than 400 tips had poured in before the suspect was spotted in Pennsylvania.

Police expressed regret that Stephens had taken his own life. "There might be people out there in similar situations and we could find out why he did what he did," said Williams. "If you're feeling, you know, not quite right and if there are things going on in your life that you need assistance with, you need to reach out and call somebody. And we'll get you that help," he added.

Members of Godwin's family had offered Stephens their forgiveness. "I don't want that man to die, I want him brought to justice," one of his sons, Robby Miller, told CNN. "This particular incident received a lot of attention and rightfully so," Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson told reporters. "We cannot resolve this underlying issue of violence particularly gun violence if we do not function and operate and have the same compassion and commitment that we've shown here," Jackson said.

It was not immediately clear how long Stephens had been in Erie, an area of remote woodland, farms and barns. Police initially searched the area on Sunday. Stephens worked for a behavioral health agency serving children through mental health services, foster care and adoption, at-risk youth and other programs. — AFP

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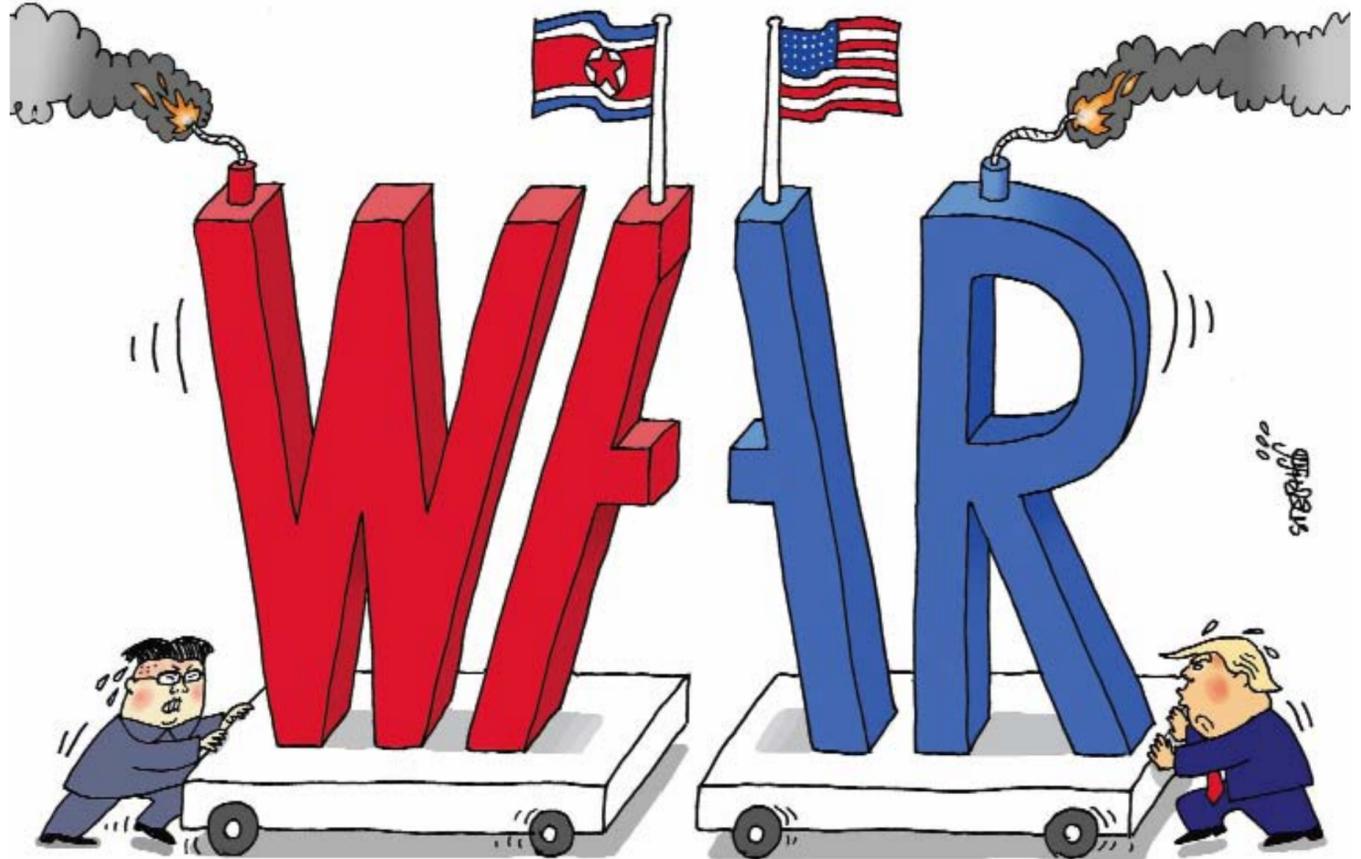
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KILL REWARDS, STAGED CRIME SCENES

The Philippine police have received cash payments for executing drug suspects, planted evidence at crime scenes and carried out most of the killings they have long blamed on vigilantes, said two senior officers who are critical of President Rodrigo Duterte's "war on drugs".

In the most detailed insider accounts yet of the drug war's secret mechanics, the two senior officials challenged the government's explanations of the killings in interviews with Reuters.

Almost 9,000 people, many small-time users and dealers, have been killed since Duterte took office on June 30. Police say about a third of the victims were shot by officers in self-defence during legitimate anti-drug operations. Human rights monitors believe many of the remaining two thirds were killed by paid assassins operating with police backing or by police disguised as vigilantes - a charge the police deny.

The two senior officers, one a retired police intelligence officer and the other an active-duty commander, claimed the killings are in fact orchestrated by the police, including most of those carried out by vigilantes. They spoke with Reuters on the condition of anonymity. "It is the Philippine National Police doing it," said the retired intelligence officer. "This killing machine must be buried six feet under the ground." He said he was angry about the impact of the killings on police discipline and wanted "to put Duterte on the defensive." Reuters was unable to independently verify if the police are behind vigilante killings. The president's office and the Philippine police did not respond to questions from Reuters.

'Only the Poor are Dying'

The intelligence officer has authored an unpublished 26-page report on the conduct of the drug war in an effort to organize opposition to Duterte's campaign. The report, titled "The State-Sponsored Extrajudicial Killings in the Philippines," provides granular detail on the campaign's alleged methods, masterminds and perpetrators. The document has been shared with leaders of the Catholic Church in the Philippines and with the government-funded Commission on Human Rights.

Some of the report's accusations against individuals could not be confirmed by Reuters; the news agency is therefore not publishing the full document. Many of its findings, however, support and expand upon previous investigations of the drug war by Reuters and independent human rights monitors. The report claims that police are paid to kill not just drug suspects, but also - for 10,000 pesos (\$200) a head - rapists, pickpockets, swindlers, gang members, alcoholics and other "troublemakers".

It also claims that civilian members of the so-called Davao Death Squad, which rights activists allege killed hundreds of people in Duterte's hometown of Davao, were drafted to "augment and assist" the police's current nationwide anti-drug operation. The report doesn't provide documentary evidence for its accusations, which the intelligence officer said were based on accounts from 17 serving or former policemen, including the commander Reuters interviewed. The police commander said he agreed to talk because he was upset that authorities are targeting only petty drug suspects. "Why aren't they killing the suppliers?" he asked. "Only the poor are dying."

The second half of the report is largely political in nature, asserting that Duterte has close ties to Communist forces in the Philippines. Many in the military and police are concerned by what they see as Duterte's leftist sympathies. Since taking office, the president has released Communist rebels from prison to restart peace talks. The report also calls the drug war a "social cleansing" campaign similar to that launched in Mao Zedong's China, with Duterte aiming to have drug addicts "physically eliminated."

Neither PDVSA nor Venezuela's Oil Ministry responded to requests for comment about the firm's maritime operations. The tankers sidelined for cleaning provide a vivid example of the firm's downward spiral: Lacking the cash to properly maintain ships, refineries and production operations - or to pay business partners on time - PDVSA can't boost exports, which is its only option for raising more cash.

The lagging exports crimp the flow of cash back to the country's crippled socialist economy, as citizens struggle daily amid soaring inflation and shortages of food and medicine. Because Venezuela relies on oil for more than 90 percent of export revenues, the problems of its state-run oil company pose a national crisis. Venezuela's crude exports declined 8 percent to 1.69 million barrels per day (bpd) in the first quarter versus the same period in 2016, according to Thomson Reuters data.

When oil prices were high, crude and fuel exports

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New Leads

The Commission on Human Rights has reviewed the report and the accounts could open up new leads in ongoing investigations, said chairman Chito Gascon. Church officials confirmed receiving the report as well. "We should do all we can to follow any lead that could ultimately shed light on these killings with the view to ultimately holding the perpetrators to account," said Gascon. The fresh claims come amid growing criticism of the drug war. In February, the country's influential Catholic Church called it a "reign of terror". The campaign has also sparked street protests and lawsuits.

Duterte's police chief, Ronald Dela Rosa, halted police operations for most of February after it emerged that an anti-drug unit had kidnapped and murdered a South Korean businessman last year. The killings continued but at a slower pace.

On March 6, Dela Rosa announced that the police were resuming their drug operations. In March, a former policeman, Arturo Lascanas, testified in the Philippine Senate about his role in vigilante-style killings in the southern city of Davao, where Duterte was once mayor. Lascanas was the second Senate witness to link Duterte to the Davao Death Squad. Duterte denies ordering any killings, either as president or mayor.

In a subsequent interview, Lascanas told Reuters that for over a decade he was paid for carrying out the liquidation of drug suspects and criminals. In the early 1990s, he said, he was paid 3,000 to 5,000 pesos (\$60-\$100) for each of the "jobs" he performed. By the early 2000s he was earning tens of thousands of pesos for each operation, he said. Lascanas said he had no documentary proof of the payments. He has since left the country.

Unplugging Cameras

In the past nine months, police acknowledge having shot dead more than 2,600 suspects during their operations. They say such shootings occur after suspects open

fire on undercover officers trying to catch them dealing drugs. But these so-called "buy-busts" are actually well-planned executions, said the commander interviewed by Reuters. The commander said targets are chosen from lists of suspects drawn up by police and local officials, who later coordinate to unplug security cameras in the neighborhood where a killing is planned. According to the report, streetlamps are also switched off.

"There is no such thing as a legitimate buy-bust," the commander said. "The dealers know the cops and won't sell to them." Instead, he said, a team of police operatives will execute the target, who is almost always unarmed, then plant guns and drugs at the crime scene to justify the use of deadly force. "We have to plant evidence for the legality of the operation," the commander said. "We are ordered to do these operations, so we have to protect ourselves."

The commander said officers put the gun in the dead suspect's hand and pull the trigger with the victim's finger so forensic testing will show that the suspect fired a gun. Late last year, he said, police crime-scene investigators told their fellow officers to place the guns at a slight distance from the suspects, rather than in their hands, to make things look more realistic. Most drug suspects in his precinct are shot by rookie cops who are either eager for the experience or nominated by their superiors, the commander said. The superiors refer to this as a "baptism by fire". Each member of the team is quickly paid according to two factors, said the commander: His role in the killing and the target's value.

According to the report, the cash "reward scales" for drug killings range from 20,000 pesos (\$400) for a "street level pusher and user," to 50,000 pesos for a member of a neighborhood council, one million pesos for "distributors, retailers and wholesalers," and five million for "drug lords." — Reuters

BANNED AT SEA: VENEZUELA'S OIL TANKERS

In the scorching heat of the Caribbean Sea, workers in scuba suits scrub crude oil by hand from the hull of the Caspian Galaxy, a tanker so filthy it can't set sail in international waters. The vessel is among many that are constantly contaminated at two major export terminals where they load crude from Venezuela's state-run oil company, PDVSA. The water here has an oily sheen from leaks in the rusty pipelines under the surface.

That means the tankers have to be cleaned before traveling to many foreign ports, which won't admit crude-stained ships for fear of environmental damage to their harbors, port facilities or other vessels. The laborious hand-cleaning operation is one of many causes of chronic delays for dozens of tankers that deliver Venezuela's principle export to customers worldwide, according to three executives of the state-run firm, eight employees of maritime firms that contract with PDVSA and Thomson Reuters vessel-tracking data. Other reasons include delayed repairs and impoundments by service providers that are owed money by cash-strapped PDVSA.

Neither PDVSA nor Venezuela's Oil Ministry responded to requests for comment about the firm's maritime operations. The tankers sidelined for cleaning provide a vivid example of the firm's downward spiral: Lacking the cash to properly maintain ships, refineries and production operations - or to pay business partners on time - PDVSA can't boost exports, which is its only option for raising more cash.

The lagging exports crimp the flow of cash back to the country's crippled socialist economy, as citizens struggle daily amid soaring inflation and shortages of food and medicine. Because Venezuela relies on oil for more than 90 percent of export revenues, the problems of its state-run oil company pose a national crisis. Venezuela's crude exports declined 8 percent to 1.69 million barrels per day (bpd) in the first quarter versus the same period in 2016, according to Thomson Reuters data.

When oil prices were high, crude and fuel exports

almost entirely financed an elaborate system of government price controls and social subsidies that maintained the popularity of late President Hugo Chavez, the socialist firebrand. Although embattled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro insists the government has maintained social programs, he has publicly acknowledged that lower oil prices have left the government with less money to finance them. Venezuela's Information Ministry did not respond to a request for comment about the nation's social spending.

Thousands of Brush Strokes

At oil export terminals around the world - where crude leaks like those in Venezuela are relatively rare - an oil-stained tanker would normally be taken out of the water and cleaned with industrial equipment in a dry dock. But Venezuela has just one small dry dock and lacks the cash or the time to send its soiled tankers there for proper cleaning, according to the PDVSA executives, ship captains and two workers from tanker cleaning companies.

So workers on a small fishing boat clean the giant tanker with thousands of scrub-brush strokes. The work - which involves scouring ships above and below the water line - can take up to ten days per vessel, a worker involved in the cleaning said. In a scene witnessed by Reuters in April, workers wearing scuba suits baked on the deck of a small boat as they reached out with brushes to scrub the Caspian Galaxy, a tanker leased for one trip by a PDVSA customer.

The workers labored just offshore from Amuay beach, near a tourist hub and PDVSA's largest refinery. The crews here have washed so many vessels in recent months that they have dubbed their operation "the boatwash". In nearby Maracaibo Lake - where tankers are stained at the export terminals - a scuba diver died in an accident this week while inspecting a leaking pipeline.

Jose Bermudez, a 40-year-old father of two, drowned

after the line connected to his air supply got tangled in the propeller on his boat, according to union representatives. The Professional Union of Scuba Divers and Marine Staff from Zulia state had previously requested that PDVSA replace the propellers with a different propulsion system, the organization said. A supervisor at PDVSA's Western division on Monday confirmed the accident but declined to answer further questions. PDVSA's maritime crisis is uniquely dire, said George Los, a senior tanker market analyst at US ship brokerage Charles R Weber Company. "I can't think of any situation similar to this anywhere else in the world right now," he said.

Leases at \$1 Million per Month

Eighteen of the 31 oil tankers PDVSA owns were out of commission at the end of March, according to Thomson Reuters vessel-tracking data and six maritime industry employees, who spoke with Reuters on condition of anonymity. Several needed cleaning, while others need repairs, according to the data. To keep oil flowing, PDVSA leases more than 50 tankers - each at a cost of between \$800,000 to \$1 million per month, according to three captains and ship brokers involved in lease contracts with PDVSA and Thomson Reuters vessel tracking data.

That is more than double the number of vessels it typically leases to complement its own fleet of tankers, according to the sources. It's a short-term fix that is driving up costs and exposing PDVSA to further detentions or seizures of vessels when it does not pay leasing fees on time. Several ship owners, exasperated by payment delays, have sought court orders to have the oil on board the tankers impounded, according to three sources involved in some of the disputes and a court document seen by Reuters.

Russian shipping conglomerate Sovcomflot in October won a court order to seize a \$20 million Venezuelan crude cargo from a Sovcomflot tanker as partial payment on a \$30 million debt. — Reuters

Focus

YOUNG AFRICANS CHART NEW PATH FOR AGRO AS CLIMATE HEATS UP

Jean Bosco Nzeyimana's company, Habona Ltd, employs 25 young people who collect garbage, separate out the plastic and metal, and use the organic waste to produce fuel briquettes for cooking. With the remains from the briquette process, they make organic fertilizer, which is sold to farmers. "This is a very smart agricultural technology, because this is the place where farmers can get compost that helps them restore the soil quality lost through applying chemical fertilizers," said Nzeyimana, adding that Habona is producing 50 tonnes of fuel a month.

Managing the waste also reduces the greenhouse gases that would be emitted into the atmosphere if the garbage were destroyed by burning it on an open fire, as often happens around markets. The Rwandan entrepreneur is just one example of young Africans seeking to transform agriculture by using new technologies, while contributing to food security and employment. Their innovations were showcased at the MasterCard Foundation's Young Africa Works Summit 2017, held in Kigali in February, aimed at putting young people at the centre of a "green revolution" for Africa that can help equip agriculture to thrive amid climate change.

"The increasing severity of climate change is already amplifying existing stress on water availability and food security in many African countries," said Anne Miles, the foundation's director for youth livelihoods and financial inclusion. "A growing youth population means this group will be particularly vulnerable," she added. At the same time, young people are uniquely poised to understand the problem, and to use new methods to make farming sustainable, efficient and profitable even as the planet warms, the foundation believes.

Help for Women Farmers

Pilirani Khoza founded the Bunda Female Students Organisation in 2014 to help pay fees for disadvantaged women students on science courses at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Malawi. In return, the sponsored students act as agricultural extension workers, training poor women farmers to survive harsh climatic conditions. The students are sent to rural counties, where they each train around 30 women farmers for a month.

They provide the farmers with the inputs and knowledge they need to implement relatively simple methods, such as using small plastic bottles filled with water and pierced at both ends which are tied onto the crop, irrigating it for six months. So far the project has reached 360 rural farmers, who are making progress in planting trees, growing vegetables and crops that are tolerant of drought and floods, and conserving water in the soil, said Khoza. In Kenya, meanwhile, 23-year-old Brian Bosire is the brain behind UjuziKilimo, which means "knowledge farming" in Swahili. Having seen farmers in his village suffer from poor yields due to droughts, floods and erratic rains, Bosire developed a handheld electronic sensor that gathers data on soil quality and helps farmers decide what to grow. "My first dream was to have some device that any farmer - like my mother or a village woman - could just stick into the ground, and within a few minutes get the precise information about what kind of inputs they need, what kinds of crops will do well, and where can they get those inputs," he said.

The service is operated by extension agents who test the soil and send information and advice to farmers on their mobile phones, which they also use to pay for their subscription. In 2015, Bosire's company won an award from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, recognizing its work in developing technology to improve the livelihoods and yields of small-scale farmers. "One of the 250 farmers who were getting 10 bags of maize from one acre is now earning \$300 per month from vegetable farming," said Bosire. "We are proud that at least the farmer is getting the right knowledge to drive him to profitability." In the next two years, the company aims to reach 200,000 Kenyan farmers, he added.

Ending Hunger

Bosire said climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing Africa, because its agriculture is mainly rain-fed. One of the best ways to make farmers more resilient is to create solutions that are tailored to smallholders, he said. Nzeyimana said climate change is "for real". "Young people, because of the skills they have, have to take a lead in trying to make sure that we mitigate the climate change risks before they hit us the hard way," he emphasised. Currently, the fuel briquettes his company produces are sold only in southern Rwanda but it is planning to build a bigger plant to be able to supply the whole country. Khoza said young Africans are the drivers of agricultural transformation. — Reuters

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PAULINHO 'KEEN' FOR CHINA STAY AMID TRANSFER RUMORS

HONG KONG: Former Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Paulinho has denied speculation linking him to a move away from the Chinese Super League after his recent impressive performances for Brazil and Guangzhou Evergrande. The 28-year-old, who joined Evergrande from the English Premier League side in June 2015, signed an extension to his initial contract in January. But after scoring a hat-trick in Brazil's 4-1 win over Uruguay in World Cup qualifying last month, he has found himself back in the spotlight. "These transfer rumors are normal in the football industry," he told Chinese media. "My agent must have received inquiries from some European clubs. "But I like where I am and I have been having good time with my team mates and coaches. I'd like to stay here to win more titles with Evergrande." Paulinho joined the club on a 14 million euro (\$14.9 million) transfer fee after a disappointing spell in London and has impressed since moving to China. He helped Evergrande win the Asian Champions League title at the end of his first season while also picking up two Chinese Super League win-



AFRICAN SOCCER BOSS OPEN TO SOMALIA HOSTING GAMES AGAIN

MOGADISHU: Somalia could host international games again for the first time in nearly 30 years after the new head of African soccer said on Tuesday he's open to the idea. Confederation of African Football president Ahmad invited Somalia to start by organizing friendly games against neighbor Djibouti in the Somali capital Mogadishu. Mogadishu last hosted a senior international in 1988. Somalia has been wracked by violence and chaos since the early 1990s, first because of a civil war and now deadly attacks by homegrown Islamist extremist group Al-Shabab. But the situation has improved. Somalia President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed used Ahmad's visit to request his country be allowed to host international soccer again. Ahmad, who beat longtime African soccer boss Issa Hayatou in an election last month, made a two-day visit to Somalia on Monday and Tuesday, his first official trip as CAF president. "Holding friendly matches in Mogadishu will help a lot to encourage sports and

LAMPARD LAUDS TERRY AS 'GREATEST EPL DEFENDER'

LONDON: Former Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard has hailed John Terry as the Premier League's greatest ever defender after the club announced their captain will leave Stamford Bridge at the end of the season. The 36-year-old former England international, who made his Chelsea debut in 1998, played more than 700 games for the club and has been their most successful captain. He won the 2012 Champions League, four Premier League titles, five FA Cups, three League Cups and the Europa League with Chelsea. Lampard, who was capped 106 times for England, is Chelsea's all-time top goalscorer with 211 goals in over 400 appearances in all competitions. "The last man standing of an incredible era for @chelseafc," Lampard wrote on his Instagram account. "What a pleasure to play with the greatest defender in the @premierleague history. "He led the club both on and off the pitch from the moment he made his debut. "He set standards for everyone, whether it was demanding excellence in training, fighting for every win or respecting how fortunate we were to play for such a great club." — Reuters



MINNEAPOLIS: Cleveland Indians' Carlos Santana dives for a sharp grounder by Minnesota Twins' Jason Castro on a fielder's choice in the eighth inning of a baseball game on Monday, April 17, 2017, in Minneapolis. — AP

YANKEES ROMP TO EIGHTH CONSECUTIVE WIN

SUZUKI RETURNS TO SEATTLE AS MEMBER OF 3,000-HIT CLUB

NEW YORK: Jordan Montgomery took a shutout into the seventh inning for his first major league win while Matt Holliday homered in his return to the lineup as the New York Yankees romped to their eighth consecutive victory by beating the Chicago White Sox 7-4 on Monday night. Holliday put the Yankees ahead with a titanic three-run shot in a five-run third inning and Aaron Judge added a two-run homer that chased Derek Holland (1-2) with the score 7-0 in the fifth. New York has rebounded from a 1-4 start with its longest winning streak since a 10-game run in June 2012. Making his second career start, Montgomery (1-0) immediately found himself in a first-inning jam.

But the 24-year-old lefty calmly pitched his way out of it by retiring cleanup hitter Jose Abreu and streaking Avisail Garcia with runners at second and third. Aroldis Chapman closed out for his fourth save.

BREWERS 6, CUBS 3

Eric Thames homered in his club record-tying fifth straight game as Milwaukee beat Chicago. Milwaukee never trailed after Thames hit an opposite-field homer to snap a 3-3 tie in the third inning. Jeromy Burnitz was the other Brewer to homer in five straight games in August of 1997. Ryan Braun and Jeff Bandy also went deep for the Brewers, the only team to hit as many as three homers in a game off

Chicago starter John Lackey (1-2) last season. Brewers starter Chase Anderson (2-0) pitched five innings of three-run, seven-hit ball to pick up the victory.

BRAVES 5, PADRES 4

Dansby Swanson hit an RBI single with two outs in the ninth inning as Atlanta, boosted by Freddie Freeman's two home runs, beat San Diego for a four-game sweep in its first series at SunTrust Park. Swanson's bases-loaded hit fell just in front of diving left fielder Allen Cordoba. The Braves have followed a five-game losing streak with five straight wins. Jim Johnson (2-0) pitched the ninth. Kurt Suzuki hit a one-out single in the Braves ninth off closer Brandon Maurer (0-1). With two outs, pinch runner Chase d'Arnaud advanced to third on Emilio Bonifacio's bloop single in front of Cordoba's dive. An intentional walk to Ender Inciarte loaded the bases for Swanson, whose first career game ending hit again fell beyond the reach of a charging Cordoba.

RED SOX 4, RAYS 3

Andrew Benintendi hit a go-ahead, two-run single as Boston scored three unearned runs following a dropped throw by second baseman Brad Miller to beat Tampa Bay in the annual Patriots' Day game. Knuckleballer Steven Wright (1-1) allowed three runs - one earned - and nine hits in six innings as Boston

won its third straight. Craig Kimbrel struck out the side in the ninth for a save for the third straight day, his sixth this season. Blake Snell (0-2) gave up four runs - one earned - and seven hits in five innings. The Rays completed a 1-6 trip that followed a franchise-best 5-2 start.

INDIANS 3, TWINS 1

Danny Salazar finished six innings strong after a shaky start and Michael Brantley homered and drove in two runs as Cleveland beat Minnesota. Salazar (1-1) struck out seven and retired 15 of his last 18 batters after allowing five hits and one walk over a seven-batter stretch spanning the first two innings. Brantley took Kyle Gibson (0-2) deep in the fifth inning, raising his career average in 13 at-bats against the Twins right-hander to .385 with four RBIs. Cody Allen loaded the bases in the ninth, but he completed his third save by getting Joe Mauer to fly out to center field.

ASTROS 3, ANGELS 0

Charlie Morton and three relievers combined for a five-hitter while Jose Altuve drove in two runs as Houston beat Los Angeles for its fifth straight win. Morton (1-1) worked in and out of trouble over five innings, allowing five hits and two walks with three strikeouts. Chris Devenski followed Morton with two perfect innings while Luke Gregerson threw a perfect eighth and Ken Giles pitched the ninth for his third save. Astros

pitchers retired the last 14 batters. Jesse Chavez (1-2) allowed two runs and seven hits over a season-high seven innings.

CARDINALS 2, PIRATES 1

Lance Lynn pitched seven shutout innings and Kolten Wong homered as St. Louis stopped a three-game losing streak. The Cardinals, who had lost six of seven, are 4-9 and still have the worst record in the NL. Lynn (1-1) allowed three hits and struck out five while walking one. Seung-Hwan Oh worked around an RBI double by pinch hitter Gregory Polanco in the ninth to pinch the Cardinals' first save of the season. Ivan Nova (1-2) gave up five hits and no walks in eight innings while striking out three.

RANGERS 7, ATHLETICS 0

AJ Griffin pitched six scoreless innings in his return to the Oakland Coliseum while Nomar Mazara had two hits and three RBIs as the Rangers beat the Athletics. Carlos Gomez and Mike Napoli added two RBIs apiece to help Texas end a three-game losing streak. Griffin (2-0) spent his first two seasons in the majors with the A's before being released near the end of 2015 after Tommy John surgery a year earlier. He hadn't pitched at the Coliseum since making his final start for Oakland on Sept. 18, 2013. He looked very comfortable in his return. The Rangers' shaggy-haired right-hander allowed one hit and one walk, retired the final 14 batters he faced and finished with eight strikeouts - one shy of his career high. Three Texas relievers combined for the final nine outs to complete the three-hitter while Jharel Cotton (1-2) took the loss.

MARINERS 6, MARLINS 1

Robinson Cano and Nelson Cruz hit consecutive first-inning homers and Ariel Miranda pitched seven scoreless innings as the Mariners beat the Marlins in Ichiro Suzuki's first visit to Safeco Field as a member of the 3,000-hit club. Miranda (1-1) allowed four singles and only one runner to reach second base while striking out five. Nick Vincent pitched a perfect eighth before Evan Scribner allowed Christian Yelich's third home run in the ninth. The Mariners won their fourth straight after a 2-8 start. Cano crushed a 2-1 pitch from Tom Koehler (0-1) 441 feet to right-center for his second home run, a two-run shot that scored Jarrod Dyson. Cruz followed with his second homer, lining a 1-1 pitch to center to make it 3-0.

DIAMONDBACKS 4, DODGERS 2

Jake Lamb hit a solo home run in the eighth inning and David Peralta added a run-scoring triple in the ninth to lead the Diamondbacks to a victory over the Dodgers. JJ Hoover (1-0) threw two scoreless innings in relief of Robbie Ray to earn the victory and Fernando Rodney blanked the Dodgers in the ninth to earn his fifth save. It was Lamb's third homer of the season.

The Dodgers took a 2-0 lead against Ray, scoring an unearned run in the second on Logan Forsythe's sacrifice fly and taking a two-run lead on an Enrique Hernandez solo home run in the fourth.

It was his first of the year. The Diamondbacks tied it on RBI hits by AJ Pollock and Peralta. Chris Hatcher (0-1) pitched 2 2/3 innings and took the loss. — AP



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Dodgers Rob Segedin (right) scores on a sacrifice fly hit by Logan Forsythe as Arizona Diamondbacks catcher Jeff Mathis takes a late throw during the second inning of a baseball game on Monday, April 17, 2017. — AP

Baseball results/standings

Arizona 4, LA Dodgers 2; Seattle 6, Miami 1; Texas 7, Oakland 0; Cleveland 3, Minnesota 1; Houston 3, LA Angels 0; Milwaukee 6, Chicago Cubs 3; Atlanta 5, San Diego 4; NY Yankees 7, Chicago White Sox 4; St. Louis 2, Pittsburgh 1; Boston 4, Tampa Bay 3.

American League

Eastern Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Baltimore	8	3	.727	-
NY Yankees	9	4	.692	-
Boston	8	5	.615	1
Tampa Bay	6	8	.429	3.5
Toronto	2	10	.167	6.5

Central Division

Detroit	8	4	.667	-
Minnesota	7	6	.538	1.5
Chicago White Sox	6	6	.500	2
Kansas City	6	6	.500	2
Cleveland	6	7	.462	2.5

Western Division

Houston	9	4	.692	-
LA Angels	6	8	.429	3.5
Seattle	6	8	.429	3.5
Oakland	5	8	.385	4
Texas	5	8	.385	4

National League

Eastern Division

Washington	7	5	.583	-
Miami	7	6	.538	0.5
NY Mets	7	6	.538	0.5
Atlanta	6	6	.500	1
Philadelphia	4	8	.333	3

Central Division

Cincinnati	8	5	.615	-
Milwaukee	8	6	.571	0.5
Chicago Cubs	6	7	.462	2
Pittsburgh	6	7	.462	2
St. Louis	4	9	.308	4

Western Division

Arizona	9	5	.643	-
Colorado	9	5	.643	-
LA Dodgers	7	7	.500	2
San Diego	5	9	.357	4
San Francisco	5	9	.357	4

RENAME 'MANKAD', FUMES GAVASKAR

NEW DELHI: Batting great Sunil Gavaskar wants the term "Mankad" dropped from cricketing parlance, saying linking the famously controversial dismissal to Indian all-rounder Vinoo Mankad smears the legend's name. The term—used when a bowler runs out a non-striker before delivery—was coined 70 years ago when Mankad twice ran out Bill Brown at the bowler's end during India's tour of Australia in 1947. Mankad was widely criticized for unsporting play, despite warning Brown several times that he was straying from his crease.

Australian skipper Donald Bradman and Brown himself also defended the Indian bowler but the term—loaded with negative connotations of bad sportsmanship—stuck for generations. But 70 years down the track, former Indian captain Gavaskar wants the term amended, arguing it should be renamed "Browned" after the Australian player who was at fault. "I have

grave objections to that because it's putting one of India's cricketing legends in a bad light," Gavaskar said on the Sony Max TV channel during an Indian Premier League Twenty20 match.

"He has been one of India's all-time great cricketers. Our legend's name should not be spoiled. If you want to call it anything, just say the batsman was 'Browned,' not 'Mankaded.'" His comments come just a fortnight after the Marylebone Cricket Club, which oversees administration of the sport, declared it was updating the rule governing the dismissal to "put the onus on the non-striker to remain in his/her ground". Dismissing a batsman at the non-striking end remains contentious in the world of cricket. Sri Lanka's Sachithra Senanayake was widely criticized by the English press in 2014 after he dismissed Jos Buttler in this fashion during a one-day international in 2014. — AFP



DHARAMSALA: In this file photo, India's cricket captain Virat Kohli (left) and Ajinkya Rahane (right) receive the Border-Gavaskar trophy from Sunil Gavaskar during the fourth day of the fourth and final cricket Test match between India and Australia at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala. Batting great Sunil Gavaskar has slammed the use of the term 'Mankad' when a bowler runs out a non-striker before his delivery, saying the onus in such dismissals is on the batsman. — AFP

CRICKET

AUSTRALIA'S PACE ATTACK COULD DECIDE ASHES: LEE

MUMBAI: Australia's pace attack, emboldened by the return of "once in a generation" bowler Pat Cummins, could prove the difference between the sides in this year's Ashes series against England, former paceman Brett Lee said. Steve Smith's side already boast tear-away paceman Mitchell Starc along with the precision of Josh Hazlewood. Cummins returned to test cricket in India after more than five years in the wilderness, replacing injured spearhead Starc and taking eight wickets from the final two matches in Ranchi and Dharamsala.

His successful comeback has only bolstered Australia's already formidable pace resources. "What Pat Cummins can bring is pace, aggression, control and anything between that. He is a once in a generation bowler and you have got to harness that amazing talent," Lee said in an interview at a Mumbai hotel overlooking the Arabian Sea. The 23-year-old right-arter showed good control and generated enough pace even on the docile surfaces in India to trouble the hosts' batsmen.

James Pattinson has also been in stellar form in domestic cricket since returning from a 12-month injury layoff in February and the 26-year-old could complete a dream pace quartet for the five-match Ashes series starting in November. Lee, an ambassador for Bowling Master, said he would struggle to summon the courage to face such a pace battery. "I would be (scared), absolutely," Lee said after launching the cricket training kit which will be sold on Amazon's India portal. "It's a pretty serious pace barrage that you've got. Australian bowling stocks now are pretty healthy. "Hazlewood is more of hitting the good length, day in and day out. With Starc you will be full, short, good length, yorkers, the whole thing.

"Two completely different bowlers but complementing each other because they are building pressure from each end. Then you throw in someone like a Pat Cummins. It's a pretty handy attack." Less than six months ago, Australia were still reeling from their 3-0 whitewash in Sri Lanka when they were beaten in the home series by South Africa with a match to spare. The axe fell on some players and a revamped side gained a consolation win at Adelaide Oval before going on to blank Pakistan 3-0 in the following series.

They impressed one and all in India, going down 2-1 after a closely-fought four-match series against the world's top ranked test side. Lee said Smith now had the players to build a team around for the long-term.

"After (former captain) Michael Clarke, you got Steve Smith taking over, and I think he's building his own team, which is a terrific team," said the 40-year-old.

"It's a team that are very close and a team that's going to be around for a long time now. You have got some young guys coming. (Matt) Renshaw is just 21 years old. (Peter) Handscomb has come on and just taken to test cricket like a duck to water.

"You throw in Pat Cummins, he's back in the mix after five and half years in absence of not playing test cricket. You got some people that are injecting in some youth, some experience. Australia is in a very good spot." Lee was also looking forward to seeing how Joe Root, who replaced long-serving Alastair Cook as test captain, would lead England Down Under. "He's a class act ... His stats back it up and proved that he is such an amazing talent," Lee said. "He's ranked among the top four-five batsmen in the world. And you throw in the captaincy with that. I am actually looking forward to seeing how he goes on the Australian wickets." — Reuters

RUGBY

FORMER ALL BLACK EVANS TO RETIRE

LONDON: Harlequins' former New Zealand fly-half Nick Evans is to retire from rugby union at the end of the northern hemisphere season, the English Premiership club announced yesterday. The 36-year-old joined the Twickenham-based side in 2008 and has since made more than 200 appearances and scored a club record 2,217 points. But by signing for Quins, Evans effectively called time on an All Blacks' career that yielded 16 caps from 2004 to 2007, although by that stage he was being eclipsed at international level by fly-half great Dan Carter.

Evans, who began his career with Otago and played for the Highlanders and the Blues in Super Rugby, was a central figure as Quins won the second-tier European Challenge Cup in 2011 and took the Premiership title the following year. "I thought leaving New Zealand was hard, but leaving the game I've played since I was eight years old-and professionally for 17 years-is tough. But when you know, you know," said Evans in a Harlequins statement. "This game has taught me everything,

showed me things I could never imagine and introduced me to people that are not teammates, but family." Evans, widely regarded as one of the best overseas signings in Premiership history, added: "I need to thank the clubs I have represented, the coaches who have helped shape the player I am today, and the fans, both in New Zealand where it all started, and here in the UK, for their support. "I couldn't think of a better shirt and place to finish my career at than Harlequins, I want to thank the club and fans for making myself and my family feel unbelievably welcome. It has made our time so special."

Harlequins director of rugby John Kingston paid tribute to the stand-off by saying: "The word 'legendary' is really over-used within the modern sporting world, but in the case of Nick Evans and his rugby playing career at Harlequins, it is the perfect description. "From the moment he arrived in the summer of 2008, he has been at the forefront of taking the club to heights never experienced before, including being crowned Premiership champions in 2012." — AFP



NASHVILLE: The Nashville Predators charge the ice after defeating the Chicago Blackhawks in overtime in Game Three of the Western Conference First Round during the 2017 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Bridgestone Arena on April 17, 2017. — AFP

NHL PLAYS 4 OT PLAYOFF GAMES IN CRAZY NIGHT

PREDATORS PUSH HAWKS TO BRINK OF ELIMINATION

WASHINGTON: Tyler Bozak scored a power-play goal at 1:37 of overtime, and the Toronto Maple Leafs defeated the Washington Capitals 4-3 on Monday night to take a 2-1 lead in a first-round Eastern Conference playoff series. All three games have gone to overtime. Auston Matthews, Nazem Kadri and William Nylander also scored for the Maple Leafs, and Matthews added an assist. Nicklas Backstrom, Alex Ovechkin and Evgeny Kuznetsov scored for the Capitals, who twice had two-goal leads. The Maple Leafs scored the final two goals of the second period to send the game to the third period tied at 3. It stayed that way through the third. But when Washington's Lars Eller took a high-sticking penalty at 19:44, Toronto opened the overtime on the power play and took advantage.

PREDATORS 3, BLACKHAWKS 2 (OT)

The Chicago Blackhawks were left staring down the barrel of a shock early playoff exit after Kevin Fiala's overtime winner handed the Nashville Predators a 3-0 series lead on Monday. Fiala slipped a backhander past Corey Crawford as Nashville fought back from 2-0 down to seal a dramatic 3-2 victory in Nashville. The win means the Predators are just one victory away from sending Chicago crashing out of the playoffs in what would be a stunning end to the postseason for the Western Conference top seeds. Fiala's winner came after he had missed two golden chances in overtime. Crawford had seemed determined to keep Chicago alive, making 46 stops in the defeat. Pekka Rinne made 34 saves for Nashville. Chicago now face the Predators on Thursday in Game 4, aiming to avoid a series sweep.

SENATORS 4, BRUINS 3 (OT)

Bobby Ryan tipped home a pass from Kyle Turris for a power-play goal 5:43 into overtime, giving Ottawa a road win and a 2-1 lead in the first-round Eastern Conference playoff series. Riley Nash was in the penalty box when Erik Karlsson hit a flying Turris with a pass into the

zone that was close to being offside. Turris got the puck to Ryan, who tipped it past Tuukka Rask as Ottawa overcame blowing a 3-0 lead to reclaim home-ice advantage in the best-of-seven series. Mike Hoffman scored twice and Derick Brassard had a goal for Ottawa. Noel Acciari, David Backes and David Pastrnak answered for the Bruins in their second straight three-goal second period.

DUCKS 5, FLAMES 4 (OT)

Corey Perry scored at 1:30 of overtime as Anaheim overcame a 4-1 deficit to win the game

and take a 3-0 lead in their Western Conference first-round playoff series. Perry's shot from a bad angle hit Calgary goalie Brian Elliott and then deflected off defenseman Michael Stone's backside and in to lead the Ducks to a come-from-behind victory. Shea Theodore scored his first two NHL playoff goals for the Ducks. In relief of Anaheim starting goalie John Gibson, Jonathan Bernier stopped all 16 shots he faced to pick up the win. Gibson gave up four goals on 16 shots before being relieved by Bernier at 8:33 of the second period. Sean Monahan had a goal and an assist for the Flames. — Agencies



CALGARY: Alex Chiasson #39 of the Calgary Flames fights Patrick Eaves #18 of the Anaheim Ducks for the puck in Game Three of the Western Conference First Round during the 2017 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Scotiabank Saddledome on April 17, 2017. — AFP

GATLAND READY TO REVEAL LIONS SQUAD

LONDON: Warren Gatland will reveal his British and Irish Lions squad for the daunting tour of New Zealand today, when talk in rugby clubs across the region will quickly switch from who will be on the plane to who is likely to be in the test team. Gatland, who oversaw the 2-1 series victory over Australia four years ago, is tipped to select Welsh flanker Sam Warburton as captain for the second time, an honor previously bestowed only on England's Martin Johnson. Warburton captained the team in the first two tests against Australia in 2013 but missed the decisive third through injury, with fellow Welshman Alun Wyn Jones stepping in.

Jones has taken on the captaincy duties for Wales this season while Warburton has played superbly, adding to the conundrum for Gatland, who will return to his day job as Wales coach after the tour. There will no doubt be the usual surprises - experienced Six Nations men missing out and the odd young "bolter" being given their chance. Media speculation over the weekend has already suggested that Joe Launchbury, George Ford and Jamie Joseph can start preparing for England's tour of Argentina instead.

The heart of the squad oozes quality, with fly-halves Jonathan Sexton and Owen Farrell, scrumhalf Conor Murray, winger George North and key forwards Billy Vunipola, Peter O'Mahony, Taulupe Faletau and Sean O'Brien on just about every pundit's short list. Gatland also looks spoiled for choice at lock and in the back row, where some high-class operators will have to miss out. On the other hand, other areas will have given him sleepless nights, with a group of similarly matched contenders of a good standard but who are unlikely to strike fear into New Zealand coach Steve Hansen.

Key among those is probably hooker, where the captains of the best two teams in Europe - England's Dylan Hartley and Ireland's Rory Best - will probably travel but with neither in the box seat - and Wales' impressive Ken Owens in with a shout. For all those who make the squad, and however well they bed down in their short time together, they face a monumentally difficult task. Many observers are describing this year's tour as the Lions' toughest, not just because of the supreme quality of the world champion All Blacks, but because of the strength too of the

provincial teams and the desperately limited preparation time. The Lions kick off with the only easy-looking fixture of the 10-match tour, against Provincial Barbarians on June 3.

That is just one week after the English Premiership and Pro-12 finals, and with Gatland having said previously that anyone featuring in those matches will not play in the tour opener, his opening options look squeezed. Former England flyhalf Stuart Barnes, who toured New Zealand with the Lions in 1993 without playing a test, described this year's tour as "attempting to conquer rugby's Mount Everest without oxygen, with a storm gathering on the horizon.

"To win the series would be the greatest Lions triumph of all. To win more than 50 percent of their games will be a decent effort," he

said, factoring in the tough tour games against the country's dominant Super Rugby sides.

The Lions have won only one series in New Zealand, in 1971, and since they started touring there in 1904 have won six of the 38 tests - with three draws. They were hammered 3-0 on their last visit 12 years ago, when Dan Carter was in his pomp, but if Lions fans think the retirement of the superstar flyhalf will have weakened the All Blacks, they have not been watching Beauden Barrett, who is operating at arguably even higher levels this season. His, and possibly New Zealand's only relative weakness is in goal-kicking, where the Lions have real strength in depth, but the tourists are almost certainly going to need to find more than a few penalties to conquer that sporting Everest. — Reuters



LONDON: In this file photo, Australia's Sitaleki Timani (right) is tackled by England's Joe Launchbury (top) and Tom Wood during their autumn international rugby match at Twickenham Stadium in London. Team coach Warren Gatland met with staff yesterday, to finalize a squad of English, Irish, Welsh and Scottish players, with a month to form the former rivals into a squad of British and Irish Lions comrades ready to face New Zealand. Launchbury could miss out in the face of intense competition in the second row position. — AP

DJOKOVIC THROUGH IN MONTE CARLO AFTER SIMON SCARE

MONTE CARLO: Novak Djokovic was made to sweat before struggling to victory 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 against Gilles Simon at Monte Carlo yesterday in his first clay court match of the season. "It was a very difficult match, with many changes of momentum," the world number two Djokovic said. "It was very tiring for me, the first clay of the season. "But this is the start of the Roland Garros build-up." Monaco resident Djokovic was broken at 4-4 in the decider but then reeled off three straight games to snatch victory. He has suffered a disjointed start to the season with patchy form while recently sitting out the Miami Masters due to an elbow injury. Djokovic won the Monte Carlo Masters in 2013 and 2015 but has won only one tournament so far this season, the Qatar Open at the start of January.



MONTE CARLO: Serbia's Novak Djokovic hits a return to French's Gilles Simon during the Monte-Carlo ATP Masters Series tournament yesterday in Monaco. — AFP

birth of his son, Jo-Wilfried Tsonga was upset by a qualifier in the second round of the Monte Carlo Masters on Tuesday. The seventh-seeded Tsonga lost to fellow Frenchman Adrian Panatta 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-3 at the first big tournament of the clay-court swing.

A two-time semifinalist at the Country Club, Tsonga had not played since losing his opening match to Fabio Fognini at Indian Wells in early March. Tsonga then took time off following the birth of his first child Shugar on March 18. The 10th-ranked Tsonga led 3-0 in the first set then struggled to cope with the good mix of baseline shots and slices from Mannarino. Mannarino broke Tsonga six times and will next go against Lucas Pouille or Paolo Lorenzi. Back from an elbow injury, two-time champion Novak Djokovic later started his campaign against Frenchman Gilles Simon. — Agencies

TSONGA LOSES

Back on court for the first time since the

SO WHAT THAT ALONSO IS RACING THE INDY 500?

CHARLOTTE: During the last race at Long Beach, there was buzz that IndyCar officials wanted a superstar to commit to the Indianapolis 500 and make the 101st running a must-watch race. The 500 is one of the most iconic events in America, and it was going to be difficult for the speedway to top last year's centennial celebration. So names were banded about, all of them drivers who might consider running next month's race and would draw a good deal of domestic interest.

There was Tony Stewart, who never won the 500 - his dream race. Retired from NASCAR now, Indy cars may have passed him, but people would have tuned into to see one last gasp from Smoke.

There was Danica Patrick, whose entire brand was built around the Indy 500. She left IndyCar six years ago but the grass hasn't been so green on the NASCAR side, and Patrick led 19 laps at the speedway and finished third and fourth in her career.

Either of those drivers would have drawn massive interest in Indiana, where the series seems to cater to its homegrown fans and unfortunately often settles for mediocrity. It was neither of those drivers. The "showstopper" CEO Mark Miles pulled out for next month's race is two-time Formula One champion Fernando Alonso. "Who?" asked my 13-year-old daughter. Trust me, she's a valuable gauge of what's trending, and I guarantee she'd have talked up the race if Stewart or Patrick was in the field.

Alonso is a highly decorated driver who was once at the top of Formula One. IndyCar has plenty of international drivers, so adding the Spaniard for the 500 isn't unusual in that respect. But his F1 titles came long ago, in 2005 and 2006, and he has yet to score a point in three races this year with McLaren. "I've never raced with so little power in my life," Alonso reportedly said on his radio during Sunday's race in Bahrain. Big news, Alo; You get one of those Honda engines for the Indy 500, too. To race on an oval, a circuit he's never attempted, in an Indy car, a car he's never driven. He apparently is skipping the rookie orientation program, and will leave himself roughly two weeks - barring rain delays - to figure out how to win the Indy 500.

This just doesn't feel right, no matter how skilled Alonso may very well be. There's got to be at least a small group of worrywarts unsettled by the crowded timeline in which Alonso plans to learn how to race Indy. The deal manufactured by current McLaren executive Zak Brown, a former IndyCar consultant, has grabbed headlines by pairing McLaren, Honda, Alonso and Andretti in the most famous auto race in the US. It comes at the expense of the Monaco Grand Prix, which Alonso will skip to race at Indy.

Why is it OK for one of F1's biggest stars to skip the crown jewel of the schedule to sell some tickets for Indianapolis Motor Speedway? Alonso's entry also came at the expense of Stefan Wilson, who had to give up his yearlong quest to put an Indy package together because there were not enough engines for both Alonso and Wilson. People will tell you Wilson graciously stepped aside, and put the race above his own interests, but what kind of series leadership puts him in that position? Of course he was going to say, "Sure, Alonso can have my engine." Meanwhile, the field already has announced entries for Indy 500 rookies Zach Veach and Jack Harvey, plus a car for Jay Howard, who hasn't raced an Indy car since 2011. So why was Wilson singled out to cough up his Honda engine to give Alonso a shot? Wilson has been working hard to make this year's race after finishing 28th last year, enough to earn a share of \$200,805. IndyCar has some nice momentum right now, but the idea of importing Alonso does little for long-term growth. Unless, of course, the idea is to coax more open-wheel drivers in F1 turf to take the road to IndyCar.

Put Lewis Hamilton in the Indy 500, with proper seat time and the freedom to Snapchat and Instagram his way through the entire process. That might appeal to kids. Or put Ricky or Jordan Taylor in the event. They are rising American stars with the following to make a difference to the race and the series. Alonso? Meh. It's hard to see what IndyCar gains in the long run. After selling some tickets and drawing some eyeballs on race day, what happens when the race is over and Alonso returns to Formula One? — AP



CLEVELAND: Cleveland Cavaliers' Tristan Thompson (left) drives to the basket against Indiana Pacers' Myles Turner in the first half in Game 2 of a first-round NBA basketball playoff series, on Monday, April 17, 2017. — AP

CAVS, SPURS MARCH ON IN NBA PLAYOFFS

FIZDALE FURY AFTER SPURS MAUL GRIZZLIES

LOS ANGELES: The Cleveland Cavaliers overcame a bout of fourth quarter jitters to take a grip of their NBA playoff series against the Indiana Pacers on Monday as San Antonio seized control of their duel with Memphis. Cleveland appeared to be coasting to victory after opening up an 18-point lead at the end of the third quarter at the Quicken Loans Arena. But the Cavs put the home fans through the ringer in a nervy finale as the Pacers punished a litany of mistakes to cut the gap to four points with 18 seconds remaining.

It mirrored a similar shaky finish in Game 1, when Indiana wiped out a 10-point fourth quarter lead before Cleveland ground out a win. They also blew a 26-point fourth quarter lead in a defeat to Atlanta earlier this month. But the NBA Champions just about held their nerve on Monday, eventually winning 117-111 thanks to a 37-point haul from Kyrie Irving as well as 27 points from Kevin Love and 25 from LeBron James. James was unfazed by the Pacers' fourth quarter fightback after the Cavs held on to take a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven series. Game 3 takes place in Memphis on Thursday.

"We're right there," said James, who also had

10 rebounds and seven assists. "We're right there of what we know we can become, and we'll figure it out." Cavs coach Tyrone Lue blamed fatigue for the high turnover count that allowed San Antonio to claw their way back into the contest in the fourth quarter. "I just saw turnovers," Lue said. "We've gotta take care of the basketball. We turned the ball over and it hurt us. Nineteen turnovers for 24 points. It's hard to win playoff games like that."

EVERYONE READY

The victory came at a cost for Cleveland however, with guard JR Smith limping off with a hamstring injury. However Smith's replacement, Iman Shumpert, impressed from the bench with five points. "We have so many pieces on this team, but everyone has to stay ready," Irving said of Shumpert's cameo.

"He had that mindset, came in and executed, and it's hard to come off the bench right after halftime. We just need Shumpert to stay focused and understand the task at hand and I think he did a good job of that tonight." In San Antonio, Memphis coach David Fizdale was left fuming after watching his team slide to a 96-82 loss

against the Spurs in their Western Conference showdown. Kawhi Leonard finished with 37 points as the Spurs took a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven series at AT&T Center.

But Fizdale unleashed a spectacular post-game tirade against the officiating crew, which is almost certain to bring disciplinary action from the league. Fizdale complained bitterly that officials had unfairly skewed the free throw count against his players. "It was a very poorly officiated basketball game," Fizdale fumed. "First half we had 19 shots in the paint and had six free throws. They shot 11 times in the paint and had 23 free throws."

"I'm not a numbers guy but that doesn't seem to add up. Overall we shot ball in the paint 35 times and we had 15 free throws - for the game. They shot 18 times and had 32 free throws. Explain it to me." Officials had shown "disrespect" to his team, Fizdale added. "I'm not going to let them treat us that way. That's unacceptable. That's unprofessional. My guys dug in that game and earned the right to be in that game and they did not even give us a chance," Fizdale told journalists. The series now moves to Memphis for Game 3 tomorrow. — AFP



SAKHIR: McLaren driver Fernando Alonso of Spain steers his car during the third practice session for the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix, at the Formula One Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir, Bahrain. — AP

KERR COMPILING AN IMPRESSIVE CAREER, ONE TROPHY AT A TIME

NEW YORK: Cristie Kerr always talked bigger than her game, and she might last long enough on the LPGA Tour to back it up. Nearly five months after knee surgery, and a recovery that took twice as long as expected, Kerr won the LPGA Lotte Championship in Hawaii last week in a manner that surprised everyone but her. She was on the wrong side of the cut 11 holes into her second round, ran off 21 birdies over the next 43 holes at Ko Olina, won by three shots and set the tournament's 72-hole record. She referred to the final round as an "epic day."

"I wasn't playing too well, and then I just found something and was able to turn it on and I just kept going," Kerr said. "Like, it was an unbelievable run." About the only thing that momentarily chilled her enthusiasm was a question related to her age. Kerr, who turns 40 in October, was asked what it was like to compete against so many players almost young enough to be her children. "You know what? Sergio Garcia just won the Masters, nobody talked about his age, so I think we need to stop talking about age over here, shall we?" she said. "Yeah. That's all I have to say about that."

And then she went on to say plenty. "Very few players are lucky enough like I am to have a career as long as I've had and be competitive as long as I've been competitive," Kerr said. "Having that experience and being competitive, it's an advantage." That's what makes her career so compelling. The

best players of Kerr's generation qualified for the points-based LPGA Hall of Fame much younger, and much quicker. Annika Sorenstam was inducted at age 33. Karrie Webb and Se Ri Pak were 30 at their inductions. Inbee Park qualified when she was 27.

Odds - and age - are against Kerr reaching the 27 points required for the LPGA Hall of Fame. Players get one point for an LPGA victory, Vare Trophy and Player of the Year award, and two points for a major. Her victory in Hawaii put her at 21 points. Kerr's hallmark has been remarkable consistency, a reliable putter and no shortage of self-belief. "She's a grinder," said Dottie Pepper, who has turned to broadcasting after her career was cut short by a shoulder injury. "And she's creeping up on some big numbers. There's nothing real flashy. You don't hear anyone say, 'Oh, I want to swing like her.' But they certainly want to putt like her."

Kerr won for the 19th time in an LPGA career that began 20 years ago. Only four players during that time have more victories - Sorenstam, Webb, Pak and Lorena Ochoa, who is headed for the World Golf Hall of Fame later this year. She joined the LPGA Tour right out of Sunset High School in Miami, and while it took her five years to get her first victory, she has steadily built an impressive career one trophy at a time. Kerr has never won more than three times in a season (in 2004 and 2006), but she

has gone only four seasons without winning since her first title. Kerr's two majors were memorable - she held off Ochoa to win the 2007 U.S. Women's Open, and she lapped the field by 12 shots to win the 2010 LPGA Championship. Her victory last week was worth \$300,000, making her a lock to finish in the top 50 on the LPGA Tour money list for the 19th consecutive year. It also was enough to push her over \$18 million for her career, No. 3 on the all-time list behind Sorenstam and Webb. But she has never been player of the year. She has never won a money title or the Vare Trophy for lowest scoring average. She just keeps going, compiling victories over a 16-year span and counting.

HALL OF FAME

Even if she doesn't get the 27 points for the LPGA version, the World Golf Hall of Fame has gone to a selection process voted on by a majority of golf administrators. This year's induction class includes Ochoa and Meg Mallon, who had 18 victories and four majors. "I've always thought about it," Kerr said. "I mean, I've come this far and I don't plan on quitting golf any time soon. Why not?" Kerr has come a long way from her teenage years on tour, with her big hair, Coke-bottle glasses and a confidence level that rubbed veterans the wrong way. She and her husband, Erik Stevens, have a 3-year-old son. — AP



BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently sponsored the Bowling Championship organized by the Civil Aviation Employees Syndicate's PR and the media office. In this regard, CBK's Corporate Credit General Manager Sahar Abdul Aziz Al-Rumaih said that this sponsorship comes as part of CBK's support for various NGO establishments, sports, cultural and social activities. The head of Civil Aviation Syndicate's PR and media office Mona Al-Bloushi expressed gratitude for CBK's sponsorship and praised the effective role it played in supporting various social activities.

'FED UP' REDKNAPP RETURNS AT BIRMINGHAM

LONDON: Veteran English manager Harry Redknapp said he had returned to football as the new boss of Championship strugglers Birmingham City yesterday because he was "fed up" with his time away from the sport. The 70-year-old former Tottenham Hotspur boss has replaced Gianfranco Zola, whose dismal four months in charge of second-tier Birmingham ended on Monday with the Italian declaring "I sacked myself".

Birmingham are now just three points above the relegation zone with three games remaining. Redknapp's most recent managerial post was with Jordan. He last worked in English football with Derby County as an advisor. Redknapp said his

initial appointment would be until the end of the season, although his time at St Andrews could be extended if he preserves Birmingham's Championship status. "I got fed up sitting around doing nothing," Redknapp told Talksport Radio yesterday. "I will come and live up here until the end of the season," added Redknapp, whose home is in Poole on England's south coast. "If I can keep them up then we can sit down and talk about going forward."

'ARE YOU MAD?'

Explaining how he got the Blues' job, Redknapp—who will be assisted at St Andrews by Steve Cotterill—said: "I got a phone call last (Monday) night from the

people at Birmingham. "I drove to London, had a meeting for 10 to 15 minutes, sat down and said 'Yeah, I will do it, no problem'. I got home and my wife said: 'Are you mad?'" Birmingham is a proper club. It is a good club. They are in a precarious position and we have got the worst goal difference as well.

"I've gone in there, said I will come and do it. The money I am not interested in." The 50-year-old Zola was a controversial appointment by the Midlands club's Chinese owners after they sacked Gary Rowett, who had Birmingham well placed to challenge for a place in the play-offs, in December.

However under former Italy interna-

tional Zola, the Birmingham suffered a dramatic slump in form that saw them manage just two wins in 22 matches. Redknapp's first game as Blues' boss is Saturday's Birmingham derby at Aston Villa. His last spell in the Championship saw Redknapp guide QPR to promotion. Redknapp has also managed two other London clubs in West Ham, for whom he played, and Tottenham. He has also been in charge of three south coast teams, starting his managerial career at Bournemouth and later twice taking charge of Portsmouth either side of an ill-fated stint at their bitter rivals Southampton.

It was with Portsmouth that Redknapp enjoyed arguably his greatest success

when they won the 2008 FA Cup. He also guided Pompey to the Championship title in 2003. Zola, speaking following Birmingham's home loss to Burton at St Andrews, said it had been his decision alone to cut short his two-and-a-half year contract. "I sacked myself," he explained. "I decided to give in my resignation. I am sorry because I came to Birmingham with huge expectations. Unfortunately the results have not been good and I take full responsibility. Zola, in his third management spell in England after stints at West Ham and Watford, added: "If I feel I cannot help the players, why stay? If I cannot help the team, it is better I leave and let someone else do that." — AFP

MAN UTD CAN END SEASON 'STRONGLY'

MANCHESTER: Manchester United can use Sunday's impressive performance against Premier League leaders Chelsea as inspiration to achieve a strong finish to the season, winger Ashley Young has said. Young captained United to their first league win over Chelsea since 2012 as they beat the London side 2-0 at Old Trafford to be at fifth in the table, four points behind fourth-placed Manchester City with a game in hand.

United host Anderlecht in the second

leg of the Europa League quarter-final on Thursday and Young is hopeful that they can beat the Belgian side and advance in their quest to book a spot in next season's Champions League. "We want to be pushing on. A lot has been said about how we want to finish fourth but... I want to finish higher than that," Young told British media. "Hopefully we have a (Europa League) semi-final coming up. If we can play like we did against Chelsea, then I am sure we can get through against Anderlecht and into the semi-finals."

England manager Gareth Southgate was present during Sunday's match but Young remains focused on performing for his club rather than hoping for a call-up to the national squad. "It is always an honor and maybe one day it (an England call-up) will happen again," Young said. "But I am just concentrating on Manchester United and wanting to play well here. It is down to the England manager." United travel to Burnley after the Anderlecht game before the Manchester derby on April 27. — Reuters



BANDUNG: This combo photograph created yesterday shows Bandung soccer club players Michael Essien (L) and Carlton Cole (R) during a Liga 1 football match at GBLA stadium in Bandung, West Java province on April 15, 2017. Michael Essien and Carlton Cole are facing problems in Indonesia after their new club admitted it had not obtained work permits for the ex-English Premier League players. — AFP

ESSIEN, COLE BANNED FROM PLAYING IN INDONESIA WITHOUT WORK PERMITS

BANDUNG: Indonesian authorities yesterday banned Michael Essien and Carlton Cole from playing until they get work permits after their new club did not obtain the necessary documents for the ex-English Premier League players. The two were signed with great fanfare last month by Persib Bandung, one of the country's best clubs, in a boost for Indonesian football as it seeks to bounce back from a FIFA suspension and launch a new league. But the government-backed Professional Sports Agency found the players did not have the required work permits. The club admitted they had not finished processing the paperwork for the pair before they made their debuts in the country's new top-flight Liga 1 at the weekend.

After calling in the players and Persib's management for questioning, immigration authorities said Tuesday the pair would not be able to play

until they obtained the permits. "Today we gave a strong warning to Persib in the form of a letter saying that as long as Persib had not completed the permits, which should be issued by the manpower ministry, we are banning Essien and Cole from playing," said Maulia Purnamawati, the immigration chief in Bandung, the city where the club is based. Persib said they would abide by the ban while working to get the permits. Joko Driyono, the secretary general of the country's football association, said they would help the club in obtaining the documents.

Persib said it had sought to process the paperwork a few days before the stars' first match on Saturday. The permits were not ready on time, but the football association and league organizer gave them permission to play. Driyono said the association had granted permission for Persib to field Essien and Cole over the weekend because the

process to get the permits was "not easy nor fast". Club manager Umuh Muchtar accused the sports agency, which reports to the government and monitors foreign players in the country, of going too far. "That they are here is a joy for us, they want to raise up Indonesia's name in the world," he said.

He added: "Everybody knows that Essien is a world-class player, not an illegal immigrant." Essien, who is Ghanaian, has played for Chelsea, AC Milan and Real Madrid. England's Cole has played for Chelsea and West Ham.

Liga 1 replaces an old top-level league, which was halted in 2015 due to a row between the government and Indonesian FA that triggered turmoil and led to the country being hit with a one-year ban by FIFA. The new league and big-name signings are a major boost for football in Southeast Asia's biggest nation, which has faced problems for years. — AFP



LONGEVILLE-LES-METZ: Metz' Luxemburg defender Chris Philipps (L) vies with Paris Saint-Germain's Italian midfielder Marco Verratti during the French L1 football match between Metz (FCM) and Paris (PSG) yesterday at Saint Symphorien stadium in Longeville-Les-Metz, eastern France. — AFP

MONTPELLIER OWNER BACKS OUT OF GLOUCESTER DEAL

LONDON: The owner of French club Montpellier said yesterday he was withdrawing from plans to invest in Premiership side Gloucester after English officials voted to restrict his stake to 20 percent.

Both England's Premiership Rugby Limited (PRL) and the Ligue Nationale de Rugby (LNR), which runs France's Top 14, expressed concerns about potential conflict of interest arising from Montpellier owner Mohamed Altrad also having a role in a rival European club. The Syria-born businessman wanted to take a 45 percent stake in Gloucester but the LNR set the limit at less than half that, a position endorsed by PRL. "Whilst this news is extremely disappointing for Gloucester Rugby Club and myself, rugby more generally is the biggest loser," Altrad said in a statement on Gloucester's website.

"Our vision was to support an English club, facilitate investment in junior and senior players as well as coaching staff and improve its training and playing facilities."

Altrad was adamant he had addressed the issue of conflict of interest and could not understand why rugby officials were not reassured by his plans. He added: "I

have still not received any substantive reasons why our safeguards were insufficient, beyond a sense of general discomfort with dual interests." Gloucester were one of England's leading clubs in the amateur era but have been under-achievers since rugby union turned professional.

Gloucester chairman Martin St Quinton said he was disappointed by the collapse of the Altrad plan but insisted the future for the club was still bright.

"After many months of work and negotiations, we are understandably disappointed that matters have concluded this way and we fully understand Mohamed Altrad's disappointment," he said. Gloucester are eighth in the 12-team Premiership and with no chance of qualifying for the title-deciding play-offs. Next season will see South Africa's Johan Ackermann, currently in charge of the Johannesburg-based Lions, take over as Gloucester head coach after Australian Laurie Fisher resigned last month.

Gloucester did however get through to the semi-finals of Europe's second-tier Challenge Cup, where they are away to France's La Rochelle in the last four on Saturday. — AFP

ALAVES BEAT VILLARREAL 2-1 IN SPANISH LEAGUE

MADRID: Alaves defeated Villarreal 2-1 to snap a three-game losing streak in the Spanish league. Alaves hadn't won in the league since March 18.

The Copa del Rey finalist remains 11th in the 20-team standings. Villarreal, coming off two consecutive victories, was trying to move within five points of fourth-placed Sevilla, which holds the final

Champions League spot. Ibai Gomez opened the scoring from the edge of the area in the 35th minute, and Rodrigo Ely added to the lead with a header in the 45th. Cedric Bakambu pulled Villarreal closer in the 70th and had a chance to equalize in the final minute of stoppage time but couldn't capitalize on a one-on-one situation. — AP

KVITOVA ENTERS FRENCH OPEN DRAW

PARIS: Two-times Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova has entered the draw for next month's French Open four months after suffering a serious hand injury, she said on Monday.

The 27-year-old was stabbed by a knife-wielding intruder in her home in the Czech Republic in December. "My name will appear on the entry list for Roland Garros tomorrow because I had made good progress in my recovery process and I want to give myself every last opportunity to be able to compete at one of my favourite events," Kvitova said on Instagram on Monday. "This unfortunately does not mean necessarily that I will be ready to play in Paris, but that I'm doing everything possible to give myself the chance and keep a positive mindset. There remains a long road ahead."

The hard-hitting left-hander rose to number two in the world rankings in 2011 when she won

the first of her two Wimbledon singles titles. She is now ranked 14th. The French Open starts on May 22. Meanwhile, Croatian Borna Coric claimed his first ATP title when he battled back to beat experienced German Philipp Kohlschreiber in the final of the Grand Prix Hassan II in Marrakech on Sunday. The 20-year-old, playing in only his second Tour final, won 5-7 7-6(3) 7-5 and saved four match points before sealing victory. Third seed Kohlschreiber looked on course for victory when he led by a set and 3-0 but Coric recovered to level the final on a tiebreak. Coric then clawed back a 2-4 deficit in the decider before claiming victory in two hours 38 minutes. It was a huge week for Coric who has suffered a marked loss of form and has slumped to 79 in the rankings having been tipped to challenge for major honours.

In Houston, American Steve Johnson literally

limped to a 6-4 4-6 7-5(5) victory over Brazilian Thomaz Bellucci in the final of the US Men's Clay Court Championship in Houston.

Johnson, suffering a cramp in his left leg, could hardly move at times late in the third set, hobbling on some points and not even chasing down balls on others. But the world number 29 prevailed in the final set tiebreak, clinching the win with a forehand groundstroke down the line for his second ATP victory.

Johnson said he was simply worn down after flying back from a Davis Cup tie in Australia earlier in the week. "My body has just physically run out of gas after this week," he said on the ATP website. "Coming in from Australia kind of put me behind the eight ball and then the nerves of trying to close out the final, a lot of factors go into cramping. I was very fortunate to get out of that." — Reuters



MONACO: Serbia's Novak Djokovic hits a return to French's Gilles Simon during the Monte-Carlo ATP Masters Series tournament yesterday in Monaco. — AFP

PROMOTED BRIGHTON IN FULL BLOOM

LONDON: Tony Bloom is a feared presence at any poker table but on Monday the biggest wager of this renowned gambler, the £200 million investment in Brighton, paid off with their promotion to the Premier League. The Seagulls have truly taken flight rising to a level that 20 years ago would have been deemed fantastical as they found themselves in dire straits like a character out of Charles Dickens novels, without a home and penniless. They only avoided relegation from the Football League on the last day of the 1996-97 season and were forced to play in Gillingham, 70 miles away from their home town, for the next two years after their old Goldstone Ground was sold to pay off debts.

However, having reached their nadir they wallowed in lower league mediocrity until Bloom came along in 2009, and with a wave of his cheque book he transformed the then League One club's fortunes on and off the pitch. Bloom, despite his reputation as a poker player, is also a keen businessman and bears strong ties to the club historically—his family were involved with Brighton dating back to the 1970s when his grandfather Harry was vice-chairman.

The property investor nicknamed the "Lizard" by a rival poker player used his money to engineer a state-of-the-art stadium just outside Brighton—roughly a 10-minute rail journey—and whose reputation is such that it hosted matches at the 2015 Rugby World Cup, including the epic Japanese win over two-time world champions South Africa. "I've been a football fan and a gambler since the age of about seven or eight. My interest in both developed at the same time," he explained at the time he invested. Monday's joy was all the more welcome given Bloom had experienced several near misses, none more so than last season when they lost out in heartbreaking fashion on the second and last automatic promotion place on goal difference.

'YOU HAVE GOT TO BE CLEVER'

For club chief executive Paul Barber promotion is a deserved reward for Bloom's massive outlay. "We are very lucky we have a very wealthy owner who has set aside money to give us an edge," Barber told a small group of journalists including AFP in February. "He has brought us a new ground (30,750 capacity Amex Stadium), training facilities and covered the losses. Even back in February, Barber said the club had already budgeted for promotion—as well as an alternative financial plan if they failed again. "If you start planning in May you will be in trouble," he said.

"We are working to get back in the black which would be for the first time in our history and give some money back to the owner," Barber, who came into football after a career in banking, admitted the odds of retaining their place will be difficult. "It is really tough to stay up and looking at the numbers now it will be very tough to stay there," said Barber. "It is possible to do both like Bournemouth last year and probably Burnley this season. "You have got to be clever and recruit really well whilst maintaining the togetherness and spirit of the previous squad." — AFP

INTER AIM TO BE ONE OF WORLD'S 'TOP 10 CLUBS'

MILAN: Inter Milan, currently enduring their fifth straight season without Champions League football, are determined to establish themselves as one of the world's top 10 clubs, vice president Javier Zanetti said in an interview. Zanetti, a former Inter captain who made a club record 858 appearances over 19 years, also said the club were committed to redeveloping the San Siro stadium along with neighbours and rivals AC Milan.

The Argentine played for Inter during one of their most successful spells, helping them win four successive Serie A titles and culminating in a league, cup and Champions League treble in 2010 under Jose Mourinho. Since then, Inter have entered a period of instability coinciding with a decline in Serie A, which has been unable to keep up financially with the Premier League or La Liga.

The club has changed ownership twice, most recently last June when it was sold to Chinese retail giant Suning Commerce Group, and it has employed nine coaches since Mourinho's departure. Currently seventh in Serie A, Inter are set to miss out on Champions League action again next term and have slumped to 44th in the UEFA club rankings, which are based on performances over five seasons. But Zanetti sees a better future. "We were winning for seven years in a row so it was perfectly natural that (would end), at a time when the ownership changed twice in three years," he said.

"Now we are at the stage of trying to build an important team ... where the club wants to be in the best 10 in the world. That is what we are working for but you can't do that overnight. You need time, a strategic plan." He said it was not just a case of the new owners trying to buy their way out of trouble. "You do it by building a team with good players but also with human values and with planning," he said. "If we also buy players in the future that will help...but we have to spend intelligently, choosing players who fit in with what we are looking for." "The first thing we are looking to do is get back into (the Champions League), where we feel at home." Rivals AC Milan's new Chinese owners have said they were planning to invest in a stadium. Zanetti said Inter would be happy to jointly renovate San Siro, possibly reducing its capacity to improve the atmosphere. "Inter has been ready with the project for more than one year," he said. "I hope that this situation can be resolved quickly." "San Siro is one of the most beautiful stadiums in the world and to remodel this stadium and bring new alternatives within the stadium would be a fundamental strategy for us," he added.

He said that Inter's fans could rest assured Suning would respect the club's traditions. "Suning has great respect for the identity and history of the club and for that reason we are working together to get Inter back to the big competitions," he said. Zanetti, who retired three seasons ago at the age of 40, said he was still learning the ropes in his new role. "For me it's a big challenge and I thank the owners who have shown me a lot of confidence and made me an important part of the club," he said. — Reuters



BRIGHTON: Brighton and Hove Albion fan celebrate their team's promotion on the pitch, following the EFL Championship match between Brighton and Wigan Athletics, at the AMEX Stadium, in Brighton, England, Monday April 17, 2017. Brighton will return to the topflight of English soccer for the first time in 34 years after securing promotion to the Premier League on Monday. — AP

SANCHEZ, OZIL STRIKE TO END ARSENAL AWAY WOES

	Middlesbrough	1
	Arsenal	2

MIDDLESBROUGH: Goals from Alexis Sanchez and Mesut Ozil ended Arsenal's run of four successive away defeats with a scratchy 2-1 victory over struggling Middlesbrough in their Premier League clash on Monday. The Gunners' performance was far from convincing but will still bring some relief to their beleaguered manager Arsene Wenger.

There was a period after Alvaro Negredo scored an equalizer when Middlesbrough, who have won only four league games this season, looked capable of going on to claim their fifth scalp. Arsenal are new seven points behind fourth-placed Manchester City with a game in hand, while Middlesbrough lie six points from safety and have also played one game fewer than most of the teams above them. "It (the top four) is mathematically still alive," Wenger told Sky Sports. "We knew we needed to win. Now we have a little break with the FA Cup (they play Manchester City on Sunday in the semi-final) and then we come back again to the league."

At least Arsenal's trip to Teesside began far more smoothly than their previous away game at Crystal Palace when they were caught in London traffic and arrived shortly before the kick-off.



MIDDLESBROUGH: Arsenal's Olivier Giroud (left) and Middlesbrough's Daniel Ayala battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match at the Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough on Monday April 17, 2017. — AP

They reached Middlesbrough's Riverside Stadium with plenty of time to spare, yet there was still a lack of direction on the pitch as they searched for a route to goal in the opening stages. Wenger had made the sort of selection decisions that he usually reserves for cup ties against teams from lower divisions. The French manager announced six changes from the team that lost 3-0 at Palace seven days earlier and, even more significantly, employed wing-backs alongside a defensive trio for the first time since 1997. His tactical alterations did not provide instant results,

although they did enjoy the bulk of the early possession and Olivier Giroud's claims for a penalty when he was felled by Daniel Ayala certainly had some merit. Arsenal's attacking difficulties were not unexpected because Middlesbrough went into the game after conceding only 37 goals—two fewer than Wenger's under-performing side.

DEADLOCK BROKEN

Marten de Roon headed past the Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech midway through the opening half, but was offside—Middlesbrough

were unimaginative and with 42 minutes gone, they were behind. A foul by Adam Clayton on the edge of the area was a gift for Sanchez, the Chilean star flighted his free-kick over the wall and inside the post. It was his 19th Premier League goal of the season and only three fewer than the entire Middlesbrough team going into this game, so it was a surprise that the home side suddenly looked capable of producing a response in the second half.

Middlesbrough were immediately on the front foot and leveled inside five minutes after Sanchez lost possession. The hosts broke quickly down the right through Stewart Downing, whose cross was missed by Laurent Koscielny before Negredo steered it past Cech. Suddenly, the game burst into life, with Downing heavily involved. The former England winger wasted an excellent opportunity when George Friend's cross was allowed to reach him at the far post, then the pair combined again to carve out a chance for Ayala.

Downing's cross was headed back towards goal by Friend and Ayala looked certain to score before he directed his header too close to Cech. Arsenal's response was impressive in the 63rd minute as Sanchez's through ball picked out Ozil, but goalkeeper Brad Guzan sensed the danger and did well to save at the feet of the German international. However, the outcome was different in their next confrontation eight minutes later. Sanchez was involved again with a cross that was chipped down by Aaron Ramsey, leaving Ozil with the chance to drill Arsenal back in front from close range. — AFP

FIVE REASONS WHY DORTMUND CAN WIN RETURN LEG IN MONACO

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund look to overturn their 3-2 home defeat against Monaco in today's Champions League quarter-final return leg away to the French League leaders. Here are five reasons to believe embattled Dortmund can turn things around at Monaco's Stade Louis II stadium:

REUS' RETURN

Marco Reus is back from injury and the Germany winger will give Dortmund a substantial boost. Reus is mentally fresh, having not been on the team bus hit by three explosions last Tuesday, en route to the first-leg, which left Marc Bartra needing wrist surgery and his Dortmund team-mates shell-shocked. The match was eventually replayed on Wednesday, 24 hours after the blast, with Reus left out as he finished recovering from a hamstring injury.

Last Saturday, Reus marked his return after six weeks on the sidelines with an audacious backheel after 122 seconds in their 3-1 win over Eintracht Frankfurt. Borussia coach Thomas Tuchel played Reus for 45 minutes to build his fitness with one eye on Monaco. "With Marco on the pitch, all other players have a different attitude and more self-confidence," said Tuchel. Reus will be looking to resume his partnership with Dortmund's top-scorer Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang which has yielded 10 Champions League goals this season. Aubameyang, who has scored 33 goals this season, will have a point to prove at Monaco, where he spent an unsuccessful loan spell in 2010/11.

THE BARTRA FACTOR

The Dortmund squad received a timely boost when Bartra left hospital on Saturday. The Spanish defender posted "proud to be part of this family! #NoWords" on Instagram alongside a picture of the squad holding aloft his number five shirt when they celebrated after Saturday's win. Dortmund will be playing for their injured team-mate in Monaco. While recovering at home, Bartra received a visit from his ex-Barcelona team-mates Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba on Monday. Busquets knows all about second-leg shock comebacks having played in Barcelona's astonishing 6-1 win over Paris Saint-Germain to win their Last 16 clash 6-

5 on aggregate. Dortmund's single goal deficit is dwarfed by the 4-0 first-leg defeat in Paris which Barca managed to overcome.

STRONG SOKRATIS

Dortmund defender Sokratis Papastathopoulos was a pillar of strength at the back against Frankfurt, blasting home their second goal from 25 metres out, which he dedicated to 'Bartra and his family'. The burly Greece centre-back made 17 tackles, launched a string of counter-attacks and won 76 percent of his challenges on Saturday. He needs to again be on his game to contain Monaco's attack spear-headed by strikers Kylian Mbappe and captain Radamel Falcao, but said Saturday's win was a morale booster for today.

VOCAL AWAY SUPPORT

Monaco's Stade Louis II has a 18,523 capacity, but 3,000 noisy Dortmund supporters are expected to make their presence felt to try and create a home-ground atmosphere for the visiting team. A cordial atmosphere is expected between the supporters after Borussia fans offered beds to stranded Monaco supporters in Dortmund last week under the Twitter hashtag #Bedforawayfans. Dortmund have only lost three of their 12 European away fixtures since the start of the season, but Monaco have won five of their six home Champions League games this season.

THIRD-TIME LUCKY

Dortmund are attempting to become only the third club to have lost the first-leg at home in the Champions League's knock-out phase and still progressed. Ajax managed it in 1995/96 when they came back from a 1-0 defeat in Amsterdam to win 3-0 at Panathinaikos in Athens in the semi-finals. And Inter Milan also did it at Bayern Munich, who won the last 16 first-leg 1-0 in Italy, but lost the return 3-2 in Bavaria. Monaco have won all 12 of their European matches when they were victorious in the first-leg and Dortmund want to make it unlucky 13. In Monaco, Slovenia's Damir Skomina will referee and Dortmund have won all three Champions League games when he has been in charge, including their 2-1 group stage win at Sporting Lisbon in October. — AFP



SANT JOAN DESPI: FC Barcelona's goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen saves a ball during a training session at the Sports Center FC Barcelona Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi, Spain yesterday. FC Barcelona will play against Juventus in a Champions League quarter-final, second-leg soccer match today. — AP

BARCA IN TRICKY POSITION TO PRODUCE ANOTHER COMEBACK

MADRID: Things have changed since Barcelona's historic comeback against Paris Saint-Germain in the last round of the Champions League. When Barcelona routed PSG 6-1 to reverse a 4-0 first-leg deficit in the last 16, its confidence was high from winning four games in a row and outscoring opponents 15-3 before that second leg against PSG. This time, it has to overcome a 3-0 first-leg loss against Juventus in the quarterfinals today.

But without the boost of a winning streak, Barcelona has lost three of its seven games since that spectacular victory over PSG at the Camp Nou. From leading the Spanish league by one point before beating PSG, Barcelona has dropped to second, three points behind, and hasn't been playing well. It lost at Malaga 2-0 before the defeat to Juventus in Turin, and had to claw its way past Real Sociedad 3-2 at the weekend.

While it's struggling somewhat, Barcelona believes it can repeat history. "Every game in the Champions League is difficult," said Neymar,

who led Barcelona with two goals and two assists in the historic win over PSG last month. "But we are the same team and we can repeat that. We have to give everything we have. We believe that we can come back again." A contribution from Lionel Messi would be helpful, too. He's scored a pair in three of his last five games. He netted twice each against Valencia, Sevilla, and Real Sociedad, but failed to score in the losses to Malaga and Juventus.

Juventus pays no mind to Messi's middling form. "These guys are like sharks," Juventus defender Giorgio Chiellini said of Messi and Co. "If you show a sign of nerves, they smell the blood and finish you off. "Instead, you have to push them back as far as you can, double up when they are in possession and shut down the lines between defense and midfield." If Messi scores twice against Juventus, he will reach his 500th goal in official matches with Barcelona. He would be the first player to reach that mark with the club. Messi has played 575 games since making his debut for Barcelona in 2004. — AP

Sports

Yankees romp
to eighth
consecutive win



Promoted
Brighton
in full Bloom



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MADRID: Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, center, and Bayern's Xabi Alonso, bottom, vie for the ball during the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Real Madrid and Bayern Munich at Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Spain, yesterday. — AP

RONALDO HAT-TRICK FIRES REAL INTO SEMIS

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo scored a hat-trick to become the first man to reach 100 Champions League goals as Real Madrid overcame 10-man Bayern Munich 4-2 after extra time in yesterday's quarter-final second leg to advance 6-3 on aggregate.

The holders will be in Friday's semi-final draw for a record seventh consecutive year. But they were pushed all the way by Bayern, who overcame a 2-1 first-leg deficit to send the tie into extra time thanks to Robert Lewandowski's penalty and an own goal from Sergio Ramos.

However, after Arturo Vidal was sent off, Ronaldo hit the century mark in Europe's top club competition on 105 minutes before then completing his hat-trick. And Marco Asensio gave a night of high-class action the finale it deserved with a sensational solo goal to rub salt in Bayern wounds. The German champions had been beaten on their previous four trips to Spain without even scoring a goal.

However, knowing they needed at least two to progress, Carlo Ancelotti's men started on the front foot and were left to rue a huge opportunity just eight minutes in.

Marcelo made a miraculous block to deny Thiago Alcantara before former Real winger Arjen Robben scuffed into the side-netting on his trusted left foot. Much like the first leg six days ago though, Madrid weathered the early storm and had plenty of chances to go in front before half-time. Manuel Neuer's fingertips turned Dani Carvajal's drive behind. Jerome Boateng then bailed out a rare mistake from his goalkeeper as he cleared off the line from Ramos after Neuer had fumbled a simple cross. The half-time whistle brought some respite to proceedings on the field, although the Bayern fans were involved in a minor clash with local police at the break. Security was tight at the Santiago Bernabeu in the wake of an attack on the Borussia Dortmund team bus ahead of their quarter-final first leg with Monaco last week.

LEWANDOWSKI STRIKES

The disturbances quickly died down and Bayern soon gave the travelling 4,000 from Germany something to cheer when play resumed. Another goal-line clearance by Marcelo from Robben's dinked effort temporarily saved Madrid.

But the hosts didn't escape moments later when Viktor Kassai pointed to the spot as Robben went down under a challenge from Casemiro. Lewandowski stayed cool under the pressure and converted from the spot for his 39th goal of the season.

Vidal was inches away from the second away goal Bayern needed as he acrobatically volleyed over before Keylor Navas dived low to his right to deny Franck Ribery. Ronaldo looked to have eased Madrid's nerves when he steered Casemiro's cross into the far corner 14 minutes from time.

However, Real's celebrations were very short-lived as just two minutes later the ball ricocheted around their

box and Ramos turned into his own net. The balance of a topsy-turvy tie turned Madrid's way again with five minutes remaining as just as in the first leg, Bayern were reduced to 10 men when Vidal saw a second yellow card for chopping down Asensio. The extra man proved decisive as Madrid settled the tie with a three-goal burst in seven minutes either side of half-time in extra time. Ronaldo took advantage at not being flagged for offside as he controlled and fired low past Neuer to become the first man to reach a Champions League century. Five minutes into the second period of extra time he had Marcelo to thank for a brilliant run and unselfish pass that allowed the Portuguese the simplest of finishes to complete his hat-trick.

And Asensio sealed victory in sensational style with a stunning solo run and low right-footed finish as many Bayern players sank to their knees knowing Champions League glory had passed them by for another year.— AFP

VARDY'S GOAL IN VAIN AS ATLETICO MADRID END LEICESTER FAIRYTALE

LEICESTER: Jamie Vardy scored in vain as Leicester City's Champions League fairytale came to a valiant end following a 1-1 quarter-final draw at home to Atletico Madrid yesterday. Seeking to overturn a 1-0 first-leg deficit, Leicester fell further behind to Saul Niguez's first-half header, before Vardy's 61st-minute strike gave them hope.

But despite heavy Leicester pressure and furious noise inside the King Power Stadium, Atletico completed a 2-1 aggregate win to reach the semi-finals for the third time in four seasons.

Leicester had hoped to become the competition's first debutant semi-finalists since Villarreal in 2006, but they were unable to engineer a repeat of their last-16 triumph against Sevilla.

Their exit brings to an end a golden adventure sparked by last season's stunning Premier League title win. Having successfully staved off the threat of relegation under new manager Craig Shakespeare, the rest of their season now holds nothing more than a return to pre-title normality.

It is the third time Atletico have eliminated Leicester from continental competition, after previous triumphs in the 1961-62 European Cup Winners' Cup and the 1997-98 UEFA Cup.

Beaten by city foes Real Madrid in the 2014 and 2016 finals, Diego Simeone's side can continue to dream that this will be the year they finally end their wait for European football's biggest prize.

Leicester's desire to make the most of the occasion was clear from the start, pyrotechnic bursts greeting the players as they emerged while fans twirled blue, white

and gold foil flags distributed by the club.

But whereas Leicester had quickly taken charge of their second-leg match against Sevilla in the previous round, Atletico made it clear they would not be pushed around like their compatriots.

SHAKESPEARE SWITCH

They defended with their customary tenacity, while two dangerous crosses from Yannick Carrasco-preferred up front to the fit-again Kevin Gameiro-demonstrated their threat on the counter.

It was just as Leicester were threatening to make inroads, Shinji Okazaki stabbing wide at the near post from Vardy's cross, that the visitors tightened their grip on the tie.

Filipe Luis was given space to shape a cross into the box from the left and the unmarked Saul expertly guided a header past Kasper Schmeichel's outstretched right hand and into the bottom-left corner.

Riyad Mahrez volleyed straight at Jan Oblak at the other end after Marc Albrighton's cross was headed away, but it was the voices of the away fans that rang loudest as the half-time whistle sounded.

The second half brought with it drastic changes for the hosts, with Ben Chilwell and Leonardo Ulloa replacing Yohan Benalouane and Okazaki as Shakespeare switched to a bold 3-4-3 system.

Antoine Griezmann gave them a scare with an early dart into the box, but Atletico soon found themselves on the back foot.

After Chilwell had thrashed over, Leicester levelled, Vardy slamming in from inside the six-yard box after



LEICESTER: Atletico Madrid's Spanish midfielder Saul Niguez (2L) prepares to head the ball and score his team's first goal during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second leg football match between Leicester City and Club Atletico de Madrid at the King Power stadium in Leicester yesterday. — AFP

Chilwell's shot had been charged down by Stefan Savic. The final half-hour was one-way traffic, but Atletico repelled everything Leicester threw at them.

Ulloa and Vardy both had shots blocked, while Vardy's flick was caught by Oblak and Mahrez

whipped a free-kick narrowly over the bar. Leicester captain Wes Morgan, passed fit to play after six games out with a back problem, succumbed to injury late on, symbolically hobbling off as Leicester's European dream faded away.— AFP

Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary BUSINESS

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Kuwait's corporate earnings remain soft in 2016

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GE to supply power generation equipment for Kuwait Sabiya plant

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New Mercedes-Benz E-Class Coupe

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STOCKS DIP AS N KOREA, FRANCE KEEP INVESTORS ON EDGE

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RABAT: Ministers of Economy and Finance of the Arab countries attend the opening of the annual joint meetings of Arab financial institutions in Rabat yesterday. The two-day financial meetings bring together many organizations to network on social and economic development, as well as decide on major investment issues for the coming year. — AP

IMF WARNS OF RISKS TO GLOBAL RECOVERY

EUROZONE GROWTH FORECAST UP BUT BREXIT DAMPENS OUTLOOK

WASHINGTON: The global economic recovery is improving and picking up steam, but still faces a series of threats that could erode the improvements, especially the rise of protectionist rhetoric, the International Monetary Fund warned yesterday. The fund's semi-annual World Economic Outlook report revised global growth up to 3.5 percent for this year, one-tenth higher than the January forecast. It was a rare upward revision to the growth forecast—the first in two years—which has been consistently disappointing. For 2018, growth is expected to rise to 3.6 percent, and to 3.8 percent by 2022. "The global economy seems to be gaining momentum—we could be at a turning point. But even as things look up, the post-World War II system of international economic relations is under severe strain," IMF chief economist Maurice Obstfeld said. The report warns of the "significant downside risks" to the outlook, which have gotten worse since January—among them, "the turn towards protectionism, leading to trade warfare," Obstfeld said in the foreword of the report.

Many of the concerns—including rolling back financial regulation, pulling away from the multilateral trading system and restricting immigration—are centerpieces of US President Donald Trump's policy program, but also are issues visible in the bitter French election campaign, as well as in Britain's planned exit from the European Union. The anti-trade, anti-immigration attitude in advanced economies is to some degree understandable, given "the failure of growth gains in rich economies to substantially

reach those in the lower parts of the income distribution in recent decades," he said. However, Obstfeld warned: "Capitulating to those pressures would result in a self-inflicted wound," which would harm countries by pushing prices higher and eroding household income, prompt retaliation, and worsen the global economy."

Initiatives for jobless

In its report, the Washington-based IMF said "hundreds of millions" of people were lifted out of poverty through economic integration and technological progress, "helping to reduce global income inequality." But Obstfeld said the benefits of growth and the burden of economic adjustments too often have been unequally shared, so it will be up to the governments to "address these disparities head-on to ensure the stability of an open, collaborative trading system that benefits all." The IMF recommends "well-targeted initiatives" to help workers adversely affected by free trade and other economic changes to "find jobs in expanding sectors" as well as "social safety nets to smooth the loss of income," and improved education and training in the longer term.

"Similarly, curbing immigration flows would hinder opportunities for skill specialization in advanced economies, limiting a positive force for productivity and income growth over the long term," the report said.



WASHINGTON: In this April 16, 2016 file photo, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde speaks during a news conference after the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) conference at the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings at IMF headquarters in Washington. — AP

Downside risks

The IMF warned that the eurozone economic outlook was clouded by Brexit and election uncertainties, with growth expected to be only modest overall. In its latest World Economic Outlook report, the IMF said growth this year in the 19-nation eurozone

would be 1.7 percent, up 0.1 percentage point from its January estimate but unchanged from the 2016 performance.

For 2018, the IMF said eurozone growth will slow slightly to 1.6 percent, in line with its previous forecast. "The euro area recovery is expected to proceed at a broadly similar pace in 2017-18 as in 2016," it said.

"The modest recovery is projected to be supported by a mildly expansionary fiscal stance, accommodative financial conditions, a weaker euro, and beneficial spillovers from a likely US fiscal stimulus," it said. However, "political uncertainty as elections approach in several countries, coupled with uncertainty about the European Union's future relationship with the United Kingdom, is expected to weigh on activity."

British Prime Minister Theresa May announced earlier Tuesday she would call snap elections on June 8 to clear the decks for Brexit as her Conservative Party rides high in the opinion polls.

May formally triggered the two-year Brexit divorce process on March 29, with both sides promising to do their best to reach a fair settlement. But she has made clear repeatedly that she would walk away rather than accept a bad deal and the negotiations are expected to be difficult and politically challenging. Meanwhile, France holds presidential polls shortly, with far-right and anti-EU candidate Marine Le Pen among the front-runners. Germany, Europe's biggest economy and the EU's paymaster, goes to the polls in September. — AFP

TEHRAN HELPS PLANEMAKERS SOLVE 'ORPHAN JET' PROBLEM

PARIS: Iran's return to the world economy is helping planemakers cope with a downturn in global demand, providing homes for airplanes orphaned by reversals in the growth plans of airlines elsewhere. Planemakers are also gambling that the early delivery of such aircraft could help prop up a nuclear sanctions deal between Iran and world powers, threatened by conservative opponents in both Washington and Tehran, Western sources said.

Since sanctions were lifted under the deal to reopen trade and curb Iran's nuclear projects, the Islamic Republic, trying to boost its economy after years of isolation, has joined a waiting list of up to eight years for 200 new aircraft. But efforts to meet its most immediate needs have been boosted by financial problems facing other airlines across the globe as new airplanes come onto the market at bargain prices.

"We hunt opportunities in the market. If there are opportunities, we can take advantage of that," Deputy Roads and Urban Development Minister Asghar Fakhrieh-Kashan told Reuters. Despite denials by manufacturers that the downturn is hurting, Iran's return to the market has brought to light pockets of surplus aircraft. With presidential elections looming in May and keen to show the 2015 nuclear deal is working, Iran has proved only too keen to take up the slack.

So far it has taken delivery of three Airbus jets. Industry executives say they were left on the plane-maker's books when their Colombian buyer,

Avianca, balked at taking delivery. Such orphan planes are often known as 'white tails'.

New deals

Last week, Iran also signed a deal for 20 ATR turboprops. Unusually in a risk-averse industry with high costs, four of those are already built and ready to be delivered: short-circuiting their usual 18 months' waiting time.

Although it denies they are white tails, ATR took the rare decision to build them for IranAir before the final contract was signed. Analysts say that too is a signal of market weakness as manufacturers wrestle with weakness in developing economies.

Turkish swap

The sudden reshuffling suits both sides as Iranian President Hassan Rouhani tries to demonstrate results from the nuclear deal, opposed by hardline candidates in May elections. It also holds up a mirror to geopolitical changes in the region, played out in the fortunes of national carriers.

While Iran's aviation industry is coming out of decades of cold storage as sanctions are lifted, Turkey has seen a slump in travel demand after a failed coup and attacks in major cities. Now, Turkish Airlines is having doubts about taking one of the industry's key growth engines, a 350-seat Boeing 777-300ER.

Uncertainty over next month's scheduled delivery contrasts with Iran's urgent need for the same

model, the first of which is due to be delivered to Tehran in April or May next year. At Boeing's suggestion, Iranian representatives are now inspecting the Turkish configuration to see whether the airlines could swap deliveries, Fakhrieh-Kashan confirmed. Boeing declined to comment.

Iran has ordered 15 777-300ERs as part of a deal for 80 Boeing jets. They are crucial to Boeing's efforts to steady declining 777 production, pending the arrival of a new model.

Bringing forward Boeing's first delivery to Iran since the 1970s could also provide broader momentum to the sanctions pact, hampered by funding problems and uncertainty about the attitude of US President Donald Trump who has said he dislikes it. Since all planemakers need US export licenses due to the number of US parts in their planes, any decision to block the Boeing deals would likely halt European activities in Iran too.

"It helps to bring Boeing to the same table as everyone else," said a senior European industry executive, referring to the talks to swap Turkish and Iranian deliveries.

Iranian officials have however been forced to defend the reshuffling from suggestions that Iran is getting cast-off airplanes. They stress the Avianca jets, for example, had been sitting unused for two years and had never flown commercially. "It is good for Airbus and Boeing, but this is part of the game that everyone knows," Fakhrieh-Kashan told Reuters. — Reuters

US HOUSING STARTS DROP, BUT BUILDING PERMITS RISE

WASHINGTON: US homebuilding fell more than expected in March as the construction of single-family homes in the Midwest recorded its biggest decline in three years, but an increase in building permits suggested the housing market recovery remained intact. Housing starts decreased 6.8 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.22 million units, the Commerce Department said yesterday.

February's starts were revised up to a 1.30 million-unit pace from the previously reported 1.29 million-rate. Economists had forecast groundbreaking activity falling to a 1.25 million-unit pace last month. Homebuilding was up 9.2 percent compared to March 2016. The dollar held at lower levels against a basket of currencies after the data, while prices for US government bonds were little changed. US stock futures were lower.

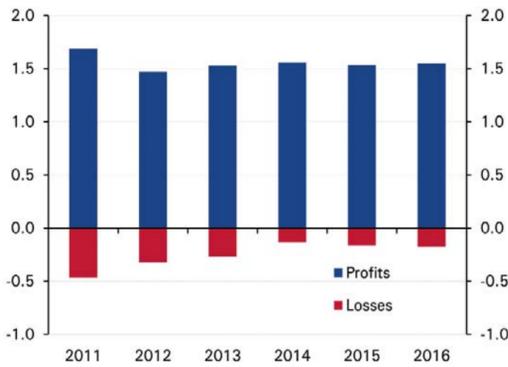
Unseasonably warm temperatures buoyed homebuilding in February, but temperatures dropped in March, with a storm lashing the Northeast and Midwest regions. Bad weather could have accounted for some of the drop in homebuilding last month. Single-family homebuilding, which makes up the largest share of the residential housing market, fell 6.2 percent to an

821,000 unit pace last month, retreating from a near 9-1/2-year high. Single-family starts in the Midwest declined 35 percent, the largest drop since January 2014, to their lowest level since August 2015. Single-family starts in the Northeast were unchanged. They rose 3.2 percent in the South, but fell 5.5 percent in the West. Last month, starts for the volatile multi-family housing segment dropped 7.9 percent to a 394,000 unit pace. Pointing to underlying strength in the housing market, building permits increased 3.6 percent, driven by a 13.8 percent surge in the multi-family segment.

While single-family permits fell 1.1 percent last month, they were not too far from the more than nine-year high reached in February. A tightening labor market, which is generating steady wage growth is underpinning the housing market. The sector, however, remains constrained by a dearth of properties available for sale. Builders have failed to bridge the gap, citing a range of problems including shortages of labor and land as well as rising material prices. A survey on Monday showed homebuilders confidence slipped in April from a near 12-year high in March. Still, measures of current sales and sales expectations remained at lofty levels. — Reuters

Chart 1: Profits and losses

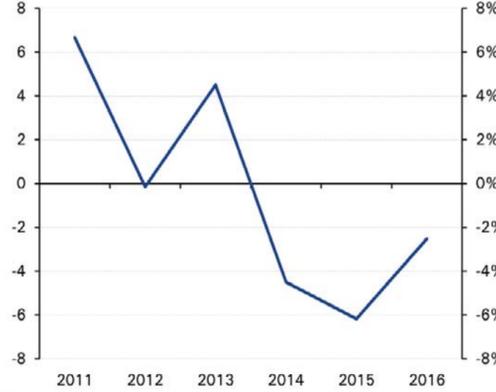
(KD billion)



Source: Boursa Kuwait

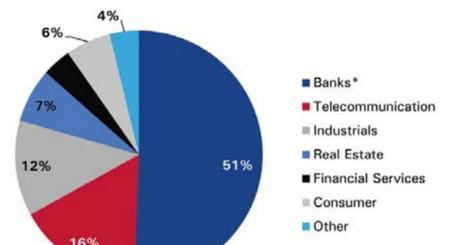
Chart 3: Total revenues

(% y/y)



Source: Thomson Reuters Eikon, *Sample of companies

Chart 4: Profits by sector



Source: Boursa Kuwait

KUWAIT'S CORPORATE EARNINGS REMAIN SOFT IN 2016

KUWAIT: The financial results of Kuwait exchange-listed companies for 2016 reflected the softness seen in business activity especially in the first half of the year. The corporate sector has felt the heat of the current low oil price environment with signs of weakness more prevalent in real estate, consumer and non-bank financial sectors. Profit announcements may have weighed on Kuwaiti equities in recent weeks, especially after a remarkable start to the year.

Earnings of listed corporates were flat on the year. The aggregate profits of 155 reporting companies, out of a total of 168 Kuwaiti companies listed on Boursa Kuwait, totaled KD 1.5 billion, up a mere 0.6 percent year-on-year (y/y). There was a rise in reported losses, which reached KD 173 million, up 5.5 percent y/y, though the number of loss-making companies dropped. However, earnings improved during the second half of the year on an overall pick-up in sentiment brought about by a rebound in oil prices.

Low oil prices have taken a toll on the performance of corporates as the operating environment proved more challenging. Since oil price took a downturn in 2014, the revenues of a sample of 92 companies dropped. In 2016, revenues of these companies totaled KD 7.6 billion, down 2.5 percent y/y. However, business activity should be on track to recover as

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

non-oil growth is expected to pick up slightly in 2017 driven by investment and government capital spending.

The industrial sector was the main contributor to profit growth in 2016. Profits for this sector were KD 181 million, up 49 percent y/y. The increase in profits was primarily due to a reversal in a large loss incurred in 2015 by one of the companies. Results were mixed among other companies within the sector.

Banks also helped offset declines at other sectors. Bank profits totaled KD 733 million, up 5.5 percent y/y. Most banks contributed to profit growth in the sector with only two banks seeing declines in bottom lines. The gains came primarily on the back of a decline in provisions and moderate growth in net interest income.

Real estate companies accounted for most of the weakness in profits, with sector earnings down by 28 percent y/y. The decline was broad-based; over half of the sector saw profits down on the year and 11 companies reported losses compared to nine in 2015. Indeed, low oil prices have hurt the real estate market in Kuwait, with 2015 and 2016 seeing a sharp decline in activity and a notable price correc-

tion. The value of sales was reduced by a quarter in 2016, while NBK's real estate price indices were off by 6-13 percent y/y during the year, though they now appear to be stabilizing.

Confidence indicators

Consumer companies also weighed on corporate profit growth as sector earnings dropped 27 percent y/y. While a big loss at one of the companies was primarily behind the drop, more than half of the companies in the sector saw a decline in profits compared to 2015. The decline in the consumer sector's profitability serves as a further confirmation of a normalizing sector as seen in other data such as consumer spending, imports of consumer goods, confidence indicators and household debt.

Non-bank financial companies were also a main contributor to the overall weakness. Sector profits retreated by 33 percent y/y and again weakness was prevalent across the sector with 14 companies reporting losses and more than 40 percent seeing declines in profits compared to 2015. The poor performance of GCC equities earlier in 2016 appeared to weigh on the portfolios of investment companies.

Table: Profits by sector

(KD million)

	Net profits		Growth % y/y
	2015	2016	
Banks*	694	733	5.5%
Basic Materials	20	21	1.4%
Consumer Goods	67	69	1.9%
Consumer Services	50	17	-65.2%
Financial Services	82	55	-33.3%
Healthcare	1	11	775.0%
Industrials	121	181	49.3%
Insurance	35	25	-29.5%
Oil & Gas	6	-6	-199.4%
Real Estate	142	103	-27.8%
Technology	4	5	24.6%
Telecommunications	218	238	9.0%
Total	1,441	1,450	0.6%

Source: Boursa Kuwait

* Adjusted for NBK's consolidation of Boubyan Bank.

Also, low volumes in the local bourse likely weighed on the sector's commission income.

Profit announcements may have put some downward pressure on equity prices. Boursa Kuwait saw a strong rally in January with the

value-weighted index advancing 12.4 percent on the month. Reported earnings didn't seem to support the rally and the index gave up some of its gains to end the quarter up 9.3 percent.

EU ACCESS VITAL FOR HEALTHY COMPETITION: UK WATCHDOG

WATCHDOG ASKS FOR MORE MONEY TO PAY BREXIT WORK COSTS

LONDON: Access to markets and workers in the European Union after Britain leaves the bloc is essential for maintaining healthy competition in financial services and avoiding disruption, the UK's markets watchdog said yesterday.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) set out the key principles for advising the government on EU withdrawal negotiations in its annual business plan for next year, with handling uncertainties surrounding Brexit a top priority. "Open markets are an important enabler of healthy competition, supporting FCA objectives," the watchdog said. The regulator said the ability to recruit a diverse workforce would also help to ensure that markets and firms are

well run and remain competitive - a nod to concerns at banks that they may no longer be able to recruit freely from EU countries in future.

FCA Chief Executive Andrew Bailey said the watchdog's Brexit contingency plans included the possibility of no EU market access, but noted that the government was looking to negotiate for keeping markets open in a free trade agreement. Some firms are already looking to move operations in case no market access is negotiated. "I start from the principle that firms, on the whole, don't want to move operations. We ought to set up a system of open markets where firms make these choices, not regulators and governments," Bailey told reporters. The

FCA said Britain should seek to have a say over the rules it applies. Regulators have said they do not want Britain to become a "rule taker" in order to obtain EU market access, meaning they must match the bloc's standards with equivalent rules. Bailey, however, said he expected financial market access to be based on such a "regulatory equivalence" system, rather than on adherence to global principles, which he would prefer. Consistent global regulatory standards and cooperation between national authorities will also be "fundamental regardless of the outcomes of the negotiations", the FCA said.

As future market access remains unclear, some firms have already decided to build up operations in the EU rather than risk disruption to established customer links. "This lack of clarity will potentially lead to a period of prolonged uncertainty for markets, firms and consumers," the FCA said. The watchdog, funded by levies on the firms it supervises, said its total requirement for the financial year starting this month was 526.9 million pounds (\$663 million), up 1.5 percent or 7.6 million pounds on the previous year.

The increase is partly due to 2.5 million pounds extra needed to handle Brexit, the watchdog said. The costs will cover the "lift and shift" work of converting EU financial law into workable UK rules, Bailey said. The FCA also published its new "Mission", a 36-page document that resets the regulator's core objectives as Bailey seeks to draw a line under a string of mis-selling scandals spanning more than two decades. It seeks to strike a balance between demands from the 56,000 firms it supervises and finite resources, saying that protecting the most vulnerable customers would be a priority rather than trying to avoid "zero" firm failures. — Reuters



In this Sept 13, 2016 photo, a selection of Johnson & Johnson brand first aid products are shown in Surfside, Florida. — AP

JOHNSON & JOHNSON TOPS Q1 PROFIT FORECASTS, BUT NET DIPS

NEW YORK: Johnson & Johnson's first-quarter profit dipped due to slightly higher spending and a bigger tax bill, but the health care giant gave a rosier financial forecast for the year.

The world's biggest maker of health care products cited its pending \$30 billion purchase of biopharmaceutical company Actelion for the raised forecast. It also benefited from several smaller acquisitions and from the restructuring of its medical device segment, which started in early 2016.

The New Brunswick, New Jersey-based company yesterday reported net income of \$4.42 billion, or \$1.61 per share, down from \$4.46 billion, or \$1.59 per share, a year earlier.

Earnings, adjusted for one-time costs, came to \$1.83 per share, topping Wall Street expectations for earnings of \$1.77 per share. Revenue totaled \$17.77 billion in

the period, which missed Street forecasts for \$18.01 billion. International sales jumped 2.8 percent to \$8.4 billion, while US sales edged up 0.6 percent to \$9.4 billion.

In an interview, Chief Financial Officer Dominic Caruso said revenue was crimped by slower growth in many consumer health product categories and by payers demanding bigger rebates off the prices of prescription drugs in categories with many competing medicines, particularly cardiovascular, diabetes and other primary care drugs.

"The diabetes market is very price sensitive, and (net) prices have been declining for some time," Caruso noted. As a result, J&J is exploring the sale of its diabetes care businesses, which make test strips and insulin pumps, but will continue selling lucrative diabetes pill Invokana. — AP

IMF FORECASTS MODEST PICKUP IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA GROWTH

JOHANNESBURG: The International Monetary Fund yesterday forecast 2.6 percent growth in sub-Saharan Africa this year, aided by a modest recovery in large economies South Africa, Nigeria and Angola.

"Growth is projected to rise to 2.6 percent in 2017 and 3.5 percent in 2018, largely driven by specific factors in the largest economies, which faced challenging macroeconomic conditions in 2016," the IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook report.

A slump in commodity price in 2016 and devastating drought had affected growth in several countries in the region, resulting in 1.4 percent growth of gross domestic product

(GDP). Nigeria, the continent's most populous nation and a leading oil producer, was expected to return to growth in 2017 after a challenging 2016 characterized by recession, a dip in oil prices and energy shortages.

"Output in Nigeria is projected to grow by 0.8 percent in 2017 as a result of a recovery in oil production," said the report, also citing sustained growth in the agricultural sector.

South Africa, which was hit by slow growth in 2016 was expected to register a slight improvement of 0.8 percent, up from 0.3 percent in 2016, as the impact of devastating drought was beginning to recede and electricity capacity improved. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.806
Indian Rupees	4.737
Pakistani Rupees	2.916
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.010
Nepali Rupees	2.966
Singapore Dollar	219.530
Hongkong Dollar	39.325
Bangladesh Taka	3.750
Philippine Peso	6.161
Thai Baht	8.809

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.574
Qatari Riyal	84.018
Omani Riyal	794.439
Bahraini Dinar	812.280
UAE Dirham	83.286

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.400
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.830
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.228
Tunisian Dinar	133.490
Jordanian Dinar	430.810
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.038
Syrian Lira	2.180
Morocco Dirham	30.817

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	305.700
Euro	326.950
Sterling Pound	386.400
Canadian dollar	230.200
Turkish lira	83.100

Swiss Franc	306.160
Australian Dollar	232.640
US Dollar Buying	304.500

GOLD	
20 Gram	262.690
10 Gram	134.270
5 Gram	67.980

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.350
Canadian Dolla	229.875
Sterling Pound	385.255
Euro	326.577
Swiss Frank	308.180
Bahrain Dinar	809.890
UAE Dirhams	83.530
Qatari Riyals	84.755
Saudi Riyals	82.320
Jordanian Dinar	430.575
Egyptian Pound	17.009
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.011
Indian Rupees	4.733
Pakistani Rupees	2.912
Bangladesh Taka	3.800
Philippines Pesto	6.155
Cyprus pound	168.510
Japanese Yen	3.800
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.955
Malaysian Ringgit	70.150

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.760
Thai Bhat	9.865
Turkish Lira	82.700

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.377324	0.387324
Czech Korune	0.004192	0.016192
Danish Krone	0.039671	0.044671
Euro	0.319764	0.328764
Norwegian Krone	0.031687	0.036887
Romanian Leu	0.084722	0.084722
Slovakia	0.009160	0.019160
Swedish Krona	0.029909	0.034909
Swiss Franc	0.297694	0.308694
Turkish Lira	0.077533	0.087833
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.223526	0.235526
New Zealand Dollar	0.207897	0.217397
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.232988	0.232988
Georgina Lari	0.138072	0.138072
US Dollars	0.301600	0.306000
US Dollars Mint	0.302100	0.306000
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003427	0.004011
Chinese Yuan	0.042864	0.046384
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037329	0.040079
Indian Rupee	0.004282	0.004970

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002722	0.002902
Kenyan Shilling	0.003044	0.003044
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065476	0.071476
Nepalese Rupee	0.002713	0.003003
Pakistan Rupee	0.002713	0.003003
Philippine Peso	0.006083	0.006383
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.213294	0.223294
South African Rand	0.017012	0.025512
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001540	0.002220
Taiwan	0.009787	0.009957
Thai Baht	0.008537	0.009087
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.804304	0.812804
Egyptian Pound	0.014387	0.020295
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000196	0.000256
Jordanian Dinar	0.425813	0.434813
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.00257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020105	0.044105
Nigerian Naira	0.001267	0.001902
Omani Riyal	0.787605	0.793285
Qatar Riyal	0.083157	0.084607
Saudi Riyal	0.080433	0.081733
Syrian Pound	0.001295	0.001518
Tunisian Dinar	0.128625	0.136625
Turkish Lira	0.077533	0.087833
UAE Dirhams	0.081761	0.083451
Yemeni Riyal	0.000994	0.001074

BANNED AT SEA: VENEZUELA'S CRUDE-STAINED OIL TANKERS

HOUSTON/PUNTO FIJO, Venezuela: In the scorching heat of the Caribbean Sea, workers in scuba suits scrub crude oil by hand from the hull of the Caspian Galaxy, a tanker so filthy it can't set sail in international waters. The vessel is among many that are constantly contaminated at two major export terminals where they load crude from Venezuela's state-run oil company, PDVSA. The water here has an oily sheen from leaks in the rusty pipelines under the surface.

That means the tankers have to be

cleaned before traveling to many foreign ports, which won't admit crude-stained ships for fear of environmental damage to their harbors, port facilities or other vessels.

The laborious hand-cleaning operation is one of many causes of chronic delays for dozens of tankers that deliver Venezuela's principle export to customers worldwide, according to three executives of the state-run firm, eight employees of maritime firms that contract with PDVSA and Thomson Reuters vessel-tracking data. Other reasons include

delayed repairs and impoundments by service providers that are owed money by cash-strapped PDVSA. Neither PDVSA nor Venezuela's Oil Ministry responded to requests for comment about the firm's maritime operations.

The tankers sidelined for cleaning provide a vivid example of the firm's downward spiral: Lacking the cash to properly maintain ships, refineries and production operations - or to pay business partners on time - PDVSA can't boost exports, which is its only option for

raising more cash. The lagging exports crimp the flow of cash back to the country's crippled socialist economy, as citizens struggle daily amid soaring inflation and shortages of food and medicine.

Because Venezuela relies on oil for more than 90 percent of export revenues, the problems of its state-run oil company pose a national crisis. Venezuela's crude exports declined 8 percent to 1.69 million barrels per day (bpd) in the first quarter versus the same period in 2016, according to Thomson

Reuters data. When oil prices were high, crude and fuel exports almost entirely financed an elaborate system of government price controls and social subsidies that maintained the popularity of late President Hugo Chavez, the socialist firebrand.

Although embattled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro insists the government has maintained social programs, he has publicly acknowledged that lower oil prices have left the government with less money to finance them. — Reuters



NEW YORK: This file photo taken on August 20, 2013 shows a Bank of America branch in New York's Times Square. — AFP

BANK OF AMERICA PROFITS JUMP, HELPED BY RATES

NEW YORK: Bank of America's first quarter profits grew nearly 40 percent, the bank said yesterday, helped by higher interest rates as well as a strong performance in its investment banking division.

The Charlotte, North Carolina-based consumer banking giant reported net income of \$4.86 billion, compared with \$3.47 billion in the same period a year earlier. On a per-share basis, Bank of America earned 41 cents per share, beating the 35 cents that analysts were looking for. "The US economy continues to show consumer and business optimism, and our results reflect that," BofA's CEO Brian Moynihan said in a prepared statement.

Like its major competitors, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and Wells Fargo, Bank of America benefited from higher interest rates. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates once in December and again in March, which has allowed the big retail banks to charge more

for their loans. The bank said it had net interest income of \$11.06 billion, compared with \$10.49 billion in the same period a year earlier.

The bank expects that if interest rates continue to move higher, Bank of America could see its net interest income grow by \$3.3 billion over the next 12 months. Bank of America's investment and trading divisions, which includes Merrill Lynch, also had a strong quarter, in line with the bank's competitors. Global investment banking had net income of \$1.73 billion compared with \$1.09 billion in the same period a year earlier. Revenue from trading rose to \$3.9 billion from \$3.4 billion.

Overall, Bank of America had revenue of \$22.49 billion compared with \$20.79 billion in the same period a year earlier. The bank was able to keep its expenses flat as well, at \$14.84 billion, which helped bolster the bank's bottom line. Bank of America shares were up 0.7 percent in pre-market trading at \$22.87. — AP

GOLDMAN SACHS' PROFITS MISS FORECASTS IN Q1

NEW YORK: Goldman Sachs had a rare miss in its first quarter results, the bank said yesterday, as its typically best-in-class trading desks did not perform as well as its competitors. The bank's stock to fall in pre-market trading. The New York-based investment bank earned \$2.16 billion compared with \$1.2 billion in the same period a year earlier. On a per-share basis, Goldman Sachs earned \$5.15 a share versus \$2.68 a share in the same period a year earlier. But Goldman's results were well below the \$5.31 a share expected by analysts, according to FactSet.

In a statement, Goldman Sachs Chairman and CEO Lloyd Blankfein called the quarter "mixed" and that client activity was "challenged." Unlike its competitors, Goldman's trading desks struggled in the first quarter. The bank's trading division had net revenue of \$3.36 billion in the first quarter, down 2 percent from a year earlier and down 7 percent from the fourth quarter. Trading revenues in bonds, currencies and

commodities was effectively flat in quarter while trading revenues for stocks were down 6 percent from a year earlier.

The hit to Goldman's trading in the first quarter is a rare misstep for a bank known to have some of the best traders on Wall Street. JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and Bank of America's trading divisions all reported increases in trading last quarter.

Goldman's investment banking business grew profits in the quarter, but its growth was not all the different from its competition. Investment banking net revenue was \$1.7 billion in the quarter, up 16 percent from a year earlier. Underwriting revenue rose 37 percent from a year earlier. Firm wide, the bank's had net revenue of \$8.03 billion compared with \$6.34 billion in the same period a year earlier. That also missed analysts' expectations of \$8.37 billion. Shares of Goldman Sachs sank 3 percent in pre-market trading to \$219.99. — AP



CANTON: A technician uses a lift to move a back seat section into a new Altima on the assembly line at the Nissan Canton Vehicle Assembly Plant in Canton, Miss. — AP

US INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION UP 0.5% IN MARCH

WASHINGTON: US industrial production posted a solid gain in March, reflecting a record rebound in utility output. But a closely watched gauge of manufacturing posted its first setback in seven months as auto production dropped sharply.

The Federal Reserve said Tuesday that industrial production rose 0.5 percent, propelled by an 8.6 percent surge in utility output, the largest on records dating to 1939. The utility gain reflected a return to normal demand for heating in March after an unusually warm February had cut demand.

Manufacturing output fell 0.4 percent last month, the first decline since August. The manufacturing decline was led by a 3 percent drop in the production of motor vehicles and parts. Output in the mining sector was up a slight 0.1 percent after a 2.9 percent February gain. Industrial produc-

tion, which covers manufacturing, utilities and mining, had produced a scant 0.1 percent increase in February. Output in February was held back by the sharp drop in utility production. Last month's decline in factory production was a setback to what has been a rising trend over the past six months as factories recovered from a prolonged period of weakness. The weakness reflected a strong dollar, which cut into exports of American companies, and a drop in oil production, which caused cutbacks in investment by energy companies.

The 3 percent fall in auto output followed a 1.1 percent rise in February and a 1 percent drop in January. The rough patch for manufacturing lasted from late 2015 through the middle of 2016. Sharply lower oil prices forced reductions in sales of drilling equipment, such as steel pipe. — AP

GE TO SUPPLY POWER GENERATION EQUIPMENT FOR KUWAIT PLANT

ADDITIONAL ENERGY TO MEET NEEDS OF 100,000 KUWAITI HOUSEHOLDS

KUWAIT: GE will supply a steam turbine generator set and two heat recovery steam generators (HRSG), along with associated engineering and other services for the Kuwaiti Ministry of Electricity's Sabiya Power Plant. The equipment will allow the conversion of the plant from simple-cycle to combined-cycle configuration, helping it to generate more than 260 megawatts (MW) of extra power without the use of additional fuel. This is enough additional power to meet the average energy needs of more than 100,000 Kuwaiti households.

GE has proven strength in steam turbines, with a portfolio that helps ensure that site-specific, operational, steam cycle and application needs are met. The heat recovery steam generators (HRSG) will be shipped from Korea and are expected to arrive in Kuwait by Q3 2018. They will be installed and operated on the backend of non-GE F-class gas turbines

currently operational at the facility. The HRSG units are being manufactured at GE's facilities acquired from Doosan. GE announced the acquisition of Doosan Engineering & Construction's HRSG business in August 2016. The acquisition is helping GE Power meet the growing demand for its combined-cycle power plant solutions.

"GE is committed to driving power sector efficiency across Kuwait and helping the Ministry of Electricity meet the increasing demand for power for domestic, industrial and municipal use," said Ghassan Barghout, President & CEO of GE's Gas Power Systems - Sales, for the Middle East & North Africa. "By adding out non-GE legacy systems at the facility, our steam tail technology will help enhance output and lower both the life cycle costs, as well as the emissions generated per megawatt of electricity produced at the Sabiya Power Plant."

Today's agreement builds on GE's strong legacy of successful projects in Kuwait. GE technologies deliver over a third of Kuwait's power today and the company employs more than 250 people in the country (direct and indirect).

GE's investments in Kuwait include the GE Kuwait Technology Center, that serves three core areas for customers across the Middle East and Africa: training, tooling and engineering.

GE (NYSE: GE) is the world's Digital Industrial Company, transforming industry with software-defined machines and solutions that are connected, responsive and predictive. GE is organized around a global exchange of knowledge, the "GE Store," through which each business shares and accesses the same technology, markets, structure and intellect. Each invention further fuels innovation and application across our industrial sectors.



SHANGHAI: Citroen carmaker CEO Linda Jackson speaks next to a Citroen C5 Aircross concept car during an event ahead of the 17th Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

CHINA OUTBOUND DIRECT INVESTMENT SLUMPS 30.1%

BEIJING: China's non-financial outbound direct investment (ODI) slumped 30.1 percent in March from a year earlier as authorities kept a tight grip on capital outflows to help support the yuan currency and safeguard the country's foreign exchange reserves. Non-financial ODI totalled \$7.11 billion last month, Commerce Ministry data showed yesterday. For the first three months of this year, non-financial ODI tumbled 48.8 percent to \$20.54 billion from the same period last year.

Outbound investment in countries involved China's "One Belt one Road" infrastructure initiative was \$2.95 billion in the first quarter, or 14.4 percent of the total, the ministry said. Non-financial ODI tumbled 52.8 percent in January-February from the

same period last year, with amounts in the property and entertainment sectors down over 80 percent.

Dealmakers have said many Chinese firms are unable to close deals because they cannot secure official permission to transfer yuan into foreign exchange. Merger and acquisitions involving Asian companies fell 39 percent in the first quarter of 2017 to \$176 billion, the lowest level in nearly three years and highlighting a sharp pull back in overseas deals by Chinese firms, Thomson Reuters data showed. Banks' advisory fees have taken a heavy hit as a result.

The ministry did not give the latest figures on China's outbound property investment, but said funds mainly flowed to manufacturing, business

services, software and information technology services, with manufacturing accounting for 24.7 percent of the total.

China tightened its grip on moving funds out of the country late last year as the yuan plumbed more than eight-year lows. The currency has steadied so far this year, thanks to the capital curbs and a retreat in the surging US dollar. While Beijing says it supports legitimate overseas investment, regulators have warned they would pay close attention to "irrational" investment in property, entertainment, sports and other sectors. Earlier data showed foreign direct investment into China rose 1 percent to 226.51 billion yuan (\$32.91 billion) in the first quarter from a year earlier. — Reuters

INDIA'S TCS RECORDS FOURTH QUARTER PROFIT

MUMBAI: India's biggest IT sourcing firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) reported a 4.2 percent increase in quarterly earnings yesterday, just missing analysts' estimates. The software giant said net profit for the three months to March 31 rose to 66.08 billion rupees (\$1.02 billion) from 63.40 billion rupees for the same period last year.

It was the first quarterly earnings reported under its new chief executive Rajesh Gopinathan, who was appointed in February this year after Tata Group ousted former chairman Cyrus Mistry amid a legal tussle. On Monday, TCS had approved a 160 billion rupee (\$2.4 billion) share repurchase to improve returns for shareholders, Bloomberg reported. The buyback had a direct impact as TCS' shares jumped 6.1 percent on Mumbai's stock exchanges.

"2016-17 was a year of broad-based growth amid economic and political turbulence in our key markets. We added \$1.4 billion in constant currency revenues during the year," Gopinathan said in a statement.

The company's digital business grew 29 percent annually to \$3 billion, he added. TCS shares had fallen by nearly a percent in the closing hours of trade. A Bloomberg survey of analysts had forecast the Mumbai-based company to increase its earnings to 66.54 billion rupees. — AFP

WIN UP TO 30 KILOS OF GOLD IN 18 DAYS AT MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS

KUWAIT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the leading jewellery retailer unfurled the details of its much awaited campaign to celebrate this festive season. This campaign will run at all Malabar Gold & Diamonds outlets in Middle East & Far East from 19th April 2017 to 6th May, 2017. The customers get unprecedented opportunities to win a total of 30 kilos of gold. A true shopper's delight, Malabar Gold & Diamonds will captivate the customers by exhibiting eye catching designs in gold, diamonds, platinum and precious gems from different parts of the world to flaunt any occasion or event and are well priced too.

With every purchase of gold & diamond jewellery worth KD 40, customers get a chance to enter raffle draws to win 1/2 (Half) kg of gold each in 2 raffle draws. Adding to the above, customers also get two gram gold coin on diamond jewellery purchase of KD 400 and a one gram gold coin on purchase of diamond jewellery worth KD 250. Also, customers can protect the gold rate at Malabar Gold & Diamonds on payment of 10% of the entire amount on the selected gold jewellery until 28th April 2017. All these offers will be valid at their outlets in Kuwait until 6 May 2017.

To add more glitter to this season, they have



also unveiled the latest collection of jewellery in gold, diamonds and precious gems to suit the tastes of their multicultural and multinational customers. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has incorporated these designs as a part of various brands presented at Malabar Gold & Diamonds' namely Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Divine - Indian Heritage Jewellery, Precia - Precious Gem Jewellery and Starlet - Kids jewellery.

STOCKS DIP AS N KOREA, FRANCE KEEP INVESTORS ON EDGE

LONDON: Shares and the dollar fell yesterday as a snap general election call in Britain added to a lengthening list of uncertainties for investors already on edge over tensions simmering from North Korea to France. Wall Street also looked likely to open marginally lower, index futures showed, after stocks weakened in Europe and Asia.

Sterling rose nearly 1 percent against the dollar and UK shares hit 1 1/2-month lows after British Prime Minister Theresa May called an early parliamentary election for June 8. Speaking outside her Downing Street office, May said she had decided "with reluctance" that an election was needed to secure political unity and stability as Britain negotiates its way out of the European Union. The pound rose as high as \$1.2678,

reflecting relief that rumors she might resign proved unfounded. It last traded at \$1.2673, up 0.8 percent on the day. The FTSE 100 stocks index, already falling on its first trading day since the Easter break, fell further and was last down 1.8 percent, at its lowest since late February.

"I guess people see that this may give Theresa May a better majority. It is a politically astute move and it should provide more stability going over the immediate aftermath of the exit from the EU," said Simon Derrick, head of global market research at Bank of New York Mellon in London.

With market activity reduced in the past week due to Easter holidays, investors have focused on political factors that also include Syria and US relations with Russia and China.

European shares fell yesterday. The pan-European STOXX 600 index, which hit 16-month highs last week, was down 0.9 percent, led lower by a 3 percent fall in the basic resources sector as commodity prices dropped. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan slipped by 0.7 percent, while Tokyo's Nikkei closed up 0.4 percent on earlier yen weakness.

The dollar declined 0.3 percent against a basket of major currencies. It earlier lifted off five-month lows versus the yen after US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told the Financial Times that a strong dollar was a positive in the long term, while agreeing with US President Donald Trump that it hurt exports in the short term. The greenback traded at 108.76 yen, down

0.1 percent on the day, while the euro was up 0.4 percent at \$1.0681.

French foreboding

Investor nervousness ahead of Sunday's French election made itself felt in currency and debt markets. French 10-year government bond yields initially rose while ultra-safe German equivalents dipped, taking the gap between the two close to six-week highs. But French yields later fell while German yields edged up and the spread with Germany narrowed to its tightest in a week after an opinion poll put centrist Emmanuel Macron first in the first round of voting, just ahead of far-right, anti-euro candidate Marine Le Pen, with a bigger gap to far-left representative Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

The cost of hedging against big moves in the euro against both the dollar and the yen over the next month jumped on Monday to their highest levels since Britain's vote in June 2016 to leave the European Union. "Every poll that is coming out now is being scrutinized closely," said

DZ Bank strategist Christian Lenk. "Nevertheless, markets remain very nervous ahead of Sunday."

Implied volatility in the STOXX 600 index hit its highest since early November 2016. Turkey's lira rose against the dollar after Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan rejected Western criticism of a referendum in which he won sweeping new powers. "The markets are taking this initial result as positive insofar the buck now stops with one person and in theory political noise should come down," Greg Saichin, CIO emerging markets fixed income at Allianz Global Investors said. He added that the next battleground would be Turkey's 2019 election.

Oil prices fell after a US government report indicated US shale production was rising. Brent, the international benchmark crude, fell 41 cents a barrel to \$54.95.

Copper was down 0.8 percent at \$55,650 a ton. Gold was marginally higher on the day at \$1,285 an ounce, having touched a five-month high of \$1,295 on Monday, the day after a failed North Korean ballistic missile launch. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Tuesday 18 April 2017

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
Price Index	▼ -34.89	6,884.73	6,919.62	6,932.48	6,852.02
Weighted Index	▼ -1.36	413.58	414.94	415.95	411.03
KSX 15	▼ -4.17	937.91	942.08	944.83	929.52

Volume	311,688,972
Value (KWD)	27,213,912
Number of Trades	5,675

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
MARIN	60	60	52500	3,150	4	60 ▲ 0.0
IPG	430	430	12,872	5,535	1	430 ▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	1,220	1,220	500	610	1	1,220 ▲ 0.0
ENERGYH	50	45.5	6,333,752	290,394	156	45.5 ▼ -2.5
GPI	48.0	47.0	3,311,016	155,807	81	47.5 ▼ -0.5
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89 ▲ 0.0
Oil & Gas			9,710,640	456,495	243	982.52 ▲ -3.45

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
KFOUC	305	300	50,602	15,306	9	300 ▼ -10.0
BPCC	580	570	70,000	40,100	3	580 ▲ 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700 ▲ 0.0
ALQURAIN	345	335	903,560	307,199	29	340 ▲ 0.0
Basic Materials			1,024,162	362,605	41	1315.85 ▲ -8.76

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
SOKOUK	54	50	12,566,083	655,123	170	53 ▲ 2.0
KRE	68	63	8,432,864	541,483	85	66 ▲ 0.0
URC	100	100	20	2	1	100 ▼ -2.0
NRE	102	100	3,632,200	365,834	55	102 ▲ 0.0
SRE	380	375	51,000	19,255	6	380 ▲ 5.0
TAM	430	430	10	4	1	430 ▲ 5.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170 ▲ 0.0
MASSALEH	65	57	11,139,467	669,975	220	58 ▼ -4.0
ARABREC	39.0	36.5	5,230,669	195,501	137	37.5 ▼ -1.5
ERESCO	45.5	44.5	2,473,957	110,852	58	45.0 ▼ -1.0
MABANEE	820	810	79,314	64,964	7	810 ▲ 0.0
INJAZZAT	90	90	20,000	1,800	1	90 ▼ -3.0
INVESTORS	28.0	27.0	20,828,590	576,925	139	27.5 ▼ -0.5
IRC	38.0	36.5	89,300	3,310	8	37.5 ▲ 0.0
ALTJARIA	79	77	137,083	10,557	5	78 ▲ 0.0
SANAM	55	52	20,015	1,041	3	55 ▼ -2.0
AAYANRE	87	85	475,228	40,799	13	87 ▲ 0.0
AOAR	82	82	10,000	820	1	82 ▲ 0.0
ALAQARIA	48.5	46.5	10,735,526	509,263	123	48.5 ▲ 2.0
MAZAYA	120	118	410,400	48,428	28	120 ▲ 0.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0 ▲ 0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90 ▲ 0.0
TJARA	62	57	90,010	5,206	5	62 ▲ 2.0
TAAMEER	47.5	45.0	12,785,665	586,559	293	45.0 ▼ -2.5
ARKAN	84	83	110,000	9,140	4	84 ▲ 0.0
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180 ▲ 0.0
ABYAR	29.5	27.5	13,949,580	394,582	155	28.0 ▼ -1.0
MUNSHAAT	66	60	13,017,356	815,995	192	61 ▼ -3.0
FIRSTDUBAI	62	58	1,225,995	73,096	47	60 ▼ -1.0
KBT	56	54	1,305,300	71,662	23	56 ▲ 0.0
REAM	275	275	14,600	4,015	2	275 ▼ -25.0
MENA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0 ▲ 0.0
ALMUDON	47.0	44.5	4,120,963	188,087	80	44.5 ▼ -2.5
MARAKEZ	58	49	537,125	27,069	29	51 ▼ -2.0
REMAL	79	74	25,186,890	1,959,704	227	74 ▼ -5.0
AWJ	93	89	2,273,992	206,970	68	90 ▲ 0.0
Real Estate			151,049,190	8,158,021	2,188	1018.30 ▲ -13.11

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	520 ▲ 0.0
CABLE	470	465	40,327	18,879	8	465 ▲ 0.0
SHIP	226	220	23,344	5,156	3	226 ▲ 6.0
PCEM	980	980	2,100	2,058	2	980 ▼ -10.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	445 ▲ 0.0
MRC	78	73	10,005	730	2	78 ▲ 0.0
ACICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290 ▲ 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208 ▲ 0.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	146 ▲ 0.0
NICBM	214	200	102	20	2	214 ▼ -2.0
EQUIPMENT	60	56	2,703,378	158,634	78	56 ▼ -2.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	91 ▲ 0.0
GYPSSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95 ▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	69	68	237,000	16,290	10	69 ▲ 0.0
AGLTY	650	620	1,370,777	871,048	70	630 ▼ -20.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	285 ▲ 0.0
CLEANING	52	50	473,271	24,340	18	52 ▲ 1.0
KGL	64	63	320,541	20,442	15	63 ▲ 0.0
KCPC	170	170	3,000	510	1	170 ▲ 2.0
HUMANSOFT	3,400	3,380	32,543	110,645	8	3,380 ▲ 80.0
NAFAIS	170	170	2	0	1	170 ▲ 10.0
GFC	63	59	52,100	3,155	8	63 ▲ 1.0
MAYADEEN	30.5	29.0	2,250,305	66,829	40	29.5 ▼ -0.5
CGC	540	510	1,415,820	745,404	94	540 ▲ 30.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56 ▲ 0.0
UPAC	760	760	2	2	1	760 ▲ 40.0
ALAFCO	255	255	1,300	332	1	255 ▲ 5.0
MUBARRAD	81	81	237,600	19,246	14	81 ▲ 0.0
LOGISTICS	71	70	274,600	19,222	19	71 ▲ 1.0
SCEM	90	90	2,097,091	188,738	28	90 ▲ 0.0
GCEM	88	87	1,386,220	120,612	27	87 ▲ 0.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80 ▲ 0.0
FCEM	91	91	300,000	27,300	3	91 ▲ 1.0
RKWC	99	99	1,100	109	1	99 ▲ 2.0
SPEC	90	88	776,866	68,946	33	89 ▼ -2.0
Industrials			14,018,394	2,488,646	487	1749.49 ▲ 20.98

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	188 ▲ 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.5 ▲ 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	104 ▲ 0.0
CATTL	214	214	1,000	214	1	214 ▲ 8.0
DANAH	92	90	1,426,500	128,986	51	90 ▲ 0.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,460 ▲ 0.0
Consumer Goods			1,427,590	129,200	52	1130.19 ▲ 3.72

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
MHC	335	335	4	1	1	335 ▼ -50
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100 ▲ 0.0
YIACO	210	190	60,150	11,943	12	192 ▼ -8
Health Care			60,154	11,944	13	1386.82 ▲ -116.47

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
KCIN	1,500	1,480	1,100	1,630	2	1,500 ▲ 80
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250 ▲ 0.0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67 ▲ 0.0
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	22.5 ▲ 0.0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400 ▲ 0.0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192 ▲ 0.0
OULFAJEL	128	124	208,088	26,585	16	128 ▲ 2
MUNTAZAHAT	86	85	272,267	23,143	4	86 ▲ 0.0
JAZEERA	570	560	58,170	33,007	7	570 ▲ 0.0
SOOR	130	124	133,966	16,903	15	130 ▲ 2
FUTUREKID	120	120	50,000	6,000	1	120 ▼ -4
ALRAI	176	174	20,842	3,627	5	176 ▲ 0.0
ZIMAH	59	56	1,623,000	93,839	37	58 ▼ -1
Mezzan	1,020	990	346,272	350,687	10	1,000 ▼ -20
Consumer Services			2,713,085	555,432	97	944.88 ▲ 3.68

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
ZAIN	465	450	4,466,028	2,044,208	77	455 ▼ -10
OOREDOO	1,220	1,160	10,514	12,728	4	1,220 ▲ 0.0
HITSTELEC	49.0	47.0	4,203,269	204,167	70	48.5 ▲ 0.0
VIVA	870	850	86,005	57,146	38	860 ▼ -30
Telecommunications			8,745,816	2,318,247	189	644.47 ▲ -12.87

Chevrolet Alghanim Wins their 12th GM GrandMasters Title “Best-of-The-Best” Award from General Motors



Group picture of General Motors and Chevrolet Alghanim Team



Samir Kasem, Alghanim Industries' Chief Operating Officer delivering his speech

General Motors awarded Chevrolet Alghanim the most prestigious “best-of-the-best” GrandMasters award, in recognition of the outstanding performance accomplished in 2016. Chevrolet Alghanim, won this award for 12 years from among all the GM dealers in the region.

The GrandMasters Awarding ceremony took place at The Regency Hotel on Wednesday, April 12, 2017 with the presence of senior management of General Motors, Alghanim Industries and Chevrolet Alghanim team, who contributed the most to this outstanding

achievement honored the ceremony with their presence.

The Grandmasters Award is considered to be one of the world's most prestigious and highly acclaimed awards created by General Motors that acknowledges companies for their excellent progress on sales, customer satisfaction, car delivery as well as distinctive performance and quality levels of after-sales service and service delivery throughout its service centers on par with global standards.

Achieving this award indicates that Chevrolet Alghanim exemplifies excellence to win one of the most important global awards granted by General Motors to its dealers around the world who achieved the highest rates of sales, services and customer satisfaction. Chevrolet Alghanim has proven excellency in spite of the strict guidelines that General Motors take into account when evaluating their dealers and distributors' performance.

During the ceremony, Mr. Mario

Spangenberg congratulated Chevrolet Alghanim for winning this prestigious award 12 times out of 14 years that GrandMasters was held globally. Spangenberg talked about the strong partnership of General Motors and Chevrolet Alghanim, and highlighted the key pillars of success which contributed to this great achievement.

In his turn, Mr. Samir Kasem, Alghanim Industries' Chief Operating Officer started his speech by thanking the company's esteemed partners at General Motors for their solid partnership that allowed Chevrolet Alghanim to achieve its many successes year after year during its successful partnership over the past 70 years. Mr. Kasem also called attention to Chevrolet Alghanim team remarkable efforts that lead to the achievement of the “best-of-the-best” award for the 12th time.

Subsequent to the speeches, all the top performers from Chevrolet Alghanim were handed awards for their



Mario Spangenberg, the President of GM Middle East and North Africa delivering his speech

achievements in categories involving sales, after sales, and support functions. Following the award ceremony a photo session was held where the companies top executives, management, and their team had a photo opportunity to capture this memorable Event.

This honorary achievement confirms Chevrolet Alghanim steadfast commitment toward quality as well as highlights the solid bond it shares with General Motors and their promise to always provide the best service, products and quality for every customer.



Kasem hands an appreciation trophy to Spangenberg from General Motors



General Motors and Chevrolet Alghanim's audience



THE NEW MERCEDES-BENZ E-CLASS COUPE

LUXURY MEETS ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE AND TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGY

KUWAIT: With its expressive coupe-esque proportions, clear and sensual design and long-distance comfort for four people, the new Mercedes-Benz E-Class Coupe combines the beauty and classic virtues of a grand tourer with state-of-the-art technology. It also offers the groundbreaking intelligence of the E-Class family with Apple CarPlay smartphone integration, Widescreen Cockpit and the latest driver assistance systems with the option of, among other things, partially automated driving. Powerful engines with low exhaust emissions and comfortable suspensions with selective damping guarantee a sporty and agile driving experience.

Following in the steps of the world's most intelligent executive sedan, the newest member of the successful E-Class family is an exciting addition. "It takes an elaborate feat of engineering to uphold two hallmarks of the E-Class Coupe: its unmatched style and extraordinary strength. And the view from outside is no less enticing, with an undeniably athletic profile and chiseled physique that expresses confidence. The E-Class Coupe embodies passion that you can see and beauty that you can feel," said Lennart Mueller-Teut, Head of Marketing & Communications, Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East.

The E-Class Coupe marks a new step in the evolution of the Mercedes-Benz design philosophy by fusing the charm and technological superiority of the sedan with a sportier and sleeker profile. With its flawless proportions, the new Coupe exhibits a puristic, surface-accentuated design with reduced lines and sensual forms.

The vehicle's Coupe design is characterised by a distinctive front end with low-positioned sports grille and central star, a long bonnet with powerdomes, a rearward-shifted, squat greenhouse and a muscular rear end.

World premiere: welcome feature of tail lamp

Equally typical of a Mercedes Coupe are the two-part, extremely flat LED tail lamps, which, in combination with LED

MULTIBEAM headlamps, celebrate the world premiere of a welcome feature. When the vehicle is opened, the taillight LEDs illuminate successively from the centre of the vehicle outwards. Upon locking the vehicle, the light sequence runs in the opposite direction. Both are additionally combined with an up and down dimming feature.

Sporty, luxurious interior with refined details

The interior of the new E-Class Coupe embodies the synthesis of sporty emotion and luxurious intelligence. Positioned in the driver's direct field of vision, the instrument cluster shows virtual instruments, which can be selected by the driver in three different styles, "Classic", "Sport" and "Progressive", depending on which information and views the driver considers relevant. Touch Control buttons in the steering wheel enable the driver to control the instrument cluster and multimedia system using finger swipes without having to take their hands off the steering wheel.

The avant-garde yet highly luxurious seats in the Coupe take their cue from the sedan. The sporty individual-seat characteristics find their distinctive impression in all four seats. A wealth of extremely high-grade design details bear witness to the superlative standard of a sporty luxury Coupe.

High-grade materials and contemporary colour landscapes come together to create a sporty, modern luxury. The attractive appointments in yacht blue in combination with macchiato beige lend the vehicle a cool, sophisticated yachting look. The new E-Class Coupe will also offer a choice of two new innovative, lightwood trim packages in open-pore and high-gloss finishes.

The AMG Line, with its unique features, such as front and rear bumpers and side skirts and larger AMG Styling wheels, will come as standard. The dots in the diamond radiator grille are chrome-plated, while the brake discs on the front axle are perforated. The interior boasts a vast range of fea-

tures such as seats in high-grade ARTICO/DINAMICA in black with grey contrasting topstitching, the Seat Comfort package and an AMG leather sports steering wheel. Additional personalization options come courtesy of the Night package with a host of design details in high-gloss black and tinted side windows.

Larger and more luxurious

With a length of 4826 mm, a width of 1860 mm and a height of 1430 mm, the new E-Class Coupe clearly outstrips its predecessor in terms of length, width and height. The principal beneficiary of the wider track, with 1605 mm at the front (+67 mm) and 1609 mm at the rear (+68 mm), is the driving dynamics.

The significantly larger footprint compared with the previous model benefits passengers with extra spaciousness and comfort.

Performance with high-tech

At market launch, there will be an initial choice between three petrol engines with a range of outputs from 135 kW (184 hp) to 245 kW (333 hp). Further engine variants will follow. All the models available at market launch are standardized with the 9G-TRONIC nine-speed automatic transmission, which allows fast gearshifts along with lower engine speeds. This has a particularly beneficial effect on efficiency and noise.

Suspension - sporty comfort

The suspension on the new E-Class Coupe offers agile driving pleasure on winding roads together with exceptional ride comfort. The Coupe comes as standard with DIRECT CONTROL suspension. In the interests of a sporty look, the suspension is 15 millimetres lower than on the sedan and is tuned for comfort with an amplitude-dependent damping system.

Alternatively, the new E-Class Coupe can be equipped with multi-chamber air suspension, including all-round

roll/pitch/heave stabilisation. The three chambers of different size in the spring struts of the rear axle and two in the spring struts of the front axle make it possible to control the hardness of the suspension in three stages. In this way, occupants enjoy soft basic suspension, along with the secure feeling of good handling stability at higher speeds.

DYNAMIC SELECT - choose your own driving characteristics. The DYNAMIC SELECT system not only makes it possible to select the suspension characteristics in combination with DYNAMIC BODY CONTROL and AIR BODY CONTROL, but it also enables the driver to influence other vehicle settings - such as the throttle response, ECO start/stop function, shift points of the automatic transmission and more. Depending on the equipment level, DYNAMIC SELECT provides the following transmission modes: Comfort, ECO, Sport, Sport + and Individual. "Individual" allows the driver to configure their own preferred transmission modes.

E-Class innovations on board

As a member of the current E-Class family, the new Coupe pushes technological boundaries and is significantly more intelligent than its predecessor. It comes with all the features of the E-Class, the most intelligent executive sedan. Active Brake Assist comes as standard. It is able to warn the driver of an imminent collision, provide optimum support with emergency braking and, if necessary, also autonomously apply the brakes. In addition to slower-moving, stopping or stationary vehicles, it can also detect pedestrians crossing in the danger zone ahead of the vehicle.

Other highlights include DRIVE PILOT: this system represents Mercedes-Benz's next step along the road to autonomous driving. As Distance Pilot DISTRONIC, it is not only able to keep the car at the correct distance behind vehicles in front on all types of road, but, for the first time, it can also automatically follow them at a speed of up to 210 km/h.

AL-MAZAYA HOLDING LAUNCHES MAZAYA RESIDENCE IN MUSCAT

MUSCAT: Al-Mazaya Holding has launched its new project, Mazaya Residence, in Muscat, the capital of Oman. Mazaya Residence is an integrated, mixed-use project located in the Al-Mawaleh area of Al Seeb Province. A grand ceremony was held by the company to mark the launch of the project at the Grand Hayat Hotel in Muscat where a series of activities was organized.

The ceremony opened with a documentary on Al-Mazaya Holding's strategy and operations. Board Chairman, Rashid Al-Nafisi, provided inaugural notes while Chief Executive Officer, Ibrahim Al-Soqabi, delivered a detailed overview of the project, followed by a word from Oman's Al-Hilal Bank representative. The function was concluded with an awards ceremony where the event sponsor, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Oman and representatives of the Ministry of Housing, Muscat Municipality and Al Hilal Bank were recognized with plaques. The ribbon was then cut, raising the curtain to reveal an architectural model for the project, before dessert was distributed to mark the felicitous occasion.

The Board chairman's inaugural notes provided a briefing on Al-Mazaya Holding's strategy that is premised on ensuring geographical diversification and expansion all over the GCC states and a number of Middle East countries. This is an ambitious strategy that yielded impressive investment opportunities, one of which is the Mazaya Residence in Muscat. Addressing the Ceremony, Al-Nafisi said, "We are honored to launch Al-Mazaya Residence, a mixed-use residential-cum-commercial project that stands out as an attractive opportunity for Omani citizens and GCC residents looking for investment or housing."

He added: "Mazaya Residence is one of the most significant projects that meets the requirements of the market and the needs of different segments of society by creating affordable homeownership opportunities. The project reflects our paramount interest in the Omani market. Boasting a highly competitive edge at the tourist and trade levels, the Omani market abounds in myriad investment opportunities that offer a promising future."

"Through the construction of such real estate enterprises, Al-Mazaya Holding seeks to ensure geographical diversification for its projects throughout the GCC states and the Middle East. Situated near the capital's major malls and trade centers, Al-Mazaya Residence strategically lies at the heart of Muscat, the capital of Oman, better known as the pearl of the Arabian Sea, the cradle of heritage and originality, and the symbol of civilization and the future," the Board Chairman continued.

Concluding, Al-Nafisi expressed appreciation for all those who have contributed to the success of this project, including government bodies, consultancies, real estate developers and suppliers, reiterating his deep thanks to Al-Mazaya Holding's teams for their diligent efforts that have earned the company the enviable success they are celebrating.

CEO Eng. Ibrahim Al-Soqabi commenced his speech with an illustrative presentation on the company's establishment and capital, noting that Al-Mazaya is a shareholding company dually listed at the Kuwaiti and Dubai financial markets. It has a rich portfolio of impressive projects that are well diversified by geography all over the region's markets. He then gave a detailed overview of Mazaya Residence.

"Mazaya Residence is the company's second investment in

Oman. At Al-Mazaya, we take care of every minute detail, allowing our residents to enjoy a luxurious living environment with maximum comfort and convenience," he said. "Sprawling over a total space of 23,194 sqm and divided into 12 commercial-cum-residential plots, the project boasts residential units, including one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom flats and shops of various sizes with high-end amenities, landscaped areas and nature," he added, explaining that the company will develop the project over different phases, the first of which was announced under the name "Zone 1" and includes 120 flats and 28 shops.

"The project is strategically located near key shopping malls and trade centers in the capital of Muscat, including the City Centre, which lies only few minutes away. Its amenities include swimming pools, health clubs and tennis playgrounds. The project stands out as an attractive opportunity for residents looking for investments or housing. It's adjacent to Sultan Qaboos Road, a highly significant arterial road linking all the Sultanate's provinces together," he stated.

"Al-Mazaya Holding has identified the gap in the market and the demand of the Omani population for residential projects that cater to the specific requirements of both the Omani and Gulf citizens alike," the CEO continued.

Al-Soqabi added, "Mazaya Residence apartments adhere to the highest design standards that include the best use of space, satisfying all modern life requirements. The residence offers a variety of designs with its 68 by 74 meter one-bedroom, 99 by 110 meter two-bedroom and 142 by 154 meter three-bedroom apartments. The project is protected 24/7 by a sophisticated surveillance system to suit the specific security needs of the residents. In addition, residents are provided with best satellite and internet services in the area."

Execution works have already started and are strictly adhering to the set schedule, he said, noting that the foundation work has already been completed, including the construction of a spacious underground car park sprawling beneath the entire space of the residential building that accommodates up to 300 vehicles, adding further value to the development. The project is expected to be delivered in 2018.

The CEO explained that Al-Mazaya has awarded a 22-month contract to Al-Hajjry Trading LLC for the construction, execution, delivery, and maintenance of Mazaya Residence. Al-Hajjry Trading is a pioneering company with more than 21 years of rich experience in areas of construction in the Omani market.

"This marks the launch of the project's marketing campaign in the Omani market. It will be followed by an additional campaign to promote the project in the GCC states. The campaign will include large-scale publicity through print and social media, radio stations and TV channels," he said, inviting the event attendees to visit a promotional exhibition at the Grand Hayat Hotel on April 19th as well as the company's marketing center to mark the launch of the project's flat and shop sales at competitive prices and easy installments to attract the largest possible segments of society. "We maintain an ambitious future-oriented vision for the Omani market and God willing, we will continue to operate in this distinguished market after we complete and hand over Mazaya Residence," CEO enthused.

OOREDOO GIVES 200 MB TO PREPAID CUSTOMERS

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, is giving its prepaid customers 200 MB valid for one week when they recharge their balance online or on Ooredoo's official app which is available on iOS and Android operating system. The free balance is automatically credited to customers upon recharge transactions, and is valid for 7 days.

In a statement to the press, Ooredoo reiterated its commitment to enriching the experience of customers by giving them services with the click of a button, keeping up with their lifestyle and mode of usage which relies on making purchases and transactions online. In relation to this, Ooredoo has recently obtained the Payment Card Industry (PCI)-Data Security Standards (DSS) 3.2 certification, making it the first telecom provider in Kuwait to be certified with this version.

Ooredoo recently relaunched its Xpress prepaid plans, with streamlined simplified plans at KD 5 for a SIM card. Customers can subscribe to a main bundle that includes internet and local calls, and have the freedom to subscribe to

add-on plans at competitive prices that include internet, international calls or local calls.

Ooredoo's operations in Kuwait date back to December 1999 when it launched wireless services as the second operator. The company today provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate managed services tai-

lored to the needs of customers and businesses. Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential.



NREC AND UPAC'S REEM MALL PROJECT TO OFFER MAJID AL-FUTTAIM VENTURES' WORLD CLASS ENTERTAINMENT OFFERINGS

KUWAIT: Abu Dhabi's Reem Mall, developed by NREC in partnership with UPAC has announced a significant new partnership with Majid Al-Futtaim Ventures, the leisure, entertainment, fashion and business arm of Majid Al-Futtaim. The agreement will see Majid Al-Futtaim Ventures bring its wide range of leisure and entertainment destinations - including the region's first standalone, themed, indoor snow park - to more than \$1 billion project.

Through this collaboration, Reem Mall will also host the next generation of concepts from award-winning VOX Cinemas, including the large format MAX screens, fine dining Theatre by Rhodes and the children focused VOX Kids. For the first time, VOX Cinemas will be fused with Magic Planet, the region's largest network of family entertainment centres, to create an all - new leisure environment.

This is also the first time that Majid Al-Futtaim Ventures has announced an indoor snow entertainment concept outside Majid Al-Futtaim's owned shopping malls, building on the success of Ski Dubai over the years, and the highly positive response to Ski Egypt, which opened in Cairo's Mall of Egypt earlier this year. The bespoke 125,000 sq. ft. Abu Dhabi snow attraction will be a dedicated snow park and is set to include a variety of activities and experiences to be enjoyed by the entire family - from sledding to zorbing to luge.

The entertainment offering will make up almost 202,000 sq. ft., which accounts for 10 percent of the total mall space, emphasizing the growing significance of leisure in the success of a modern retail environment.

Commenting on the news, NREC CEO Samuel Sidiqi said: "Reem Mall is one of our landmark projects in the region, and we're very excited about our new partnership with Majid Al-Futtaim Ventures to offer visitors iconic leisure and entertainment concepts and truly memorable experiences."

Shane Eldstrom, Reem Mall Chief Executive Officer said: "As one of the most ambitious and exciting retail and leisure projects ever undertaken in Abu Dhabi, we share Majid Al-Futtaim's commitment to continued growth and innovation. As the UAE capital continues to enhance its position as a global tourism and leisure hub, this new partnership marks a significant milestone not only for Reem Mall, but also for the region's wider entertainment offering. We now look forward to bringing our shared vision to the UAE capital and creating spectacular visitor experiences for decades to come."

Ahmed Galal Ismail CEO of Majid Al-Futtaim Ventures said: "Over the years, Majid Al-Futtaim's Leisure & Entertainment and Cinemas business have established themselves as the go-to providers of innovative and successful leisure and entertainment concepts for retail developers in the region, and with Reem Mall we have taken this one step further by creating a unique and bespoke offering that will not only anchor the mall, but transform it into a lifestyle destination. We are in the business of creating great moments, and so are partnering with Reem Mall in the same way we do with our own shopping malls to ensure that our entertainment concepts are curated and created for the best guest experience."

This is the second collaboration between Reem Mall and Majid Al-Futtaim after previously signing a deal to open a Carrefour hypermarket at the upcoming Abu Dhabi destination.

Reem Mall will deliver 2 million sq. ft. of leasable area (2.9 million sq. ft. of floor area) of retail, leisure, dining and entertainment offerings on Abu Dhabi's Reem Island. Comprising around 450 stores housing local and international brands, 85 of which will be Food and Beverage outlets, as well as a range of family-focused entertainment and edutainment anchors, Reem Mall will be a unique addition to Abu Dhabi's family leisure attractions.





DISCOVER NEW POSSIBILITIES WITH THE SAMSUNG GALAXY S8 AND S8+

KUWAIT: Samsung Gulf Electronics - launched the much anticipated Galaxy S8 and S8+ yesterday in Kuwait, at an exclusive event held at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach hotel. The latest smartphone pushes the boundaries of traditional smartphones with its seamless screen hardware design and a variety of new service offerings. With the launch of multiple services and apps, as well as a stunning Infinity Display for immersive viewing experiences, the Galaxy S8 and S8+ bring a new level of functionality and convenience, opening up a galaxy of possibilities.

"The Samsung Galaxy S8 and S8+ usher in a new era of smartphone design and fantastic services, opening the door for new ways to experience the world," said Tarek Sabbagh, Head of IT & Mobile (IM) Division at Samsung Gulf Electronics. "The Galaxy S8 and S8+ represents, not just the launch of a brand new device in the region, but a whole new way to create experiences. Knowing that exploring the world and new cultures is something that people across the region love, we have tied up with Etihad Airways and Hotels.com to reward our loyal customers."

Those who purchase the Galaxy S8 and S8+ will be able to explore the world in style and enjoy 30% off in Economy and Business Class with Etihad Airways. Furthermore, customers will be able to save up to 40% on hotel bookings worldwide and enjoy an extra 12% off coupon in partnership with hotels.com. This offer is exclusively available to customers in the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait.

Mohammad Al-Bulooki, Executive Vice President Commercial at Etihad Airways, said: "Etihad Airways' partnership with Samsung sees two brands committed to technological innovation coming together to deliver this incredible offer. It applies not only to Etihad Airways' flights, but also across the seven airlines that make up Etihad Airways Partners. We are constantly looking for new ways to connect with our guests and this is a perfect example."

See and Experience More

The Galaxy S8 builds on Samsung's heritage of creating stunning designs and functional devices. Available in 5.8-inch Galaxy S8 and 6.2-inch Galaxy S8+, the Infinity Display and bezel-less design form a smooth, continuous surface with no buttons or harsh angles. The result is a truly immersive viewing experience without distractions, which makes multi-tasking more convenient. The Galaxy S8's compact design enables comfortable one-handed operation and Corning(r) Gorilla(r) Glass 5 on both the front and back and provides a durable and a high-quality finish.

The Galaxy Foundation

In addition to the new design innovations, Samsung continues to deliver cutting-edge technology including an advanced camera, enhanced performance and more to the devices that users love, including:

- Premium Camera: The Galaxy S8 and S8+ are



equipped with an advanced 8MP F1.7 Smart autofocus-front camera and 12MP F1.7 Dual Pixel rear camera for the best low-light, zoom and anti-blur photos with enhanced image processing.

- Powerful Performance: Packing powerful performance and connectivity, the Galaxy S8 and S8+ feature the industry's first 10nm processor, enabling heightened speed and efficiency. It is also gigabit LTE and gigabit Wi-Fi ready with support for speeds up to 1 Gbps so users can quickly download files, regardless of the file size.

- Robust Entertainment: As the world's first mobile device certified by the UHD Alliance as MOBILE HDR PREMIUM, Galaxy S8 and S8+ let you see the same vibrant colors and contrasts that filmmakers intended while watching your favorite shows. In addition, the Galaxy S8 and S8+ offer next-level gaming experiences with vivid and superior graphic technology, and come pre-loaded with a Game Pack, featuring top game titles, including select titles supported by the Vulkan API.

- Global Standard in Mobile Security: The Galaxy S8 and S8+ are built on Samsung Knox, a defense-grade security platform. In addition, the Galaxy S8 and S8+ will offer a wide selection of biometric technologies including a fingerprint scanner, iris scanner and facial recognition so users can select a secure biometric authentication method that works best for them.

New way to interact with your phone

Bixby is an intelligent interface that will help users get more out of their phone. With the new Bixby button, you will be able to conveniently access Bixby and navigate through services and apps with simple touch, vision and text commands. Contextual awareness capabilities enable Bixby to offer personalized help based on what it continues to learn about the user's interests, situation and location. Users can also search for images and get details about nearby places with Bixby's image recognition technology. As the Bixby ecosystem grows, it will connect across devices, apps and services as a ubiquitous interface, and open up new experiences and scenarios to simplify life.

Beyond the phone experiences

The Galaxy S8 and S8+ offers robust portfolio of products and services, elevating the both devices experience for premiere mobile productivity and connectivity. The Galaxy S8 and S8+ unlock the new Gear VR with Controller, powered by Oculus. Enabling convenient one-handed control and navigation, the controller provides better motion interaction when accessing interactive VR content. The Galaxy S8 and S8+ will also connect to the new Gear

360 to create 4K 360-degree videos and 15MP photos. Leveraging the processing power of the Galaxy S8 and S8+ for enhanced productivity, Samsung DeX is a unique solution that transforms your smartphone into a desktop by providing a secure desktop-like experience. With Samsung DeX, users can easily display and edit data from their phone, making working from a smartphone faster and smarter.

Users can leave their physical wallet behind with Samsung Pay, turning their Galaxy S8 and S8+ into a digital wallet which they can use almost anywhere they would use a credit or debit card. With more than 870 worldwide banking partnerships, Samsung Pay has processed more than 240 million transactions to date. New high-performance earphones tuned by AKG by Harman, offering uncompromised audio for unbeatable sound quality, will come as an in-box accessory. These earphones will have a comfortable hybrid canal fit for better noise cancellation and will be made from anti-tangle metal-fabric material.

The Samsung Galaxy S8 and S8+ will be available across major retailers in Kuwait from April 28 at KWD 236 for the Galaxy S8 and KWD 266 for the Galaxy S8+ and will be offered in a rich color palette including Midnight Black, Orchid Gray and Maple Gold.



—Photos by Joseph Shagra

BANGLADESH TRAINS TEENAGE GIRLS TO FIGHT CYBER CRIME

DHAKA: Bangladesh yesterday began training thousands of teenage girls to fight cyber crime, citing an "alarming" rise in social media-related abuses mostly targeting adolescents. Police said online harassment had grown alarmingly with the rise in smart phone use in Bangladesh, and teenage girls were the main targets.

More than 10,000 school-age girls will take part in government workshops around the country in April and May to teach them what to look out for and how to respond. "Every day, we have 10-12 complaints of cyber crimes. Some 90 percent of these victims are pre-teen and teenage girls," Nazmul Islam, a deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told AFP. Police said girls were being tricked into posing for intimate photographs and video footage that were later posted on social media or used for trolling.

On some occasions, hidden cameras were used to secretly film young people having sex, with the footage later posted online. "Sometimes these photos and videos are being used by boyfriends to emotionally blackmail the girls or their families," said Islam. Bangladesh in 2013 set up a special trial court to deal with social media-related crimes and since then more than 450 cases have been heard. "(The) majority of the victims are young girls. In many cases, once they were married, they found that their former lovers posted their intimate photos to social media," prosecutor Nazrul Islam Shamim told AFP. "In one incident, a young woman committed suicide after her lover sent some of her intimate photos to her mobile phone," he said. —AFP

FIRST ONLINE PLATFORM FOR INFLUENCER MARKETING IN GCC IS LAUNCHED

DUBAI: With the increasing use of influencers to market brands across the region, and an even greater number of influencers entering this new content marketing arena, the newly launched Dubai-based digital firm, Influencers.ae, promises to be an all-encompassing online platform that enables brands and agencies to discover, compare and book relevant influencers for effective digital campaigns across the GCC. Easy to navigate and use, the first ever Arab focused Influencer Marketing Platform (IMP) provides data on over 1,780 of the regions' most successful influencers who, collectively, have over 640 million followers.

Developed in the UAE with an in-depth understanding of regional needs, Influencers.ae relieves many of the pain points marketers have when attempting to conduct influencer marketing. According to eConsultancy, the greatest difficulty for 73% of marketers is identifying the right influencer and 82% of brands are still conducting their influencer research manually. The Influencers.ae platform alleviates this by allowing brands the ability to search for relevant influencers across the GCC accord-

ing to multiple parameters, compare them according to performance data analysis, and book them all online.

Marketers now have transparent and real time data on influencers and their followers for benchmarking analysis and com-



Clark Williams, COO, Influencers.ae

parison of regional performance/cost value, including image vs video engagement trends across sectors, in depth demographics of the followers down to city level, gen-

der, interests, follower's popularity index and much more. For even more thorough analysis of how followers interact with influencers' content, Influencers.ae created the Influential Rate, a proprietary algorithm which takes into account a variety of metrics such as weighted average of comments, tags, likes and views, and cross matches the data with comparable influencers regionally.

"In the GCC, most brands are using influencer marketing like they would celebrity endorsement or brand ambassadorship," said Feras Arafe, CEO of Influencers.ae. "They find, with difficulty, one or two influencers that have relevant profiles and promote a brand through them in one-off campaigns. Our platform harnesses the power of mass campaigns through influencers. The more influencers that promote a specific hashtag within a set period of time, the higher the number of social media channels that will boost it. With the right amount of influencers, your campaigns will not only reach difficult to target consumers, but also have the ability to go viral."

The interactive portal enables users to

choose and compare critical data for up to 5 influencers on a single page for easier evaluation. Additionally, to determine the campaign ROI, users are provided with an overview of the campaign content with details on reposts or produced content along with the number of 'Likes', comment, views and engagement. The in-depth data on engagement levels based on geography, demography and interactions allows users to analyze the penetration of campaigns.

"Digital spending is up, but marketers continue to spend on programmatic advertising even though they realize that the banner ad is dead," said Clark Williams, COO, Influencers.ae. "The average click through rate (CTR) rarely exceeds 1% and their target audiences are more and more employing ad blocking software, especially on their mobiles. Our platform offers a viable alternative. Brands can now reach consumers with created or reposted content from relevant Influencers that their followers trust. A campaign can achieve receive mass impressions and a higher conversion rate for much less cost than other forms of digital advertising."

GERMAN AIMS TO ROLE OUT CHILD FORMULA FOR SCHISTOSOMIASIS

GENEVA: Merck KGaA said it is developing a children's formula of its drug to treat schistosomiasis, a parasitic worm disease that infects millions of poor people in Africa and Asia. Schistosomiasis kills 280,000 people each year in Africa alone, the German drugmaker said yesterday. It can cause anaemia, diarrhoea, bladder cancer, slow cognitive development, as well as infertility problems in females.

The company said it has donated 500 million tablets of praziquantel to the World Health Organisation (WHO) over the last 10 years for use in 39 African countries, primarily targeting children

who catch the disease in contaminated rivers and lakes. But the pill is large, bitter and difficult for children to swallow, Belen Garijo, CEO of healthcare at Merck KGaA, told reporters in Geneva. The new formula will be sweeter.

"We have learned that we need to customise the formulation of praziquantel to the patients that we want to treat. This is why we are developing a children user-friendly formulation that we expect to bring to the market in the next couple of years." "We are actually very close to filing because we are aiming to file in early 2019," Garijo said. "We will be filing in as many countries

as possible in Africa. We don't anticipate any major challenges in production so we will scale up as quickly as we can in order to be able to put a sweetened formulation in front of the pediatric population."

Merck's initial commitment 10 years ago to donate 25 million tablets a year from its plant in Mexico has grown ten-fold. Its annual donation has a value of around \$30 million, she said. "Now we have stepped up to 250 million tablets per year ... We believe that with the tablets we are donating we can treat approximately 100 million patients a year. This is going to last until elimination."

Garijo was among senior pharmaceutical executives due to meet Bill Gates privately in Geneva on Tuesday to discuss stepping up the industry's contribution to fighting 18 neglected tropical diseases known as NTDs. The WHO and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will host a meeting today.

Since a key 2012 meeting in London, NTD medicines have been provided at a cost of less than \$0.50 per person per year through drug companies and partnerships, for an estimated value of \$2 billion to \$3 billion a year, WHO director-general Margaret Chan wrote in the Financial Times yesterday. "The tide is turning," she said. — AP



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump joins others to write notes to service members during the Easter Egg Roll on the South Lawn of the White House. — AFP

IN OR OUT? TRUMP AIDES TO HUDDLE ON CLIMATE ACCORD

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's top aides will huddle to discuss whether or not the US should remain part of the Paris Climate accord - a global effort to cut down on climate-warming carbon emissions. Officials will be discussing their options, with the goal of providing a recommendation to the president about the path forward, according to an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity, despite the president's criticism of the use of anonymous sources.

The non-binding international agreement was forged in Paris in December 2015 and allowed rich and poor countries to set their own goals to reduce carbon dioxide. It went into effect last November after it was ratified by countries, including the US and China. Trump's top advisers are currently divided on the issue, with some, including Environmental Protection Agency head Scott Pruitt, eager for the US to leave the deal.

"Paris is something that we need to really look at closely, because it's something we need to exit, in my opinion," Pruitt said in an interview with Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends" last week. "It's a bad deal for America. It was an America second, third or fourth kind of approach." Trump pledged during his campaign to pull out of the Paris accord, but has wavered

on the issue since he won the presidency.

He told the editorial board of The New York Times in an interview last year that he was, "looking at it very closely.... I have an open mind to it. We're going to look very carefully." Under the agreement, the US pledged to reduce its annual greenhouse gas emissions in 2025 by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels, which would be a reduction of about 1.6 billion tons of annual emissions. Besides continuing Obama's efforts to reduce US heat-trapping gases, Trump has two general options.

Non-binding agreement

One option is to pull the United States out of the non-binding agreement, which Obama enacted without US Senate ratification. It typically takes countries four years to pull out of new international treaties, but because Obama enacted the accord as part of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro treaty, Trump could pull out of the older, broader treaty in one year.

Another option is to just do nothing. Trump could publicly badmouth the treaty, but not formally withdraw from it. If the US stays part of the agreement, which 125 nations or groups of nations have already ratified, and fails to reach its goal, technically nothing happens. There is no climate court, no enforcement action. And

because the agreement already went into force, nothing the United States can do - even pulling out - can nullify the accord. It is in effect.

Nonetheless, a withdrawal or public announcement that the US is abandoning its efforts to fight man-made climate change could spark repercussions individually from other nations, said Nigel Purvis, who was the top US State Department environmental diplomat when George W Bush pulled out of the 1997 Kyoto climate treaty.

"Any sign that the administration would not be serious will provoke an international reaction that would undermine the administration's foreign policy," said Purvis, an international attorney who served in Democratic and Republican administrations. Other countries, he said, take climate change seriously and could retaliate in trade deals or tariffs or balk on negotiations over international security costs.

Trump has already reversed some of former President Obama's efforts to scale back carbon emissions to try to halt climate change, including restrictions on coal plants and drilling. White House spokesman Sean Spicer has said the president will make up his mind on the Paris agreement before a summit of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations in Taormina, Italy in late May. — AP

FAMILY WITNESSES' SHARK KILL DAUGHTER IN AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY: A 17-year-old girl has died after being mauled by a shark in full view of her parents on Australia's southwest coast, authorities said yesterday. Laetia Brouwer was on holiday and went surfing with her father near Wylie Bay late Monday afternoon, police said. The girl had lost a leg and was bleeding heavily when she was pulled from the water and rushed to hospital in the Western Australian town of Esperance.

Her mother and two younger sisters witnessed the attack from the beach and alerted emergency services. "Father and daughter were surfing out where the waves were breaking and that's where the attack occurred," Acting Senior Sergeant Ben Jeffes told reporters. "The father obviously tried everything he could to save his daughter. He's brought her to shore and then the family have contacted emergency services."

The West Australian newspaper said he "heard her scream before she was pulled under water by the shark." "When she resurfaced, her father paddled over and dragged her to the shore with the help of another teenager." "Condolences to the family and friends of the victim involved in today's tragedy," Esperance police tweeted. "Devastating circumstances." Family spokesman Steve Evans read a statement saying "the ocean was her and her family's passion."

"Surfing was something that she treasured doing with her dad and her sisters. We can take some comfort that Laetia died doing something that she loved." Local authorities closed Wylie Bay beach until further notice and people were urged to stay out of the water. The fisheries department was patrolling the area Tuesday and spokesman Russell Adams said a great white was likely responsible for the attack.

"Since 2000 all fatal attacks in WA (Western Australia) have been caused by great whites, so you could assume safely it was a great white but we can't say for sure," he told reporters. A man lost his left arm and right hand when two great whites attacked him at Wylie Bay in October 2014. Brouwer was the third person killed by a shark off Western Australia in the past 12 months. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: In this April 15, 2017 photo marijuana plants sit for sale on display in ShowGrow a medical marijuana provider. — AP

MARIJUANA SAFER THAN OPIOIDS, BUT MOMS SHOULD STAY AWAY

DENVER: Americans think it's safer to use marijuana than opioids to relieve pain, but they were less comfortable with children and pregnant women using pot to treat medical conditions, according to a new Yahoo/Marist poll released Monday. Two-thirds of the respondents in the telephone survey said opioid drugs such as Vicodin or OxyContin are "riskier" to use than pot, even when the pain pills are prescribed by a doctor. Only one in five said marijuana was riskier than opioids. The rest weren't sure.

Every day, an overdose of prescription opioids or heroin kills 91 people, and legions more are brought back from the brink of death. Some 2 million Americans are thought to be hooked on the pills. Last month, President Donald J. Trump appointed an opioid commission to look into the problem. Marijuana by itself is not fatal. Doctors technically don't prescribe it for

pain or other purposes but most states that allow medical marijuana do require patients to get a doctor's written recommendation to purchase it to treat their conditions.

Reducing pain

Among those answering the Yahoo/Marist poll, 83 percent said the drug should be legal nationally for medical treatment. But 70 percent said it is not acceptable for pregnant women to use marijuana to reduce nausea or pain. And the survey respondents were about evenly divided on whether marijuana should be recommended for children if it were legal. The survey respondents were deeply divided on how Trump should approach pot: 38 percent said he shouldn't be as tough about enforcing federal laws against recreational pot use as President Barack Obama, whose policy generally was to leave states alone. — AP

IN ALASKA, ANXIETY GROWS AS HEALTH CARE DEBATE RAGES

JUNEAU: Going without health insurance is a risk. Going without it in Alaska can be a gamble of a much higher order, for this is a place unlike anywhere else in the U.S., a land of pitiless cold, vast expanses and dangerous, back-breaking work such as pulling fishing nets from the water or hauling animal carcasses out of the woods. And yet many people on the Last Frontier do not carry insurance. For them, the Affordable Care Act just isn't working.

For reasons that have a lot to do with its sheer size, sparse population and harsh environment, Alaska has some of the highest health care costs in the nation; the most expensive insurance premiums, according to one key measure; and just one insurer in the whole state writing individual policies.

Michael Hutton, who makes a living selling high-performance dog food used by dog sledders, some of whom compete in the grueling Iditarod race, looked at the potential \$700-a-month cost of coverage under Obamacare and decided he would rather take his chances and hope he doesn't get seriously hurt or ill. "In my age group, it hasn't been much of an issue," the 45-year-old Hutton said. But he confessed, "The older you get, the more important it's going to be."

Many people in Alaska are frustrated with the cost of required health coverage under President Barack Obama's signature law and anxious about what the future holds, with President Donald Trump so far unable to deliver on his promise to repeal and replace it with something better. Income-based subsidies are available under the Affordable Care Act to help many Alaskans buy insurance. But not everyone qualifies, and so some choose to go without.

As of 2015, 13 percent of Alaska residents were uninsured and potentially subject to fines under Obamacare, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, citing the most recent figures available. Five states in all were at 13 percent. Only Georgia (14 percent) and Texas (16 percent) were higher. Hutton, who lives in the fishing village of Kasilof, has so far managed to avoid any serious health problems and said the amount he has paid out of his own pocket for medical care, plus an Obamacare tax penalty of \$700 for not having insurance, are far less than the premiums he would have faced.

Alcohol and drug abuse

Many people in Alaska hold down rugged jobs or enjoy outdoor pastimes that can lead to serious injuries and chronic ailments, such as bad backs and knees. At the same time, Alaska has some of the nation's highest rates of tuberculosis, chlamydia and suicide. Alcohol and drug abuse is a major problem, too. With many places in the state accessible only by air or water, some people who suddenly get very sick have to be flown to Anchorage or Seattle. A medical evacuation can cost \$50,000 to \$150,000. Even ordinary visits to the doctor can be problematic, in part because of shortages of primary-care physicians.

Alaska's biggest cities - Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau - rank at or near the top among the nation's metro areas in the cost of a doctor's visit, with Juneau the most expensive in the country at nearly \$189, just above Boston, according to the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness. The attitude toward Obamacare appears to reflect something essential about Alaskans: They can be stubborn, skeptical bunch with a libertarian streak. While Trump won the state with 51 percent to Hillary Clinton's 37 percent, the biggest voting bloc is independents, who

outnumber registered Republicans nearly 2-to-1. Alaskans often take great pride in their toughness and resourcefulness and have been known to bandage their own wounds or use a staple gun to close a leg gash. "There's no use in going to pay a thousand dollars for someone to wrap your ribs in a bandage," said Bryce Reimer, a 25-year-old audio and lighting technician from Wasilla who wrapped his own ribs after a car accident because he doesn't have health insurance. The health plan that is often used as a benchmark for comparing coverage from state to state, for a 40-year-old nonsmoker, costs \$927 a month before any subsidies in Alaska, or 21/2 times the national average, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

While nearly every Alaskan receives an annual check of typically more than \$1,000 as their share of the state's oil wealth, that doesn't necessarily go very far in a place where the late-winter unemployment rate in some communities is around 20 percent and where the difficulties of delivering goods and services contribute to a cost of living so staggering that a gallon of milk can cost \$10 in some rural outposts.

Salmon runs

Also, many Alaskans work jobs where the amount they earn can fluctuate wildly, depending on such factors as the weather or the size of a salmon run. Because of that, some people cannot be sure whether they qualify for subsidies from one year to the next, or whether they will be able to afford coverage once they have signed up.

Juneau resident Bonnin Jarvill, who fishes for a living, said her family's Obamacare-subsidized policy of \$360 a month is affordable, but the family deductible is a daunting \$14,000. That's worrisome because their income can vary depending on how many salmon and halibut they catch, they are still paying off bills from last year's fishing season, and they are trying to set up a plan to pay off her husband's recent hernia surgery. They live on their boat with their 4-year-old daughter.

Jarvill, 30, said she and her husband plan to see if they qualify for Medicaid. If not, they may have to ask their parents for help. "We feel like at this point in our lives we should be able to take care of our family," she said. "It's frustrating to receive help." Nearly a quarter of Alaska's 740,000 residents are covered by Medicaid, which Gov. Bill Walker, an independent, expanded as part of the Affordable Care Act to include more lower-income people. Only about 19,000 Alaskans get insurance on the individual market, resulting in a tiny pool across which insurers can spread costs. The number of insurance companies writing individual policies in Alaska dropped from five in 2015.

Last month's dead-on-arrival GOP health care proposal would have jacked up premiums on Alaskans even higher. Rep. Don Young and Sen. Lisa Murkowski, both Republicans, had raised serious objections, saying they wanted to see something that would reduce costs, increase access to care and protect Medicaid recipients from cutbacks.

In the meantime, many of those who gained coverage under the law or have affordable plans are fearful about losing their lifeline. Public relations photographer Lisa Seifert, 55, of Anchorage, qualified for expanded Medicaid last fall after going without insurance for years because it became too expensive. Car accidents and years of lugging around camera equipment have taken a toll on her body. "I just hope it doesn't go away," she said of her Medicaid coverage, her voice faltering. "Where would I be?" — AP



JUNEAU: In this March 15, 2017 photo, Bonnin Jarvill, who fishes with her husband and young daughter, shovels snow from the boat that doubles as home and workplace. — AP



KIEV: A bear stands in a shelter for bears rescued from circuses and private restaurants of Ukraine, near Zhytomyr, some 150 km west of Kiev. — AFP photos

School children look at a bear as they visit the shelter.

LEASE ON LIFE FOR ABUSED CIRCUS BEARS IN UKRAINE

SHELTER, ONE OF THE REGION'S PRIME ATTRACTIONS

ZHYTOMYR: Dental treatment by the best vets, open-air accommodation and fresh fish instead of dubious leftovers and abuse-life has changed markedly for brown bears rescued from Ukrainian circuses and restaurants. Tortured for years by humans, the animals have received a second lease of life in the city of Zhytomyr in northwestern Ukraine.

Opened in 2012 by the Vienna-based animal one bear named Nastya, who was seized from her mother when she was three months old and sold to a private zoo. It took two months for volunteers to find her and return her to her birthplace, but Nastya's mother refused to accept her as her own. Nastya was soon joined by another brown bear, Masha, who was rescued from a hunting dog training centre, where she served as the bait.

Germany come to Ukraine to make a physical examination and carry out all the necessary vaccinations. The bear is then released into the shelter's spacious enclosure, where the creature can finally start a new life. Four Paws park is now home to five brown bears saved from places such as roadside cafe and private circuses. "Olya (the oldest bear in the shelter) was blind when she came here. Possibly she was blinded on purpose", manager Leonov says. "And her teeth were in a very bad condition. Last year dentists came here to treat her teeth and everything is much better now."



A brown bear reacts to a quadcopter drone launched by a visitor.



A brown bear sits atop his den.

welfare charity Four Paws, the shelter soon became one of the region's prime attractions. "I saw bears before in Kiev zoos, but they were much sadder than here," Myroslava, 10, says in reference to the Ukrainian capital. "Here they are happy", says Myroslava after coming to the shelter with her school class and being particularly taken by a scarred female bear named Masha. "I don't like the fact that she was severely beaten before and that she has scars. I was scared for her."

"We received her in a terrible state: the hair on her neck had been worn away by a collar, her tail was torn off, nose scratched", shelter manager Oleksandr Leonov tells AFP. A law banning the training of hunting dogs on bears was only adopted in Ukraine in 2015, and it noticeably simplified the work of animal rights activists across the country. The shelter's staff usually finds out about abused animals from ordinary people and goes straight to the location to verify the tip.

Bears for sale

"It is considered fashionable to have a bear at home or in a restaurant, or to make money off people who get amused by seeing a bear on a chain", says Taras Boyko from the Four Paws wild animals department. "This complex problem is rooted in the mentality of our people." Maryna Shkvyrya, widely considered to be the leading scientific expert on bears in Ukraine, explains that most privately owned bears were already born in captivity, but that there was also a black market on which bears are sold.

Some bears come from the Carpathian Mountains in Ukraine's west, but most are smuggled in across the border with Russia, where hunting for bears is legal and a lot of cubs are motherless. The east of the country has been ravaged by a three-year war with Russian-backed insurgents. "These cubs are sold as a gift, as a living toy, as an animal that will be the object for training hunting dogs", Shkvyrya says. "On the black market, prices start from \$1,000 and go up to several thousand dollars per cub," she adds.

Four Paws plans to open another large shelter for bears in the western Lviv region in September 2017 to bring them closer to their natural habitat. But there are no plans to release the saved bears into the wild. Their behavior changes dramatically while in human captivity and they may be unable to cohabitate with other animals. "Our project gives these bears an opportunity to spend the rest of their life in normal conditions," Shkvyrya says. "And also to show people the consequences of animal abuse." — AFP



A brown bear stands on a log in an artificial lake at the shelter.

CLINIC

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BURGAN BANK SPONSORS KUWAIT'S BIGGEST U-18 YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP



Burgan Bank, the second largest conventional bank in terms of assets in Kuwait, is proud to be an ongoing sponsor of Kuwait's most inspirational and largest under 18 youth community service group, 'Hand In Hand'. This month, 'Hand In Hand', which operates under Al-Bayan Bilingual School, has planned a dynamic agenda for each weekend, wherein youth will be able to contribute to those in need.

The group's planned agenda for the month of April includes spending time with ill and disabled children at Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH), KACCH, and Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center for Disabilities. It will also include organizing a Charity Gala to raise funds for those in need. Other projects revolve around the environment, with beach and public park clean-ups, as well as painting the walls of Al-Amal Indian School and the Gulf Pakistan English School. The group will also directly provide aid to the poor by preparing and distributing food boxes. All their activities revolve around giving back and teaching youth to volunteer their time and effort for good causes.

Part of the National Honor Society, 'Hand In Hand' is the largest student-run community service group and consists of 150 passionate volunteers from Al-Bayan Bilingual

School. The sponsorship falls under the bank's commitment towards its Corporate Social Responsibility, which aims at providing support to young inspiring groups whose simple work and efforts make a significant difference in the community, while teaching them how to become responsible members of the society who work to give back to others. Burgan Bank believes that investing in the young generation goes hand in hand with investing in Kuwait's future. The Bank feels very privileged to extend its hand and provide support to such a young, passionate and hardworking community service group of school-aged youth and children. For those looking to volunteer with the group or learn more about their work, please visit hibhbs.org.

The sponsorship falls under Burgan Bank's full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.

KAMCO HOSTS ANNUAL BLOOD DRIVE

KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, hosted its annual blood drive under the slogan "Donate Blood, Give Life" to support those who are in need of blood in the local community. KAMCO made this commitment several years back as part of its continuous corporate social responsibility agenda. The blood donation campaign, organized in collaboration with the Kuwait Central Blood Bank, witnessed a large number of donors who came to support the cause. The event was open to all KAMCO staff members and sister companies located in the same area.

Commenting on the event, Danah Al-Jasem, Head of the Marketing Department at KAMCO, said, "We at KAMCO strongly believe in creating awareness and coming together to highlight the importance of saving lives through donating blood. We are delighted once again with the successful turnout of the campaign and the amount of blood donated. Blood donation is a noble cause where all donors are contributing to support the community and save lives of those who are in need of it. This ongoing commitment has become part of our health related social responsibility and is in line with our values to positively impact society."

She added, "KAMCO will continue to organize and participate in socially responsible initiatives that primarily focus on health, education and the environment. We will also continue to collaborate with other parties, such as the Kuwait Central Blood Bank, to achieve our objective in better improving our community as a whole."



UPAC ORGANIZES BLOOD DONATION CAMPAIGN IN KUWAIT

United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC), a leading commercial real estate and facilities management company, organized a blood donation campaign that saw 17 bags of blood, amounting to 8.5 liters, donated to the Kuwait Central Blood Bank. The initiative called "Blood is Life" took place over four hours in the Discovery Mall in Kuwait City at the beginning of the month, and was open to all mall visitors. UPAC employees and investors attended and donated blood in support of the Kuwait Central Blood Bank and the society.

Nadia Akil, CEO of UPAC, said, "On behalf of UPAC, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who

participated and offered their donations, as well as to the team from the Kuwait Central Blood Bank. Giving blood is an important contribution to society, and as a company that puts people first, we find it is our responsibility to try and give back whenever possible."

In Kuwait, there is a need for hundreds of blood donations every day, and demand is growing. Donating blood contributes to helping those in need of immediate transfusions following an accident, as well as restoring the health of patients recovering from illnesses. Anyone in good health between the age of 18 and 60 can donate blood, regardless of blood type.



GUST RECOGNIZES HONORS STUDENTS AT CEREMONY

Gulf University for Science and Technology's (GUST) College of Arts and Sciences hosted an award ceremony this week honoring 66 of their top students, who were inducted into the College's Dean's List. The ceremony was attended by the Dean of the College, Dr Ali Ansari, the College's department heads, faculty, students, and their parents. The ceremony awarded 66 students, who have been inducted into the Dean's List for maintaining a GPA of 3.5 and above.

College of Arts and Sciences Dean, Dr Ali Ansari, said, "We are extremely proud of our students, their hard work, and continuous effort to maintain these high standards. There is nothing that makes us more proud as educators than to see our students realize their full potential." The ceremony serves to recognize those who have achieved academic excellence, as well as motivation for the students working to improve their academic performance. Last year, 57 were inducted into the Dean's List.

GUST, as a university, constantly strives to provide its students with all the tools they need for success. The College of Arts and Sciences' Mass Communication and Media Department was recently awarded a full accreditation by the American Communications Association (ACA). Its Computer Science major has been accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), and the quality of the program is evident in our students winning 1st place at the Gulf Programming Contest last month. Just last year, the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research (CTLR) was launched to provide workshops for not only GUST faculty, but Kuwait school teachers as well. The college tirelessly works on ensuring the best faculty and curriculum for its students through these accreditations and community projects.





Kassem Barakat & Hussain Al-Hasaseen



(From left) Elie Ajamy, Kassem Barakat, Hussain Al-Hasaseen and Mohammad Nadim

MAIS ALGHANIM & ROYAL JORDANIAN OFFERING 20% DISCOUNT VOUCHERS

Barakat Foods Co operating Mais Alghanim Restaurants in Kuwait had agreed to partner with Royal Jordanian Airlines. This came through an agreement signed by Chawki Barakat, Managing Director of Barakat Foods Co and Hussein Al-Hasaseen, Kuwait Area Manager at Royal Jordanian Airlines.

As part of the activities covered by this agreement Mais Alghanim customers were treated with a surprise by offering vouchers of 20% discount for bookings

done on Royal Jordanian Airlines for as many as 5 persons in one reservation either one way or round trips. This offer is valid for persons booking their tickets only through Royal Jordanian Airlines office in Kuwait.

Speaking with Chawki Barakat, Managing Director responded saying, "Being in the genuine hospitality, we took pride in providing excellent service to our customers in order to maintain a high level of satisfaction which has been our main aim. We wish our

customers to enjoy this exclusive offer provided by Royal Jordanian Airlines which is considered one of the prestigious airlines company in the Middle East." It is worth mentioning that the Royal Jordanian began its operations in 1963 with 250 employees and two aircraft of the Dart Herald and DC-7 serving three destinations which were Beirut, Cairo and Kuwait while today it serves 55 destinations worldwide through 25 modern aircraft.

Traveling has increased from 87 thousand passengers in 1964 to nearly three million passengers in 2016. They have been transported across more than 35 thousand flights compared to four thousand flights at the time of commencement. You can visit the Mais Alghanim Restaurant's branches in Arabian Gulf Street or in Mahboula Spoons Complex. You can also find the special menu and many other offers by visiting the website.



'TAQADDAM' SECOND YEAR PROGRAM ENDS

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The British Council close "Taqaddam" second year program in the "Make it Happen" event, with key partners involved in this project HSBC Bank Middle East Limited, and Spark+Mettle.

Taqaddam, meaning 'Move Forward' in Arabic, is an innovative, student-facing programme that develops enduring life skills in

15-16 year olds across several countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The program combines online learning with practical interactive face to face workshops for teachers and young participants ending in an exciting inter-school idea-sharing event at the end of the program. The program aims to increase the chances and outlook for participants, by helping them to reach their full potential through

developing the personal and social skills they need to make a positive contribution to their communities and wider society.

The program does not aim to give young participants skills focused specifically on employment as many programs do, but provides them with a wider set of enduring skills that they will need to be more successful and better prepared for life supporting them in

their life journeys, to find employment or undertake further study.

Make It Happen! is an event that showcases interesting and exciting ideas created by Taqaddam students. These ideas are developed through the Taqaddam journey using learning from the program. Students have been asked to think about what inspires them in our communities, get out of their comfort

zones and try new things, appreciate the people that live in our communities, and think about and apply things that are important to us as individuals. During the Make it Happen event, 24 projects were showcased from different boys and girls schools across different education areas. H.E the Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr. Mohammad Al-Faris honored the top 3 projects at the end of the event.



REFUGEE AWARENESS AT KNES

The Kuwait National English School has always believed in keeping learners informed in current affairs taking place around the globe, in accordance with Global Citizenship as well as a civic duty to teach learners about current events and create an awareness in all matters, not only in Kuwait but abroad.

Recently, an assembly was delivered to

our Secondary learners at KNES, on the topic of refugees. The assembly informed learners on the crisis taking place all around the globe; not only on the negative impact it has on the world but a positive message was conveyed through a presentation on what can be done to support refugees around the world. Learners from both year 7 and year 8 took part in the assembly, speaking in front

of the school; sharing their thoughts on the situation in the form of creative writing and poetry expressing their feelings on global refugee crisis. The assembly was a great success and students and staff received the message positively. The Director, who shared a personal experience on the matter, relived a solemn, special moment.

Our school mission prides itself at keep-

ing our learners actively informed on current events throughout the year, allowing student participation and creating awareness on not only refugees, but also, all matters both past and current, that affect the lives of both students in the school and around the world. Poems and essays were written and read by the students in commemoration of the assembly.

BADSHAH TO PERFORM LIVE IN AL-SHAHEED PARK

Indian Youth Society (IYS) proudly announces for the first time ever in Kuwait the Dynamic King of Rap 'Badshah' on 28 April at Al-Shaheed Park Amphitheater. 'Badshah' has ruled the hearts of billions with his super hit rap numbers adding up to his fame. Be that the Tamma Tamma Again, Humma song, Kaala Chashma, Akkad Bakkad, Selfie le le re, Saturday Saturday, Abhi to party Shuruhuyee Hai, the Break up song, Djwaleybabu and many more. This young stylish Punjabi Civil Engineer from Delhi captured the chart-list and will be in Kuwait to energize Shaheed Park and have you tapping your feet to his unique beats. Don't miss the opportunity to see him live at 7 pm in Al-Shaheed Park, Kuwait City on Friday, 28 April, 2017.

DJ Waley Babu Fame, Singer Astha Gill and famous Punjabi singer Gurinder Rai will also be performing live with Badshah for the first time ever in Kuwait with his full live band and group of musicians. An amazing experience awaits those eager fans, and the evening is prepared to be an extremely memorable one.

OSN MOVIES
ACTION

- 00:00 Revenge Of The Green Dragons
- 02:00 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 04:00 Road Wars
- 06:00 Pompeii
- 08:00 Batman: Bad Blood
- 10:00 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 11:45 San Andreas
- 13:45 Tomorrow Never Dies
- 15:45 Last Action Hero
- 18:00 Lucy
- 19:45 The World Is Not Enough
- 22:00 Ironclad: Battle For Blood

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:15 Swamp Brothers
- 00:45 Bondi Vet
- 01:40 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 02:35 Tanked
- 03:25 North America
- 04:15 Gator Boys
- 05:02 Swamp Brothers
- 05:27 Swamp Brothers
- 05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 06:36 Swamp Brothers
- 07:00 Swamp Brothers
- 07:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 08:15 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 09:10 North America
- 10:05 Tanked
- 11:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 11:55 Bondi Vet
- 12:50 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 13:45 Gator Boys
- 14:40 North America
- 15:35 Tanked
- 16:30 Swamp Brothers
- 16:55 Swamp Brothers
- 17:25 Wild Animal Rescue
- 18:20 The Pool Master
- 19:15 Tanked
- 20:10 North America
- 21:05 Wild Animal Rescue
- 22:00 The Pool Master
- 22:55 Gator Boys
- 23:50 Swamp Brothers

BBC FIRST

- 00:10 Doctors
- 00:45 Frankie
- 01:40 Unforgotten
- 02:30 Silent Witness

- 01:45 Tosh.0
- 02:10 South Park
- 02:35 South Park
- 03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 04:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 04:40 Ridiculousness
- 05:05 Disaster Date
- 05:30 MLE St Patrick's Day Chowdown
- 06:20 Life Or Debt
- 07:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 08:00 Disaster Date
- 08:25 Disaster Date
- 08:50 Ridiculousness
- 09:15 Workaholics
- 09:40 Disaster Date
- 10:05 Ridiculousness
- 10:30 Impractical Jokers UK
- 10:55 Hungry Investors
- 11:45 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 12:10 Lip Sync Battle
- 12:35 Impractical Jokers UK
- 13:00 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 13:50 Ridiculousness
- 14:15 Tattoo Disasters
- 14:40 Tattoo Disasters
- 15:05 Workaholics
- 15:30 Disaster Date
- 15:55 Disaster Date
- 16:20 Impractical Jokers UK
- 16:45 Lip Sync Battle
- 17:10 Workaholics
- 17:35 MLE St Patrick's Day Chowdown
- 18:25 Ridiculousness
- 18:50 Disaster Date
- 19:13 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagaf
- 19:43 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagaf
- 20:13 South Park
- 20:37 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 21:30 Tba- Series
- 22:00 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show
- 22:50 Tosh.0
- 23:15 Tosh.0
- 23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

Discovery Family

- 00:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 01:20 React To That
- 01:55 React To That
- 02:10 World's Funniest Fails
- 03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:25 Destroyed In Seconds

- 11:15 That's So Raven
- 11:40 Sonny With A Chance
- 12:05 Sonny With A Chance
- 12:30 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 13:15 Gravity Falls
- 13:40 Hank Zipzer
- 14:05 Star Darlings
- 14:10 Austin & Ally
- 14:35 Jessie
- 15:00 Bunk'd
- 15:25 Kirby Buckets
- 15:50 Sunny Bunnies
- 15:55 The Zucchini
- 16:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 16:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:10 Liv And Maddie
- 17:35 Descendants Wicked World
- 17:40 Girl Meets World
- 18:05 Stuck In The Middle
- 18:30 Bunk'd
- 18:55 Bizaardvark
- 19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:25 Alex & Co.
- 19:50 Jessie
- 20:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 20:20 Backstage
- 20:45 Austin & Ally
- 21:10 The Next Step
- 21:35 Cracked
- 21:40 Disney The Lodge
- 22:05 Girl Meets World
- 22:30 That's So Raven
- 22:55 Star Darlings
- 23:00 Good Luck Charlie
- 23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

Disney Junior

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

- 13:55 Storage Hunters
- 14:20 Gold Rush
- 15:10 Marooned With Ed Stafford
- 16:00 Railroad Australia
- 16:50 Fast N' Loud
- 17:40 Street Outlaws
- 18:30 How Do They Do It?
- 18:55 How Do They Do It?
- 19:20 Marooned With Ed Stafford
- 20:10 Storage Hunters
- 20:35 Storage Hunters
- 21:00 World's Top 5
- 21:50 You Have Been Warned
- 22:40 Deadliest Job Interview
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud

Disney XD

- 06:00 Gravity Falls
- 06:25 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 06:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 07:15 Milo Murphy's Law
- 07:25 The 7D
- 07:40 Supa Strikas
- 08:05 Two More Eggs
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Counterfeit Cat
- 09:00 Lab Rats
- 09:25 Lab Rats
- 09:50 Future-Worm!
- 10:15 Two More Eggs
- 10:20 Pair Of Kings
- 10:45 Pair Of Kings
- 11:10 Danger Mouse
- 11:35 Supa Strikas
- 12:00 Supa Strikas
- 12:30 Gravity Falls
- 12:55 Annedroids
- 13:20 Atomic Puppet
- 13:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Mighty Med
- 14:40 Disney Cookbook
- 15:05 Lab Rats
- 15:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 15:55 Right Now Kapow
- 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

EHD

- 00:05 Botched
- 00:55 Botched
- 01:50 El News
- 02:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:50 WAGs Miami
- 04:40 WAGs Miami
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 Just Jillian
- 06:55 El News
- 07:10 Just Jillian
- 08:10 El News
- 09:10 WAGs
- 10:05 WAGs
- 11:00 WAGs
- 12:00 El News
- 12:15 So Cosmo
- 13:10 So Cosmo
- 14:05 So Cosmo
- 15:00 El News
- 15:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 16:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 18:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 19:00 El News
- 20:00 Rob & Chyna
- 21:00 Rob & Chyna
- 22:00 Rob & Chyna
- 23:00 El News
- 23:15 Famously Single

food network

- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Man Finds Food
- 01:30 Man Finds Food
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa

- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Cooking For Real
- 09:30 Cooking For Real
- 10:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 10:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 13:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Cooking For Real
- 17:30 Cooking For Real
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Chopped Junior
- 20:00 Chopped
- 21:00 The Great Food Truck Race
- 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:00 Guy's Grocery Games

itv HD CHOICE

- 00:10 The Chase
- 01:00 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coronation Street
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:30 Guess This House
- 03:25 The Secret Photos Of The Duke & Duchess Of Windsor
- 04:20 Brief Encounters
- 05:15 Come Date With Me Australia
- 05:45 Come Date With Me Australia
- 06:10 The Chase
- 07:05 Guess This House
- 08:00 The Secret Photos Of The Duke & Duchess Of Windsor
- 09:00 Brief Encounters
- 10:00 Come Date With Me Australia
- 10:30 Come Date With Me Australia
- 10:55 The Chase
- 11:50 Guess This House
- 12:45 Emmerdale
- 13:15 Coronation Street
- 13:45 Coronation Street
- 14:15 The Chase
- 15:10 Guess This House
- 16:00 Broadchurch
- 16:55 Broadchurch
- 17:50 Come Date With Me Australia
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Coronation Street
- 19:45 Coronation Street
- 20:10 Guess This House
- 21:00 Broadchurch
- 21:55 Broadchurch
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Coronation Street
- 23:40 Coronation Street

HQ HD

- 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 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 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 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 11:00 The Universe
- 12:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
- 13:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 14:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
- 15:00 Ancient Aliens
- 16:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 17:00 The Universe
- 18:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 19:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 20:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
- 21:00 Ancient Aliens
- 22:00 Ancient Top 10
- 23:00 The Universe

HISTORY HD

- 00:20 Ice Road Truckers
- 01:10 Fifth Gear
- 02:00 Swamp People
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Lost In Transmission
- 06:50 Ice Road Truckers
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Hunting Hitler



WAR HORSE ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 11:50 Battle 300
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 16:00 Lost In Transmission
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Fifth Gear
- 18:30 Swamp People
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Big Easy Motors
- 21:25 Big Easy Motors
- 21:50 Walk In Fire
- 22:40 Forged In Fire
- 23:30 American Pickers

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 00:15 Sky High
- 02:15 Marvel Super Hero Adventures: Frost Fight
- 03:30 The Shaggy Dog
- 05:30 Hercules (1997)
- 07:30 Marvel Super Hero Adventures: Frost Fight
- 09:00 Cars
- 11:00 The Shaggy Dog
- 13:00 Lilo & Stitch
- 15:00 Finding Nemo
- 17:00 The Sorcerer's Apprentice
- 19:00 Peter Pan Live!
- 21:15 Marvel's Iron Man & Captain America: Heroes United
- 22:30 Finding Nemo

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

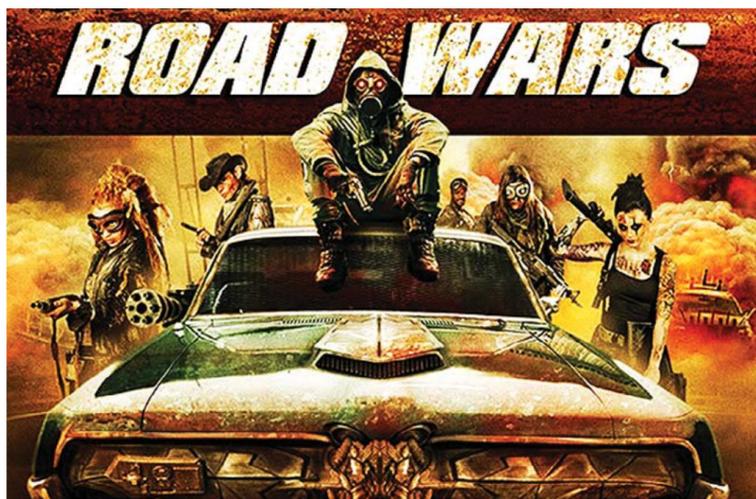
- 00:00 Correspondence
- 02:00 Still Alice
- 04:00 50 To 1
- 06:00 Foreverland
- 08:00 Beyond I Disappear
- 10:00 My Old Lady
- 12:00 Still Alice
- 14:00 And Justice For All
- 16:00 Ronaldo
- 17:45 Chariots Of Fire
- 20:00 The Joy Luck Club
- 22:30 A Little Chaos

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 00:45 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 02:30 Marco Macaco
- 04:15 Rugrats In Paris: The Movie
- 06:00 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 07:45 The Heart Of The Oak
- 09:15 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 11:00 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 12:30 Marco Macaco
- 14:00 Jack The Hero Dog
- 16:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 18:00 The Nutcracker Sweet
- 20:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 21:45 Jack The Hero Dog
- 23:30 The Heart Of The Oak

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:30 X-Men: The Last Stand
- 03:30 Invictus
- 06:00 A Passage To India
- 08:45 X-Men: The Last Stand
- 10:45 Sherlock Holmes
- 13:00 War Horse
- 15:30 The Fugitive
- 17:45 X-Men: First Class
- 20:00 Cradle 2 The Grave
- 22:00 The Woman In Black 2: Angel Of Death



ROAD WARS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 03:20 Silent Witness
- 04:10 Doctors
- 04:40 Doctors
- 05:10 Stella
- 06:00 Death In Paradise
- 06:55 Doctors
- 07:25 Doctors
- 07:55 Father Brown
- 08:40 Stella
- 09:25 Death In Paradise
- 10:20 Father Brown
- 11:05 Doctors
- 11:35 Doctors
- 12:05 Stella
- 12:50 Death In Paradise
- 13:45 Doctors
- 14:15 Doctors
- 14:45 Father Brown
- 15:30 Stella
- 16:15 Death In Paradise
- 17:10 The Coroner
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Father Brown
- 20:00 Benidorm
- 21:00 Last Tango In Halifax
- 22:00 Silent Witness
- 22:50 Silent Witness
- 23:40 Doctors

crime & investigation network

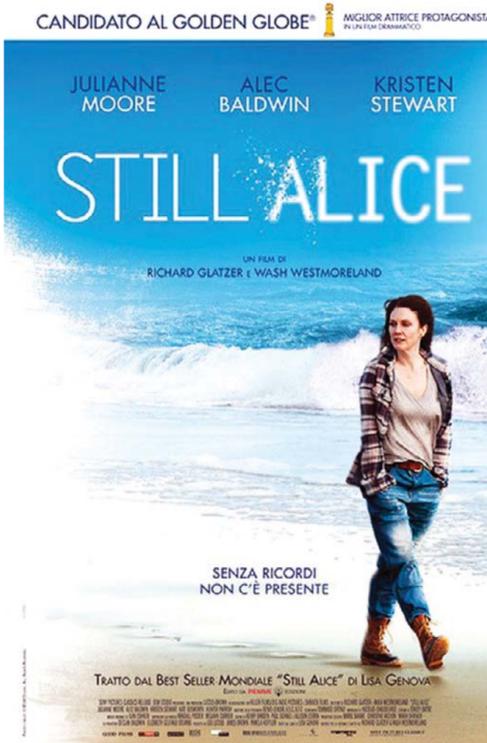
- 00:00 It Takes A Killer
- 00:30 It Takes A Killer
- 01:00 Killer Kids Specials
- 02:00 Crime Stories
- 03:00 Motive For Murder
- 04:00 It Takes A Killer
- 04:30 It Takes A Killer
- 05:00 Killer Kids Specials
- 06:00 My Crazy Ex
- 07:00 My Crazy Ex
- 08:00 Evil Up Close
- 09:00 It Takes A Killer
- 09:30 It Takes A Killer
- 10:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 11:00 The First 48
- 12:00 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 Gangs Of Britain With Gary And Martin Kemp
- 21:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 22:00 My Crazy Ex
- 23:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera

Disney Channel HD

- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:25 Hank Zipzer
- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:55 Hank Zipzer
- 04:15 The Hive
- 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:25 Hank Zipzer
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 The 7D
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:25 Jessie
- 07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 07:55 The Zucchini
- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Bunk'd
- 09:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 09:35 Bizaardvark
- 10:00 Shake It Up
- 10:25 Shake It Up
- 10:50 That's So Raven

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:05 Broad City
- 00:30 South Park
- 00:55 South Park
- 01:20 Tosh.0



STILL ALICE ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

- 00:05 Botched
- 00:55 Botched
- 01:50 El News
- 02:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:50 WAGs Miami
- 04:40 WAGs Miami
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 Just Jillian
- 06:55 El News
- 07:10 Just Jillian
- 08:10 El News
- 09:10 WAGs
- 10:05 WAGs
- 11:00 WAGs
- 12:00 El News
- 12:15 So Cosmo
- 13:10 So Cosmo
- 14:05 So Cosmo
- 15:00 El News
- 15:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 16:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 18:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 19:00 El News
- 20:00 Rob & Chyna
- 21:00 Rob & Chyna
- 22:00 Rob & Chyna
- 23:00 El News
- 23:15 Famously Single

CLASSIFIEDS



Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



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

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

As a part of its development activities in Kuwait, a reputed food services company is looking for candidates to fill the below positions on Local release basis.

REQUIRED URGENTLY

DIETITIAN

The candidate should have

- Diploma/Degree in Dietetics and Nutrition.
- Good command of English and prepared to work autonomously.
- At least 5 years experience in any reputed hospital or catering industries.
- Candidates fluent in Arabic are preferred but not compulsory.

Commercial Assistant

- Graduate in any discipline preference will be given to Business Management graduates with Specialization in Marketing
- Proficient in English Language (Oral and Written), knowledge of Arabic will be an added advantage
- Candidates with minimum two years of relevant experience handling similar responsibilities preferred.
- Higher level of proficiency in handling computers, with expertise in MS office programs.

Interested candidates having transferable Visa No. 18 may send CVs with recent photograph to the following contacts:

Email : mailtotag@gmail.com
 or Fax: 24313152

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Chengal Rashid Khan S/o Abdul Rahim, Rangrej holder of Indian Passport No. M5457594 & Civil ID No. 274040205076, has changed my name Abdul Rashid, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5299) 19-4-2017

I, Sangaraju Subramanyam s/o Subbaraju, holder of Indian Passport No. J7175997 and Civil ID No. 283010802296 has changed my name to Surapuraju Subramanyam hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5297) 18-4-2017

FOR SALE

CONTAINERS
 20FT, 40FT & PORTABLE CABINS

CONTACT: **60620079**

ROOM AVAILABLE IN C-A/C flat for Asian couple/ Family/Working Ladies in Khaitan Airport Road. Just one minute to all routes bus stop. Tel: 51614467. (C 5298) 18-4-2017

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 19/4/2017				Departure Flights on Wednesday 19/4/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	KAC	645	Muscat	15:10
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	KAC	562	Amman	15:10
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	KAC	502	Beirut	15:25
KAC	102	London	00:55	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	KAC	118	New York	15:40
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	SAW	705	Damascus	15:50
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	FDK	801	Damascus	16:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50	SVA	504	Madinah	16:00
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	RJA	640	Amman	16:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	FDB	051	Dubai	16:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	JZR	125	Bahrain	16:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
BAW	157	London	06:05	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	177	Dubai	17:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	QTR	1080	Doha	18:05
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	512	Mashhad	18:40
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
IRC	6511	ABD	09:10	KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	620	Dubai	19:50
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	104	London	20:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KNE	381	Taif	20:10
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	JZR	189	Dubai	20:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	KAC	564	Amman	21:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:05
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	13:15	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
IRC	6521	Lamerd	14:00	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	BBC	043	Dhaka	22:30
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15	JZR	185	Dubai	22:55
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	JZR	241	Amman	22:55
KAC	364	Colombo	14:15	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
KAC	618	Doha	14:20	PIA	239	Sialkot	23:40
IRC	526	Mashhad	14:30				
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:35				
JZR	357	Mashhad	14:50				

CROSSWORD 1583



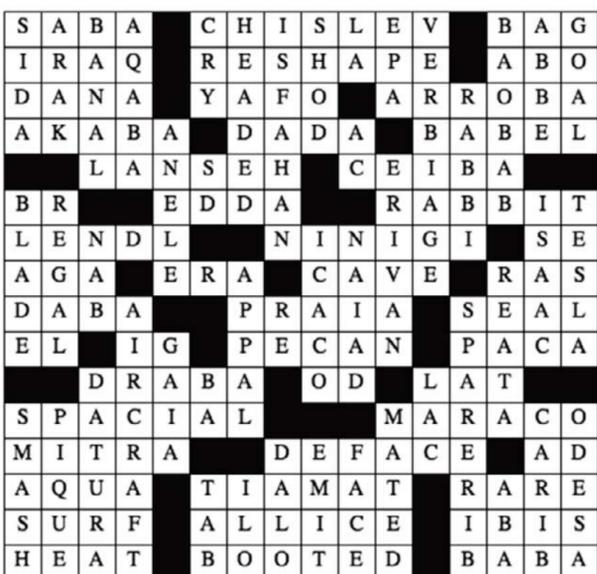
ACROSS

- (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
- The capital of Malta.
- An accountant certified by the state.
- (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.
- Pick consisting of a steel rod with a sharp point.
- A human limb.
- Send a signal by waving a flag or a light according to a certain code.
- A town in southwestern Idaho.
- The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
- Not openly expressed.
- God of wealth and love.
- Being or occurring at an advanced period of time or after a usual or expected time.
- An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
- A nearly horizontal passage from the surface into a mine.
- English illustrator of several of Dickens' novels (1815-1882).
- Danish philologist whose work on Old Norse pioneered in the field of comparative linguistics (1787-1832).
- Having lips or parts that resemble lips.
- A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
- The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
- Being one more than fifty.
- An ancient branch of the Semitic languages.
- Swedish theologian (1688-1772).
- An orchid of the genus *Aerides*.
- Relating to or having or hearing with only one ear.
- The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- A unit of luminous flux equal to the amount of light given out through a solid angle of 1 steradian by a point source of 1 candela intensity radiating uniformly in all directions.
- A flat tortilla with various fillings piled on it.
- The bill in a restaurant.
- Strong woody fibers obtained especially from the phloem of from various plants.
- Sect of Orthodox Jews who follow the Mosaic Law strictly.
- An athlete who plays basketball.
- The fur of a rabbit.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- A challenge to do something dangerous or foolhardy.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- (Japanese) An ancient ritual for preparing and serving and drinking tea.
- A primeval personification of air and breath.
- A doctor's degree in education.
- Showing a sense of guilt.
- An aromatic ointment used in antiquity.

DOWN

- (British) Street lined with building that were originally private stables but have been remodeled as dwellings.
- The seventh month of the Hindu calendar.
- An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
- Of or relating to the kingdom of Kuwait or its people.
- A period of sleeplessness.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- The linear extent in space from one end to the other.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- An instance or single occasion for some event.
- A protocol developed for the internet to get data from one network device to another.
- Jordan's port.
- An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- Capital and largest city of the Czech Republic.
- Type genus of the Amniidae.
- A state in northwestern North America.
- The back side of the neck.
- Any of several Orthodox Jewish sects who reject modern secular culture and many of whom do not recognize the spiritual authority of the modern state of Israel.
- A genus of Mustelidae.
- A mildly narcotic analgesic drug (trade name Darvon) related to methadone but less addictive.
- Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).
- French romantic writer (1766-1817).
- A member of the Siouan people of the Kansas river valley in Kansas.
- One or more recordings issued together.
- A relative position or degree of value in a graded group.
- Having the head uncovered.
- Influential German idealist philosopher (1724-1804).
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- The basic unit of money in Gambia.
- British playwright (1911-1977).
- The time of day immediately following sunset.
- A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
- A port city in southwestern Iran.
- Done or occurring in a brief period of time.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- A West African language closely related to Fula.
- A general direction in which something tends to move.
- Exhibiting or restored to vigorous good health.
- A unit of length (in United States and Britain) equal to one twelfth of a foot.
- Knock unconscious or senseless.
- The federal department responsible for safeguarding national security.
- Floor covering consisting of a piece of thick heavy fabric (usually with nap or pile).
- (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Many of your friends from the past still keep in contact with you and you keep in contact with them. It is fun to see the kids in each family grow and prosper. Having so many friends in so many different places makes it fun to travel and visit and even entertain the idea of trading homes occasionally. A new relationship coming to you may be based first on a sort of friendship. You know there are more friends to enjoy and someday a special person will be available to share life experiences with you. All people have something special to bring to the experience of living and they create wonderful challenges as well as simple pleasures. A new friend may take an interest in making movies or you may decide to try your hand at some form of art.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are in a mood of self-enjoyment this morning and may express yourself with much confidence. You may see value in or feel love for an older person or someone in authority. You appreciate and discover the beauty in your own life and in those around you. At the same time, everything could take on added value and importance. Be careful that you do not overspend or indulge too much just now. You may find yourself enjoying a long conversation, writing a letter or making a special phone call this afternoon. You feel good when all the people in your life are accounted for and in a healthy place. The preparations for a get-together with your friends will show off your abilities to create a positive and beautiful atmosphere.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Partnerships are accentuated and through this avenue, you will find much can be accomplished. When given the opportunity, you generously want to share your visions, ideals and ideas with other people—they can be spellbound for hours. You might want to pay attention to the interest that someone shows you and learn when to back away from a conversation if others are not interested. Today, however, you will encourage someone to move forward with plans for some particular goal that this person might not have believed attainable. With all the communication exchange today, you may find a new interest. You may really become involved with the art of handwriting or the art of numerology. This is a time of harmony, fun and success.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You could be very popular this day, especially with superiors or in relation to your work. You may find that you enjoy your job or the responsibility it entails more than usual. Your dealings with money will be successful as well. If your attitude is positive, this is what you will project and if your attitude is negative you will project this as well. You do not have a hidden agenda and others know what to expect from you. Make sure your feelings compliment your goodness. You may need the emotional balance of a friendly person today. A kind of romantic longing characterizes your approach to life. This could mean a longing for a soul mate or a yearning to save the world; it could mean carrying a torch as well; patience.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Some previous plans that are finally developing into a most positive end result will boost the mood for you and those around you today; whatever the case this is a day that is approached with high energy and an attitude that gets much accomplished. Success is easy to find. Others will notice your efficiency. Your inner resources and emotions are accentuated. This afternoon new projects come to your attention. There are interesting subjects for your evaluation and a relationship from the past may come to your attention later this afternoon. Find time to relax and commune with nature in order to balance your energies before the evening begins. Avoid actively pursuing new social objectives. There is a small package for you to open this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Work progresses fairly well today; obtaining and exchanging information take on more importance. To complete important work, you may need certain information from others—you can successfully accomplish this with your smooth professional manner. If there is someone you are trying to influence, this would be the day when you would be most successful. Setting time aside this evening for family conversations makes for a closer knit family and the feeling of a good support system for all. Helping a young person with a hobby may aid in his or her creativeness and provide opportunities for one-on-one conversations. You work on a project this evening while this young person enjoys his or her hobby—perhaps you sew, repair furniture, etc.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Stay in touch with your own sense of direction. Many things come to your attention this morning and staying focused may become very difficult. Work particularly hard now to stay focused and complete projects. This is an exciting day and you could become distracted from what you really want to accomplish. An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of you is emphasized now. Diet, exercise and work become important routines now. You want to feel good about yourself and the way you do things. A healthy change in your diet and a new exercise program are positive plans. Perhaps you can bring a friend or family member along when you exercise. You will find this time speeds right along when shared with a friend.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

An appointment or a meeting signifies the need to be professionally well dressed. Your presentation or report will bring you respect. Considering you set the pace for others to follow, you will do well to keep current with trends and styles. Allocating certain responsibilities to trusted individuals will gain excellent results. You are in a planning mood this afternoon and are able to view all the alternate paths. You can see the road ahead and will make the right choices. One of the most common human experiences is disappointment. You help a member of your family recover and learn from a disappointment that might be felt today. Most people see disappointment as a downer; you teach that it can be a tool for correction, learning and growth.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A feeling of inadequacy or frustration may occur today. It is important to look at the possibility that failures at work may not be your fault. You are, however, to be commended for your dedication and perseverance and can find answers or solve a problem without the stress most would feel. You crave organization and you want to get things accomplished. Good focus and concentration make most any task run well. Be aware of an impossible standard and take it easier on everyone—including you. A little humor could go a long way this day. It is your responsibility to expand your vision without losing the innocence of your convictions. Do not lose your ability to play. Borrow a relative or friend's child if you have none and play.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Clear some space so that you can work more easily. Hard work and trying to make contact with higher-ups seem to take priority. Problem is this activity of trying to contact certain people may be a bit difficult. You have time to think through what you want to say—expressing yourself is done very well. You want to get things accomplished and this may end up a very productive day. After work your creative side kicks in as you help share your talents in the art of sewing, cooking or gardening. You may be surprised at the result of your effort with this teaching. You could become a teacher or others could teach you. Health habits and work goals also come to your attention and you may decide to set a few goals. A sense of harmony makes this a happy time.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Watch what you say to a new person today—you will be protecting your best interests in your future job security. Speculating or participating in sports may be scheduled this afternoon. Perhaps you and your co-workers have an ongoing tournament. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends and enjoying them as well. Excessive emotional energy could produce flare-ups, harsh words and arguments. Be aware of this possibility and when you feel yourself becoming highly emotional, take a break in order to refocus. Find ways to relax this evening by doing something really funny, renting a comedy video, tickling a loved one, etc. Laughter is the best way to promote a healing and get rid of any excessive negative energy.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Job-related subjects take precedence this morning. New projects turn out to be more successful than you had previously thought. There seems to be very little that you cannot do today—the day is yours. You have the energy and wisdom to tackle any problem that comes to your attention. A lot of personal and sensitive psychological material from a mate may be just as important for you as for your mate. You may look back on this time as very transforming. There could be a temporary estrangement from a loved one today but if you leave this alone it will be turned around for the positive. Being more closely involved with another person may well become your highest priority. Marriage, contracts and partnerships are seen as keys to success and happiness.

WORD SEARCH

Valentine's Day

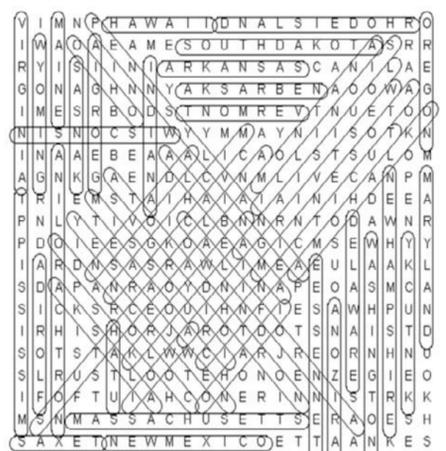
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a popular Valentine's Day item.



- ADMIRER
- ADORE
- AFFECTION
- ATTRACTION
- BEAU
- BELOVED
- BOYFRIEND
- CANDLES
- CANDY
- CHOCOLATES
- COUPLE
- CRUSH
- CUPID
- DARLING
- DATE
- DEAR
- DEVOTION
- FANCY
- FEBRUARY
- FLAME
- FLOWERS
- FONDNESS
- FOREVER
- FRIENDSHIP
- GIFT
- GIRLFRIEND
- HEARTS
- JEWELRY
- LIKE
- LOVEBIRDS
- LOVERS
- PARTNER
- PROPOSAL
- RELATIONSHIP
- RESTAURANT
- ROMANCE
- ROSES
- SENTIMENT
- SUITOR
- SWEETHEART

Yesterday's Solution

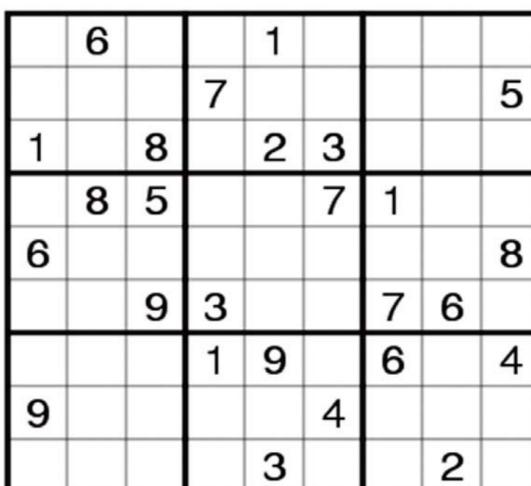
USA States



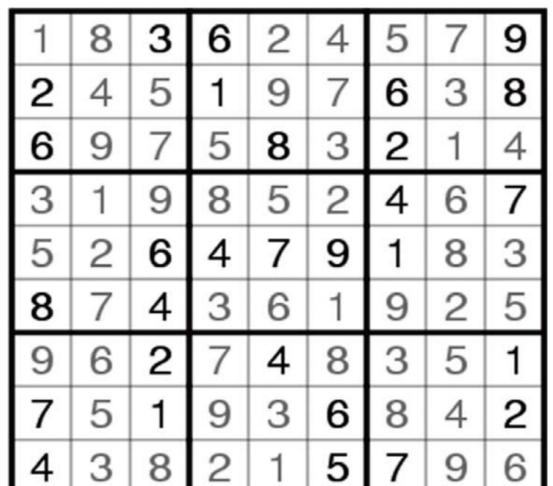
- ALABAMA
- ALASKA
- ARIZONA
- ARKANSAS
- CALIFORNIA
- COLORADO
- CONNECTICUT
- DELAWARE
- FLORIDA
- GEORGIA
- HAWAII
- IDAH
- ILLINOIS
- INDIANA
- IOWA
- KANSAS
- KENTUCKY
- LOUISIANA
- MAINE
- MARYLAND
- MASSACHUSETTS
- MICHIGAN
- MINNESOTA
- MISSISSIPPI
- MISSOURI
- MONTANA
- NEBRASKA
- NEVADA
- NEW HAMPSHIRE
- NEW JERSEY
- NEW MEXICO
- NEW YORK
- NORTH CAROLINA
- NORTH DAKOTA
- OHIO
- OKLAHOMA
- OREGON
- PENNSYLVANIA
- RHODE ISLAND
- SOUTH CAROLINA
- SOUTH DAKOTA
- TENNESSEE
- TEXAS
- UTAH
- VERMONT
- VIRGINIA
- WASHINGTON
- WEST VIRGINIA
- WISCONSIN
- WYOMING

The hidden sentence is: IN AMERICA ANY BOY MAY BECOME PRESIDENT AND I SUPPOSE IT'S JUST ONE OF THE RISKS HE TAKES

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
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
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 18/04/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 29 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h with a chance for scattered rain
By Night : Cloudy to partly cloudy with variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered rain that might be thundery at times

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Expected Weather	partly cloudy + raising dust	sunny + raising dust	sunny + raising dust	sunny + raising dust
Min Temp °C	24	22	21	23
Max Temp °C	34	35	35	36
Wind Direction	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	15 - 40	20 - 45	25 - 45	25 - 45

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	22		28	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20		29	
ABDALLY	19		28	
BUBYAN	20		27	
JAHRA	21		28	
FAILAKA ISLAND	21		27	
SALMIYAH	23		28	
AHMADI	23		29	
JAL ALIYAH	19		28	
QAROH ISLAND	22		26	
UMM AL-MARADEM	22		26	
NUWASIB	21		30	
WAFRA	20		29	
SALMY	17		27	
MUTRIBA	19		29	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	27
Min Temp (°C)	22
Max Rel Hum (%)	66
Min Rel Hum (%)	31
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	57 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	05:18
Sunset	18:16

Prayer Times

Fajr	03:55
Sunrise	05:18
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:22
Sunset	18:16
Isha	19:37

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	2455050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	2455050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duwaisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	2455050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
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TRAVEL



Borobudur



Candi Mendut Temple



A 500 years tree at Candi Mendut Temple

Indonesia: A fairytale on earth



(Third left) A group photo shows the Sultan of Yogyakarta Hamengkubuwono, (fourth left) Kuwait Times reporter Faten Omar and other media journalists are seen with (second right) Minister Counselor from the Indonesian Embassy to Kuwait, Gantosori Tanjung and (sixth right) Secretary of the Ambassador from the Indonesian Embassy to Kuwait, Muhammad Hassa Rifqi.

By Faten Omar

A land gifted with pristine beaches, quasi-active volcanoes and fairytale landscapes. Kuwait Times recently traveled to Indonesia to explore the unexpected beauty of one of Asia's treasures. For 10 days, we traveled across the island nation to visit Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Bali, Indonesia's most popular tourist destination.

Beautiful Indonesia

Indonesia is situated between the Indian and Pacific oceans and is the world's largest island country, with more than 17,000 individual islands. With a population of 255 million people, of whom more than 210 million are Muslims, Indonesia is also the world's largest Muslim country.

A number of religions are practiced in the country, and their collective influence on the country's political, economic and cultural life is significant. The Indonesian constitution guarantees freedom of religion. The government recognizes six official religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

Tourism is one of Indonesia's most lucrative industries, bringing in \$11.8 billion in revenue in 2016. Around 240,000 visitors from the Gulf explored Indonesia last year. Following on the heels of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz's visit to Indonesia earlier this year, Gulfie tourism is expected to rise significantly this year as well.

Jakarta: Commerce and Diversity

The cultural, linguistic and visual melange of Jakarta will enthrall first-time visitors. The historic influence of Javanese, Malay, Chinese, Arab, Indian and European cultures is visible in the capital city's architecture, language and cuisine. Jakarta is a city of surprises where you can enjoy the beauty of nature while at the same time the conveniences of modern roads, projects and skyscrapers. It is also the headquarters of the ASEAN Secretariat as well as the headquarters of many of the world's largest companies operating in the country.

Journalists from Kuwait, including this intrepid reporter, were given the opportunity to meet Deputy Governor for Industry, Trade and Transportation Sutanto Soehodho, who spoke about the progress and development of Jakarta and projects that attract investors from all over the world. For example, the city now has around 182 shopping malls, including all high-end international brands. "Jakarta is Indonesia's most populous city, with more than 12.5 million people during daylight hours, and slightly down to about 10 million permanent residents after work hours," he said.

Soehodho revealed that the city government is planning a major metro project that will help ease Jakarta's traffic congestion. The \$11-billion subway, funded by the Japanese government, will be completed in 2019. Jakarta is also home to Sea World Ancol, the biggest aquarium in Southeast Asia. The aquarium offers visitors unbelievable experiences with aquatic life. The Sharkquarium allows you to feed a shark, while the Antasena Tunnel, an 80-m-long tunnel with a transparent roof, allows you to feel like you're walking underwater without getting wet. Each area - freshwater, dugong, ecosystem or deep sea - provides an enriching and satisfying experience for families and visitors.

This reporter also visited the beautiful Taman Mini Indonesia Indah - the beautiful Indonesia

Miniature Park. The park houses the entirety of Indonesian culture, architecture and society replicated in miniature. Visitors are amazed by the traditional houses and details of Sumatra, the largest island in western Indonesia.

Yogyakarta: Soul of Indonesia

If Jakarta is powering the economy and industries, Yogyakarta is its soul, keeping the spirit of Indonesia in perfect balance and harmony. The center of Javanese arts and culture, the city is rich in culture and customs, governed independently by a traditional sultanate system which differs from the rest of Indonesia.

The palace in Yogyakarta is the cultural and

After our tour of Yogyakarta Palace, the hereditary sultan of Yogyakarta Hamengkubuwono X welcomed this reporter and our colleagues inside his palace. During the meeting, Hamengkubuwono said Yogyakarta is a cultural center in the Far East region, noting that it has about 117 institutes and universities, making it a unique cultural city. More than 3,000 college students study annually in Yogyakarta, including hundreds of foreign students from China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and other countries in East Asia.

Hamengkubuwono noted that an international airport will open in 2019, and the city hopes to attract visitors and tourists from the



Borobudur



Students with disabilities at a special class in the Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga University.



Photo shows the Sultan Yogyakarta Palace



Stupa Restaurant

political heart of this fascinating city. Known as kraton, its residents are employed by the sultan. The innermost group of buildings, where the current sultan still resides, was built between 1755 and 1756. European-style touches to the interior were added in the 1920s. Structurally, this is one of the finest examples of Javanese palace architecture, providing a series of luxurious halls and spacious courtyards and pavilions. A large part of the kraton is used as a museum and holds an extensive collection, including gifts from European monarchs. One of the most interesting rooms contains the royal family tree, old photographs of grand mass weddings and portraits of the former sultans of Yogyakarta.

Gulf and Middle East. Already, the city has inked agreements to launch direct flights with Emirates and Qatar Airways. The sultan pointed out that the economy of Yogyakarta depends on trade, craft and agriculture.

Land of learning

As we were in the center of culture and science, we did not miss the opportunity to visit several academic institutions in Yogyakarta, such as the University of Gadjah Mada and the Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, which highlighted the bright side of Indonesian academia. The Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University offers study programs in the field of Islamic science in adab, dawah, sharia, tarbiya, usuluddin, science and technology and social science and humanities. It was founded in 1950.

Prof Dr Yudian Wahyudi, present of the university, said the college provides a superior education in the integration and development of Islamic studies and science. He expressed hope that there would be cooperation with academic institutions in Kuwait, especially in the field of Arabic language for female students, noting that he is aware there is a center for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in Kuwait, which enhances opportunities for cooperation in this field.

Sunan University cooperates with many universities around the world, including the Al-Azhar and Suez universities in Egypt, as well as universities in Turkey, Germany, the Netherlands, Thailand, Malaysia, Russia and Singapore.

Pillar of educational awakening

Meanwhile, University of Gadjah Mada, which was established in 1949, is one of the oldest universities in Indonesia. It serves as a pillar of educational awakening in Indonesia, and purports to be a defender and disseminator of Pancasila



Photo shows the bust of Sultan Hamengkubuwono.

TRAVEL



Boats are seen at Sunda Kelapa Port



Batavia Marina Sunda Kelapa Restaurant



Jakarta Airport

(official philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state). "Gadjah Mada University collaborates with more than 300 partners from outside Indonesia - in America, Europe, Middle East and Asia," said Hargo Utomo, Director of Business Development and Incubation. The university's buildings and facilities accommodate more than 55,000 students, including 2,000 from outside Indonesia. University officials expressed their readiness to receive students from Gulf countries, especially after opening the way for an exchange of students with UAE universities.



Sea World in Jakarta



Metro project in process in Jakarta



National Monument

(Brahma), preserver (Vishnu) and destroyer (Shiva). The temple compound, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the largest Hindu temple site in Indonesia, and one of the biggest in Southeast Asia.

Bali

Like many travelers, you will be amazed on arriving in Bali for the first time. We were also informed that Bali is the place where Julia Roberts filmed the movie "Eat, Pray, Love". Bali is an Indonesian island known for its forested volcanic mountains, iconic rice paddies, beaches and coral reefs. The island is home to many religious sites. We visited Pura Besakih, the largest and holiest Hindu temple in Bali, and one of a series of Balinese temples.

If you an animal lover, you will love to feed the monkeys in Ubud Monkey Forest. The reserve lies within the village of Padangtegal. Having lunch in Terasing Sawah with a view of the Tegalalang rice terrace in Ubud should not be missed. Many shops dot the main street, selling candlesticks to statues. The scenic rice fields are a pleasure to watch.

NOTE: Kuwait Times was invited by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia on a 10-day trip to explore and enjoy the country's beautiful scenery. Three journalists along with two officials from the embassy - Minister Counselor Gantosori Tanjung and Secretary of the Ambassador Muhammad Rifqi - comprised the tour group.



A statue is seen in Bali's Airport



Guards are seen at the Sultan of Yogyakarta Palace

Central Java
Kuwait Times was amazed by the details and variety of temples, such as Borobudur, which is a 9th-century Mahayana Buddhist temple in Magelang, Central Java, as well as the world's largest Buddhist temple. It was built in the 9th century during the reign of the Sailendra Dynasty - the temple was designed in Javanese Buddhist architecture, which blends the Indonesian indigenous cult of ancestor worship and the Buddhist concept of attaining nirvana. Prambanan is an 8th-century Hindu temple compound in Central Java, dedicated to the Trimurti, the expression of god as the creator



Taman mini Indonesia Indah



Jakarta Mall



The biggest mosque in Jakarta



Sea World in Jakarta



Nightlife in Bali



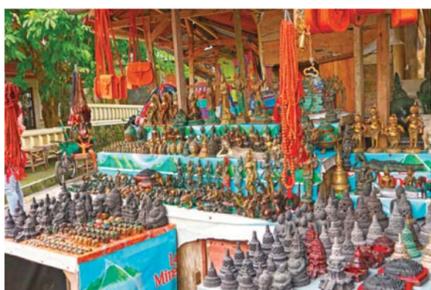
Holy Spring Water Temple in Bali



Souvenirs shop in Bali



Water Park in Bali



Souvenirs shop in Yogyakarta



Bali



Traditional Indonesian dish



Surfing in Bali

FEATURES



MONTAHA AL-AJEEL SUPERIOR IN HER NEW COLLECTION



Features of modern fashion dominated Montaha Al-Ajeel's Ramadan jellabiya collection with aesthetic and artistic cuts executed with special designs, superb craftsmanship and luxurious fabrics that bestow a special glamor on the wearer, making her appear more slender through the choice of lively and classy colors.

Montaha's creations combine traditional and modern designs, with her collection reflecting the style of the designer which is characterized by its independence and unique identity in the art of designing. The collection embodies her imagination, which blends modernity with originality in one whole.

Montaha Al-Ajeel's designs are distinctive through professional geometrical cuts that make the front of the waist more prominent in order to create a leaner form and cover the flaws of the full pelvis area. Montaha's designs are also simple. The Kuwaiti derra'a is almost always made of fabrics patterned with wonderful Arabic calligraphy. She brilliantly developed the Kuwaiti derra'a so that it can be worn as a reception dress in the holy month of Ramadan.

Of her use of Arabic calligraphy, she says it is an art because it is one of the most beautiful forms of calligraphy in the world, and that's why she is keen on using it in the Kuwaiti derra'a.

She adds that fabrics inspire her designs, which made her choose a variety of fabrics such as dentelle, silk, fabric embroidered with cashmere threads, crochet, poplin with black dentelle, geometric lines adorned with Swarovsky crystals and gold thread fabric which the woman wears in Ramadan as an expression of joy for the holy month, as well as the mixing of fabrics and colors to satisfy different tastes.

Last year, Ajeel was honored with the international GR8 award in Dubai, which is the highest business award in the Middle East, as well as being chosen for the Middle East Award for business leaders and an honorary award. She was also chosen for the world award for business leaders 2016. Lately, she launched a charitable initiative in Kuwait, and is involved in several philanthropic deeds and activities.



Mummies discovered in ancient tomb near Egypt's Luxor



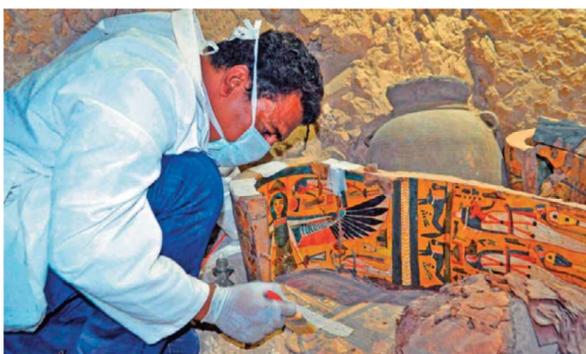
Archaeologists work on a wooden coffin in a 3,500-year-old tomb in the Draa Abul Nagaa necropolis, near the southern Egyptian city of Luxor yesterday.



An archaeologist shows artifacts discovered in a 3,500-year-old tomb in the Draa Abul Nagaa necropolis.— AFP photos



Journalists and members of an Egyptian archaeological team stand near artifacts discovered in a 3,500-year-old tomb.



An archaeologist works on a wooden coffin discovered in a 3,500-year-old tomb in the Draa Abul Nagaa necropolis.



Members of an Egyptian archaeological team stand near artifacts discovered in a 3,500-year-old tomb.

Egyptian archaeologists have unearthed several mummies, colorful wooden sarcophagi and more than 1,000 funerary statues in a 3,500-year-old tomb near the city of Luxor hailed as an "important discovery". Antiquities officials had initially said six mummies along with partial remains were discovered near the southern city, but said they had later identified two more mummies. "There are 10 coffins and eight mummies. The excavation is ongoing," Mostafa Waziri, the head of the archeological mission, told AFP. The 18th Dynasty tomb, discovered in the Draa Abul Nagaa necropolis near the famed Valley of the Kings, belonged to a nobleman named Userhat who worked as the city judge, the ministry said in a yesterday statement.

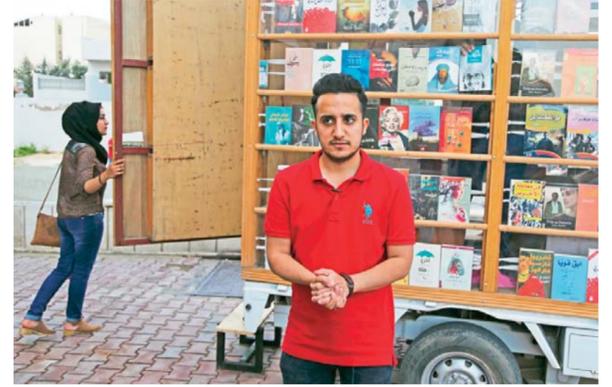
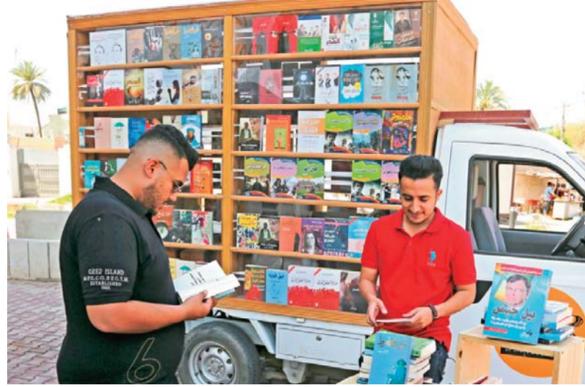
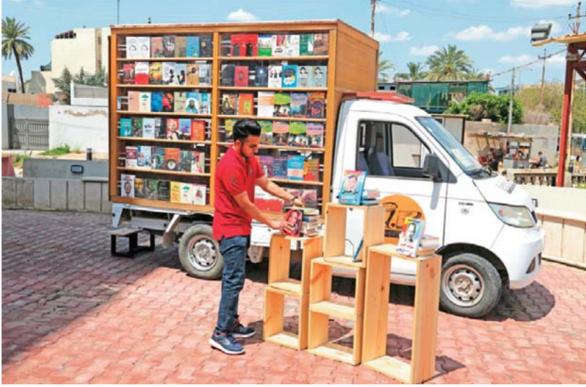
It was opened to add more mummies during the 21st Dynasty, about 3,000 years ago, to protect them during a period when tomb-robbing was common, said Waziri, the head of the archaeological mission, at the site. "It was a surprise how much was being displayed inside" the tomb, Antiquities Minister Khaled Eel-Enany told reporters outside the tomb. "We found a large number of Ushabti (small carved figurines), more than 1,000 of them," Enany said. "This is an important discovery," he said.

Ushabti figurines were often placed with the deceased in ancient Egyptian tombs to help with responsibilities in the afterlife. Inside the tomb, archaeologists wearing white masks and latex gloves inspected the sarcophagi, which were covered with intricate drawings in red, blue, black, green, and yellow, and featured the carved faces of the dead. The coffins were mainly well-preserved, though some had deteriorated and broken over the years. Archeologists were also examining a mummy wrapped in linen which was inside one of the coffins. White, orange, green, and patterned pots were also found in the tombs. "It is a T-shaped tomb (which) consists of an open court leading into a rectangular hall, a corridor and an inner chamber," the ministry said in a statement. A nine-meter shaft inside the tomb held the Ushabti figurines, as well as "wooden masks and a handle of a sarcophagus lid," the ministry said. Another room in the tomb was also discovered, though it has not yet been completely excavated, it said. Nevine El-Aref, the spokeswoman for the antiquities ministry, said "there is evidence and traces that new mummies could be discovered in the future." — AFP



Members of an Egyptian archaeological team stand near artifacts discovered in a 3,500-year-old tomb in the Draa Abul Nagaa necropolis.

FEATURES



Ali Al-Moussawi, the owner of a mobile library truck, arranges his books on a street in Baghdad, Iraq. — AP photos

Ali Al-Moussawi, right, the owner of a mobile book truck, arranges his books on a street in Baghdad, Iraq.

Ali Al-Moussawi, stands in front of his book truck on a street.

Bookstore on wheels turns heads in Baghdad

The Iraqis guarding Baghdad's many checkpoints, on the lookout for car bombs and convoys, don't know what to make of Ali Al-Moussawi when he pulls up in a truck displaying shelves of glossy books. The mobile bookstore is the latest in a series of efforts by the 25-year-old to share his passion for reading and revive a love for books in Baghdad, which was once the literary capital of the Muslim world but is now better known for bombs than poems. It began with "Iraqi Bookish," a Facebook group for readers launched in 2015. He eventually started organizing book clubs, contests, signings and writing seminars held at cultural centers and cafes.

"I adore reading," said Al-Moussawi, who holds a bachelor's degree in English translation. "I have long wanted to meet people like me, so I was thinking of creating something where all readers could gather at any time, regardless of where they are." He eventually took to selling books in order to finance the cultural activities, opening a bookstand in a Baghdad mall that offers a delivery service and designing shelves and other book-themed gifts.

Now he finds himself steering a bookstore on wheels

through Baghdad's snarled traffic, past its checkpoints, barbed wire and blast walls. Security forces often insist on searching his truck, fearing it contains explosives, and parking can be subject to prolonged negotiations. The world's greatest poets flocked to Baghdad after it was established as the capital of the Abbasid Empire in the 8th century A.D., but its cultural flowering ended with the Mongol conquest of 1258. Iraq's modern education system, richly financed by oil wealth in the 1970s, was subsequently decimated by years of war and sanctions.

The city still takes pride in its literary heritage. The Al-Mutanabbi market in central Baghdad, named for a 10th century poet, hosts a bustling used book fair every Friday. The Shahbandar cafe, in the heart of the bazaar, remains a popular haunt for writers and intellectuals, who gaze upon black and white photos from more peaceful times. Al-Moussawi has found plenty of customers. He says his business brings in a monthly income of up to \$4,000, and that he has hired four paid workers.

But he must swap out his offerings depending on where he goes in the city, which is still deeply divided by the sectarian violence that erupted after the 2003 US-led invasion. Sunnis and Shiites gravitate toward their own religious texts, and in Sunni areas biographies of Saddam Hussein remain popular. He recalls a time in the Sunni neighborhood of Azamiyah when a man in his 50s ran up to the truck and grabbed an Arabic translation of "Saddam: The Secret Life," by Con Coughlin. The man's eyes filled with tears as he kissed the cover.

Many Sunnis still revere Saddam - who was executed in 2006 - and blame the violence and chaos of recent years on the American invasion and the Shiite-dominated government established in its wake.

On one recent afternoon, al-Moussawi drove to an upscale neighborhood and parked at a mall near the University of Baghdad. There the clientele was mainly students, so he put out textbooks, novels and poetry in different languages, and celebrity biographies. Salma Abdul-Karim, a 25-year old student, said her passion for reading came from growing up in a family of poetry lovers, but on that afternoon she opted for a biography of Oprah Winfrey. "I love biographies because they tell you about the experiences a person went through so you can benefit from it," she said. — AP



University student Salma Abdelkrim, browse books inside a truck in Baghdad, Iraq.



A woman arranges fried snacks on her street food cart in the Pratunam district of Bangkok. — AFP photos



People go shopping for food from street stalls in the Phayathai district of Bangkok.



A street food vendor talking to a customer in the Phrakanong district of Bangkok.



A family preparing food for customers at a street food stall in the Phrakanong district.

Last orders loom at Uncle Pan's Bangkok noodle stall



A man carries a dish at his street food stall in the Pratunam district of Bangkok.

For three decades everyone from cops and builders, to street cleaners and partying rich kids have gorged on noodles at Uncle Pan's streetside stall in Bangkok's chicest neighborhood. But now it is the 67-year-old food vendor who is no longer welcome at his pavement spot, a victim of a purge of food stalls by Bangkok's governor who says they are cluttering the capital's curbs. With dishes that average 35-55 baht (\$1-1.5) a plate, most of Bangkok's curbside cooks don't make a fortune selling their fare that spans grilled seafood skewers to spicy papaya salads. But they have won global acclaim as some of the finest fast food chefs in the world, fuelling a booming city besotted by eating.

Like his peers, Pan Chaiyasit works behind a small push cart from where he dishes out yellow egg noodles-topped with pork and wonton dumplings-to customers who cluster together on plastic chairs spread across the pavement. The family-run stall is a fixture of a neighborhood that has exploded with development over the past few decades. But with the deadline to clear off the street expiring this week, Pan must either uproot his restaurant to a new locale or downsize the shop so it doesn't spill onto the sidewalk.

"I've been selling here since there was nothing," the genial, apron-wearing uncle told AFP, explaining that the Thonglor area was a tree-studded backwater when he first set up.

Today his customers sit ringside to a central artery of Bangkok's ritziest neighborhood, lined with tower blocks, upscale restaurants and night clubs. That makes for a varied clientele that pulls from all layers of Thailand's social fabric. "Office workers, police, soldiers... even if they drive a Mercedes Benz, they have the same right to eat here," Pan told AFP, wiping away a bead of sweat as waiters buzzed around him to serve an after-work crush.

Good business, which sees Pan rake in around 30,000 baht a month (\$870), rests on these close ties to the neighborhood. "We all know each other in this street. Everyone, factory workers, company staff, they know me and we are friends... if we move, we won't have these relationships." Yet city officials insist the foot paths must be "returned to the public" and have laid out a plan to bar tens of thousands of street stalls from the capital's main roads, instead squeezing them into side streets or hawkers' centers. Pan isn't sure what the future holds-other than more bowls of soup.

"Even though we sometimes face troubles we have to keep selling. We have to fight to survive." — AFP



A man making food at a street stall in the Phrakanong district of Bangkok.



People waiting to pick up food from a street stall in the Phrakanong district of Bangkok.

Lifestyle

Bookstore on wheels turns heads in Baghdad



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People dance in front of the Eiffel Tower as they take part in the Color Run 2017's edition, in Paris. The Color Run is a five kilometers paint race without winners nor prizes, while runners are showered with colored powder at stations along the run. — AFP

Bizarre News

Bookseller charges 50p for people to enter his shop

A rude bookseller has come under fire for charging his customers 50p to enter his store. The store's owner Stephen Bloom, has been branded the "bookseller from hell" by visitors to his Bloomindales store in Hawes in North Yorkshire, north east England. The Times newspaper reports that a complaint, submitted to Hawes Parish Council, claims one customer declined to pay and was branded a "pain in the arse" whilst another was thrown out of the shop for spending five minutes browsing. More than 20 complaints have been made about Mr Bloom in the past four years and his conduct had been discussed by parish councilors five times since 2003. In Mr Bloom's defense, he explained: "I'm not really a people person" and claimed he had become victim to an "aggressive and vindictive witch hunt" and added: "The 50p charge is me making sure they are serious about coming into my shop to buy something, not just standing for 10 minutes reading a book to pass the time as some people do." John Blackie, the chairman of the parish council, said: "I'm afraid we have the bookseller from hell. He charges

50p, people object and he is very rude to them. Yet he feels that improves his business."

KitKat fillings are allegedly made from crushed up fingers

KitKat fillings contain reject chocolate bar fingers, it has been claimed. The four fingered Nestle snack, named one of the "most influential" chocolate bars of all time by Time Magazine, is made from the delicious sweet treat and wafer, but it is understood that within the wafer is crushed up KitKats. The sweet treat has been in more than 200 flavors but its secret filling has been unknown until now. Some people assumed it was a different type of chocolate, which Nestle vaguely describes as "smooth and creamy chocolate" but according to The Mirror newspaper, Quality assurance technicians on the production line are tasked with removing substandard bars which have imperfections and instead of throwing these KitKats away, they are said to be mashed up into a fine paste and remade into a sensual filling. But the method has alarmed Mental Floss, which noted: "If all KitKats contain the remains of imperfect KitKats, and

not all KitKats are perfect, then every KitKat that gets recycled contains the remains of older KitKats, which contained older KitKats, which contained older KitKats...How far back does that actually go?!"

Chickens can speak 24 different ways

Chickens can reportedly speak 24 different ways. The birds are said to use a repertoire of so many different vocalizations and several modes of body language to communicate. According to The Times newspaper, a study has claimed that the chicken dictionary contains at least 24 different clucks, squawks and disapproving brk noises, each with its own distinct meaning. The study also revealed that their heart rate also go up when they watch their chicks being buffeted by puffs of air, they can sense time intervals of six minutes and become agitated when they expect something bad to happen. Dr Lori Marino said: "They are perceived as lacking most of the psychological characteristics we recognize in other intelligent animals and are typically thought of as possessing a low level of intelligence compared with other animals." It is also understood that

five-day-old chicks can add and subtract up to five items at once. Older chickens are thought to have some sense of the passage of time.

Woman exposes cheating partner with local posters

A woman broadcasted her partner's infidelity by putting up posters. The woman - who is only known as Linda - sought revenge on her former beau by pinning dozens of laminated signs around Warwick town centre to expose her cheating partner, Graham, in the hope he realizes his mistake and their relationship has officially ended, according to the Metro newspaper. The poster, which features a heart with her Graham's name on it, read: "If she is so good in bed you can stay there". Linda's note concludes with her wishing her previous lover a 'Happy New Year'. And people have since flocked to Twitter to share their opinion about the shocking message, with some intrigued to find out who the suspected Graham was. One social media user, Alison Tonkin, wrote: "Well there's a Graham in Warwick who's having a much worse day than me. Go Linda #WomanScorned #NaughtyBoy (sic)." — BangShowbiz

Big summer for Disney parks: Pandora and Guardians of Galaxy

Disney theme parks have a big summer ahead of them with major new attractions opening May 27 based on two movies, one about the Marvel Comics superheroes from "Guardians of the Galaxy" and the other about the lush alien world of Pandora from the James Cameron film "Avatar". The Guardians of the Galaxy: Mission BREAKOUT! attraction opens at Disney California Adventure in Anaheim, California.

Pandora - The World of Avatar is a 12-acre land opening at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. But the creative designer behind the attractions says you don't need to know anything about either movie to enjoy them. "This is not a revisit of a plot line of a film you already saw," said Disney Imagineer Joe Rohde at an event

Monday in New York City previewing the attractions. "This is your opportunity to go to an amazing world and have adventures of your own. ... The story is about you."

The premise of the Guardians of the Galaxy ride is that the Guardian superheroes have been captured and riders must participate in an adventure with a character called Rocket Raccoon to free them. "It is a prison breakout story," Rohde said. The ride incorporates multiple scenarios for resolving the story line so that riders have a slightly different experience each time they go through it. Guardians of the Galaxy is located in a redesigned drop tower structure that once housed the Twilight Zone of Terror.

At Pandora, there are two rides plus retail and dining components. Riders on Avatar Flight of Passage

fly through the forest on the backs of creatures called banshees to participate in a tribal coming of age ceremony. Riders on the Na'vi River Journey move through the bioluminescent forest on a boat, guided by a mystical singing figure. Rohde described Pandora as an "obsessively real" environment that "reacts to the change of day on its own." The sounds of creatures in the forest change from day to night, and the Pandoran plants glow by night, Rohde said. Rohde took his team on field trips to Hawaii, Bali and China for design inspiration from real landscapes and cultural touchstones. — AP



This photo provided by Disney shows a new land opening at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom in Lake Buena Vista, Fla, called 'Pandora - The World of Avatar'.



This artist concept rendering provided by Disneyland Resort shows characters from a new ride debuting at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif, called Guardians of the Galaxy - Mission: BREAKOUT! The ride was inspired by the 'Guardians of the Galaxy' film. — AP photos



This photo provided by Disney shows guests in the 'Na'vi River Journey,' part of the new land opening at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom.