

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017

RAJAB 26, 1438 AH

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**Doctors use
HoLEP tech
used to remove
prostate tumor**

**Waiting for
green cards,
Indians in
US hopeful**

**Trump sons
take helm of
company, eye
US expansion**

**Former Giro
winner Scarponi
killed in
training crash**
150 FILS
NO: 17207
40 PAGES

MEW: NEW ELECTRICITY, WATER TARIFFS AIM AT RATIONALIZATION

SABEEH DENIES JABER HOSPITAL WILL CHARGE CITIZENS FOR TREATMENT

 Min 25°
 Max 39°
 High Tide
 09:55 & 21:23
 Low Tide
 03:22 & 15:35

THOUSANDS JOIN MARCH FOR SCIENCE RALLIES

WASHINGTON: Thousands of people joined a global March for Science yesterday with Washington the epicenter of a movement to fight back against what many see as an "assault on facts" by populist politicians. Hundreds streamed onto the Washington Mall for a festive day of music, speeches and teach-ins by scientists disturbed by the rise of so-called "alternative facts" around crucial issues like climate change following the election of Donald Trump.

"We have no Planet B," read one of the signs carried by demonstrators, many of whom sported "Keep Our Science Great" caps as they arrived from around the country on Earth Day to remind fellow citizens of the importance of science to their daily lives. At a time when the Earth has marked three consecutive years of record-breaking heat, and ice is melting at an unprecedented rate at the poles, risking massive sea level rise in the decades ahead, some marchers say it is more important than ever for scientists to communicate and work toward solutions to curb fossil fuel emissions.

"Everything we touch, science has helped us understand better," said Ruth Varner, a biochemist from the University of New Hampshire. "We're all busy every day, so if you're not surrounded by scientists talking about this you might forget how important it is to you." Rainy weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of the Washington crowd, as people chatted, introduced themselves to strangers, or hailed colleagues they came across in the throng.

Continued on Page 13



LONDON: Scientists and science enthusiasts gather prior to the start of a 'March for Science' rally outside the Science Museum yesterday. — AFP

By A Saleh and Agencies

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Electricity and Water's (MEW) new tariffs, due to be implemented from May 22, aim to encourage rationalization in consumption and not to "collect more duties," MEW's Undersecretary Mohammad Bushehri said yesterday. Bushehri's remarks marked the launch of an awareness campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Information to rationalize water and electricity use. "The objective of such campaigns is to promote the culture of rationalization among consumers," he said in a statement.

He said the campaign would highlight the best means to rationalize consumption, which would ease the burden on the budget. The National Assembly approved on April 26, 2016 a law that set new water and electricity tariffs. The lawmakers exempted owners of private houses from the hike. The law stated that tariffs would vary in real estate investment sector depending on consumption, which means the more people consume, the more they will pay. The government and commercial sectors will be charged 25 fils per kilowatt of electricity and KD 4 for every 1,000 imperial water gallons consumed. The industrial and agricultural sectors will be charged 10 fils per kilowatt and KD 2.5 for 1,000 imperial water gallons.

Separately, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh strongly denied social media reports about making citizens pay for the cost of their treatment at Jaber Hospital. She stressed that charges would be 'zero', although payment had been proposed in a bid to provide outstanding medical services. Sabeeh added that the Cabinet's decision to establish a shareholding company to run the hospital did not include anything about making citizens pay any charges. "It only included a proposal to consider health insurance and the investment authority was assigned to study it," she explained.

MATTIS VISITS KEY US ALLY QATAR

DOHA: US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis met Qatar's emir yesterday during a visit to the oil-rich Gulf state, home to the largest US air base in the Middle East. The visit to Doha is part of a regional tour that has included stops in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel. Mattis is scheduled to visit Djibouti today. The Pentagon chief's meeting with Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani aimed to "reinforce relationships" between the two countries, Mattis said. "Relationships get better or weaker, and I'm committed to making it better from

our side," Mattis told the Qatari leader.

Their talks were expected to focus on the fight against the Islamic State group, the conflict in Syria and the regional role of Iran, which Mattis has described as "destabilizing". Mattis was also due to hold talks with Defense Minister Khaled Al-Attiya. Washington's relations with Gulf Arab states became increasingly frayed during the presidency of Barack Obama, whom leaders saw as too reluctant to intervene in the civil war in Syria

Continued on Page 13



DOHA: Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani welcomes US Defense Secretary James Mattis at the Prince's Sea Palace residence yesterday. — AFP

RISE OF CHINESE FIGHTERS IN SYRIA CAUSES CONCERNS

BEIRUT: Many don't speak Arabic and their role in Syria is little known to the outside world, but the Chinese fighters of the Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria are organized, battled-hardened and have been instrumental in ground offensives against President Bashar Al-Assad's forces in the country's northern regions. Thousands of Chinese jihadists have come to Syria since the country's civil war began in March 2011 to fight against government forces and their allies. Some have joined the Al-Qaeda's branch in the country previously known as Nusra Front. Others paid allegiance to the Islamic State group and a smaller number joined factions such as the ultraconservative Ahrar Al-Sham.

But the majority of Chinese militants are with the Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria, whose vast majority are Chinese Muslims, particularly those from the Turkic-speaking Uighur majority native to Xinjiang in China. Their growing role in Syria has resulted in increased cooperation between Syrian and Chinese intelligence agencies who fear those same jihadists could one day return home and cause trouble there.

The Turkistan Islamic Party is the other name for the East Turkistan Islamic Movement that considers China's Xinjiang to be East Turkistan.

Continued on Page 13



DUBAI: In this April 5, 2017 photo, Saudi entrepreneur Manar Alomayri, a partner at Dhad Audio Publishing, poses in front of her stand at the Digital Media Services tent at the Step 2017 Conference and Music. — AP

AS MIDEAST LOOKS PAST OIL, FOCUS ON ENTREPRENEURS

DUBAI: A mobile app to track school buses, Arabic cooking videos on YouTube and even a portable bidet are finding support from governments in the Gulf as a slide in oil prices forces states to cull cushy public sector jobs and look to entrepreneurs to plug the gap. Recent \$1 billion valuations of local start-ups Careem, a ride-hailing app, and retailer Souq.com, which was acquired by Amazon in March, have raised interest in the region's budding entrepreneurship scene. Both companies are headquartered in Dubai, an emirate with futuristic skyscrapers that is working to harness the power of the region's majority young population with a minister of state for youth affairs who is a mere 22 years old.

Across the Arabian Peninsula, governments - hit hard by a sharp decline in oil prices since 2014 - are competing to attract and keep local entrepreneurs who might provide the region's next "unicorn", the industry term for startups that reach a valuation of a billion dollars. Khaled Talhouni, the managing partner at venture capitalist firm Wamda Capital, says the negative headlines out of the Middle East have tended to overshadow the good, including the growing entrepreneurial spirit. "There is a huge upswell of entrepreneurial activity happening on the ground, as evidenced by the recent acquisition of Souq by Amazon. And

there are hundreds of companies beneath them, following them," he said.

The Middle East is no Silicon Valley, though. For starters, Talhouni says that unlike the vast single market of the US, local entrepreneurs have to grapple with various customs regulations, laws, consumer preferences and norms across nearly two dozen different Arabic-speaking countries to reach the full Middle Eastern market. Many of the tech start-ups are finding success by localizing ideas successfully started abroad, from Amazon to Uber.

YallaParking, for example, helps people find and rent parking spots. "I think it is getting very competitive. What we tend to see, and people that we know, they're bringing ideas from other places that are not necessarily here yet," said co-founder and CEO Craig McDonald, a Scottish national who grew up in Dubai. "For example YallaParking: There are big companies around the world that do what we do, but no one was doing it here."

Local government support for start-ups has mostly sprung out of a need to create jobs. According to the World Economic Forum, the Middle East and North Africa needs to create 75 million jobs by 2020 just to keep employment close to current levels. Failing to do so could lead to slow economic growth and

Continued on Page 13

SCORES KILLED IN AFGHAN BASE ATTACK

MAZAR-I-SHARIF, Afghanistan: More than 100 Afghan soldiers were killed and wounded in a Taliban attack on an army base in northern Afghanistan, the defense ministry said yesterday, the latest in a string of deadly assaults against Afghan military sites. The ministry did not give a breakdown of the casualties in the hours-long attack near Mazar-i-Sharif city on Friday. The US military has said that "more than 50" Afghan soldiers were killed, while an Afghan army source who was on the base at the time put the death toll as high as 150, with dozens more wounded.

"They entered the compound using two army trucks with machine guns on top of them. They opened fire on everyone. And then they entered the mosque and dining room, killing everyone indiscriminately," Mohammad Hussain, an army officer wounded in the attack, said as he was treated in

hospital. Two of the attackers blew themselves up in the raid, which was claimed by the Taliban late Friday and which underscores rising insecurity as Afghanistan braces for an intense spring fighting season.

All were dressed in Afghan army uniforms, the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity and adding that no civilians were killed. "Three months ago I sent my son to the army, I have not seen him since then. And today, they give me his remains," one grieving father told AFP. Noorullah, a second officer injured in the attack, speculated the militants may have had "inside help", noting they had to pass through at least seven check posts before entering the compound.

The defense ministry said Afghan forces had killed all the attackers, without specifying how many there were. Earlier it had said one of the assailants had been detained. The

military source at the base said there were at least 10 attackers, adding that the soldiers were "young recruits who had come for training." "I was in a room close to the mosque, their leader came in and shouted 'aim for their heads'. I jumped out of the window, my friends were killed," one 19-year-old soldier, Mohammad Qurban, told AFP from hospital where he was being treated for hand and stomach injuries.

The toll could change, the defense ministry said in a statement, adding it would provide more information once an investigation was completed. Afghan officials have been known to minimize casualty figures in some major attacks on military sites, such as in early March when gunmen disguised as doctors stormed the country's largest military hospital in Kabul, killing dozens. — AFP

In Brief

ABBAS VISITS KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his accompanying delegation are due to arrive to Kuwait today for a two-day official visit to the country. The Palestinian leader is due to hold official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



POPE TAWADROS VISITS KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark and his accompanying delegation are due to arrive to Kuwait today on his maiden visit to the country. He will be received at Kuwait International Airport's VIP Terminal by Deputy Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Kuwait's ambassador to Egypt Mohammad Al-Thuwaiikh, Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Yasser Atef and other dignitaries.



CORRECTION

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times published an article on Wednesday, April 19, 2017 with the headline 'Imagine Cup continues to spark innovation among Kuwaiti youth', which mistakenly mentioned that the location of the regional finals will take place in South Africa. In fact, the seven finalists who were selected from Kuwait will compete in the regional finals in Lebanon.



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: An aerial view of the Sheikhha Fatma Mosque in Abdullah Al-Salem area, approximately five kilometers south of Kuwait City. Opened in August 1976, it is one of Kuwait's most recognizable historical mosques known for the distinguished conical shape of its dome. It used to host major religious events in Kuwait before the Grand Mosque opened in 1986. —KUNA photo

BURGAN BANK HOSTS TRIATHLON WITH PARTICIPATION OF 500 ATHLETES



KUWAIT: Borgan Bank's triathlon began Friday with the participation of 500 competitors. The first day included a 2,000-meter run followed by a 500-meter swim. There was also a race dedicated to child athletes. The event concluded yesterday with the main triathlon which involved a 750-meter dash followed by 24-kilometer cycling race, concluding with a five-kilometer run. —KUNA



Local spotlight

BARRAK IS FREE



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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On Friday, authorities released former parliamentarian Musallam Al-Barrak after he served two years in prison in a state security case for insulting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Kuwaiti law criminalizes insulting the head of state and article 54 of the constitution states: "The Amir is the head of state. His person is immune and inviolable."

Barrak is known among Kuwaiti people as the 'conscience of the nation' for his role in countering corruption. His two years of imprisonment are over now and Barrak is a free man, so what is next? Barrak's trial galvanized public attention, and even when he was in prison, several tweets with images of him in prison clothes and comments on social media kept appearing every now and then. I believe that even when the man was away from the political arena, he was under the scope of supporters and opponents. After all, he was a political prisoner.

Today is a new chapter, so it is normal for people to think what is next. Does Barrak plan to run in a new election? Will we witness by-elections shortly for a new entry by Barrak? This is a possible theory. What is the likely position of some MPs who have entered the National Assembly now? Former MP Saleh Al-Mulla expressed happiness over the release of Barrak from prison, saying that "the release of Musallam Al-Barrak will constitute a great addition to national reform."

But how does Barrak see Kuwait and its issues today? These are worthy questions. Perhaps the most prominent thing said by Barrak on the first day of his release was that change in any society requires sacrifices, confirming his adherence to his ideas and principles. Yet, have the demands of Kuwaitis changed over the past two years? He may inspire or provoke some enthusiasm amongst some activists.

It is clear that people still complain about corruption, and so far nothing significant has been achieved to change this. We all suffer from bad roads and the decline in health services. A little rain even flooded an entire underpass. This is no secret.

We need to mention that although Barrak violated the country's law and went to prison for it, he did not flee from Kuwait to hide in the West. He did not hire foreign lawyers to avoid prison. This point may not be of interest or consideration for some people, but it surely shows that the man is ready to face the consequences of what he believes in.

Barrak announced that he will clear all points tomorrow in an open letter to the people. Obviously, the man knows exactly what he wants and will not abandon his previous positions, especially the issues he adopted within the National Assembly related to corruption and political reform. Tomorrow, all speculations will be made clear.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
MAJOR ISSUE IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Amid rising aggression on property rights worldwide, Kuwait has been paying due attention to the issue. The country, a signatory to relevant agreements, has adopted legislations to protect copyrights. In 2011, Kuwait established a specialized department at the Ministry of Information for the application of copyright. Later, the unit was moved to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry under the 'Copyright Department.' Then, a Cabinet decree in 2014 transferred it to the Kuwait National Library, an affiliate of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). Head of the department Sheikhha Rasha Al-Sabah said yesterday that she and her staff work hard to preserve copyrights through registering works in the international filing and numbering section.

She referred to Law 22/2016 on the protection of copyright, saying it was a quantum shift in the field in Kuwait. It is considered 'the best' in the Arab region in terms of text, Sheikhha Rasha said, adding that the Cabinet is expected to issue the executive rule of the law in the coming weeks. The provisions of the law apply to all works of innovation, in arts, literature and science, she said.

According to the law, the term of copyright protection exists until the lapse of 50 years after the death of the author and in case of joint work; it is calculated from the death of the last surviving co-author, according to the law. The law also provides that any person who has committed copyright infringement is liable to be punished for either two years or a fine not less than KD 500 (\$164) and not exceeding KD 50,000 (\$16,004). —KUNA

DELEGATION IN RAMALLAH TO
INTERVIEW PALESTINIAN TEACHERS
FISHERMEN UNION DENIES CAUSING FISHKILL

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A Ministry of Education (MoE) delegation headed by Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Fatima Al-Kandari has reportedly arrived in Ramallah to begin interviewing Palestinian teachers applying to work in Kuwait. The Palestinian Embassy in Kuwait said MoE plans to hire 180 teachers for mathematics, science and English. The embassy added that the delegation will remain in Ramallah until April 29.

Separately, MoE announced using a new method on handing over final exam papers and model answers from its "secret" printing press to various secondary schools. In this regard, Kandari distributed a directive explaining that the exam papers would be placed in sealed boxes and handed over to the ministry the evening before the exam to be delivered to schools at 5 am the following morning.

'Outstanding companies'

Capital labor department at the Public Authority for Manpower finalized listing six companies to be experimentally named as 'outstanding companies', pending generalizing the project to other private and oil sector companies matching the set conditions. Notably, the conditions include having a minimum capital of KD 1 million, having a minimum of 450 employees, and pay-

ing KD 150 for each extra work permit. The conditions also included allowing one laborer per 5 sq m of the total area of the rented premises, with a maximum of 200 per license for class A companies and 100 for class B companies.

Fishkill

Kuwait Fishermen Union strongly rejected accusations of being responsible for Fishkill and stressed that it had repeatedly called for treating sewage water instead of dumping it into the sea, namely in Kuwait Bay. Reports had recently accused fishermen of dumping dead fish into the water, saying that recent Fishkill sightings were caused by the dumped fish being washed to the shore. But a statement issued by the union urged all relevant parties to cooperate to limit pollution within Kuwait Bay. He also noted that the water used in operating four power plants is being dumped into the bay. He also called for investigating the real cause of fish deaths and transparently declaring the results to the public to hold whoever is responsible accountable, instead of blaming it on fishermen.

Overpriced goods

Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan said that the commerce ministry has referred 12 citations concerning overpriced goods during the period

from Sept 2016 till mid-March 2017. Responding to an inquiry filed by MP Khalil Al-Saleh, Roudhan said that there is no price control committee and that this task is being undertaken by the commercial control department and its sections. Roudhan also denied detecting any price hikes at various co-ops and stressed that prices are monitored throughout the year.

Iraqi compensations

The UN's compensations committee in Geneva will meet tomorrow with Kuwaiti and Iraqi delegations to discuss the payment of \$4.6 billion in compensation over the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Notably, Iraq is internationally mandated to deposit 5 percent of the revenues of its oil sales with the committee till Jan 1, 2018 to be used in paying compensation claims.

Rest houses

Well-informed governmental sources said Kuwait reached an agreement with Iraq to build special rest houses along the route to Najaf for investment purposes. The sources explained that the facilities would be used both by pilgrims visiting holy sites in Iraq and tourists, that annually add up to 10 million visitors. The sources explained that the new facilities would include apartment buildings, restaurants, stores, automobile services, gas stations and department stores. The sources added that con-

struction of these facilities is expected to commence before the end of this year with huge Kuwaiti investments. Moreover, the sources said that once the facilities are built in Iraq, similar ones would be discussed with Iran.

Value added tax

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states recently announced exempting oil, its byproducts and gas from the value added tax scheme, leaving each member state free to decide on exempting four other sectors from the five percent tax, including education, health, real estate and local transport.

Subpar performance

MP Majed Al-Mutairi said legislative performance of the current parliament is subpar in terms of the total numbers of laws passed. However, he believed scrutiny and careful study of bills and proposed laws were behind the delay. Separately, MP Humoud Al-Khudair urged Education Minister Mohammed Al-Fares to undo his decision to cancel granting leaves to employees to sit for exams and urged the parliamentary educational affairs to discuss the matter. "Such a decision contradicts with plans to develop education," he said, noting that acquiring knowledge is the best investment for Kuwait's future and that the decision would hinder many employees from pursuing further studies.

KUWAITI LAWMAKER CALLS FOR PROMOTING
LEGISLATIONS TO ATTRACT FOREIGN CAPITAL

CAIRO: Kuwaiti lawmaker Khaled Al-Otaibi, also member of the Arab Parliament (AP), called yesterday for promoting legislations and removing obstacles to develop the Arab region into an investment-attractive environment. Talking on the sidelines of the meetings of the Arab League's Economic and Financial Committee that wrapped up discussions in Cairo, Otaibi stressed the need to encourage foreigners to direct more capital in the Arab countries. In the meantime, Arab investors have to be urged to bring back their capital and invest at home for achieving the Arab economic integration.

Yesterday's meeting has reviewed a report on investment in the Arab World, and Also discussed proposals on promoting the Unified Agreement for the Investment of Arab Capital in the Arab States. He added that the committee members have been working hard to produce significant recommendations the AP would submit to decision makers in a bid to break down the barriers and obstacles hindering promotion of investment in the Arab World. Participants have also addressed the role of the Union of Arab Chambers of commerce and industry and its views on the Arab investment scene, the MP said.

National security

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti MP Ali Salem Al-



MP Khaled Al-Otaibi



MP Ali Al-Deqbasi



MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaie

Deqbasi has called for reactivating the Arab League and boosting its role for preserving Arab national security and enhancing joint Arab action. This was the core of statements Deqbasi made on sidelines of the meetings of the AP's Committee on Foreign, Political and National Security Affairs that concluded discussions in Cairo yesterday. The Arab League represents a "symbol of the Arab joint action," he said. The Kuwaiti lawmaker stressed the necessity of developing the League into a competent system able to keep pace with the age and realize the expectations of the Arab peoples. Yesterday, the committee members and Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League

for International Political Affairs Khalid Al-Habas discussed a host of reports, he said. Deqbasi emphasized the dire need to adopt untraditional methods for maintaining the Arab national security against threats and acts of aggression. He also urged the Arab League to act rapidly and help Somalis who are dying of hunger.

Humanitarian leader

In the meantime, MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaie said that Kuwait is a leading international humanitarian country. After the Arab Parliament's legislative, legal affairs and human rights committee's final meeting,

Tabtabaie said that Kuwait is one of the chief donors that aid displaced and refugees from Syria and Iraq, in addition to providing humanitarian assistance to the needy in Yemen and Somalia.

Tabtabaie added that inclusive discussions related to humanitarian issues were held during the meeting, mainly the Syrian refugee problem after the field trip made by the committee to visit a number of refugees on a Greek island. He said that the committee also discussed the situation in Yemen, where the humanitarian condition in many areas degraded after the Houthi rebels blocked aid from reaching the needy, mostly in areas under their control.

Moreover, the commission held discussions on a number of issues, such as urging the Arab states to implement agreements related to human rights and the Arab agreement for prisons status, in addition to activating the counter terrorist agreement and its funding.

The committee also discussed a suggestion to hold international forum to examine condition of millions of refugees and displaced peoples, in addition to another seminar, to be held in Geneva on the sidelines of the international human rights conference, to discuss the circumstances of the displaced in Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Somalia. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Flames coming out from a transformer unit in Adan yesterday.



Firefighters tackle the blaze in Adan.



Fire trucks and an ambulance are seen at the site of a fire in Khaitan.

TRANSFORMER CAUGHT FIRE IN ADAN

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Qurain firemen were yesterday dispatched to Adan where a fire started in a power transformer unit, said

security sources. Ministry of Electricity and Water technicians disconnected the power before firemen could contain the flames and put the fire out. No casualties were reported.

In Khaitan, three people suffered smoke inhalation when a fire broke out on the ground floor of a nine-floor building, said security sources. The building was evacuated and fire was controlled without any further casualties.



KUWAIT: Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs inaugurates the competition. —KUNA



Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth poses for group photos with officials and participating students.

SCIENCE CLUB BACKS YOUTH

KUWAIT: Kuwait Science Club (KSC) is holding a contest in sciences and engineering, designed to empower youth to be active in development. Participating projects have revealed

that Kuwait is rich in bright young brains that can contribute to development and diversify income resources, said Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State

for Youth Affairs during inauguration of the competition.

She hoped the public and private sectors would study such small enterprises and invest in

the young citizens, who she described as "the oil of Kuwait in the future," in reference to the country's national wealth. Yousuf Al-Hamad, board member at the club, indicated at plans to organ-

ize workshops for empowering the youth to become leaders and sharpen their talents. Some 93 projects are partaking in the competition, with 50 judges assessing the works. —KUNA

KUWAIT-FUNDED VILLAGE FOR REFUGEES OPENS IN TURKEY



KILIS: A scene from the opening ceremony of the Kuwait village for refugees. — KUNA

KILIS: Chairman of the International Islamic Charitable Organizations (IICO) Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq yesterday cut the ribbon of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Village for Hosting Syrian refugees in southern town of Kilis.

In his inaugural statement, Dr Maatouq expressed gratitude to Turkey for hosting Syrian refugees, congratulated the nation on the recent constitutional referendum before touching on the issue of the village, including 1,248 housing units, a mosque, a school, a nursery and a social services center. The latest humanitarian initiative is in line with instructions by His Highness the Amir to intensify efforts for relieving the refugees.

This project is fruit of coordinated efforts by Kuwaiti and Turkish charities, he said, thanking the national institutions that contributed to the humanitarian activity, namely the Kuwait Banking Association, the popular committee for

collecting donations, Kuwait Al-Zakat House, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the Kuwaiti Relief Society, Zain, Ooredoo and VIVA telecommunication companies. He also expressed gratitude to "the unknown soldiers, whose efforts resulted in making this project a reality, securing home for more than 6,000 persons from our Syrian brothers."

Bulent Yildirim, the head of the Turkish IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir, the UN-designated Humanitarian Leader. On the sidelines of the ceremony, which was attended by a large number of Kuwaiti and Turkish officials, Maatouq signed with Yildirim an agreement to launch eight projects for the Syrian refugees. Kilis Governor Ismail Catakli, during a meeting with Maatouq and the accompanying Kuwaiti officials, lauded the State of Kuwait for being the sole that has taken such an initiatives, establishing the makeshift town for the refugees in southern Turkey. — KUNA

WEEKLY ROUNDUP OF KUWAIT RELIEF EFFORTS

KUWAIT: Living up to its status as International Humanitarian Center, Kuwait continued offering assistance to needy people in the Middle East and beyond throughout the just-ended week. On Sunday April 16, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) distributed 3,500 food parcels to displaced Iraqis in several parts of Mosul city as part of 'Kuwait is by Your Side' campaign.

The humanitarian aid was distributed in coordination with the local Al-Barzani Charity, said Mohammad Bahaa-Eddine, who is in charge of supply distribution at the Kurdish charitable association. He noted that most recipients, who were internally displaced and have returned from camps, are in dire need of relief aid.

KRCS had recently distributed more than 1,500 food parcels in Mosul. On April 17, Al-Salam Humanitarian and Charity Society started an emergency aid campaign for needy people in Yemen and Syria. The campaign, according to the society's director general Nabil Hamad Al-Oun, includes a series of relief projects.

Oun pointed out that so far, 13 truckloads have been collected, and half of them for the Yemeni people while the other half will be for the Syrian people. The society previously sent six aid convoys to the Syrians on the border with Turkey, and one convoy to Yemenis.

On Wednesday April 19, the Kuwaiti Consulate General in Irbil offered 1,500 vouchers to displaced Iraqis in the city of Sulaymaniyah in cooperation with the Ronahee Foundation. The goal of such type of aid is to fulfill the food needs of the displaced Iraqis, offering them the chance to shop for themselves, Kuwait's Consulate General in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kandari said. So far, up to 10,000 vouchers have been distributed on the displaced Iraqis in Irbil and Sulaymaniya, Kandari added. The senior diplomat noted that his country would carry on with all types of aid as part of a relief plan for the displaced, covering all areas of the Kurdistan Region.

Turkey

Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait has opened three prosthetics' centers in the

Turkish cities of Istanbul, Sanliurfa and Hatay to aid Syrian refugees who lost limbs or other organs in the ongoing war in their homeland. Ibrahim Ahmad Al-Saleh, General Director of Al-Zakat (Alms) House, said the Kuwait Medical Center for Prosthesis was opened in the three cities as a result of generosity of Kuwaiti citizens who contributed with financial allocations to relieve the Syrian refugees of some of their hardships.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, designated by the UN as the Humanitarian Leader, and the Kuwaiti Government, support all projects aimed at serving those in need. Ghassan Al-Zawawi, Kuwait Ambassador to Turkey, praised in a statement during inauguration of the center the efforts that have been put to ensure such a vital humanitarian accomplishment.

Bulent Yildirim, the head of the Turkish IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, expressed appreciation for granting such vital aid to the refugees. "Such noble and eternal stances by the Kuwaiti people, charities and architect and leader of humanitarian action in the world, His Highness the Amir, will go down in history with bright letters," Yildirim said. The centers will secure 1,000 prostheses in two years as of beginning operations.

Egypt

In Egypt, the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects in Cairo, an affiliate of the Zakat House, offered financial donations to the Children's Cancer Hospital (57357). Head of the office Ismail Abdullah Al-Kandari toured some wards in the hospital, where he was briefed on the various services provided to children suffering from cancer. He also met some children receiving treatment there. Kandari expressed pleasure for the visit saying that he was proud of the services offered to the children afflicted with the disease from Egypt as well as the Arab world free of charge.

Deputy director of the hospital Dr Tareq Mansour expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti people for their support to "57357" since the project started till now. He thanked the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects and the



Kuwait's humanitarian aid is being distributed.

Zakat House for their backing, which reflected the deep-rooted ties between peoples in the two countries.

Food bank

Also on the same day, the Kuwaiti Food Bank Society inaugurated "the clothing bank" project catering for 5,700 short-income families in Kuwait. Meshaal Al-Ansari, the association deputy chairman, said the humanitarian activity was co-organized with Saveco company, indicating that it includes charitable coupons and training courses for the poor. Each coupon, worth KD 25, is given to a family with limited resources.

Responding to the Yemeni crisis, the Health Committee of the Kuwaiti Society for Relief

(KSR) handed over 15 tons of cancer treatment drugs to the central pharmaceuticals storehouses in the city of Aden. The drugs are part of the KSR's program to support the health services sector in the Yemeni city, the committee said in a statement.

On Thursday April 20, the 'Kuwait is by Your Side' campaign delivered the Jaar-Al-Hisn power grid hookup and the second phase of the Abyan water station to the municipal authorities in Greater Aden. Secretary-General of the Municipal Council of Aden Mahdi Al-Hamed expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti government and people for their firm support to the Yemeni people and distinguished contributions to the development projects in various fields. In a ceremony held to mark the

delivery of the two projects, he appreciated the great efforts being made by 'Kuwait is by Your Side' campaign to aid the Yemeni people in such areas as famine relief, housing, energy, potable water, education and healthcare. The power grid hookup is four kilometers long with a capacity of 33 kilovolt, according to a press release by the campaign.

The water station project aims to rehabilitate eight water wells in the first stage and nine wells in the second stage. On Friday April 21, the Kuwaiti Al-Najat Society sponsored 1,300 Syrian and Jordanian orphans in various Jordanian governorates. The aid project is co-organized with the Jordanian Benevolent Society, which supervises Al-Najat society's projects in Jordan. — KUNA



Kuwait's humanitarian aid distributed in Kurdistan.



Kuwait's humanitarian aid.



A Kuwaiti aid worker poses with a Syrian refugee in Jordan.

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ZAIN EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEER TO PRESERVE MARINE LIFE IN COLLABORATION WITH KUWAIT DIVE TEAM

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced that a team of its employees and their families participated in a beach cleanup initiative at Shuwaikh beach. The event came in collaboration with the Kuwait Dive Team with the aim of preserving Kuwaiti marine life.

This initiative falls under Zain's Corporate Sustainability umbrella, and came as a continuation of its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Dive Team (an affiliate of the Environmental Voluntary Foundation). The company is keen on shouldering initiatives that contribute to preserving the Kuwaiti marine life, which is considered one of the main pillars of the valued Kuwaiti heritage.

The beach cleanup initiative witnessed positive feedback and participation from Zain employees, further reinforcing the company's keenness in having a productive role in preserving the local environment.

Zain also strives to invite its employees to take part in initiatives and campaigns that give back to the community. Recently, Zain dedicated a brand new boat to the Kuwait Dive Team, which will be utilized to carry out marine preservation projects throughout

the upcoming years. The boat is fully equipped with the latest state of the art equipment, and will be used for removing wrecked ships and boats from the bottom of the ocean, removing abandoned fishing nets, installing and maintaining environ-

ment-friendly anchors, monitoring coral reefs, cleaning shores, islands, and beaches, documenting marine life, and more.

Zain's support to the Kuwait Dive Team throughout the past 14 years comes under its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the environmental sector. The company's sustainable goals closely focus on preserving the Kuwaiti environment, especially Kuwait's marine life, and seeks to raise awareness of protecting it within the community.

During October 2016, the Kuwait Dive Team honored Zain in the occasion of completing 800 marine preservation missions using a boat the company dedicated to the team back in 2003. The newly dedicated boat from Zain is much more advanced, and features state of the art equipment that will ensure easy and fast marine preservation missions throughout the upcoming years.





HOLEP TECHNOLOGY USED TO REMOVE PROSTATE TUMOR AT MUBARAK HOSPITAL

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Urology Surgery and Robot and Endoscopic Surgery specialist Dr Ahmad Nahis Al-Enezi announced successful operations that involved removing a benign prostate tumor with the use of holmium laser (HoLEP) at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital. Dr Enezi operated on three patients successfully using the technology, in cooperation with British Surgeon Tevita Aho from Addenbrook Hospital, Cambridge University.

Holmium laser surgeries are characterized with the ability to remove enlarged prostate with minimally invasive treatment. It is also known as Holmium Laser Enucleation of the prostate (HoLEP), and the procedure uses a laser to remove tissue, while the patient does not have to stay for more than 24 hours at the hospital compared to the usual procedures. This procedure can also be performed on patients who

use blood dilution drugs. Meanwhile, the robot workshop was held at Sabah Al-Ahmad Urology Center, during which five procedures were carried out in cooperation with British Surgeon Omar Kareem, during which prostate enlargements and partial kidney tumor were removed, while a correction of a congenital defect in the kidney cavity operation were carried out. All operations were successful.

Robot surgeries are characterized with the insertion of a camera, with small holes for surgical instruments, avoiding major incision in the patient's abdomen, which makes recovery faster and easier. Robot surgery allows the surgeon to have a three dimensional view and get to the minute details and the possibility to avoid arteries and nerves, even in cases where the hands of the surgeon cannot reach or will be harmed in open surgeries. The robot can move from outside to inside with the same sensitivity the surgeon's hand has.

AMERICAN COMIC BOOK WRITER HAMA PARTICIPATES IN GX2017

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Popular American comic book writer Larry Hama was the guest of honor during the Games and Media Entertainment Expo (GX2017), where he showcased his prowess in a 'Storytelling without Words' event. "My participation today is to tell stories plainly with the use of pictures without words," he said. "I am fascinated with the people here in Kuwait. This is my first time in the Middle East and when I see how people here are appreciative of my work, I am really amazed," he said.

He advised young talents to pursue their dreams in this art form. "This is struggle for a time, but if you become famous, you can actually live and help your families with it. You will be gratified if you pursue your heart's desire. Do not be afraid to fail - it is part of life. Just go on, continue and do whatever makes you feel better," Hama said.

Hama was accompanied by the US Embassy's Cultural Attache Zennia Paganini. He will also visit some local schools in Kuwait, addressing those interested in writing and cartooning. Hama has a decade of experience in print and various mass media.

Born on June 7, 1949, in Manhattan, Hama is also an actor and musician who has worked in the fields of entertainment and publishing since the 1960s. In the 1970, he starred in TV shows 'MASH' and Saturday Night Live, along with many more projects. Hama is best known to American comic book readers as a writer and editor at Marvel Comics, where he wrote the licensed comic book series G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero, based on the Hasbro toy line. Hama also written for the series Wolverine, Nth Man: the Ultimate Ninja, and Elektra. He created the character Bucky O'Hare, which was developed into a comic book, a toy line and television cartoon.



KUWAIT: American writer Larry Hama speaks during his participation in the Games and Media Entertainment Expo (GX2017). — KUNA photos



People attend Larry Hama's lecture.

KUWAIT MALARIA-FREE WITH 388 CASES TREATED 2016

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health affirmed yesterday that Kuwait is currently a Malaria-free zone with 388 cases treated in 2016. Patients with the treated cases have entered Kuwait from other Malaria-infected countries, Assistant Undersecretary for public health affairs Majda Al-Qattan said in a statement released on the occasion of the World Malaria Day which falls on

April 25. The ministry is following strict procedures to prevent the disease in Kuwait and protect those travelling to infected zones, she said. The disease kills over 400,000 people around the world each year, she added.

Meanwhile, Qattan called on those heading to Africa or East and South Asia to take their injections two weeks prior to their travel date at

Al-Sabah Health Zone. The World Health Organization (WHO), will celebrate the Malaria day under the theme 'a push for prevention'.

WHO aims to create a Malaria-free world through a strategy it had adopted in 2015. The Malaria prevention plan for 2016-2030 will involve executing extreme measures to reduce the disease's rates within the next 15 years. — KUNA



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Crime

Report

COP ARRESTED WITH DRUGS

KUWAIT: A policeman and his friend were arrested with possession of drugs, said security sources, noting that the policeman begged his 'colleagues' to release him. "I am your colleague and work in a police station," he pleaded in vain.

Visa violator caught

Farwaniya detectives arrested an Egyptian man who had arrived in Kuwait on a visit visa five years earlier and had been hiding in Hasawi. Security sources said the suspect was arrested at a checkpoint, where he did not have an ID, so he was taken to the police station. Checking on him, detectives found that he had arrived on a visit visa in 2012 and never left.

Drug possession

Four Syrians were arrested in Hawally with illicit pills. Security sources said a police patrol stopped the suspects' vehicle and found all of them were under the influence, before the vehicle was searched and the pills were found.

Accident

Two men, Bangladeshi and Egyptian, were rushed to Farwaniya Hospital with injuries they sustained when their vehicles collided in Jleeb Al-Shuyiukh. A case was filed to investigate the circumstances which led to the accident.

Fight

Three citizens and three Yemenis were rushed to Mubarak Hospital with various injuries and stab wounds they sustained when they fought using blades at a Salmiya shopping mall. Security sources said the fight started when one of the citizens, who was drunk, insulted the three Yemenis. The sources added that on searching the citizen's vehicle, police found a bottle of whiskey. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Physical assault

A citizen was arrested for assaulting his Kuwaiti girlfriend because she left an apartment he rented for her without informing him. The girlfriend explained that the assailant had promised to marry her, adding his attack on her was due to jealousy. On summoning the suspect, he verified her story, and was detained pending further investigations.

Arrest warrant

A warrant was issued to summon a 60-year-old female citizen to be interrogated over charges of assaulting another female citizen, assisted by a third female citizen, at a restaurant in Adan. Security sources said the suspect did not answer their calls and refused going to the police station.

Thefts

A citizen reported that an unidentified robber climbed into his house and stole KD 7,000 in cash, in addition to his housemaids' passports. A case was filed for investigations. Meanwhile, an Egyptian man working for a 'VIP' woman reported that an unidentified robber had stolen two generators from her farm in Qashaniya. — *Translated from the Arabic press*



LET BYGONES BE BYGONES

By Ali Al-Bedah

Corruption in Kuwait is not about exposing an unidentified culprit involved in a scandal that might rock the entire state. Corruption has become a well-known issue and stories about it are recognized by the state, as the government declares them regularly as if they are talking about a story from a different world. It seems that the world is racing to achieve high rates of corruption. There is hardly a day when we do not hear or read about a corruption-related scandal in some country including minor robberies committed by simpler people and big ones that would not have been exposed if it were not for the greed of the culprits themselves and insistence on taking everything.

*People identify the thieves
and still stand up to show
them respect whenever
they enter a diwaniya*

The good thing in countries ruled by law is that the corrupt people who are caught get prosecuted, and whatever they looted is returned. Robbers might even go to jail. In other countries, scandals are disgraceful and the corrupt themselves commit suicide because life will no longer be acceptable after they are exposed. Some thieves with high positions and statuses do not accept life with scandals but would continue stealing if not exposed.

However, in our Arab countries, the lands of prophets and heavenly religions, things are different. We shamelessly steal. People identify the thieves and still stand up to show them respect whenever they enter a diwaniya. They might whisper about his actions, how much he has stolen and from whom, but no one dares to say the truth and utter a word to make him feel disgraceful. What is even worse is that our thieves brag about their abilities and wealth made through cheating, bribery and violating both public and private funds. They would also laugh their hearts out at opponents who only get bits and pieces.

Kuwaiti corruption has its norms, laws, men and women who are untouchable. The state knows who steals from it, but soon after declaring the amount of such thefts, everything goes back to pin drop silence. Nobody listens to the State Audit Bureau. A parliament used to hold people accountable and thus some of its members were enrolled in the game to act as barriers against attacks on any corrupted person. Some MPs still believe they can stop corruption, thefts and public fund violations.

What do you expect the people to do about what happened during the session that was held to discuss citizenship forgeries? Why would you be angry if they go out to streets declaring their anger? Would you blame them? Would anybody? What is bygone must not be bygone. It must remain alive until we get a solution. This state cannot go on being run as some private farm or estate.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Al-Jarida

OUR SKY IS NOT KUWAITI

By Dr Hassan Jouhar

As usual, a new story is distracting people; the Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC). The proof of this distraction is the feverish comments made on the story on social media including endless information, accusations of treason and squandering millions dinars through corruption without even sourcing such information. Just like all previous pre-staged governmental issues, 'its majesty' did not even take the trouble of declaring an official clear attitude, not only about the dangerous information and leaks by senior state officials including some ministers, but also about the reasons of the sudden change of KAC's board of directors before it finished half of its tenure.

Under chairperson Rash Al-Roumi, this particular board of directors was the only team since Kuwait's liberation that managed to regain some hope in reviving KAC; which had been clinically declared dead thanks to government manipulation, random decisions and improvised privatization laws that turned out to be part of a plan to evacuate this national establishment from national staffs including Kuwaiti pilots. The corporation had been suffering constant losses accumulating over two decades, and all attempts to modernize its fleet had failed.

The outgoing board of directors was the only one that managed to renew and modernize the fleet and cancel privatization plans. In addition, the new airport project's contract was signed during this board's tenure. The funny thing is that Rash Al-Roumi had held a press conference to explain KAC's future vision and the process of launching new planes until 2022, when a few

hours later a new board was formed with new names.

Well, the real reason behind ousting the board of directors and its chairperson might particularly be the slogan Roumi had adapted, 'Our Sky is Kuwaiti', which included a brave indication that KAC would remain the state's official national carrier and that its plane would remain flying under the name of KAC using the Kuwaiti flag, which apparently did not appeal to some people who wish to liquidate all states assets in due time.

KAC privatization did not succeed although the law has been there for several years. The reason is that no 'suitsors' have proposed for such an 'ugly and broke bride' because all its planes were piles of junk, the fleet only included two dozens of planes with half of them not properly functioning and a worn out airport with its buildings leaking from slightest rain showers. That 'bride of Kuwait' now owns 30 new planes, 60 percent of its staffs have been laid off and, within five years, will have new airport that has so far cost \$4 billion. It is just natural that so many suitsors propose now.

If the previous management made any mistakes, the government must be brave enough to state the violations and hold those responsible accountable, but the government is still silent concerning a project to sell this national corporation. Our only consolation might still be in the new board and its chairman, engineer Sami Al-Rasheed, who was once subject to injustice. We hope his usual patriotic spirit would prevail and he would not change the corporation's motto or slogan to make 'Our Sky is not Kuwaiti.'

— Translated by Kuwait Times



KJA MEMBERS BACK HOME FROM UMRAH TRIP



KUWAIT: A Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) delegation returned from an umrah trip organized for KJA members and their families from April 12th through 15th. The delegation members expressed their gratitude to KJA for hosting them and their family members in the annual trip.



Tunisia massacre hotel sees hope in 'rebirth'

THOUSANDS OF FORMER TALEBAN FIGHTERS MAY HAVE ENTERED GERMANY



PARIS: A French riot police officer patrols in Paris yesterday. — AFP

FRANCE ON EDGE AS ELECTION LOOMS

PARIS: France was on edge yesterday on the eve of its most unpredictable presidential election in decades, which will take place under heightened security after the jihadist killing of a policeman. The Islamic State-claimed slaying of the officer on Paris' Champs Elysees avenue thrust questions of security to the fore of campaigning after nine months of relative calm. Analysts say Thursday's attack could shake up the four-way contest between far-right leader Marine Le Pen, centrist Emmanuel Macron, conservative Francois Fillon and Communist-backed firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon.

The top two vote getters in today's poll will head to a run-off on May 7. Authorities in Paris have offered additional guards for hundreds of polling stations in the capital, which will come on top of an already major security plan across the country. "An extra guard or reinforcement of staff will be provided to any polling station that needs it," Paris town hall official Colombe Brossel said. Today, around 50,000 police and 7,000 soldiers will be deployed to protect voters across France.

Until now, surveys showed the French to be more concerned about jobs and the economy than terrorism or security, though analysts warned Thursday's shooting could change that. A note praising IS was found next to the

body of 39-year-old gunman Karim Cheurfi, who shot dead an officer and wounded two others before being killed in a firefight that sent tourists on the Champs Elysees rushing for cover. Le Pen has moved quickly to present herself as the strongest defender against Islamist radicals in a country scarred by a string of attacks that have claimed 239 lives since 2015.

'No signs of radicalisation'

The 48-year-old leader of the anti-immigration National Front (FN) called for France to "immediately" take back control of its borders from the European Union and deport all foreigners on a terror watchlist. "This war against us is ceaseless and merciless," she said, accusing the Socialist government of a "cowardly" response to the threat. Fillon and Macron also hastily convened televised briefings in which they vowed to protect the country. "Some haven't taken the full measure of the evil," 63-year-old Fillon said, promising an "iron-fisted" approach.

Macron, a 39-year-old moderate whom Fillon has portrayed as too inexperienced for the top job, said France was paying for the intelligence jobs cuts made when Fillon was prime minister between 2007 and 2012. Describing the Champs Elysees shooting as an attack on democracy,

he urged voters: "Do not give in to fear." Veteran left-winger Melenchon, 65, was the only one of the four to stick to his schedule. A BVA poll conducted on Thursday and Friday showed Le Pen and Macron tied on 23 percent, ahead of Melenchon with 19.5 percent and Fillon on 19 percent.

Though the race has four main contenders, a total of 11 are in the race, most of whom are polling in the single digits. Cheurfi drew up alongside a police van and shot an officer sitting at the wheel, sending shoppers and strollers on the ritzy Champs Elysees scattering for safety. He was killed while trying to flee on foot. A German tourist was slightly wounded in the crossfire.

A statement by IS's propaganda agency Amaq issued shortly after the attack identified the assailant as "Abu Youssef the Belgian". The claim had raised concerns that a possible second attacker could be on the loose. French authorities said a man sought in Belgium, who was suspected of having planned to travel to France on Thursday, had handed himself in to police in the Belgian city of Antwerp. Cheurfi was arrested in February on suspicion of plotting to kill police officers but released because of a lack of evidence. A serial offender, he spent nearly 14 years in prison for a range of crimes including attacks on the police. He had shown "no signs of radicalisation" while in custody,

said France's anti-terrorism prosecutor Francois Molins.

'Exploiting' attack

The shooting came days after two men were arrested in Marseille on suspicion of planning an imminent attack and follows a series of deadly strikes around Europe in the past month, targeting Stockholm, London and the Saint Petersburg metro. US President Donald Trump tweeted that the attack "will have a big effect" on the election. Adelaide Zulfikarpasic of BVA pollsters said: "If it were to benefit someone that would clearly be Marine Le Pen who has dominated this issue throughout the campaign, or Francois Fillon."

Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve accused Le Pen of attempting to make political hay out of the killing, saying she was "seeking, as she does after every tragedy, to take advantage of it". France has been under a state of emergency for nearly a year and a half. The string of terror attacks began in January 2015 with a massacre at the offices of the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine. The following November, IS gunmen and suicide bombers killed 130 people in Paris, and a Tunisian man rammed a truck through crowds in Nice last July, killing 86 people. — AFP



PARIS: People hold balloons during a rally organized by the 'Angry Policemen's Wife' (FFOC) in support of French policemen, near the esplanade of the Champs de Mars yesterday, two days after a gunman opened fire on police on the Champs Elysee avenue, killing a policeman and wounding two others in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group. —AFP

HASTY IS CLAIM FOR PARIS ATTACK RAISES QUESTIONS

CAIRO: The Islamic State group's rushed claim of responsibility for Thursday's Paris shooting suggests it wanted to heighten the attack's impact, but in its haste may have mixed up the attacker's identity. IS's initial claims of responsibility are usually released by their self-styled news agency Amaq on the social media application Telegram. But Thursday's claim, which came briefly after the attack, was unusual both in its alacrity and also in identifying the attacker by his epithet: Abu Youssef Al-Belgiki, or the Father of Youssef the Belgian.

In previous attacks in the West, claims on Amaq often came up to a day later. For example, IS claimed an October Hamburg stabbing almost two weeks later. "The claim was much faster than it has ever been for this kind of attack," said Charlie Winter, a senior research fellow with the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence at King's College, London. "The sooner the claim comes after the attack, the more easy it is for the organisation to amplify it," he added. For their more spectacular attacks, the Amaq bulletin-often a terse sentence saying the attacker belonged to IS-is often followed by a longer statement with details on the attack and assailant.

This second statement, published on IS's "Nasher" Telegram accounts, may be followed by a picture of the attacker or a video of him pledging allegiance to IS, again sometimes days later. But in the case of the latest Paris attack, in which the shooter killed a policeman, no further statement was forthcoming. The identification of the attacker by Amaq, and naming him as a Belgian rather than the French assailant who was shot dead as he fled, also raised questions. The 39-year-old assailant, Karim Cheurfi, had a long criminal record and had been briefly arrested on suspicion of wanting to attack police.

He may have identified himself as Belgian in communi-

cations with IS handlers, but that is unlikely. French IS members are usually identified as such, with the epithet al-Faransi, or "the Frenchman". "The unusual willingness of IS to provide an alleged kunya (epithet) after the commission of yesterday's shooting in Paris suggests there may be more here than meets the eye," Jade Parker, an expert on IS, said on Friday.

"Whether IS had foresight of the event, mistook yesterday's attacker for someone else or simply made an imbecilic error remains to be seen," said Parker, Senior Research Associate on Terrorist Use of the Internet at TAPSTRI, a private counterterrorism firm. Another expert on the jihadists, Amarnath Amarasingam, said Amaq's identification of the attacker and his description as an Islamic State "fighter" meant "they likely thought someone they knew had carried out the attack". "It's probably why they were confident enough to name him," said Amarasingam, a senior research fellow with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue think tank. The mystery grew after police found a handwritten note praising IS near the slain attacker. — AFP

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WEST BANK: A demonstrator throws back a tear gas canister fired by Israeli troops during clashes after a protest for solidarity with Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike in Israeli jails and against the expansion of the nearby Jewish settlement of Halamish, in the West Bank village of Nebi Saleh near Ramallah. — AP

US IDENTIFIES, CHARGES TEEN ACCUSED OF JEWISH THREATS

ISRAELI-AMERICAN MADE AT LEAST 245 THREATENING CALLS

FLORIDA: An Israeli-American teenager accused of making dozens of bomb threats to Jewish community centers was identified for the first time on Friday in separate criminal complaints filed in US federal courts in Florida and Georgia that linked him to hundreds of hoax calls in 2015 and 2017. Michael Ron David Kadar, 18, who has dual citizenship and lives in Israel, made at least 245 threatening telephone calls between Jan 4 and March 7, many targeting Jewish community centers in the United States, according to the Florida complaint.

Kadar also appears linked to more than 240 hoax threats called into schools in the United States and Canada between August and December 2015, forcing thousands of students to be evacuated, according to the Georgia complaint. Kadar, who is Jewish, has been in custody in Israel since his arrest there on March 23. His name had been withheld by Israeli authorities pending a formal indictment, which is expected within days. US and Israeli authorities have not offered a possible motive. Kadar's defense lawyer in Israel has told reporters he has a high IQ but the emotional intelligence of a 5-year-old.

Kadar's American-born mother said in an interview with Israel's Channel 2 that her son was home-schooled after he was unable to func-

tion in school due to a brain tumor. "He's autistic," she said. "He can't control it. He can't think straight." In the same interview, Kadar's father, who is Israeli, said, "To all the Jews in America, I want to say clearly, we are very, very sorry, from the bottom of our hearts." Both parents were filmed in silhouette to protect their identities. The US Justice Department did not say whether it would seek his extradition.

The waves of threats against Jewish groups forced widespread evacuations and prompted concern among Jewish leaders about a resurgence of anti-Semitism. Many Jewish community centers took steps to heighten security in response. Authorities have said the calls also went to institutions in Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Several threats

The complaints against Kadar provided new detail about the evidence authorities have, including a flash drive found in his laptop containing recordings of numerous telephoned threats. Kadar spontaneously told officers who arrested him at his house in Ashkelon, Israel, that he "did not do it," according to the Florida complaint. When asked what he meant, he referred to the Jewish community center threats, even

though no officer had mentioned them, the complaint said.

Kadar also has a speech impediment that matched one observed in recordings of the calls, US authorities said. He allegedly used masking technology to hide his location and disguise his voice. It was not immediately clear why charges were brought only in Florida and Georgia, after Jewish centers in dozens of states were hit by Kadar's alleged threats. The Florida complaint formally charges him with 15 threats, including against a United Airlines flight at Orlando's airport and several Jewish schools.

In Georgia, he faces a single count for threatening a private residence in Athens, Georgia, in January, in part because he was not yet 18 when he made the 2015 school threats in that state and therefore cannot face charges as an adult. In a statement, the JCC Association of North America praised the "leadership and determination" of Attorney General Jeff Sessions and federal investigators. US authorities previously made one other arrest in connection with the threats. Juan Thompson, a disgraced journalist, is accused of making several threats to Jewish organizations while posing as an ex-girlfriend as part of a revenge plot against her. He has denied the charges. — Reuters

TUNISIA MASSACRE HOTEL SEES HOPE IN 'REBIRTH'

PORT EL KANTAOUI: Some guests are in the jacuzzi as others top up their tans by the pool. Nearly two years after a bloody attack targeted a Tunisian hotel, it has finally reopened. It was on the beach at the former Imperial Marhaba Hotel on June 26, 2015 that a Tunisian gunman opened fire with an assault rifle on foreign tourists. Thirty-eight tourists-among them 30 Britons-were killed in the massacre that transformed a peaceful holiday scene into one of unspeakable horror.

The Islamic State jihadist group claimed responsibility for the killings, which were carried out by Seifeddine Rezgui who was himself shot dead by police later the same day. The hotel at the resort of Port El Kantaoui near Sousse reopened this week, rebranded the "Kantaoui Bay". "You cannot forget. On the day we reopened, I could think only of the victims and their families," says hotel owner Zohra Driss. The parliamentarian with the ruling Nidaa Tounes party calls Tuesday's reopening a "breath of rebirth" that enabled people "to have new confidence in life".

The IS attack on the beach resort 120 kilometers south of the capital was the second of three to hit the North African country in 2015. In March, 22 people-including 21 tourists-had been killed in shootings at the National Bardo museum in Tunis. And in November, a suicide bomber killed 12 members of the presidential guard in the capital.

A shocking year

It was a shocking year for the tourism-reliant economy. Since then, apart from coordinated attacks on security forces in Ben Guerdane near the border with Libya in March last year, the



SOUSSE, Tunisia: Tunisian employees set up the fountains in the grounds of the Imperial Marhaba Hotel in Port El-Kantaoui, on the outskirts of Sousse south of the capital Tunis. The hotel reopened this week, rebranded the 'Kantaoui Bay', after it remained closed for two years following an attack by a Tunisian gunman which was claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group. —AFP

authorities say the situation has improved, but they remain vigilant. At Port El Kantaoui, Driss says that nearly six million dinars (\$2.4 million, 2.2 million euros) has been spent on her hotel. "We changed nearly everything: the decor, color scheme, furniture, the gardens..."

On Friday, workers were still fixing small jobs in the hotel which employs nearly 200 people, general manager Ramzi Kessissa said. Despite what had happened there nearly two years ago,

the hotel which used to be part of Spain's Riù chain but is now with Germany's Steigenberger did not lay off a single member of staff. Last June, on the first anniversary of the mass killing, a memorial ceremony attended by emotional hotel workers was held on the beach to pay tribute to the 38 victims.

Everyone is happy to be back at work, the head gardener for 23 years said. The high season for tourists has not yet arrived in Sousse, and there are not so many visitors yet. French tourist Claudine Chevillard says she had no hesitation at attending the hotel reopening. "We were told we should not go to Tunisia, because there have been attacks," she says. "I said 'I'm going as usual, with no problem.'"

Security boosted

Natalia, a Russian first-time visitor to Tunisia accompanied by her husband, says she has been there for two days and "it's safe". There has been a marked increase in security since the massacre. Then prime minister Habib Essid acknowledged there had been lapses in security, in particular the speed at which the police reacted to the shooting. Now the security presence is obvious, with fixed barriers and mobile patrols, a somewhat incongruous sight in a resort dedicated to relaxation. "We've spent nearly 500,000 dinars (\$200,000, 185,000 euros) on electronic surveillance gear including cameras and scanners, and now have a control room to monitor the hotel and surroundings," says Kessissa. — AFP

A 2-YEAR-OLD ORPHAN OF JIHAD IS TRAPPED IN A LIBYAN PRISON

TUNIS: Almost the only home this toddler has known is a Libyan prison. He already marked one birthday there and in a few days will reach another, turning 3. He is an orphan of the caliphate: His parents, both Islamic State group members, were killed in an airstrike. Tamim Jaboudi is among hundreds of children fathered by the Islamic State's foreign fighters or brought to the self-proclaimed caliphate by their parents who are now imprisoned or in limbo with nowhere to go, collateral victims as the militant group retreats and home countries hesitate to take them back.

Since his parents were killed in February 2016, Tamim has been living among some two dozen Tunisian women and their children in Tripoli's Mitiga prison, raised by a woman who herself willingly joined the Islamic State group. The captives are under guard by a militia that tightly controls access to the group, despite repeatedly claiming they have no interest in preventing their return home. "What is this young child's sin that he is in jail with criminals?" asked Faouzi Trabelsi, the boy's grandfather who has traveled twice to Libya trying to retrieve the boy and twice returned home emptyhanded. "If he grows up there, what kind of attitude will he have toward his homeland?"

600 kid of foreign fighters

European governments and experts have documented at least 600 children of foreign fighters who live in or have returned from IS territory in Syria, Iraq or Libya. But the numbers are likely far higher. The children and families often find it impossible to escape IS-held areas. And even if they do, their native countries are deeply suspicious and fearful of returnees - sometimes even children. Tunisia, France and Belgium have all suffered major attacks from trained IS fighters, and Western intelligence officials have said the group is deploying cells of attackers in Europe.

Although the Islamic State group says women have no role as fighters, France in particular has detained women returnees and some adolescent boys who it believes pose a danger. Young children often go into foster care or end up with extended family. In the Netherlands, anyone over nine is considered a potential security threat, since that is said to be the age IS extremists begin teaching boys to kill. In Libya, their fate is particularly uncertain. The North African nation descended into chaos after the 2011 civil war, which ended with the killing of dictator Mummar Gaddafi.

The country has been split into competing governments, each backed by a set of militias, tribes and political factions. Militias in December captured the main IS stronghold in Libya, Sirte, effectively breaking the group's efforts to build territory there, at least for now. Tunisia is working to bring back the women and 44 children held in Tripoli and elsewhere in Libya. But so far the only result has been repeated hold-ups and miscommunications. "There is no wrong in being born in a conflict zone. Once their Tunisian citizenship is confirmed, they will have an individual treatment," said Chafik Hajji, a Tunisian diplomat who handles the cases of the country's citizens who joined IS.

'Big and comfortable'

Meanwhile, the women and children are held in a "big and comfortable" space in the prison, according to Ahmed bin Salem, spokesman of the Libyan militia that runs the facility. The prison was set up several years ago in a building inside Mitiga Air Base, a military facility that is now also used for commercial flights - including daily ones from Tunis - because it is the only functioning airport in Tripoli. Few if any of the women and children at Mitiga or another group of 120 foreign women and children jailed in the city of Misrata in Libya have valid ID papers, according to Hanan Salah, a Human Rights Watch researcher who specializes in Libya.

While it is unclear how many children were born in IS territory in Iraq, Syria, Libya and elsewhere, a snapshot of the group at its height showed as many as 31,000 women were pregnant at any given moment, many of them wives of jihadis encouraged to have as many babies as possible to populate the nascent caliphate, according to the Quilliam Foundation, a British counter-extremism research group. Quilliam researcher Nikita Malik said 80 British children were inside Islamic State territory. France estimated 450 of its children, including around 60 born there; Dutch and Belgian intelligence each estimated 80 children.

"In the long term, there is the new

generation of ISIS, of Daesh. These are the newborns, the children of the marriages," said Mohammed Iqbel, whose Association of Tunisians Trapped Abroad advocates for the families of those who have left. "And if we don't save them, they will be a new generation of terrorism." By many estimates, Tunisia sent more jihadis to the war zones than any other country, with official figures at 3,000 and some analysts doubling that number. Trabelsi's daughter and son-in-law were among them.

Joining extremist groups

His forehead bearing the bruise-colored mark from prayer, Trabelsi spoke in his spotlessly clean living room in Tunis. Outside, the neighborhood was rough at the edges, its streets pitted with neglect. Around the corner, adolescent boys brawled as a crowd watched. Trabelsi's daughter, Samah, married a young man from the neighborhood after a month-long courtship, he said. The newlyweds left for Turkey, a common jumping off point for Europeans and North Africans joining extremist groups. Tamim was born there on April 30, 2014. The couple returned to Tunisia, then went on to neighboring Libya, where they remained for two years, he said.

True Muslims

The Islamic State group paid particular attention to recruiting families, boasting that it would build a society that would endure for generations. Its early propaganda showed children eating sweets and playing in peaceful streets. Foreign fighters who brought wives and children were told their housing and utility bills would be covered, with money for food. Their children, they were told, would grow up to be "true Muslims."

To reassure recruits, an Australian doctor appeared in a widely viewed propaganda video that showed a pristine neonatal clinic in Raqqa. Reality was another story. The families of foreign fighters, in many cases, took over the homes of Syrians who had fled. Movement was highly restricted, and medical care was rudimentary at best, according to court testimony and interviews from former recruits who have returned. For foreign recruits in particular, extricating themselves has proven exponentially more difficult than joining.

Tamim's mother made it out once, Trabelsi said, but she was demoralized by what he described as harassment from Tunisian intelligence agents. His daughter gave no warning before she left for the second time, he said. She took all her documents and nearly all the family photos. A copy of her ID card shows a veiled young woman gazing directly at the camera. When she did call, she said nothing about where they were, Trabelsi said. "Her husband told her to be quiet and not to tell us anything."

The couple was among at least 40 people killed in a US airstrike on an IS training camp in the city of Sabratha in February 2016. The Pentagon at the time said the target was Nouredine Chouchane, a Tunisian suspected in a 2015 attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunis in which 22 people died. Six months later, word filtered back to his grandfather that Tamim was alive and in Mitiga. He began pressing to get him back. A low point came when Trabelsi was permitted to take Tamim outside the prison and sit with him in a car. He wondered, he said, if he should just drive away with the child, who by now was closer to the prison warden than his own grandfather.

"He is clean, he is in good shape. They told me they bring him out to play and see other children," he said. "But he should be allowed back. He is in a prison." Salah, the Human Rights Watch researcher, said that for both the Tunisians and the Libyans, keeping the women and children in the prison "is the easy way out, and that's what we object to." Over a month ago, Tunisian officials pledged on a national talk show to bring Tamim home that very week. They never even left. One problem is that the Tunisian government is reluctant to deal officially with the militia that runs Mitiga prison since it is not a government body, while the militia demands the Tunisians talk to it directly.

Last week, an unofficial Tunisian delegation went to negotiate for the children, only to be turned back by the Libyans because it did not get permission prior to the visit. On Wednesday, another delegation was due at the prison but the visit was cancelled when the group demanded to see the families and transfer them on the same day without going through proper procedures, according to the militia's spokesman bin Salem. He said the delegation also failed to show up on time. — AP



Faouzi Trabelsi shows a photo of himself posing with his grandson, **Tamim Jaboudi**, who has been trapped in a prison in Libya. The boy's parents, both Tunisians who left home to join the Islamic State group, died in an American airstrike on the city of Sabratha in February 2016, according to Trabelsi. — AP

HUNDREDS JOIN MOSUL EXODUS

MOSUL: Pushing carts loaded with bags, babies and the elderly, hundreds of people fled Mosul yesterday after Iraqi forces retook another district in the west of the city from Islamic State. After walking for miles, families were taken by bus from a government checkpoint in the south of the city to camps housing more than 410,000 people displaced since the offensive to retake Mosul began in October.

"We left with no water, food or electricity," said 63-year-old Abu Qahntan, the elder of a group of 41 people from five families. "We left with the clothes on our backs." Iraqi forces have taken much of Mosul from the militants who overran the city in June 2014. The military now controls the eastern districts and are making advances in the west. Islamic State fighters are surrounded in the northwest and are using

booby traps, sniper and mortar fire to defend themselves.

Artillery and gun fire could be heard as families arrived from Hay Al-Tanak district which they said was still half controlled by the militants. The US-trained Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) has retaken the nearby al-Thaura district, a statement said. Hundreds of thousands of civilians are still trapped in western Mosul, where Iraqi forces are making slow progress against Islamic State in what is a labyrinth of narrow streets. As of April 20, some 503,000 people have been displaced from Mosul, of which 91,000 have returned, a spokeswoman for the UN refugee agency UNHCR said, citing government figures. Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, is the militants' last urban stronghold in the country. — Reuters

POWER OUTAGE CRIPPLES SAN FRANCISCO FOR HOURS

SAN FRANCISCO: A power outage triggered by a fire in a utility substation blacked out much of San Francisco on Friday, paralyzing the city's technology and finance center, halting its famed cable cars and shuttering major retailers. The utility PG&E Corp reported a fire and a circuit-breaker failure at a San Francisco substation, with a series of outages hitting the Bay Area city shortly after 9 am and ultimately cutting power to some 90,000 customers. Office workers in the city's financial district spilled out onto the sidewalks, wandering the streets in search of an open cafe, or stood waiting in the lobbies of their buildings as elevators came to a stop. "It's pretty big, seems like half the city has no power," said King Lip, chief investment officer at Baker Avenue Asset Management in San Francisco. "We were in the middle of a trade."

Fourteen neighborhoods were affected, including the main shopping district near Union Square, where stores and coffee shops turns signs to closed and major

retailers such as Macy's and Louis Vuitton shut their doors. In a city proud of its technological prowess, the outage forced residents back to the dark ages. At the salad bar chain MIXT downtown, cashiers took credit card payments using old-fashioned paper imprints, as customers lined up to eat in the dim natural light. "Old school," commented patron Ben Fackler. "I haven't seen that in forever."

Darkened by substation

By 3 pm electricity had been restored to less than a third of the affected customers and PG&E spokesman Paul Doherty said that it would be several more hours before the rest would be brought back online. "Workers have entered the substation. They're assessing the damage and starting to make repairs," Doherty said. San Francisco International Airport remained operational, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said through a spokesperson that the agency had not received any reports indicating that the



SAN FRANCISCO: Crews install a generator above the Bay Area Rapid Transit Montgomery station after a power outage in San Francisco. A power outage struck a wide area of San Francisco on Friday, blacking out about 90,000 utility customers, trapping people in stuck elevators, snarling traffic as intersection signals went dark and forcing shops and restaurants to close. — AP

outage was related to any security or terrorism incident. The spokesperson requested anonymity, citing department policy. "This had nothing to do with

cyber," said Joe Weiss, an expert on control system cyber security who has testified to Congress about structural weaknesses in grid components. "The real

question is how could one substation take out, effectively, San Francisco? What other failures occurred there that didn't isolate this?" Wells Fargo & Co closed 13 bank branches and four office buildings, while the New York Stock Exchange said its ARCA options trading floor in San Francisco was briefly unavailable because of the power outage.

For more than two hours, trains streamed through the Montgomery Street station as the outage prevented them from stopping until backup generators came on line at about 11:30 a.m., Bay Area Rapid Transit said. At Saint Francis Memorial Hospital in the Nob Hill neighborhood, all non-essential appointments and procedures had been canceled, spokeswoman Blair Holloway said. Two of four campuses of Sutter Health's California Pacific Medical Center were also impacted by the outage, spokesman Dean Fryer said. Elective surgeries were canceled and emergency patients were directed to other hospitals, Fryer said. — Reuters



A woman holds a sign at a rally outside of City Hall in San Francisco. The Trump administration is moving beyond rhetoric in its effort to crack down on so-called sanctuary cities that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration authorities.— AP

SANCTUARY CITIES THREATENED WITH LOSS OF FEDERAL GRANTS

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration intensified its threats to crack down on so-called sanctuary cities that refuse to comply with federal immigration authorities, warning nine jurisdictions Friday that they may lose coveted law enforcement grant money unless they document cooperation. It sent letters to officials in California and major cities including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and New Orleans, all places the Justice Department's inspector general has identified as limiting the information local law enforcement can provide to federal immigration authorities about those in their custody.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has warned that the administration will punish communities that refuse to cooperate with efforts to find and deport immigrants in the country illegally. But some of the localities remained defiant, despite risking the loss of funds that police agencies use to pay for everything from body cameras to bulletproof vests. "We're not going to cave to these threats," Milwaukee County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic said, promising a legal fight if the money is pulled.

Violent crime

Playing off Sessions' recent comments that sanctuary cities undermine the fight against gangs, the Justice Department said the communities under financial threat are "crumbling under the weight of illegal immigration and violent crime." After a raid led to the arrests of 11 MS-13 gang members in California's Bay Area "city officials seemed more concerned with reassuring illegal immigrants that the raid was unrelated to immigration than with warning other MS-13 members that they were next," the department said in a statement.

The federal law in question says state and local governments may not prohibit police or sheriffs from sharing information

about a person's immigration status with federal authorities. The money could be withheld in the future, or terminated, if local officials fail to prove they are following the law, wrote Alan R. Hanson, acting head of the Office of Justice Programs. The grant program is the leading source of federal justice funding to states and local communities. Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly threatened additional consequences for local police that don't deliver people in custody, saying the alternative is immigration agents searching neighborhoods.

"Ideally the best place for us to pick up these illegal criminals is in jails and prisons," Kelly said at a news conference with Sessions in San Diego, next to a border fence topped with razor wire. "If they don't do that, then we have to go into neighborhoods. We have to go into courthouses. We have to go wherever we can find them and apprehend them." Kevin de Leon, leader of California's state Senate, rejected the administration's demand, saying its policies are based on "principles of white supremacy" and not American values. "Their constant and systematic targeting of diverse cities and states goes beyond constitutional norms and will be challenged at every level," he said.

Soft-on-crime

Leaders in Chicago and Cook County, which shared a grant of more than \$2.3 million in 2016, dismissed the threat. So did the mayor's office in New York City, which received \$4.3 million. The Justice Department singled out Chicago's rise in homicides and said New York's gang killings were the "predictable consequence of the city's soft-on-crime stance." New York City Police Commissioner James O'Neill said the "soft on crime" statement made his blood boil. "To say we're soft on crime is absolutely ludicrous," O'Neill said. — AP

WAITING FOR GREEN CARDS, INDIAN VISA-HOLDERS SEE HOPE IN TRUMP

1.5 MILLION H1-B VISA HOLDERS WAITING FOR GREEN CARDS

SAN FRANCISCO: When Gokul Gunasekaran was offered a full scholarship for a graduate program in electrical engineering at Stanford University, he saw it as the chance of a lifetime. He had grown up in Chennai, India, and had a solid job offer with a large oil company after getting his undergraduate degree. He came to America instead, got the Stanford degree and now works as an engineer at a data science start-up in Silicon Valley.

But for the past five years, he has been waiting for a green card that would give him full legal rights as a permanent resident. In the meantime, he is in a holding pattern on an H1-B visa, which permits him to live and work in the United States but does not allow him easily to switch jobs or start his own company. "It was a no-brainer when I came to this country, but now I'm kind of regretting taking that scholarship," said Gunasekaran, 29, who is also vice president with a non-profit group called Immigration Voice that represents immigrants waiting for green cards.

Immigration Voice estimates there are some 1.5 million H1-B visa holders in the country waiting for green cards, many of whom are from India and have been waiting for more than a decade. Many of these immigrants welcomed President Donald Trump's executive order this week to the federal departments overseeing the program to review it, a move that may lead to H1-B visas being awarded to the highest-paying, highest-skilled jobs rather than through a random lottery. Their hope is that merit-based H1-Bs might then lead to merit-based green cards.

"I think less random is great," said Guru Hariharan, the CEO and founder of Boomerang Commerce, an e-commerce startup. Hariharan, who was previously an executive at Amazon.com Inc and eBay Inc, spent 10 years waiting for his green card and started his own company as soon as he got it. Green cards can be a path to naturalization and Hariharan expects to become a US citizen soon. H1-B visas are aimed at foreign nationals in occupations that generally require specialized knowledge, such as science, engineering or computer programming. The US government uses a lottery to award 65,000 such visas yearly and randomly distributes another 20,000 to graduate student workers.

'Indentured servants'

The H1-B and the green card system are technically separate, but many immigrants from India see them as intimately connected. The number of green cards that can go to people born in each country is capped at a few percent of the total, without regard to how large or small the country's population is. There is a big backlog of Indian-born people in the line, given the



NEW YORK: Juan Escalante, of the immigration reform group America's Voice, conducts interviews in New York. Young immigrants protected by executive action from deportation say they won't "rest easy," even if President Donald Trump said they should. Nearly 800,000 people living illegally in the US qualify for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA. Trump said that his administration is "not after the dreamers, we are after the criminals. — AP

size of India's population - 1.3 billion - and the number of its natives in the United States waiting for green cards. That leaves many of those immigrants stuck on H1-B visas while they wait, which they say makes them almost like "indentured servants," said Gaurav Mehta, an H1-B holder who works in the financial industry.

Mehta has a US-born son, but he could be forced to take his family back to India at any time if he loses his job and cannot find another quickly. "He's never been to my country," Mehta said of his son. "But we'll have no choice if we have to go. Nobody likes to live in constant fear." The H1-B visa is tied to a specific employer, who must apply for the visa and sponsor the employee for a specific job laid out in the visa application. To switch employers, the visa holder must secure their paperwork from their current employer and find another employer willing to take over their visa. Some H1-B holders suspect that employers purposely seek out Indian immigrants because they know they will end up waiting for green cards and will be afraid to leave their employers.

But changing the green card system away

from country caps to a merit-based system would require an act of Congress. Some executives also worry that allocating H1-Bs and green cards based on salary - while it would be done to counter the argument that immigrants undercut American workers - would hurt startups that cannot afford high wages. In the meantime, H1-B holders like Nitin Pachisia, founding partner of a venture capital firm called Unshackled Ventures, are taking more practical measures. His firm specializes in taking care of the legal paperwork so that H1-B holders can start their own companies, a process that is possible but tricky.

Pachisia is hopeful that changes to the H1-B visa program could revive interest in making the entire system, from H1-B visas to green cards and eventual citizenship, more merit-based and focused on immigrants who are likely to start companies and create jobs. "If the purpose of our high-skilled immigration program is to bring in the most talented people, let's use that as a lens. From that perspective, it's a good thing we can focus on the most talented, and I'd say most entrepreneurial, people," he said. — Reuters

GUNFIRE SENSORS CREDITED WITH QUICK ARREST IN FRESNO RAMPAGE

FRESNO: Acoustic sensors mounted on lampposts and telephone poles picked up the crack of gunfire and rapidly enabled police to zero in on where it was coming from. Within minutes, the alleged gunman in the deadly rampage was under arrest. Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer credited the technology Wednesday with the swift capture of Kori Ali Muhammad, a 39-year-old black man who authorities say killed three people Tuesday in a bid to wipe out as many whites as possible.

"He was in custody within 4 minutes and 13 seconds," Dyer said

Wednesday at a news conference where he played audio clips of the ShotSpotter technology. "Kori Muhammad would be outstanding today if it wasn't for shots-fired detection." First developed two decades ago, ShotSpotter technology has been used widely since 2011 in US cities. The Fresno rampage is one of the more serious crimes in which it played a vital role. Police say Muhammad randomly targeted white men he encountered in a tree-lined Fresno neighborhood, firing 17 rounds within a few minutes before running out of ammunition,

police said. He was charged with one count of first-degree murder Thursday in the killing of a motel security guard days before the rampage. Police said he told them Carl Williams, who was also white, showed him disrespect. Authorities say he decided to kill more white people when he learned he was wanted in Williams' death. Prosecutors say they are holding off on three additional charges while investigators piece together their case. The technology police credit with stopping Muhammad is used by about 90 US cities, including New York; San Francisco; Oakland, California; and Chicago, as well as Cape Town, South Africa, according to ShotSpotter. Police in Fresno have had it for the past two years. ShotSpotter of Newark, California, requires the installation of numerous sensitive microphones.

Computers and technicians at a California-based center distinguish the sound of gunfire from other noises and triangulate the shots, in much the same way that cell towers are used to zero in on the location of a cellphone. The system can tell police the location and time the shots were fired, how many there were, and sometimes the type of weapon, the number of shooters and whether they changed location as they fired. The information can be sent to officers on the street via

their smartphones and their squad-car computer screens, as was the case in Fresno.

Fresno police said officers were alerted to the gunfire by ShotSpotter even before they received any word from the dispatchers who take 911 calls, and the system pinpointed the shooter's location to within a matter of feet. Muhammad had tossed aside his empty gun moments before the officer pulled up, according to police. The suspect then threw himself on the ground and surrendered. Fresno Officer Nicholas El-Helou said it is rare for police relying on traditional dispatch calls to arrive while a gunman is still on the scene.

The speedy arrest in this case may have averted another tragedy, he said. "He could carjack somebody. What's to say he doesn't force his way into a home and take hostages?" El-Helou said. "We don't know what could have happened. He was a desperate man." A one-year contract with ShotSpotter costs \$55,000 to \$95,000 for each square mile. Because of the cost, cities often limit the technology to high-crime areas. Privacy advocates criticize it for also sometimes recording speech, though the manufacturer says it is designed to ignore such noise. Still, prosecutors used a recording of the last words of Tyrone Lyles to help convict the gunman who killed him in Oakland in 2007. — AP



FRESNO: Pastors and church leaders gather for a final prayer following a prayer walk for the victims of triple-homicide near downtown Fresno, Calif. — AP

'DRAIN THE SWAMP' - MORE A SLOGAN THAN A PRACTICE

WASHINGTON: The leader of a bipartisan good-government group, Zach Wamp, headed to the White House last week to ask whether President Donald Trump's "drain the swamp" slogan would ever be more than a throwaway campaign slogan. One of the president's closest aides, Steve Bannon, assured him it's a priority. Bannon said he "agrees with the concept that Washington is rigged," said Wamp, a former Republican congressman. "He said he just needs to figure out what to do about it."

Yet within 48 hours of the visit, the White House announced the end of an Obama administration practice aimed at greater transparency in government: It would no longer release the names of visitors to the executive mansion. It was another step away from the goal of "drainage," curbing the outsized influence of Washington powerbrokers. Then, a filing this week showed that the president raised a record \$107 million for his inauguration, much of it from companies and people who do business with the government.

Special-interest players

Trump also has brought scores of spe-

cial-interest players into government. And he has yet to push any proposals to tighten campaign finance or lobbying disclosure rules. Trump's boldest anti-swamp move - a January executive order limiting the lobbying of outgoing officials - has already been undermined by a waiver he granted to at least one departing employee. The administration says it will never share information about when or why it makes those decisions, another change from the Obama era. "What they do on 'drain the swamp' is very much to-be-determined," Wamp said. "I think - at least I hope - my stop there last week was a reminder that these things matter."

Bannon did not respond to requests for comment, and the White House says it considers Trump's early bureaucracy-slimming moves to be part of its drain-the-swamp work. At a rally last month in Louisville, Kentucky, Trump re-upped his vow: "We are going to drain the swamp of government corruption in Washington, DC, and we are going to keep our promises, all of the promises that we made." Indeed, "drain the swamp" is scrawled on one of chief strategist Bannon's white boards documenting those campaign pledges. — AP

IN OR OUT? EU IS HOT-BUTTON ISSUE IN FRENCH VOTE

PARIS: Such is Marine Le Pen's aversion to the European Union that the French far-right leader demanded the removal of its star-spangled flag from a TV studio before agreeing to a recent interview. Her chief rival in the race for the French presidency, centrist Emmanuel Macron, pointedly waved an EU flag from the podium at a campaign rally the next day. Love it or loathe it, the European Union has become a hot-button issue in the election, fanning fears far beyond France in the wake of Britain's Brexit vote that a "Frexit" could doom the 60-year-old bloc.

"Rarely has the European issue held such a pre-eminent place on all the candidates' platforms as in this electoral campaign," said analyst Pierre Vimont of the Carnegie Europe think tank. In the five years since France's last presidential vote, Europe has seen a massive migrant crisis and a rise in populism, both contributing to the Brexit vote. None of the four main French candidates can afford to be neutral on the EU, whether they portray it as the source of all woes or a guarantee of peace and stability.

Like Macron, conservative candidate Francois Fillon is bullish on Brussels, highlighting the Franco-German leadership axis and defending the euro. Both candidates met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel during the campaign. Arrayed on the other side are Le Pen, who advo-

cates leaving the EU immediately, and hard-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon, who demands a renegotiation of key treaty provisions. "Positions have hardened," said Manuel Lafont Rapnouil of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

"Melenchon was very influenced by what happened to (Greek anti-austerity party) Syriza," which gave in to European demands after months of crisis. Syriza, the party of Greek premier Alexis Tsipras, endorsed Melenchon, saying he "represents hope for change for France and Europe". Le Pen, on the other hand, "is riding the wave of Brexit" and Donald Trump's surprise accession to the White House, he said. The ideological underpinnings of the two candidates' euroscepticism are worlds apart, however.

'Dictatorship of banks'

Le Pen stresses economic, monetary and territorial "sovereignty", along with a "national preference" for French citizens in the workplace and the allocation of state benefits. Melenchon vows to end the "nightmare" of an EU that submits its members to "the dictatorship of the banks" and the austerity policies they impose. But both promise a showdown with Brussels and say they are certain to come out on top given the strength of France within the bloc. — AFP



PARIS: A French policeman patrols inside the Gare du Nord train station in Paris on yesterday, after a man carrying a knife was arrested. The arrest at Paris's Gare du Nord caused brief panic days after the jihadist killing of a policeman, police sources said amid pre-election jitters. "An individual carrying a knife came into the station, was pointed out to a police patrol which immediately arrested him," one of the sources said. — AFP



COLOGNE: Police secure a protest march against the party convention of Germany's nationalist party AfD (Alternative for Germany) in Cologne yesterday. Around 50,000 left-wing protesters were expected and about 4,000 police officers were on the ground to prevent a violent escalation of anti-populist rallies. — AP

GERMANY'S ANTI-IMMIGRATION PARTY AfD STAGES SHOWDOWN

CLASHES AS LEFTIST DEMONSTRATORS DISRUPT CONGRESS

COLOGNE: Thousands of leftist demonstrators tried to disrupt a party congress by Germany's right-wing populist AfD yesterday marked by festering internal rivalries five months before a general election. Around 50,000 demonstrators were expected to mobilize during the two-day gathering of the anti-immigration Alternative for Germany party in the western city of Cologne, with 4,000 police officers dispatched to keep the peace.

But as the 600 delegates began filing into the congress venue, a hotel in the city centre, singing and chanting demonstrators attempted to block them from passing through security barricades, leading to scuffles with authorities. One police officer escorting party members into the suffered an injury to his face, leading to the arrest of a male protester. The AfD, now represented in 11 of Germany's 16 states, aims to sign off on a program for its campaign that it hopes will pave the way for the party to enter the national parliament for the first time in its four-year history.

After weeks of bitter infighting, co-leader Frauke Petry made the shock announcement Wednesday that she would not seek to lead the AfD's campaign. The news left the party reeling and set the stage for a showdown between populist and more radical, hard-right forces. "(Petry) has been unable to stop the AfD, which began as a party of euro critics, from becoming more and more a catch-all for racists, right-

wing nationalists and the far right," Cologne's daily Stadt-Anzeiger said. "The fight within the AfD rages on."

Founded in 2013 on a eurosceptic platform, the AfD seized on Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to let in more than one million asylum seekers since 2015, transforming the German political landscape. But its fortunes have declined as the number of new arrivals has dwindled, and all of Germany's mainstream parties have ruled out working with it should it clear the five-percent hurdle to representation in the September 24 election. Opinion polls show the AfD at between seven and 11 percent, a steep drop from the 15 percent support it drew only late last year. Merkel is seeking a fourth term after nearly 12 years in power and her conservative Christian Democrats are currently leading the polls.

'Tearing itself apart'

The telegenic Petry, a 41-year-old trained chemist who is pregnant with her fifth child, has aligned herself with kindred spirits across Europe, including far-right firebrand Marine Le Pen, one of the frontrunners for the first round of French elections today. But given the long shadow still cast by Germany's Nazi past, Petry has argued the AfD must make itself more palatable with a more moderate-sounding "middle-class" platform she will put to a vote at the congress.

The stated goal is to become Germany's rul-

ing party by 2021. Denouncing "provocations" by party officials, Petry has called for the ouster of an AfD state leader, Bjoern Hoecke, who in January sparked outrage by slamming Berlin's vast Holocaust memorial as a "monument of shame". Although Hoecke has been barred from attending the congress, some delegates have said they will put forward a motion to keep him in the party. Petry's chief rival, 76-year-old Alexander Gauland, a hardline defector from Merkel's CDU, has said he would back the initiative. Analysts say the vast majority of the AfD's core supporters are far to the right of the political spectrum.

However they say there is little appetite among most German voters for radical change, particularly after the victories of Donald Trump in the United States and the Brexit camp in Britain. "In terms of its voters, Petry's attempt to make the AfD a middle-class mainstream party is a very unrealistic strategy," Robert Vehrkamp of the Bertelsmann Foundation think tank told Spiegel Online. The news website said the party's inner turmoil also diminished the threat it posed to the establishment in Europe's top economy. "While in the rest of Europe, opponents of immigration and the EU are on the march, the AfD is busy tearing itself apart," it said. "That is good news for the traditional parties and the defenders of liberal values in Germany—at least in its current state, no one needs to fear the AfD." — AFP

FRENCH YOUTHS 'POLITICAL', EVEN IF THEY DO NOT VOTE

PARIS: They may not head to polling stations for France's presidential election today but it doesn't mean they don't care. "We are called disengaged, depoliticized, but it's just that we get involved differently," said Loic Frohn, 19, who rejects the cliché that French youth are selfish and indifferent. Backing his view, studies show high levels of civic engagement among the country's younger population despite a tendency to neglect politics. Frohn grew up in a working-class suburb of Paris and says he is motivated by a desire to fight for "equality, diversity and solidarity".

He works in a civil service program that pays youths aged between 16 and 25 around 600 euros (\$640) for a six- to 12-month mission. Participants typically make home visits to pensioners and help handicapped people with sporting and cultural activities. Frohn also became an ambassador of the program, visiting schools to persuade others to take part. Last year nearly 100,000 people took part in these programs, nearly tripling enrolment in just two years. "They say we are not active perhaps because of (low) voter turnout rates," Frohn said. "But rather than vote for people who don't necessarily reflect our values, we instead project our values ourselves, through our actions," Frohn added.

Soaring abstention rates

In France, abstention rates are highest among older and younger voters, with the younger population counting the lowest proportion of registered voters. During the last French presidential election in 2012, nearly one registered voter out of five (19 percent) under the age of 25 did not vote—one-and-a-half times the abstention rate (13 percent) of the overall population. Last month, half of 18- to 25-year-olds questioned for several polls said they plan to skip voting in the country's two-stage presidential election this Sunday and May 7.

"Defiance toward the political system is overwhelming," said Anne Muxel, a sociologist who works on the French part of the European-wide survey Generation What.

Among the 20,000 in that survey, 87 percent do not have confidence in politics and 99 percent consider politicians more or less corrupt. "This does not mean that young people no longer believe in political activities," or are apathetic, she added. "There is a strong propensity toward direct democracy and protesting," said Muxel, noting a majority of young people have high confidence in humanitarian organizations.

'Morally driven activism'

Studies show French youth are increasingly involved in civil society. Just behind Iceland, young French people are the most active in volunteer work in Europe, according to the 2012 quality of life survey by Eurofound. In 2016, 35 percent of respondents to a survey by the CREDOC research centre volunteered at least intermittently, up from 26 percent the previous year. Shock from France's worst terrorist attack two years ago, when concertgoers were killed at the Bataclan hall in Paris, "clearly prompted a desire for engagement, for perhaps more morally-driven activism, an awareness, at any rate, and a return to civic participation," said Muxel.

But civic engagement is not new to young people in France, as demonstrated by a willingness to hit the streets to protest against reforms, Muxel noted. Beyond traditional ways of participating in civic life like voting, other types of engagement are cropping up, for example in digital-based activities, says Milena Lebreton-Chebouba of the French youth forum, which brings together a range of organizations.

"We tend to limit our activities to volunteering, but a young person who decides to produce an explanatory video or write a blog about citizenship in their free time is also engaging in a form of activism," says Nicolas Bertrand, 26, who used to volunteer for an organization promoting journalism geared to young people. There are also petition signings and brand boycotts. "Young people are perhaps not the most involved in sacrificial activism but they have a real conscience," Bertrand said. —AFP



PARIS: Far-right candidate for the presidential election Marine Le Pen gestures as she arrives for a campaign meeting in Paris. — AP

SPAIN'S PM STILL UNSCATHED FROM CORRUPTION SCANDALS

MADRID: With arrests, raids and tears, Spaniards this week watched another episode in a long-running corruption saga that has hit the ruling conservative party... but left Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy unscathed. On Tuesday, the 62-year-old conservative leader was summoned to testify as a witness in a graft trial involving former members of his party. While not accused of anything, he will be the first acting Spanish prime minister to take the stand. One defendant has already claimed the party ran a slush fund, prompting a separate investigation and parliamentary probe.

On Wednesday, police arrested 12 people in Madrid—including the former Popular Party (PP) regional president in an inquiry into embezzlement of public money. Police a day later raided several companies accused of bribing the party in exchange for contracts. And that same day, Esperanza Aguirre, another former PP president of the Madrid region, broke down in tears on television while pledging she was unaware of the alleged corrupt activities of those once her closest advisers.

'Sons of bitches'

These are but some of a series of corruption twists and turns that have tarnished the PP's

image over the years. But despite the opposition's constant criticism and general corruption fatigue in Spain, Rajoy himself has only been marginally weakened by the scandals, analysts say. Angry voters have flocked to two relatively new parties—left Podemos and centre-right Ciudadanos—but the PP still managed to win a general election last year, albeit without the absolute majority it won in 2011. As a result, Rajoy now heads up a minority government with considerably less power than before.

But according to Jose Pablo Ferrandiz of polling institute Metroscopia, the most recent scandals don't threaten him. "He's lucky not to have to fight any elections in the near future," he said. "He will go to the end of his mandate to try and clean up his image." Ferrandiz also points to recent polls that show voter intentions unchanged since elections last June, with the PP



Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy

remaining ahead with 33 percent. "The PP has an advantage over other parties in that its voters have pretty much accepted (the corruption allegations)," says Fernando Vallespin, politics professor at the Autonomous University of Madrid. "Their frame of mind seems to be: 'they're sons of bitches, but they are our sons of bitches.'"

Divided opposition

And while Rajoy rules at the head of a minority government, the opposition has found itself unable to rally and fight. The PP's traditional rival Socialist party, which has also been hit by its own corruption scandals, is in the throes of a fierce leadership contest after its previous chief Pedro Sanchez was ousted. Ciudadanos, which supports the PP in parliament while still criticizing it, is also locked in constant conflict with Podemos. "If there were a consensus, then maybe one of them would dare table a vote of no confidence," says Vallespin.

The PP, meanwhile, defends itself by pointing to a string of anti-corruption laws voted in when it still had an absolute majority. Rajoy also regularly insists on Spain's economic recovery under his direction, with a sharp drop in unemployment—even if Spain remains the second worst performer in Europe after Greece. —AFP

REPORT: THOUSANDS OF FORMER TALEBAN FIGHTERS MAY HAVE ENTERED GERMANY

BERLIN: Thousands of former Taliban fighters may have entered Germany over the past two years among an influx of more than a million migrants and refugees, Der Spiegel magazine reported yesterday. Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) informed security officials that thousands of migrants had identified themselves as former Taliban insurgents during the asylum application process, the magazine said.

It added that at least 70 Afghan men were being investigated by Germany's over-stretched chief federal prosecutor, though it was not clear whether all of them were suspected of being active Taliban militants. Six are being held in investigatory detention and preliminary

court hearings involving several others are due to start next week, the magazine added. No comment was immediately available from the migration office or federal prosecutors.

The government of Chancellor Angela Merkel, under fire for allowing in so many migrants, especially after several militant attacks linked to migrants last year, has been actively deporting groups of rejected Afghan asylum seekers. Merkel, seeking a fourth term in a Sept 24 election, this month defended the increase deportations of rejected Afghan asylum seekers, saying all other European Union countries were doing the same. She said about 55 percent of Afghans were granted refugee status in Germany, while 45 percent were turned down. —Reuters

News

in brief

\$90,000 in underwear

YANGON: Two Georgian men were busted in a Myanmar airport with \$90,000 of stolen cash hidden in their underwear which they had swiped from a local money changer, police said yesterday. Officers said the middle-aged men, identified as Janjgava Revas, 64, and Narmania Malkhaz, 51, had made off with the money from a currency exchange office on Friday in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city. "They were found at the Yangon airport with the \$90,000 in their underwear," said a statement posted on Yangon police's official Facebook page. "They will have to face trial," an officer said yesterday, adding that the men were being held in the city's main prison. The duo allegedly duped the money changer into giving them the \$90,000 before they had handed over the equivalent amount in Myanmar kyat. "They told me they would come back with the Myanmar kyat," Zaw Win, the owner of the exchange office said. He said the Georgians, who were in Myanmar on tourist visas, left behind a case that they claimed contained the US dollars he had doled out for them and promising to return shortly.

IS 'bandits' killed

MOSCOW: Russian law enforcers have shot dead two "bandits" from an Islamic State sleeper cell near the volatile North Caucasus region who were plotting to kill religious leaders, officials said yesterday. The two men were killed in a firefight late Friday after they opened up on officers when their car was stopped during a security sweep near a village in the Stavropol region in southern Russia, the National Anti-Terrorism Committee said in a statement to Russian news agencies. "One of them was the head of the cell and had undergone training in IS camps before coming to Russia to carry out terror attacks. The other was an active member of the cell," the statement said. "The security agencies have information that these bandits intended to conduct a range of terrorist crimes, including killing religious figures and other civilians." Moscow is fighting a lingering Islamist insurgency in the mainly Muslim North Caucasus, a region that has provided a steady stream of fighters for extremist groups battling in Iraq and Syria.

Protesters free hostages

HANOI: Protesters involved in a land dispute near Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, released the final 20 officials they had been holding as hostages for almost a week after a visit by a senior city official, Reuters witnesses said yesterday. Villagers in Dong Tam, 40 km from the centre of Hanoi, seized 38 officials, including police officers, last weekend after four people were arrested in retaliation for protests staged during the escalating land dispute. Fifteen of the officials were released on Monday and another three escaped, while authorities also released the detained protesters. Dong Tam villagers say they have received insufficient compensation by authorities who took over residential land for a telecommunications project. The release of the final 20 officials came after a visit to the village earlier on Saturday by Hanoi's People's Committee Chairman Nguyen Duc Chung, who spoke with villagers and listened to their complaints.

Tunisia massacre case

TUNIS: The first public hearing into the June 2015 attack in the Tunisian resort of Sousse that killed 38 foreign tourists has been set for next month, the prosecution said yesterday. "The trial on the attack at the Imperial Marhaba Hotel will begin on May 26," spokesman Sofiene Sliiti said. A total of 33 people are being prosecuted in the case, including five members of the security forces who are charged with "not assisting people in danger". On June 25, 2015, gunman Seifeddine Rezgui killed 38 people, including 30 British tourists and three Irish citizens, in a shooting spree at the Riu Imperial Marhaba Hotel. The attack was claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group. The killings have also been the subject of an inquest in Britain. In February, Judge Nicholas Lorraine-Smith said after several weeks of hearings that the Tunisian police response to the massacre was "at best shambolic, at worst cowardly". "Their response could and should have been more effective," he said.

SEX PRANK GETS
CANADIAN OFF NEW
ZEALAND CLUB LIST

WELLINGTON: A Canadian man sent out invitations to a fake swingers' sex party in a desperate attempt to get himself removed from a New Zealand golf club's mailing list. Ian Campbell from Toronto was accidentally added to the email list for a Friday group at the Russley Golf Club in Christchurch because he has a similar email address to a namesake member. Campbell, who runs a home meal service for the elderly in his home city, told the New Zealand Herald newspaper that once he was on the list he couldn't get off despite several attempts.

"I e-mailed them three times to tell them I wasn't the right Ian Campbell but kept getting email updates," he said. After doing some research, Campbell came across Tawse Manor on the outskirts of Christchurch which advertises itself as an "adult-themed" alternative accommodation venue. He duly wrote an invitation to a party at the manor and hit "reply all." "Just a quick note to our 'Russley Rounders'; as we did this time last year, a few of us will be meeting up at Tawse Manor around 7pm," Campbell wrote.

"Last year we had a lot of trouble squeezing 14 people into only two rooms, so this year we have reserved all four rooms and will have the whole manor to ourselves (with the exception of the Play Room from 11pm to 2am, when it is reserved for the Tawse Kink group). "This year we are keeping it to a maximum of four per room (and couples will be split up this time - we don't need a repeat of last year's fiasco!!!"

In a follow up email, Campbell apologized for sending the message to all rather than to the swinging "Rounders." "I've fixed it now so we won't have the same email slip-up again. I realize that not everyone in the Friday Golf Group is privy to our extra-curricular activities at the Russley Rounders, and may not approve."

He then finally revealed the prank: "TAKE ME OFF YOUR GOD-DAMN LIST. Three times now I've written to the senders of these emails asking to be removed from the mailing list. "I'm not the Ian Campbell you're thinking of, ok? All you have to do is remove my specific email address from your list and I will stop getting notices about your golf club on the other side of the world." Campbell believes he has now been removed from the list. —AFP

VENEZUELA OPPOSITION BOSS ASKS
WALL STREET TO CUT OFF MADURO
ANTI-MADURO PROTESTS LEAVE 20 DEAD; DOZENS ARRESTED

CARACAS: The leader of Venezuela's rebellious congress has a message for the world's capitalists: Think twice before signing another check to President Nicolas Maduro's government. Amid anti-Maduro protests roiling Venezuela, leading to 20 deaths and dozens of arrests the past three weeks, the opposition is trying to rally international opinion against his socialist government. For his part, National Assembly President Julio Borges has sent more than a dozen letters to leading global banks warning them of the risk to their reputations and bottom line if they throw a lifeline to Maduro as he seeks to bolster an economy suffering widespread shortages of food and other goods while avoiding a default on foreign debt.

"The national government, through the central bank, is going to try to swap gold held as reserves for dollars to stay in power unconstitutionally," said one letter sent Thursday to John Cryan, the CEO of Deutsche Bank. "I have the obligation to warn you that by supporting such a gold swap you would be taking actions favoring a government that's been recognized as dictatorial by the international community." The letters are intended to build on legislation recently passed by the opposition-controlled congress that nullifies any government debt issuances not explicitly approved by legislators, Borges said in an interview Friday.

Following a tense week filled with protests that drew tens of thousands into the streets and overnight clashes that left at least a dozen dead by Friday morning, opposition leaders were calling Venezuelans out again yesterday to demonstrate in a silent protest. Protesters dressed in white were gathering at cities around the country in homage to those killed in the unrest. Dozens of police officers could be seen blocking roads in Caracas yesterday and nearly a dozen metro stations were closed.

Lost in the surge of protests triggered by last month's decision by the Venezuelan Supreme Court to strip congress of power is Maduro's desperate need for financing. The ruling, which was reversed after a

storm of international criticism, arose from congress' refusal to approve a proposal allowing state-run oil giant PDVSA to form joint ventures with preferred foreign partners such as Russia's Rosneft.

Sitting atop the world's largest oil reserves, Venezuela has long been considered a reliable credit, managing to maintain its status as a Wall Street favorite even

foreign currency reserves have plummeted to a 15-year low of \$10 billion. About 75 percent of that is held in illiquid gold bars as a result of Chavez's fetish for bullion over the "imperialist" dollar. The country has debt payments still coming due this year of around \$6 billion. Yet, as the government scrounges for financing, it managed to donate \$500,000 to President Donald

Trump, who said he was "not afraid of the US," Borges said. "They want to portray themselves as romantics, but they really are just Mickey Mouse revolutionaries. All of them have houses in Orlando (Florida), assets in the US, apartments in New York, and yet they donate \$500,000 from a country that is dying of hunger."

Borges, a lawyer who studied philosophy at Boston College, entered politics on



CARACAS: Anti-government demonstrators take cover from advancing Bolivarian Police officers during protests in Caracas, Venezuela. —AP

when the late President Hugo Chavez went on a nationalizing spree seizing factories and oil fields of major foreign companies like Exxon and Clorox. This week, General Motors became the latest major American brand to flee Venezuela after its assembly plant, bank accounts and other assets were seized as the result of a judicial ruling in favor of a former GM dealership.

But as crude oil prices have fallen since Maduro took office in 2013, the country's

Trump's inauguration events, through PDVSA's wholly owned US subsidiary, Citgo, federal election records revealed this week.

Borges called the donation a "hypocritical" attempt by Maduro to curry favor with Trump in hopes the Republican administration will go soft on human rights abuses. Several officials have already been targeted by US sanctions, including under Trump's watch Vice President Tarek El Aissami, for alleged drug trafficking. "It shows they're

the coattails of a popular TV program. Shortly after Chavez was elected president in 1999, he founded the Justice First party alongside the two dominant opposition politicians over the past decade: two-time presidential candidate Henrique Capriles and jailed activist Leopoldo Lopez. In his role as the party's coordinator, Borges is known as a cool-headed strategist and voice of moderation more comfortable behind the scenes. —AP

ANTI-MUGABE ELECTION
COALITION TAKES SHAPE

HARARE: President Robert Mugabe's grip on power has faced little recent threat from Zimbabwe's splintered opposition, but efforts to forge a unified alliance in next year's election could test his supremacy. Any opposition bloc would first have to overcome fierce rivalries within their various camps, and then hold together in an intense and often violent political landscape dominated by Mugabe's ZANU-PF party.

Two deals between opposition parties signed this week represent an embryonic attempt to forge an alternative to Mugabe's rule, which began with independence from Britain in 1980. Now aged 93 and in weak health, Mugabe has struggled to maintain control over ZANU-PF. The party has been hit by infighting and public frustration over the country's economic woes.

The strife presents an opportunity to the opposition only if they can unify, according to Alois Masepe, a Harare-based political analyst. "It is a move in the right direction," he said of steps toward the alliance. "A fragmented opposition does not help anyone except ZANU-PF." Anything less than unity would mean near-inevitable victory for Mugabe. The going is tough, after decades of repression, vote-rigging and ZANU-PF violence during campaigning. But another stumbling block is apathy. "The opposition leaders must find strategies to get the people to participate," Masepe said. "The majority... don't."

Just the beginning?

On Wednesday, Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), held a joint press conference with Mugabe's former vice president Joice Mujuru, who has set up the National People's Party. "This is just the beginning," Tsvangirai said as the two signed a pact to work together to try and topple Mugabe in next year's poll.

The following day, Tsvangirai signed another pact to re-unite with the MDC-N, which split away in 2005, and is led by the influential Welshman Ncube. The MDC has been weakened by repeated splits, and was badly fractured by Tsvangirai's troubled term as Mugabe's prime minister in a coalition government from 2009 until 2013. "We owe it to future generations, we owe it to ourselves to do

everything that we can to make sure that come 2018 we won't fail," Ncube said. In 2008, Tsvangirai pulled out of a run-off against Mugabe after a wave of deadly violence, vote-rigging and voter intimidation from ZANU-PF operatives.

This week's pacts, however, are fledgling. "More still needs to be done to unravel the matrix of cheating by ZANU-PF," warned Takavafira Zhou, a political scientist at Masvingo State University. Another tricky problem facing any broad-based opposition alliance would be deciding which of its leaders would emerge as the candidate to take on Mugabe. The two top names would appear to be Tsvangirai and Mujuru, who was expelled from ZANU-PF in 2015 after Mugabe's wife, Grace, accused her of plotting against the president. Mujuru is seen as relatively moderate, but her long record as a former Mugabe loyalist would raise major concerns among those who have opposed the regime—often at great risk—for years.

Mugabe mocks plans

Mugabe himself has mocked the chances of would be opponents. "They have tried this and that, been together, they split again, they talk of coalitions," he said earlier this month. "We look with joy as they daily turn on each other while pretending to chase a mirage they have termed the grand coalition, apparently unaware of the grand defeat that stares them in the face." After last week's deals, his spokesman added: "They can sign as many MoUs (memorandums of understanding) as they like, but these MoUs don't vote."

Mugabe, who would be 99 if he held power through another full term, has ruled through the country's drastic economic collapse. Hyperinflation wiped out savings more than 10 years ago, unemployment is over 90 percent and economic output has halved since 2000, when many white-owned farms were seized. Strife has resurfaced. Last year street protests shut down major towns as citizens demanded help from worsening hardship. Authorities reacted by beating up protesters, arresting activists and banning marches. Although Mugabe has refused to name a successor, his wife Grace and vice president Emmerson Mnangagwa have been touted as favored replacements. —AFP



HARARE: Zimbabwe main opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai (left) and former vice president Joice Mujuru (Right) sign a Memorandum of Understanding to negotiate a coalition ahead of the 2018 general election in Harare. —AFP



CHESTER: Pedestrians walk past Chester Cross in Chester, northern England. With Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservatives dominating Britain's opinion polls, opposition MPs are bracing for a fierce election fight—none more so than in Chester, where Labour's majority is just 93. —AFP

GLADIATORIAL BATTLE LOOMS
IN TIGHTEST BRITAIN ELECTION

CHESTER: With Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservatives dominating Britain's opinion polls, opposition MPs are bracing for a fierce election fight—none more so than in Chester, where Labor's majority is just 93. The Roman fortress town in north-west England has long been a political bellwether, going Labor with the rest of Britain in 1997 and Conservative in 2010 — and it is now a key battleground for the June 8 snap election. As elsewhere in the country, the outcome will depend in part on how the debate is framed—whether on local issues, party leadership, the government's record, or Britain's looming exit from the European Union.

In national opinion polls, Labor is running up to 24 points behind May's Conservatives—but Chester MP Chris Matheson, who won the seat with the slimmest of margins in 2015, is bullish. "We had a fight on our hands last time and we won, and we've got a fight on our hands this time and we're going to win as well," he said. His local party says it is ready for the campaign—while the Conservatives have yet to even choose a parliamentary candidate.

Local Tories are playing down expectations, admitting they were "bruised" by their defeat two years ago, which bucked the national trend—and also saw them lose control of the local council. "It's not a shoo-in. We've got nothing to lose now and we really hope to win," said city councilor Pamela Hall. But analysts say that Chester, an increasingly affluent pocket of Labor's north-west heartland, is deeply vulnerable. "This must be at the top of Theresa May's hitlist of constituencies to win from Labor to boost her majority," said Simon Lee, senior politics lecturer at the University of Hull.

'Sort out Brexit'

May called the vote this week, accusing opposition parties of seeking to disrupt Brexit and saying that only she provides the "strong and stable leadership" needed as Britain heads into negotiations with the EU. "I want Theresa May in charge to sort out Brexit," said Gina Mayne-Flower, a 60-year-old

in Chester who used to run her own business. "She knows what she's doing," she told AFP, adding of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn: "I don't think he is up to the job."

Labour has struggled to define a clear message on Brexit, but says the election is about change and has promised to stand up to the "cosy elites" and improve public services. Accusations of underfunding in the state-run National Health Service (NHS) and schools resonate with Chester voters—as do the government's cuts to welfare. May has promised to stand up for "ordinary working families", but this provokes a snort of derision from many people here. "The Conservative party is full of shit. They're cutting all my benefits," said Carla Fletcher, a 26-year-old carer with four children.

'The Corbyn issue'

Fletcher lives in Blacon, an area of Chester where Labor won a council by-election with an increased majority on Thursday. But she is no fan of Corbyn—"no comment"—and other traditional Labor voters are also less than enthusiastic about their party. "On the economy, that's where Labor falls down," said Thomas Mawdsley, a 24-year-old software engineer. Many Labor MPs view Corbyn as an electoral liability, rejecting his left-wing views as impractical, and are already seeking to distance themselves from him in the campaign.

Matheson joined a mass revolt against Corbyn last year—but now insists he wants him to become prime minister, describing him as "decent and honest". However, he would not say whether the party leader would be on his campaign literature. "The Corbyn issue is sensitive. Some marginal MPs will try to play a local campaign," said Patrick Diamond, a politics lecturer at Queen Mary University of London. But he warned they cannot control the Conservative party machine, which two years ago proved ruthlessly effective in targeting voters through mailshots. "On the ground things might look evenly matched, but the sheer financial advantage of the Conservatives means it isn't." —AFP

CHINA RIGHTS LAWYER DENIED OWN DEFENSE FOR TRIAL

BEIJING: Prominent Chinese lawyer Xie Yang will not be allowed to pick his defense at his upcoming trial, his former attorney said, in a move rights groups called a breach of international standards. Xie, who has worked on numerous cases considered politically sensitive by the ruling Communist party including defending Hong Kong pro-democracy activists, has been detained since July 2015.

He has claimed police have used "sleep deprivation, long interrogations, beatings, death threats, humiliations" on him while

in custody, and the EU has voiced concern over his case. "The court has designated a defense lawyer," Xie's former lawyer Chen Jiangang said. "Everything has been done according to the will of the judiciary-not the interests of Xie and his family," Chen said. The trial-possibly on charges of "inciting subversion of state power"-will be held Tuesday at the Changsha Intermediate People's Court in southern Hunan province, Chen added.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has overseen a tightening of controls on civil

society since assuming power in 2012, closing avenues for legal activism that had opened up in recent years. While the government initially targeted political activists and human rights campaigners, it has increasingly turned its attention to the legal professionals who represent them. "Since Xi came to power, we have seen more cases of lawyers being warned or blocked from representing high-profile human rights cases," Amnesty International China researcher Patrick Poon said.

"It's a self-contradictory practice and an insult to the lawyer originally representing the defendant," Poon said. Xie was arrested during the so-called "709 crackdown" in the summer of 2015, which saw some 200 legal staff and activists detained. Last year, Chinese courts-during televised trials-found six of the group guilty of serious crimes including "subverting state power" and "endangering national security". Their punishments ranged from no additional jail time to seven years in prison, while

others have been released on bail. After his July 2015 arrest, Xie was initially held incommunicado for six months, and later moved to a detention centre. In December, he was indicted on charges of "inciting subversion of state power" and "disrupting court order", according to US-based charity Chinese Human Rights Defenders. Chen said he could not confirm whether those charges are the most recent, and Xie's new lawyer did not answer calls from AFP yesterday. —AFP

THAT'S WHAT XI SAID: SOUTH KOREA OUTRAGE OVER TRUMP'S COMMENT S KOREA DESCRIBED AS 'SHRIMP BETWEEN TWO WHALES'

SEOUL: Buffeted by the currents of diplomacy, South Korea is sometimes described as a "shrimp between two whales", and US president Donald Trump has touched nerves with remarks that the peninsula "used to be part of China". The comments came after Trump hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping at his Mar-a-Lago retreat in Florida. As the pair discussed ways to curb North Korea's nuclear ambitions amid mounting tensions, Trump told the Wall Street Journal, Xi "went

Chinese expansionism, and politicians, historians and citizens have been outraged.

The Korean peninsula has been heavily influenced by China politically and culturally for centuries. But while its ruling kingdoms sometimes paid tribute to their giant neighbor, South Korean historians stress they did not come under its territorial control, despite repeated invasions. Seoul's foreign ministry spokesman countered: "The fact that Korea was not part of

ty of the Korean people," it said. South Korean historians and activists rallied outside the Chinese embassy on Friday to protest against Xi's "absurd remarks", Yonhap news agency reported.

Seoul and Beijing are at loggerheads over the deployment of the US missile defence system THAAD to the South to guard against threats from the North, infuriating China, which sees it as weakening its own capabilities. Beijing has imposed a series of moves includ-

Relations 'at their lowest'

The row came after South Koreans were dismayed by the revelation that the US aircraft carrier Carl Vinson and a supporting battle group were still thousands of kilometers from the peninsula, despite the White House saying it was dispatching them to the area as tensions mounted with the North. Trump had described the vessels as an "armada" and "very powerful" and the revelation drew jeers and disappointment. "What Mr Trump said was very important for the national security of South Korea," conservative South Korean presidential candidate Hong Joon-Pyo told the Wall Street Journal. "If that was a lie, then during Trump's term, South Korea will not trust whatever Trump says."

The series of missteps demonstrate lack of communications within Trump's nascent administration, said Bong Young-Shik, analyst at the Yonsei University's Institute for North Korean Studies. "Trump is an outsider inexperienced with how Washington works... and the coordination among his White House, the State Department and the Pentagon seems to be poor for now," he said. Relations between Seoul and Beijing are "at their lowest for years", said Bong, and Trump's description of Xi's remark was likely to worsen them further, "whether he intended to or not". Fears of potential Korean conflict have mounted in recent weeks with Pyongyang showing no sign of any willingness to abandon its nuclear and missile programs, and the US saying that military action was an "option on the table".

The North has vast amounts of artillery deployed within striking range of Seoul, putting the South Korean capital at risk of devastation in even a conventional conflict. The carrier controversy illustrated Trump's "unpredictable behavior" that could lead to "disastrous events", the Kyunghyang daily said. "We are worried whether the Trump administration... can properly handle a crisis on the Korean peninsula," it added. "The South Korean government should brace itself against the 'Trump Risk'." —AFP



The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (left) leading the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Michael Murphy (center) and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain in the Indian Ocean. The US supercarrier Carl Vinson will arrive in the Sea of Japan in days, US Vice President Mike Pence said in Australia yesterday, amid high tensions with North Korea. —AFP

into the history of China and Korea. "And you know, you're talking about thousands of years... and many wars.

And Korea actually used to be a part of China," Trump went on. Beijing is Pyongyang's sole major ally and Washington wants it to do more about the North's nuclear and missile programs, while the US has a security alliance with Seoul and stations more than 28,000 troops in South to defend it. The exact details of what Xi said and whether Trump accurately represented him are not known, but South Koreans are wary of

China for thousands of years... is a clear historical fact acknowledged by the international community."

'Dumbfounded'

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang declined to confirm the details of Xi's wording, saying that: "The Korean people should not be worried about it." But Seoul's major JoongAng Ilbo daily said South Koreans had been "dumbfounded" by the Chinese leader. "If Trump really conveyed Xi's words correctly, it is nothing but a grave challenge to the identi-

ing a ban on group tours to the South and suspensions of South Korean businesses in China, which are seen by Seoul as economic retaliation. South Korea's top-selling Chosun newspaper turned on both leaders, castigating Xi for his "premodern expansionist view" and Trump for a lack of awareness of diplomatic sensitivities. "The fact that Trump publicly disclosed such a remark (by Xi) demonstrates that he is completely ignorant about the history of the Korean peninsula," it said in an editorial Friday.

US TO HONOR 'DUMB' REFUGEE DEAL WITH AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY: The US will honor a controversial agreement with Australia to take refugees from Pacific island detention centres, Vice President Mike Pence said yesterday-a deal Donald Trump had previously branded "dumb". Pence also sought to clear the waters about the location of US supercarrier Carl Vinson that was supposedly steaming towards North Korea, saying it would arrive in the Sea of Japan "in a matter of days".

The vice president was in Sydney for talks with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on a trip aimed at mending fences following a surly phone conversation between Trump and Turnbull in January, which rattled a long-standing alliance between the two powers. Trump reportedly exploded and cut short the telephone call when he was told about a deal to move some refugees from Pacific island camps to America.

"The United States intends to honor the agreement, subject to the results of the vetting processes that now apply to all refugees considered for admission to the United States of America," Pence said. The US commitment to take the refugees was "a reflection of the enormous importance of the historical alliance between the United States and Australia... whatever reservations the president may have about the details." But he added that that this "doesn't mean we admire the agreement". Turnbull thanked Pence for the "very important" commitment. Pence also praised China's role in the escalating North Korean crisis but renewed calls for Beijing to use its "unique" position to bring Pyongyang to heel.

Tensions between Washington and Pyongyang have soared recently following a series of missile launches amid fears that the North may be readying a sixth nuclear

test. "The steps we're seeing China take, in many ways unprecedented steps, bringing economic pressure to bear on North Korea are very welcome," Pence said. "We do believe China can do more." The USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier was expected to arrive in the Sea of Japan before the end of the month, Pence said. The US Navy on April 8 said it was directing a naval strike group headed by the Vinson to "sail north" from waters off Singapore, as a "prudent measure" to deter the hermit regime.

Trump and other officials followed up with comments that made it sound like the ships were steaming towards the region. "We are sending an armada. Very powerful," said President Donald Trump, while Pentagon chief Jim Mattis said the Vinson

was "on her way up". But the Navy admitted Tuesday the ships were in fact sent in the opposite direction-away from Singapore and towards Australia to conduct drills with the Australian navy.

Pence said Wednesday that the United States would counter any North Korean attack with an "overwhelming and effective" response. His comments came after a senior North Korean official warned the regime had no intention of scaling down its missile program, pledging weekly tests and threatening "all-out war" if the US took any action against it. Trump's deputy visited South Korea and Japan before arriving in Australia to reassure allies fretting over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs. —AFP



SYDNEY: US Vice President Mike Pence (center) and Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop (left) look at an exhibit with Australian Museum Director Kim McKay during a visit to the Australian Museum in Sydney yesterday. —AP



MANILA: A gun turret (front) and the P-500 Bazalt long range anti-ship missile system of the missile-guided cruiser Varyag is seen during a shipboard tour in Manila yesterday. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte toured a visiting Russian warship on April 21 for the second time in barely four months as he highlighted his growing closeness to Moscow. —AFP

PHILIPPINE TROOPS KILL A SUSPECTED MILITANT

CEBU: Philippine forces killed a suspected Muslim militant in new fighting yesterday in a central resort province where troops foiled possible kidnapping and bombing plots by extremists earlier this month, officials said. Army troops and police killed Joselito Melloria in a gunbattle with about seven militants near Clarin town in Bohol province. Melloria's companions fled and were being pursued by troops, police said. Melloria, a convert to Islam and a Bohol resident, guided Abu Sayyaf militants from their jungle encampments in the country's south to his Bohol village in Inabanga town to carry out possible ransom kidnappings and bombings.

Troops, however, detected the militants and killed four of them in April 11 fighting that also left three soldiers, a policeman and two villagers dead. Melloria fled with at least seven other militants. They were hunted in a massive search by police and

the military. President Rodrigo Duterte offered a 1 million peso (\$20,000) reward for information that would lead to the capture of each of the fleeing militants. A military profile of Melloria, who uses the militant nom de guerre Abu Alih, said he converted to Islam when he married a Muslim woman in southern Zamboanga del Sur province in 2005.

After a yearlong trip to Saudi Arabia, he returned to the Philippines in 2015 and joined Maute, a small nascent group based in the south that has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group. He later assimilated with another IS-linked group, Ansar Khilafa Philippines, and Abu Sayyaf, the military report said. Philippine security officials said that had the Bohol plots been successful, Melloria would have been designated to lead Ansar Khilafa Philippines, whose leader was killed in a clash with police in the south in January. —AP



TILLER: The abandoned Tiller Elementary School playground is seen in the foreground with the school in the background in downtown Tiller, Ore. Almost all of the downtown in Tiller, a dot on a map in remote southwestern Oregon, is for sale for \$3.5 million and the elementary school is for sale separately for \$350,000. —AP

WANT TO OWN A TOWN? TINY OREGON COMMUNITY FOR SALE FOR \$3.5 MILLION

TILLER: In the tiny, dying timber town of Tiller, the old cliché is true. If you blink, you might actually miss it. But these days, this dot on a map in southwestern Oregon is generating big-city buzz for an unlikely reason: Almost the entire town is for sale. The asking price of \$3.5 million brings with it six houses, the shuttered general store and gas station, the land under the post office, undeveloped parcels, water rights and infrastructure that includes sidewalks, fire hydrants and a working power station.

Tiller Elementary School, a six-classroom building that closed in 2014, is for sale separately for \$350,000. Potential buyers have come forward but are remaining anonymous, and backup offers are still being accepted. The listing represents a melancholy crossroads for Tiller, a once-bustling logging outpost that sprang up after the turn of the last century deep in what is now the Umpqua National Forest, about 230 miles south of Portland. The post office opened in 1902, and miners, loggers, ranchers and farmers flocked to the community along a pristine river.

By the 1940s and 1950s, there were three timber mills running, and the town expanded the elementary school and built a new general store. Then, nearly three decades ago, logging on the federal forest lands that encircle Tiller came to a near standstill because of environmental regulations. The mills closed, and families moved away. One longtime resident began buying up properties. When he died three years ago, the family owned much of the town.

Then the Tiller Elementary School closed and was up for sale, as well as a small market,

and the man's estate bought those too - and the potential became clear. The listing includes more than 256 acres in 29 distinct parcels, water and timber rights, and a variety of zonings, from residential to industrial. About 235 people still live in the unincorporated area around Tiller, and have long relied on the buildings now for sale along historic Highway 227 as a gathering spot and one of the only places to shop for groceries in miles.

"Between the dying economy and the dying owners, Tiller became a new opportunity that had never been available before," said Richard Caswell, executor of the estate. "I started getting inquiries from all over the world, essentially, 'What was it? And what could you do with it?' It's the buyer and their imagination that's going to determine what Tiller can become." The potential buyers have said through the seller's broker that they intend to turn the school into some type of campus and create a "permaculture" development that respects the town's remaining residents and its picturesque setting in a bend in the emerald-tinted South Umpqua River.

They want to make reopening the market a priority. "The buyers understand that they only have one shot at a first impression," said Garrett Zoller, principal broker for LandandWildlife.com, the seller's realtor. "They want to address this project with the community in mind." Beyond that, Tiller's future remains shrouded in mystery. The downtown is a ghost town, but plenty of people still live tucked into the mountains in a region where bears wander onto porches and where picking up a cellphone signal takes a 30-minute drive. —AP

AS MIDEAST LOOKS PAST OIL, FOCUS...

Continued from Page 1

the kind of social unrest brought on by the Arab Spring protests of 2011. "Unfortunately, the governments in general just recognized the importance of the entrepreneurship ecosystem," said Mohamed Al-Ruwais, a partner at STC Ventures, a venture capital fund whose anchor investor is the Saudi Telecom Company.

The kings and ruling sheikhs of the Gulf have so far ridden out the Arab Spring, but demographics and time are forcing governments to look to the private sector where creative startups and savvy entrepreneurs can provide an economic lifeline to future stability. In one of the starkest examples of this region-wide push, Saudi Arabia's powerful young defense minister and second-in-line to the throne, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is launching a university named after him this fall, in partnership with Massachusetts' Babson College, focused on business and entrepreneurship training.

In Saudi Arabia, the Middle East's biggest economy, half of the population is under 25 and around 70 percent is under 35, representing a rapidly-growing labor force. The kingdom has launched a plan, called Vision 2030, with goals to shore

up its foreign reserves and reform the economy for a new generation of tech-savvy youth. The plan specifically calls for encouraging innovation and improving regulation. Despite efforts to lower unemployment from 11.6 percent today to 7 percent by 2030, unemployment has actually risen to 12.3 percent this year.

Saudi Prince Saud bin Khalid Al-Faisal, who heads the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority, says part of the reason why the kingdom sponsors the largest scholarship program on earth, with more than 200,000 students studying across the globe, is to give them a good education and expose them to different ideas. "We also would like them to get bitten by the entrepreneurship bug, basically, so they can come back and start doing their own thing," he said.

In the kingdom, where Saudi females represent only about 10 percent of the labor force, Manar Alomayri stands out as a female entrepreneur. She quit a good-paying job in the private sector to found Dhad Audio, an Arabic audio book publisher. "Instead of waiting for someone to bring a solution for me, I decided to be the change, to bring about a change," she said. A Saudi government initiative funded her trip to Dubai and her booth at the recent Step Conference for entrepreneurs in Dubai. — AP

THOUSANDS JOIN MARCH FOR SCIENCE RALLIES

Continued from Page 1

Their movement was echoed in hundreds of satellite events across the United States and around the world, from Sydney to Accra. Organizers stress their protest is non-partisan, but concerns about the challenges to the role of science in society have spiked under Trump's presidency. He has proposed deep cuts in funding for scientific research, elevated opponents of climate pacts and environmental regulations to cabinet-level positions, and drawn support from conservative Christians who challenge the teaching of evolution in US schools.

"If this president has his way, science is in danger but I think there will be a lot of resistance from Congress," said Elisabeth Johnston, a retired biologist. Some in the Washington crowd were not opposed to Trump per se, but felt that science was a public good that should receive non-partisan support, as it historically has. Lowell Jarvis, a 57-year-old air and water quality expert, said he agreed with Trump on some issues, but not the cuts on funding for research. "We need to invest in people and the environment," he said.

In London, hundreds of people marched from the Science Museum to the Houses of Parliament, holding up signs with messages like "Science is Sexy" and "Less Invasions, More Equations". The London rally was attended by actor Peter Capaldi, who plays TV's time-travelling hero of science, Dr Who. In Ghana, organizers used the day for a teach-in at a beachside hotel in Accra about environmental issues of local concern like the impact of plastic waste on the environment. "As you walk around our beaches you see it is killing everything," said Cordie Aziz, an American activist involved in plastics recycling.

"It's killing our fish, we have flooding in our communities, we have a rise of environmental diseases."

Vocal protesters in Sydney wearing white lab coats called on politicians to support the scientific community. "We need thinkers not deniers," read one banner. Demonstrators turned out across Australia, in Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and other cities, as well as Wellington and Auckland in New Zealand. "In this day and age, there's so much fake news and alternate facts going around that it's important to remember that science is what has built the society we know today," Parissa Zand, who was at the Sydney march with her molecular biologist mother, told AFP. High-school science teacher Byrne La Ginestra said "we need to... teach people that science isn't a political agenda, it's just facts."

Protestors in major university cities in Europe posted pictures on Twitter of marches in Bonn, Helsinki, Munich and Stockholm. In Paris, a banner in French read: "We are the resistance against the orange menace in Washington! Defend science!" Other rallies were scheduled in Brazil, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria and South Korea.

"Seeing the assault on fact-based thinking, scientists are energized," Paul Hanle, chief executive officer of Climate Central, an independent organization of scientists and journalists, wrote in an op-ed this week. Scientists "are not famous for their camaraderie," said professor of carbon management at the University of Edinburgh, David Reay. "We are trained to question, criticize and, where needed, contest each other's work. That we are now marching together is testament to just how threatened our disparate community feels." — AFP

RISE OF CHINESE FIGHTERS IN SYRIA CAUSES...

Continued from Page 1

Like most jihadi groups in Syria, their aim is to remove Assad's secular government from power and replace it with strict Islamic rule. Their participation in the war, which has left nearly 400,000 people dead, comes at a time when the Chinese government is one of Assad's strongest international backers. Along with Russia, China has used its veto power at the UN Security Council on several occasions to prevent the imposition of international sanctions against its Arab ally.

Beijing has blamed violence back at home and against Chinese targets around the world on Islamic militants with foreign connections seeking an independent state in Xinjiang. The government says some of them are fleeing the country to join the jihad, although critics say the Uighurs are discriminated against and economically marginalized in their homeland and are merely seeking to escape repressive rule by the majority Han Chinese.

Abu Dardaa Al-Shami, a member of the now-defunct extremist Jund al-Aqsa group, said the TIP has the best "Inghemasiyoun," Arabic for "those who immerse themselves". The Inghemasiyoun have been used by extremist groups such as IS and Al-Qaeda's affiliate now known as Fatah al-Sham Front. Their role is to infiltrate their targets, unleash mayhem and fight to the death before a major ground offensive begins. "They are the lions of ground offensives," said Shami, who fought on several occasions alongside TIP fighters in northern Syria.

Xie Xiaoyuan, China's envoy to Syria, told reporters in November that the two countries have had normal military exchanges focused on humanitarian issues, although Chinese officials have repeatedly rejected the possibility of sending troops or weapons. In the last year, however, Chinese and Syrian officials have begun holding regular, once-a-month high-level meetings to share intelligence on militant movements in Syria, according to a person familiar with the matter. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to reveal military secrets.

"These people not only fight alongside international terrorist forces in Syria, but also they will possibly return to China posing threat to China's national security," said Li Wei, terrorism expert at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations and Director of the CICIR Institute of Security and Arms Control Studies.

Rami Abdurrahman who heads the Britain-based

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said there are about 5,000 Chinese fighters in Syria, most of them with the TIP fighters in northern Syria who along with their families make about 20,000. Li, the terrorism expert, said Abdurrahman's numbers are way too high, adding that he believes the number are about 300 Chinese fighters in Syria who brought with them about 700 family members. "As the control of the passage along the borders between Turkey and Syria is being tightened, it is becoming more difficult for them to smuggle into Syria," Li said.

Syrian opposition activists and pro-government media outlets say dozens of TIP fighters have carried out suicide attacks against government forces and their allies and for the past two years have led battles mostly in the north of the country. The suicide attackers include one known as Shahid Allah Al-Turkistani. He was shown in a video released by TIP taken from a drone of an attack in which he blew himself up in the vehicle he was driving near Aleppo late last year, allegedly killing dozens of pro-government gunmen.

In 2015, members of the group spearheaded an attack on the northwestern province of Idlib and captured the strategic town of Jisr al-Shughour on the edge of Assad's stronghold of Latakia region. They reportedly damaged a church in the town and raised their black flag on top of it. In late 2016, TIP was a main force to briefly break a government siege on the then rebel-held eastern parts of the northern city of Aleppo. The role of the Chinese jihadists in Syria was a topic that Assad spoke about last month in an interview with Chinese PHOENIX TV, saying "they know your country more than the others, so they can do more harm in your country than others".

Unlike other rebel groups, TIP is a very secretive organization and they live among themselves, according to activists in northern Syria. They are active in parts of Idlib and in the strategic town of Jisr al-Shughour, as well as the Kurdish Mountains in the western province of Latakia. Abdul-Hakim Ramadan, a doctor who was active in Idlib province, said one of his teams was trying to enter a northwestern village to vaccinate children when TIP fighters prevented them from entering, saying only Chinese can go into the area. Ramadan said unlike other fighters who have come to Syria, the Chinese have not merged into local communities and the language has been a major barrier. — AP

MATTIS VISITS KEY US ALLY QATAR

Continued from Page 1

and overly friendly with regional rival Iran. Mattis, who commanded troops during the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, said in Israel on Friday that there was "no doubt" Syria has kept some chemical weapons and

warned President Bashar Al-Assad's regime not to use them. Assad has said repeatedly that his forces turned over all chemical weapons stockpiles in 2013, under a deal brokered by Russia to avoid threatened US military action. A small but strategic state in the Gulf, Qatar plays a key role in regional politics. It is home to the Al-Udeid air base which houses around 10,000 US troops. — AFP



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Focus

CAMPSITES COOL
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Before last year's Brexit vote, Scott McCready was struggling to fill his holiday cabins on the coast of southwest England. Now the site is fully booked with British tourists avoiding more expensive foreign trips following a plunge in the pound. This turnaround in the 10 months since Britons decided to leave the European Union reflects a jump in demand for "staycations", with British consumers seeking ways to make their money go further as rising inflation squeezes their incomes.

McCready, who gave up a job in IT to build his site between ancient woodlands and a creek in the county of Devon, recalled the hectic days after last June's referendum. "My phone just took off," he told Reuters. "It was like someone flicked a switch. We were booked out for the rest of the summer and now this year we're having to turn people away."

The reason why Britons and some Europeans have flocked to his 24 wooden lodges in Newton Ferrers, once a quiet fishing village 370 km from London, is straightforward. The referendum result caught financial markets off guard, sending the pound down about 20 percent against the dollar and 16 percent against the euro at one point. That rapidly pushed up the cost of holidays to the United States and continental Europe, both popular destinations for Britons. Since then, sterling has recovered some of its losses but remains down about 14 percent against the dollar and 8 percent against the euro.

So about 15 km away, Chris Duff is enjoying a similar jump in demand at his 90-lodge Thatches park, where he is investing to upgrade facilities which include a swimming pool and a fitness suite. "If we could, we would like to expand," he said. Britain's \$2.6 trillion economy surprised almost all forecasters by withstanding the initial shock of the Brexit vote, a point made by Prime Minister Theresa May on Tuesday when she called a snap June 8 election. "Despite predictions of immediate financial and economic danger since the referendum we have seen consumer confidence remain high, record numbers of jobs and economic growth that has exceeded all expectations," she said.

But the picture for the years ahead looks weaker as sterling's fall raises import costs. With annual inflation pushing up towards 3 percent, outstripping sluggish wage growth, Britons are becoming cautious in their spending - and not just on holidays. Retail sales rose at the slowest pace in nearly a decade in the first three months of 2017, according to the British Retail Consortium, and surveys have shown that households are increasingly worried about the outlook for the economy. German supermarket groups Aldi and Lidl, which attracted new British shoppers during the global financial crisis due to their deeply discounted prices, have seen accelerating sales in 2017. "Customers are voting with their feet," Matthew Barnes, Aldi's CEO for Britain and Ireland, told Reuters in February. The squeeze facing many people in Britain is unlikely to be as sharp as in the years following the 2007-09 financial crisis when inflation hit 5 percent and annual wage growth was even weaker than it is now.

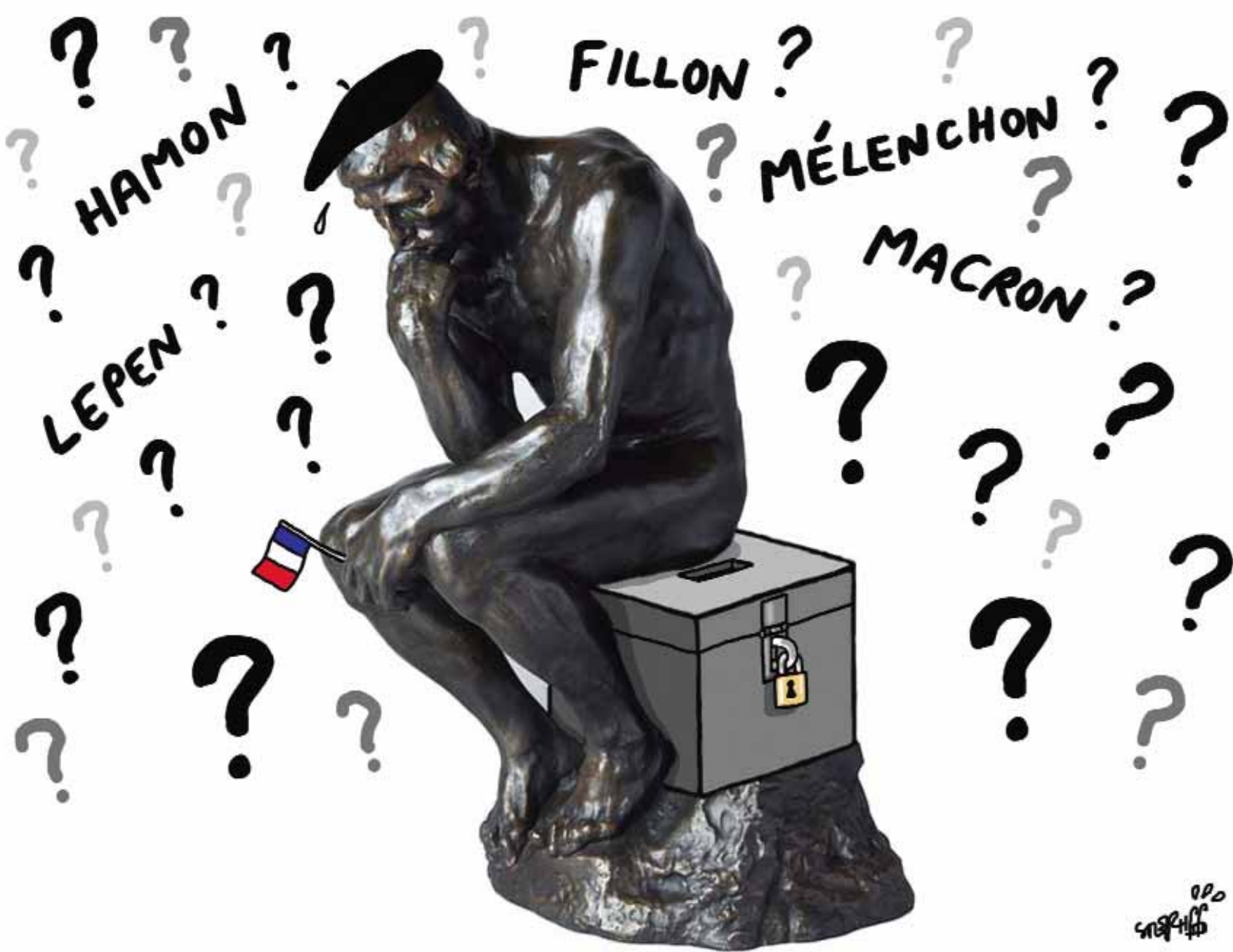
Nonetheless, the Bank of England expects almost no growth in the spending power of households over the next three years. Many private economists say even this forecast may be too optimistic. The extent of the hit to consumer spending is the most important factor behind the central bank's view that the economy cannot be weaned off its record low interest rates. "The big story in terms of the strength of the UK economy is ... the strength of consumer demand, and there are some signs of (that) coming off slowly," Governor Mark Carney said.

Staying in UK

Last month, the Bank pointed to rising demand for staycations as a sign of how consumers are adapting. According to tourism agency Visit England, 63 percent of British adults expect to take a holiday or break in England in 2017, up from 57 percent in 2016. More will flock to traditional destinations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Bookings website Pitchup.com, which specializes in outdoor holidays, says it has seen a 41 percent jump in UK reservations from domestic tourists since the referendum, a much stronger growth rate than in previous years.

Bookings for lodges are nearly tripling and cabins doubling and to Pitchup.com founder Dan Yates, this suggests that many holidaymakers want to avoid expense but without resorting to a tent in Britain's unreliable climate. "People who are moving from a hotel to a cabin are going to be paying significantly less. But they still want their dishwashers, cable TV and iPod docks," he said. — Reuters

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Washington Watch

PALESTINIAN PRISONERS' HUNGER STRIKE

By Dr James J Zogby

One thousand five hundred Palestinian prisoners have been on a hunger strike for almost a week now. They are refusing sustenance in an effort to improve the deplorable conditions faced by the nearly 6,500 Palestinians who are currently imprisoned in Israel.

On the day before the strike began, the action's leader, Marwan Barghouti, published an op-ed in the International New York Times. It was an elegantly written piece in which Barghouti laid out the conditions in Israel's prisons and the demands of the strikers. These demands include: more regular family visits, better health care, an end to solitary confinement, and end to administrative detention (a practice in which Israel jails Palestinians for prolonged periods without charges or trial - there are currently 500 such detainees), and installing public telephones enabling prisoners to have monitored calls with their families.

Barghouti began his article noting that he has been in prison for 15 years during which time "I have been both a witness to and a victim of Israel's illegal system of mass arrests and the ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners". He concluded his opening paragraph saying "After exhausting all other options, I decided there was no other choice but to resist these abuses by going on a hunger strike".

As one of the co-founders of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, I have long been acquainted with Israel's "justice system". Since most Palestinians have been convicted based on confessions obtained under duress, international human rights organizations have condemned Israel's violations of international law and the lack of due process afforded to prisoners. Over 80 percent of all arrested Palestinians have been refused the right to legal counsel until after they have been subjected to prolonged and often abusive interrogation. In his article, Barghouti describes these abuses that he and other prisoners have been forced to endure, noting that the equivalent of 40 percent of Palestine's male population have been jailed by Israel.

The Israeli government's response to the article and to the strike, itself, have been revealingly characteristic of their modus operandi. Because the Times initially described Barghouti as a member of the Palestinian parliament and a leader, Israel launched a campaign

forcing the editors to change their description to note that Barghouti had been convicted of murder and membership in a terrorist organization.

What Israel did not mention was the fact that Barghouti's arrest, trial, and conviction were denounced by the Swiss-based Inter-Parliamentary Union as being "a violation of international law" and having "failed to meet fair-trial standards". The IPU concluded that "Barghouti's guilt has not been established".

But when Israel is on the war-path in an effort to discredit criticism, facts don't matter. Instead they make do with bullying threats to force their target into submission. They called the op-ed "journalist terrorism"; accused the Times of "media terrorism"; called Barghouti's piece "fake news" that was "full of lies". Former Israeli Ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, called for an investigation to see who at the Times was responsible for getting and publishing the article. One Knesset Member went so far as to suggest that Israel might close the Times' Israel bureau.

Israel also ratcheted up the rhetoric against Barghouti and the other strikers. Despite the fact that most of Palestinians are being held on political charges (and many are detainees who haven't been charged with any crimes) - all were hysterically denounced as "loathsome murderers" and "dangerous terrorists". In the end, the Times relented and changed their description of Barghouti to meet Israel's demands.

Bullying Campaign

Reflecting on this Israeli bullying campaign, Haaretz's insightful columnist, Chemi Salev termed the entire effort a "ritual of diversion and denial". By focusing on the description of Barghouti and not the content of his piece, Israel was able to "accentuate the insignificant at the expense of the essence". "First", he wrote, "you manufacture righteous indignation over a minor fault...then you assault the newspaper...and cast doubt on its motives...In this way the Israeli public is absolved of the need to actually contend with the gist of the article...In this way, anyone who wants to address Barghouti's claims...is seen as collaborating with a terrorist and enabling terror".

As for the strikers, Israel promised a harsh response and no negotiations. Barghouti and other "ring lead-

ers" have been placed under solitary confinement. One Israeli minister said that Barghouti should have been "executed", while another said that Israel should treat their prisoners the way Hamas treats its captives. And while a law is being advanced to allow the government to force-feed prisoners, Foreign Minister Lieberman said that the government should be firm even if it means letting prisoners die. At the same time, a not so subtle media campaign has been launched to discredit Barghouti as a political opportunist who is only doing this to advance his political career and to sabotage the "peace process" (as if one actually exists).

What Israel will not acknowledge and is attempting to obfuscate is that their treatment of Palestinians is deplorable. Their 50-year-long illegal occupation has driven a captive people to resist their systematic oppressive violence. In the process, Israel terms every Palestinian response "terrorism". Whether throwing rocks at checkpoints, boycotting Israeli products or writing op-eds and going on a hunger strike - all become "terrorist" acts.

There are, to be sure, horrific acts of real terror that have been committed by Palestinians and these must be condemned and punished. But even here Israel is not blameless. Doesn't bombing civilian targets and killing scores of civilians or systematically starving Gaza into submission qualify as terror? And doesn't confiscating land, demolishing homes, and centuries-old olive orchards also fit the definition of terrorism?

At the root of all the violence is the persistence of an inhumane occupation and the evil that results from it. What should be noted, however, is that like the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, a mass prisoners' strike is an inherently non-violent protest. This, Israel refuses to accept. Because it can admit no wrong-doing and because of its obsessive need to control all aspects of Palestinian life, any resistance becomes a threat and, therefore, an "act of terror" that must be punished and snuffed out. It is this behavior that breeds resistance. And this deadly and tragic cycle will continue until Israel recognizes that its victims are real people who will not submit but will continue to assert their rights.

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

NEW ACTOR TRUMP HEIGHTENS N KOREA DRAMA

Geopolitical tensions flare every spring on the Korean peninsula, but analysts say the anxiety of recent weeks has been magnified by the unpredictable new player in the annual drama: Donald Trump. North Korea always intensifies its rhetoric when Seoul and Washington stage annual large-scale joint military drills that it condemns as rehearsals for a potential invasion. But this time threat and counter-threat from both sides sent tensions spiralling, generating lurid headlines and focussing global attention on the region.

The North says it needs nuclear weapons to protect itself and observers agree it is making progress towards a long-dreamed-of rocket capable of delivering a warhead to the US mainland. With multiple sets of UN sanctions failing to quell its ambitions, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson last month said US military action was an "option on the table". Pyongyang promised "the toughest counteraction" to any attack while Washington pledged an "overwhelming response", with Trump himself tweeting that the North "will be taken care of".

Even so the North has carried out two rocket tests this month alone and paraded its arsenal, including a suspected new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), through the streets of Pyongyang. Speculation has also mounted that it could carry out a sixth nuclear test, following two last year, although that has yet to happen. Pyongyang's threats and actions are not unusual - it has gone further in the past, sinking the South Korean corvette Cheonan with the loss of 46 lives in 2010, and

three years later urging foreigners to leave the South to escape what it said was a looming nuclear war.

But cooler heads always prevailed in Washington and the two sides never came to blows. Analysts now point to the new US administration as a key factor behind the intense fears of conflict this time. "The big change was from Washington," said Koo Kab-Woo, professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul. After years of "strategic patience" under Barack Obama, he said the US is "reacting more sensitively" to claims by leader Kim Jong-Un Kim that his country is in the final stages of developing an ICBM.

'Turning It Up to Eleven'

A missile strike in Syria and the dropping of the "Mother of All Bombs" in Afghanistan sent ominous signals that the new administration is prepared to unleash US firepower. And after a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Trump doubled down on a vow to act unilaterally against Pyongyang if Beijing fails to rein in its unpredictable ally. "The ascendancy of Donald Trump introduces a greater element of uncertainty about America's moves," said Mark Fitzpatrick, executive director at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in Washington. "His threatening tweets make people wonder whether he would also attack North Korea," he told AFP.

The North itself is already renowned for belligerent statements. Mason Richey of Hankuk University of

Foreign Affairs in Seoul described its propaganda as "ranging from insulting to bellicose to ludicrous" in a recent paper titled "Turning It Up to Eleven" - a rare reference in diplomatic analysis to the 1984 rock mockumentary "This Is Spinal Tap". But he found no correlation between the North's verbal hostility and its actual actions. "US civilian and military decision-makers should greatly discount North Korea's threat rhetoric" unless it is accompanied by other signals, he said.

Commitment trap

Analysts say Trump's tweets - which often use unrefined and harsh rhetoric - and his unpredictability have also unsettled Beijing. "Both China and North Korea are stunned by Washington's change," said Choi Kang, an analyst at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies. But the US has yet to translate words into action and its misstep over the deployment of a naval strike group to the Korean peninsula, which turned out to be thousands of kilometres away, has caused embarrassment.

Questions have been raised whether Washington's statements will create a "commitment trap" where it feels obliged to act to maintain its credibility. "It can be hard to distinguish bluff from real intentions, and President Trump is a master at keeping the other side guessing," said Fitzpatrick. But the commander-in-chief "does not seem to care much about following through on past promises," he added. "He is infinitely flexible in his policy choices." —AFP

WIESBERGER KEEPS LEAD AT SHENZHEN INTERNATIONAL

SHENZHEN: Bernd Wiesberger of Austria shot a 3-under 69 yesterday to take a three-stroke lead into the final round of the Shenzhen International. Wiesberger, who started the third round at Genzon Golf Club with a four-shot advantage, offset two bogeys with five birdies for 15-under 201 overall. "I didn't start off really well, I said. I hit a couple of crooked shots and left a couple of putts out there but then, from when I holed the putt on seven, I felt more comfortable out there and was rolling the ball a bit better." South African Dylan Frittelli was second after a 68 with a birdie-birdie finish. Frittelli's countrymen Dean Burmester and George Coetzee were tied for third at 11 under, alongside England's Ross Fisher and American David Lipsky. Wiesberger has been in impressive form the last eight months, having not missed a cut since the PGA Championship with seven top-five finishes.—AP



BACSINSZKY STRIKES BACK FOR SWISS IN FED CUP SEMIFINAL

MINSK: Timea Bacsinszky downed Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets to bring Switzerland level with Belarus at 1-1 in their Fed Cup semifinal yesterday. Bacsinszky took full advantage of 50 unforced errors from 19-year-old Sabalenka to win 6-4, 7-5. That canceled out an upset win for Belarusian Aliaksandra Sasnovich against Switzerland's Viktorija Golubic in the opening rubber. Sasnovich's aggressive style, with 36 winners to Golubic's 22, helped her edge an almost three-hour fight which ended 6-3, 5-7, 7-5. With former top-ranked Victoria Azarenka taking a break to raise her first child, Sasnovich is the only member of the Belarus team ranked in the top 100, at 96. Golubic is 54th. Sasnovich plays Bacsinszky in today's first reverse singles, then Sabalenka takes on Golubic. The tie will conclude with a doubles rubber between Belarusians Olga Govortsova and Vera Lapko and the Swiss duo of Martina Hingis and Belinda Bencic. The Swiss are aiming to reach their second Fed Cup final following defeat to Spain in 1998, while Belarus is in uncharted territory in its first semifinal.—AP

WIDDOP RE-SIGNS WITH DRAGONS IN NRL

SYDNEY: England international Gareth Widdop has re-signed with the St George Illawarra Dragons for the next four Australian National Rugby League seasons, the club said yesterday. Club skipper and stand-off Widdop will now remain at the competition leaders until the end of the 2021 season. Widdop, 28, has been an integral member of the Dragons since his arrival from the Melbourne Storm in 2014 and became captain of the club this season. He has played 79 games for the Dragons and recently became the second-highest pointscorer in St George Illawarra history and is now on track to surpass Jamie Soward's record of 977 points. "The Dragons have grown more and more since I've arrived. There's a good environment here and it's a good place to be so I wanted to play my part in that," Widdop said. "At this stage of my career it certainly was a big decision for my family. I have three young kids, I'm very settled here and I'm enjoying my time here.—AFP



HOCKEY

ASIAN ICE HOCKEY CUP TOURNAMENT BEGINS

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Competitions of Asia Ice Hockey Cup tournament continue today at the Ice Skating Rink which was opened yesterday under the patronage of Commerce and Industry Minister, Acting State Minister of Youth Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan, as Kuwait's

team will play its Indian counterpart at 10 pm. Meanwhile Macao will play Oman at 6:30 pm, and these matches are expected to be the most difficult as each team wants to get closer to winning the cup.

Kuwait's team is going through a high state of concentration, bearing in mind that all technical problems were taken care of and

plans were made accordingly. The tournament opening ceremony received good reviews as many people expressed appreciation of what the first day included, particularly the simple opening ceremony, since Kuwait sports activities were placed under suspension. Large number of fans was at the Ice Rink to support the teams and witness events.

Meanwhile, participating teams lauded the tournament's organization and hospitality adding that all is going as planned, and they appreciated the efforts of Kuwait winter sports club to make their participation easy. Director of Ice Hockey Game Development at the Asian Federation Andy Kerr lauded activities of the Asian tournament, saying that

Kuwait winter sports club is well known for good organization and ability to deal with regional events, and that is evident through organizing several activities. Kerr said participating teams are among those at the highest level and of good history in the world of Ice Hockey which adds to the tournament's excitement.



MUNSTER TO HONOUR FOLEY IN EUROPEAN SEMI-FINAL

DUBLIN: Munster return to Dublin's Lansdowne Road for the first time since the death of Anthony Foley determined to again honour their late coach in a European Champions Cup semi-final against title-holders Saracens.

Irish province Munster, one of rugby union's best-supported teams, have been riding an even greater tidal wave of emotion following the shock death of Foley on the eve of a Champions Cup pool match in Paris in October. The former Munster and Ireland back-row forward was 42. A week earlier, he'd been at Lansdowne Road, a ground where he made more than 30 appearances as a player, to see Munster lose 25-14 to Irish rivals Leinster in the Celtic League.

"The last game we played here, where Anthony was in charge of the team, he was the head coach, it was the last time we were in that changing room, he was with us in the changing room and then the next week he passed away," Munster director of rugby Rassie Erasmus told reporters on Friday. "I just know the private conversations we had after that loss against Leinster, I know what I would tell him and I know he would smile but it wouldn't be something I could say in front of you guys (the media) now," the South African added.

"I just think he would be really proud, because the guys carry him in our hearts every day. 'We talk about him, he's part of our daily training and I think that would put a smile on his face and hopefully we can make him proud tomorrow.' Although Munster are two-time European champions, they've made pool stage exits in each of the last two seasons and their 2014/15 European campaign included a 33-10 group phase defeat by London club Saracens, also the reigning English champions.

Saracens boss Mark McCall was full of admiration for the way Munster had transformed their playing fortunes while mourning Foley. "It's been remarkable, it's been a master-class in how they dealt with something so terrible," said McCall, himself a former Ireland centre. "I don't know how they did it but they did. They have shown some real class in the weeks and months after that tragedy."

But McCall stressed that sentiment alone could not have taken Munster, ferocious in defence, this far in Europe. "Man and ball is a big strength, their kicking game's good, their kick chase is good," he explained.

"You've said their defence. I think the exceptional thing is how hard they work. 'Of all the teams we've analysed this year, I don't think there's a team who work as hard and fight for each other the way they do, which is why they come out the right end of a lot of results this year.' He added: "I think they've got a really smart coaching team. 'We've got to be adaptable and flexible on the day and they might hit us with some things that we've got to be able to deal with.' 'Having said that, we've got to match their work-rate, their intensity on the day.'—AFP

RUGBY

HIGHLANDERS, CRUSADERS, CHIEFS WIN IN SUPER RUGBY

CHRISTCHURCH: Winger George Bridge scored three first-half tries as the Christchurch-based Crusaders overwhelmed South Africa's Stormers 57-24 yesterday to stretch their winning start to the Super Rugby season to eight matches. After the Stormers managed only a penalty from a period of early dominance, Bridge scored his hat trick between the 13th and 32nd minutes, during a spell in which the Crusaders showed sublime handling and passing skills. All Blacks captain Kieran Read, who played only 40 minutes before being subbed, also scored two tries as the Crusaders opened an insurmountable 36-3 lead by halftime.

The Stormers came back strongly in the second half with tries to wingers Cheslin Kolbe and Bjorn Basson which cut the lead to 36-17 but the Crusaders were able to monopolize possession and added further tries to Mike Alaataoa, Pete Samu and Manasa Mataele to post their highest-ever score against the Stormers.

They have made an 8-0 start to the season for only the third time in their history - having previously done so on the way to championships in 2002 and 2006 - and remain unbeaten in 10 home matches against the Stormers. "I thought the first half we came out and tried to show our intent," Crusaders captain Sam Whitelock said. "But credit to them, they came back in the second half, scored straight after halftime as a great side does and put the pressure right back on us."

Two of the Crusaders' tries - to Samu and Mataele - came from intercepts but otherwise they were intricately constructed and relied on an outstanding ability to offload under pressure. The best was likely Read's first which began with a long attack down the right flank and ended with the No. 8 scoring in the left-hand corner. "When we did get our hands on the ball, we used it well and it was great to see the boys using their heads and playing smart," Whitelock said.

Earlier, center Matt Faddes scored two second-half tries to help the Dunedin-based Highlanders to a flattering 40-15 win over Japan's Sunwolves. The Highlanders, coming off a bye, struggled for much of the match to subdue the Sunwolves before emerging with a bonus point for a win by six tries to two.

A try to All Blacks center Malakai Fekitoa after only

four minutes suggested the Highlanders were in for a convincing win but the Sunwolves proved competitive for long periods, holding at least even shares of possession in both halves.

Luck played a part in the Highlanders taking a 21-3 lead to halftime. The Sunwolves had a try to Will Tupou disallowed by the television match official while the Highlanders were awarded a try to Liam Squire from what seemed to be a forward pass.

Scrumhalf Aaron Smith touched down just before the break to boost the Highlanders' halftime advantage. Faddes scored immediately after the resumption from a brilliant angled run and again in the 50th minute from an intercept to give the Highlanders a 35-3 lead and put the match beyond doubt. Captain Ben Smith scrambled over four minutes later and, at 40-3, the match was all but over. But the Sunwolves refused to

give up and dominated the final quarter, scoring tries through Willie Britz and Rahboni Warren Vosayaco.

"It wasn't perfect and at times we probably threw a few miracle balls and didn't show them respect," Smith said. "They made us pay at times so there's a bit to work on." The Chiefs eked out a scrappy 16-7 win over the Western Force in Perth to complete another clean sweep for New Zealand teams. The Hurricanes scored 42 unanswered points in the second half Friday to beat the ACT Brumbies 56-21 after trailing 21-14 at halftime. The Auckland-based Blues had a bye. The Chiefs needed three penalties from Aaron Cruden, the only points of the second half, to see off the Force after the teams had been tied 7-7 at halftime. Liam Messam scored an early try for the Chiefs and they seemed set to dominate but Matt Hodgson replied with a try from a lineout drive for the Force, who defended stoutly.—AP



CHRISTCHURCH: Stormers Eben Etzebeth makes a run at Crusaders defender Michael Alaataoa, left, during their super rugby match in Christchurch, New Zealand, yesterday.—AP

LIVERPOOL 2022 COMMONWEALTH GAMES BID OPEN TO MANCHESTER HELP

MANCHESTER: Liverpool's bid to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games could include using existing facilities in Manchester or other cities, a source close to the bid told Reuters yesterday. The British government has asked its cities to draw up detailed plans to stage the Games, as it prepared a bid to take over the event from dropped host Durban. The South African city lost the right to hold the games following a trail of missed deadlines and financial problems. Australian cities Sydney and

Melbourne have also shown interest in taking on the 2022 event. The 2018 Games will be held on the Gold Coast, Queensland. Liverpool has already begun putting together a bid team headed by former English Football Association chief executive and current Rugby Football League chair Brian Barwick. Manchester successfully hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2002 and has yet to formally declare an interest in the 2022 event. A Manchester City Council

spokesman said: "We welcome the announcement that the government is supporting a UK bid to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Manchester, which hosted a memorable games in 2002 with a successful legacy, has always considered itself part of the Commonwealth Games family and remains happy to help if called upon to do so". While, there is no suggestion of a formal, jointly-branded proposal, the source close to Liverpool's bid said they would be open to discussions with

Manchester and possibly other cities regarding cooperation for 2022, in order to efficiently make use of existing facilities. Manchester, which is just 30 miles from Liverpool, has a top-class velodrome and swimming venue. A statement from Britain's Department of Culture, Media and Sport on Friday said such cooperation would be accepted as part of the process. "The government will consider multi-city proposals, as well as applications

from individual cities which will be assessed to ensure they offer value for money. The process will end later in the year when the government will decide if the UK will put forward a formal bid," read the statement. Birmingham has set up a bid organisation, whose effort is expected to be backed by the City Council's cabinet. The Commonwealth Games Federation is due to decide where the 2022 Games will be staged later this year. — Reuters

MOTOR RACING

INDYCAR DRIVERS WELCOME ALONSO'S INDIANAPOLIS BID

LEEDS: IndyCar drivers will throw out the welcome mat for Fernando Alonso on his Indianapolis 500 debut next month but have warned the double Formula One champion not to expect any support on the track. "He's going to get passed and pass more cars in one month than he will in his entire Formula One career combined," Graham Rahal, son of 1986 Indy 500 winner Bobby, told Reuters at Barber Motorsports Park. Alonso announced last week he would miss the showcase Monaco Grand Prix on May 28 to race in the Indy 500 on the same day. The Spaniard, who is having a difficult F1 season with uncompetitive McLaren, has set his sights on becoming only the second driver to achieve the famed 'Triple Crown'-the Formula One title, Indy 500 and Le Mans 24 Hours sportscar race. If the 35-year-old can triumph at the Brickyard, a sensational outcome for someone who has never raced on oval circuits, Alonso would still have to win the French classic to complete the triple and there are no plans for that as yet. "It's great to have someone here of his calibre," Brazilian three times Indy 500 winner Helio Castroneves said.

"He'll do well but I'm going to do everything I can to make him not do well." Scott Dixon, the New Zealander who won at Indianapolis in 2008 from pole position and has also tested Formula One cars, said he was looking forward to racing Alonso. "I think everybody here is welcoming him with open arms," the four times IndyCar series champion told Reuters. Alonso is visiting the IndyCar paddock this weekend to watch the Indy Grand Prix of Alabama on the Barber Motorsports Park road course. His first shakedown in his Andretti Autosport Dallara Honda will come on May 3 in an all-day practice session at the 2.5 mile (4km) Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Fellow Spaniard Oriol Servia expects Alonso will be up to the task. "He's super-talented and he likes fast corners, that's what the (Indianapolis) Speedway is," he told Reuters in a telephone interview. Alonso's biggest challenge is likely to be learning how to handle a car in the traffic and turbulence of a tightly-bunched 33-car field. "If you grow up in Europe the Indy 500 sounds like Mars, you don't know how risky it is," said Servia. — Reuters

BASKETBALL

THUNDER, CELTICS EARN CRUCIAL VICTORY, CLIPPERS STUN JAZZ

LOS ANGELES: Russell Westbrook produced yet another triple-double and the Oklahoma City Thunder held on for a crucial 115-113 victory over the Houston Rockets in the NBA playoffs on Friday. With the win on their home court, the Thunder avoided falling into an 0-3 hole in their best-of-seven Western Conference first-round series, narrowing the deficit to 2-1. Eastern Conference top seeds Boston also clawed back from an 0-2 deficit, beating the Bulls in Chicago 104-87 after dropping the first two games of their series at home. "That was our only goal for this game was (to) just get the win no matter what for us to have a chance to make it a series," the Celtics' Jae Crowder said. "You go down 0-3 and it's really, really tough for you to fight back, but we just wanted to take it one game at a time and get this game and give ourselves a chance." Al Horford scored 18 points, Isaiah Thomas and Crowder added 16 each as five Boston players scored in double figures. Dwyane Wade scored 18 points and Jimmy Butler chipped in 14 for Chicago, but the Bulls offense looked stagnant without point guard Rajon Rondo, who is sidelined indefinitely with a broken thumb. Butler connected on just seven of his 21 shots from the floor and didn't get to the free throw line. The Bulls didn't have a single assist in the third quarter as they struggled to get their offense going. "We're not going to put this all on us missing Rondo because if that's the case we might as well not show up anymore because it looks like we're going to be missing him for awhile," Wade said. "We have to figure out a way to be better." In Oklahoma City, Westbrook became the first player to notch back-to-back triple-doubles in the same playoff series since Jason Kidd in the 2002 Eastern Conference finals. But even his 32 points, 11 assists and 13 rebounds were barely enough against

the Rockets, who had a chance to win at the buzzer only for James Harden to miss a three-point attempt. Westbrook's second missed free throw in the waning seconds had kept the door open for the Rockets, who had tied it at 111-111 with 52 seconds to play on a Harden three-pointer. Westbrook responded with his first three-point attempt of the game. It didn't fall, but teammate Steven Adams was there for the tip-in that put the Thunder back in front. **CLIPPERS RALLY** In Salt Lake City, Los Angeles point guard Chris Paul scored 24 of his 34 points in the second half as the Clippers rallied for a 111-106 victory over the Utah Jazz. The Clippers took a 2-1 lead in the series, despite losing Blake Griffin to a toe injury late in the second quarter. Griffin scored 11 points and pulled down six rebounds before departing, and Clippers coach Doc Rivers said immediately after the game that the extent of Griffin's injury was unclear. "We should have more news tomorrow," Rivers said. DeAndre Jordan scored 17 points and grabbed 13 rebounds and Luc Mbah a Moute added 15 points for the Clippers, who withstood a career-high 40 points from Utah's Gordon Hayward. The Clippers erased a double-digit deficit by the end of the third quarter. When they took the lead with 4:01 to play they were in front for the first time since the first quarter. Paul made four straight baskets in a 15-0 scoring run that put the Clippers ahead 103-96 with 2:09 remaining. The Jazz closed to 106-105 with 7.1 seconds left, but they couldn't get back in front. "We just hung in there," Rivers said of the key to the turnaround. "I thought the second half even though Blake wasn't there we just kept playing and we just kept hanging in there." — AFP



OKLAHOMA CITY: Russell Westbrook #0 of the Oklahoma City Thunder drives around James Harden #13 of the Houston Rockets for two points during the second half of Game Three in the 2017 NBA Playoffs Western Conference Quarterfinals on Friday in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. —AFP



HERNING: This file photo taken on May 03, 2012 shows Italian cyclist Michele Scarponi posing with his 2011 Tour of Italy trophy after receiving the winner's pink jersey following the disqualification of Alberto Contador in Herning on May 3, 2012. Veteran Italian cyclist Michele Scarponi was killed yesterday in a road accident while out training on his bike, his Astana team and Italian media said. — AFP

CYCLING

FORMER GIRO WINNER SCARPONI DIES AFTER COLLISION WITH VAN

MILAN: Michele Scarponi, who won the Giro d'Italia in 2011, died after a collision with a van while training yesterday. He was 37. Scarponi was training near his home of Filottrano, near Ancona, when he was hit by a van at a crossroad, Team Astana said. According to Italian media reports, the Astana cyclist died on the spot and was unable to be revived by emergency services which arrived promptly. Team Astana called it "a tragedy too big to be written" in a statement. "We left a great champion and a special guy, always smiling in every situation, he was a real mile stone and a landmark for everyone in the Astana Pro Team," it added. Scarponi is survived by a wife and twin sons, who are only four years old. He had returned home after finishing fourth in the Tour of the Alps on Friday in Trento. He won the first stage on Monday. Scarponi had posted a photo on Twitter on Friday night, with his sons on his back and the caption: "Even if only for a day I thought I'd bring home two leaders' jerseys." His wife, Anna, put a photo on Instagram several hours after the death of Scarponi, showing him pedaling outside the Astana team bus watched by his sons. She wrote "thank-you everyone." Scarponi was awarded the 2011 Giro trophy after Alberto Contador was stripped of the title because of doping. The Italian had also faced doping sanctions. He was banned for 18 months in July 2007 following the long-running Operation Puerto doping scandal, while he served a three-month suspension from the end of 2012 after working with the banned physician Michele Ferrari. Scarponi had been named as Astana's leader for the upcoming Giro d'Italia, which starts in less than two weeks, after Fabio Aru pulled out with a knee injury. "An infinite tragedy. Words don't exist. Rest in peace my friend," Aru tweeted. Former teammate Vincenzo Nibali wrote: "I don't know, I can't cope! I don't have words my friend..." Scarponi was one of the most liked riders on the circuit, with his sense of humor and jovial disposition. He often started training rides with his parrot on his shoulder, posting videos which quickly went viral. "Yesterday he was racing. He came up to me. Michele was smiling, as ever," Italy team coach Davide Cassani wrote on Twitter. "He was happy for (Monday's) win. He was talking about the Giro. And now I'm here crying for him. Oh my God." The Italian football federation announced there will be a minute's silence at all matches this weekend in honor of Scarponi and other sports are expected to follow suit. Scarponi was an Inter Milan fan and had reportedly planned to attend the Nerazzurri's Serie A match at Fiorentina on Saturday night. Inter was one of the many sports teams which tweeted their support, along with governing bodies and athletes. "Our condolences and hugs to your dearest in a very sad day for sport. Your Inter bids you farewell with affection," Inter wrote. — AP

FIGURE SKATING

JAPAN WIN TEAM TROPHY AS MEDVEDEVA SHINES

TOKYO: World champion Evgenia Medvedeva displayed elegance and athleticism to win the ladies' free programme at the World Team Trophy in Tokyo yesterday, with host nation Japan grabbing the overall title. The Russian teenager's artistry captivated rivals and fans, renewing her own world record score to 160.46, soaring ahead of her Japanese rivals Mai Mihara in second place with 146.17 and Wakaba Higuchi in third with 145.30. But the Japanese collected 109 team points overall to claim the trophy, after men's world champion Yuzuru Hanyu and his compatriot Shoma Uno finished first and second in the male segment Friday. The Russian team followed with 105 points, while the Americans took bronze with 97 points. Canada came fourth with 87 and China followed with 80. France finished with 62 in the six-nation gathering at Yoyogi National Gymnasium. As the final skater of the event, Medvedeva already knew that Japan had secured the team gold when she stepped onto the ice. But she stayed focused and

flawlessly executed 11 jumps, seven of them triples. Her routine began with a dynamic triple flip-triple toe combination to the music from the movie "Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close". After a succession of spins and steps, the two-time world champion blasted off and nailed a powerful triple Salchow triple-toe combination in the latter half of her programme, impressing the audience with her stamina. The solemn finish of her routine was followed by a serene smile of confidence. When her score was announced, the Russian team was euphoric and Medvedeva screamed in delight. The result brought her total score to 241.31 after both free and short programmes, also renewing the world record for women previously set by her. The victorious but stunned Japanese skaters looked on. In the pairs free skating, France's Vanessa James and Morgan Cipres finished first with 146.87, followed by Russia's Evgenia Tarasova and Vladimir Morozov with 142.38 and China's Peng Cheng and Yang Jin with 133.13. —AFP



TOKYO: Japan figure skating team members, front row from left, Sumire Suto, Mai Mihara, Wakaba Higuchi, Kana Muramoto rear row from left, Francis Boudreau-Audet, Yuzuru Hanyu, Shoma Uno, and Chris Reed pose with their gold medals for photographers during an award ceremony after winning the World Team Trophy in Figure Skating in Tokyo, yesterday. — AP

SHARAPOVA RIVALS ARE JEALOUS 'JOURNEYMEN', SAYS AGENT

NEW YORK: Critics of Maria Sharapova possibly receiving a wildcard into the French Open just want to keep another title threat out of Roland Garros, the Russian star's agent said in a report Friday. Ben Rothenberg, a US-based tennis writer and podcaster, tweeted a statement Friday from Max Eisenbud, Sharapova's agent, decrying the five-time Grand Slam champion's critics. Sharapova is set to return next week in Stuttgart from a 15-month doping ban as a wildcard entrant. She is expected to learn the week of May 15 if she will be able to compete at the French Open as a wildcard.

But hours after Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska told Polish media she feels Sharapova should not receive wild card entries for Grand Slam events, Eisenbud responded about her and Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki, who was critical of Sharapova getting a wildcard entry for the German tournament.

"All those 'journeyman' players like Radwanska and Wozniacki who have never won a slam and the next generation passing them. They are smart to try to keep Maria out of Paris," Eisenbud said. "NO Serena, NO Maria, NO Vika, NO Petra, it's

their last chance to win a slam," he added, a nod to the absence of pregnant world number one Serena Williams, Czech Petra Kvitova and former world number one Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, expected to return in July after having a baby.

Radwanska, 2-13 all-time against Sharapova, told Polish media she expects Sharapova to be "fierce" when she returns but made no secret that she felt Sharapova must start at the bottom and work her way back into elite events.

"This kind of entry into the tournament should apply to players who dropped in the ranking because of injury, illness or some other random event. Not for those suspended for doping. Maria should recover some other way, starting with smaller events," Radwanska said.

"So far she hasn't been invited to slams in Paris and London and in my opinion that's how it should remain. She should win her spot by playing well."

Radwanska said that if she were a tournament director, she wouldn't give Sharapova a wild card. "No," she said. "She would never have a chance (to get one) from my hands." — AFP

TENNIS

FOUL-MOUTHED ILIE NASTASE EXPELLED FROM FED CUP TIE

LONDON: Romanian tennis legend Ilie Nastase was expelled from the Fed Cup tie with Britain yesterday for "serious misconduct" after a foul-mouthed rant compounded a controversy caused by racist remarks aimed at superstar Serena Williams.

The 70-year-old was heard to say about Williams's pregnancy at Friday's press conference ahead of the World Group play-off in Constanta: "Let's see what colour it (the baby) has. Chocolate with milk?"

Furious that his remarks were made public, Nastase's anger had not abated by the time the tie reached the second rubber on Saturday between British number one Johanna Konta and Sorana Cirstea.

According to reports, he used foul and abusive remarks courtside to pregnant British captain Anna Keothavong-whose room number he'd asked for at the press conference-and Konta.

He was reported to have described the British duo as "fucking bitches". Nastase had also been riled by the umpire appealing to the crowd for calm with the Romanian captain interjecting: "It's not the opera, what's your fucking problem?"

After a lengthy delay to proceedings, Nastase was banished to the stands before being finally kicked out of the tournament.

"His accreditation was removed and he will play no further part in the tie," said the International Tennis Federation (ITF) in a statement. "The ITF has launched an investigation into this matter as well as previous comments made by Mr Nastase during the week," the ITF added, referring to the comments about Williams's pregnancy. "The ITF does not tolerate discriminatory and offensive language and behaviour of any kind," the governing body for tennis said in a statement to AFP earlier on Saturday when the storm about his comment first broke.

"We are aware of alleged comments made by Romanian captain Ilie Nastase and have begun an immediate investigation so that we have the full facts of the situation before taking further and appropriate action."

'YOU'RE STUPID, UGLY'

Nastase, who won two Grand Slams in his career, didn't take kindly to the initial press reports of his comment and lambasted a Press Association tennis correspondent in the press room prior to the start of the tie. "Why did you write that? You're stupid, you're stupid," Nastase told reporter Eleanor Crooks during a three-minute tirade which has also been passed on to the ITF.

Crooks later tweeted that Nastase confronted her for a second time and called her "ugly". He was subsequently escorted

from the court still lambasting the umpire and British duo Keovathong and Konta. The match was suspended as Konta burst into tears, although the BBC claimed it appeared that was provoked by abusive remarks from a spectator.

Romania star Simona Halep appealed to the crowd to calm down and the rubber was able to resume with Konta shrugging aside the upset to level the tie at 1-1 as she prevailed in straight sets 6-2, 6-3.

Nastase, who had a reputation as a playboy during and after his playing career, also made a number of inappropriate remarks to Keothavong ahead of the weekend tie between the two countries.

He asked for her room number on two occasions and when the captains posed together for photographs following Friday's draw he put his arm tightly around the pregnant Keothavong's shoulder. Williams, one of the greatest players of all time, revealed on Wednesday she is expecting her first baby but intends to return to the WTA circuit in 2018. Williams is due to give birth in September, the same month she turns 36. — AFP



Ilie Nastase

RAMOS-VINOLAS BEATS POUILLE TO REACH MONTE CARLO FINAL

MONACO: Albert Ramos-Vinolas beat Lucas Pouille 6-3, 5-7, 6-1 to reach the clay-court Monte Carlo Masters final yesterday.

Although the 15th-seeded Ramos Vinolas has never previously reached a Masters final and has won only one career title, he has good credentials on clay, having got to the French Open quarterfinals last year. The 29-year-old Spaniard plays either defending champion Rafael Nadal or 10th-seeded David Goffin of Belgium, who play later.

The semifinal saw two players who made significant breakthroughs last year, with the 23-year-old Pouille reaching Grand Slam quarterfinals at Wimbledon and the US Open. Pouille had won their only previous match two years ago, in straight sets, on outdoor hard courts in Auckland.

With the sun shining and warm temperatures, the conditions were perfect for clay-court tennis on the idyllic center court perched above the glittering Mediterranean sea. Ramos-Vinolas took the

first set when he broke the 11th-seeded Frenchman to love, concluding with a smash at the net.

Pouille missed a chance to break in the ninth game of the second set, meaning he was serving to stay in the match. After holding easily with a neat volley at the net, Pouille got the crowd going and then played his best tennis of the match.

He broke Ramos-Vinolas in the next game when the Spaniard hit a forehand long, and Pouille leveled the match on his own serve. But he seemed to be struggling physically in the deciding set. At 3-0 down, Pouille needed treatment to his lower back and hips for about four minutes during the changeover. His power went after that and the inevitable conclusion happened when Pouille dropped his serve again in the seventh game. Ramos-Vinolas has one career title - on outdoor clay by the sea in Bastad, Sweden - and has lost three other finals, including this year on outdoor clay at Sao Paulo. — AP



BALTIMORE: Manny Machado #13 of the Baltimore Orioles collides with Dustin Pedroia #15 of the Boston Red Sox at second base in the eighth inning at Oriole Park at Camden Yards on Friday in Baltimore, Maryland. — AFP

BASEBALL

ORIOLE ROLL CONTINUES AGAINST BOSTON RED SOX

BALTIMORE: Dylan Bundy took a five-hitter into the eighth inning, Manny Machado homered and the surging Baltimore Orioles beat the Boston Red Sox 2-0 in Major League Baseball on Friday night. It was the seventh win in nine games for the Orioles, whose major league-best 11-4 record includes a 9-3 mark in the AL East. Bundy (3-1) struck out three, walked one and allowed six hits in seven-plus innings. The 2011 first-round draft pick lowered his ERA to 1.37 and extended his run of consecutive scoreless innings to 13. Brad Brach worked a perfect ninth for his third save - all in the past three nights. Boston second baseman Dustin Pedroia had to be helped from the field in the bottom of the eighth inning after hurting his knee. The injury occurred when Machado slid into second on a force play and appeared to unintentionally spike Pedroia in the back of the left leg. Red Sox starter Drew Pomeranz (1-1) gave up two runs and five hits over 5 1/3 innings.

CUBS 6, REDS 5, 11 INNINGS

Anthony Rizzo tied it with a two-out, three-run homer in the ninth inning and Kris Bryant hit a sacrifice fly in the 11th, rallying the Chicago Cubs past the Cincinnati Reds. The Cubs won for the 19th time in their last 23 games against the Reds and for the 16th time in their last 20 games at Great American Ball Park. Bryant's sacrifice fly off Robert Stephenson (0-1) sent the Cubs to their third straight win. Carl Edwards Jr. (1-0) retired the side in the 10th, and Wade Davis got the three outs for his fourth save in as many chances.

ROCKIES 6, GIANTS 5

Trevor Story hit his first career grand slam and Charlie Blackmon lined an inside-the-park homer as part of a six-run fourth inning, helping the Colorado Rockies beat Johnny Cueto and the San Francisco Giants. It's the first time an NL team has hit a grand slam and an inside-the-parker in the same inning since the 1950 New York Giants, according to STATS. The Boston Red Sox accomplished the feat in 2011. Tyler Chatwood (2-2) started off shaky before finding his rhythm. He went six innings and allowed four runs. Greg Holland pitched a perfect ninth for his ninth straight save to start this season. Cueto (3-1) struggled in the fourth when the rain picked up intensity.

NATIONALS 4, METS 3, 11 INNINGS

Bryce Harper homered early, then doubled and scored the go-ahead run in the 11th inning on a bases-loaded walk by Jeury's Familia, sending the Washington Nationals over the New York Mets for their fifth straight win. Familia came in for Josh Smoker (0-1) and again had trouble finding the strike zone, forcing home a run with a walk to Trea Turner, as the Mets lost for the sixth time in seven games. New York fell to 1-3 in extra innings early this season. Enny Romero (1-0) got the win, and Shawn Kelley earned his third save. Jose Lobaton homered in the fifth.

INDIANS 3, WHITE SOX 0

Corey Kluber pitched a three-hitter and faced two over the minimum, leading the Cleveland Indians over the Chicago White Sox. Kluber (2-1) faced 29 batters in his fourth complete-game shutout and first since June 21, 2016, against Tampa Bay. Only one Chicago runner reached second base, and Kluber struck out nine, walked two and threw 110 pitches. Jose Quintana (0-4) took a fifth straight loss dating to last season. The left-hander allowed three runs, five hits and three walks while striking out six in six innings. Austin Jackson doubled and scored on a wild pitch in the third, and Brandon Guyer hit a two-run homer in the fourth - his first of the year.

CARDINALS 6, BREWERS 3

Adam Wainwright homered and drove in four runs while getting his first victory of the season, leading the St. Louis Cardinals over the Milwaukee Brewers. Wainwright ripped a two-run homer into the second deck in left field off

Wily Peralta (3-1) to put the Cardinals up 2-1 in the third. He drove in two more runs with a single in the fourth to extend the lead to 5-1. Wainwright (1-3) had struggled on the mound this season, but showed better command against the Brewers. He gave up two runs and six hits in five innings, recording a season-high nine strikeouts without walking a batter. St. Louis' Dexter Fowler left in the fifth inning with right heel bursitis. He was replaced by Stephen Piscotty.

TWINS 6, TIGERS 3

Justin Verlander stumbled again, Miguel Cabrera left after straining his right groin and the Detroit Tigers wasted a three-run lead against the Minnesota Twins, who burst ahead when Eddie Rosario hit a three-run homer that capped a six-run sixth inning. Cabrera had three hits but was hurt while stretching for a throw from third baseman Nicholas Castellanos to first on Brian Dozier's inning-ending grounder in the sixth. Cabrera was replaced in the middle of the seventh. Six days after allowing nine runs and 11 hits in four innings against Cleveland, Verlander (1-2) held the Twins to two hits in five innings and led 3-0 before walking Max Kepler, Miguel Sano and Joe Mauer starting the sixth. Robbie Grossman chased Verlander with a two-run single. Hector Santiago (2-1) gave up three runs and seven hits in 6 1/3 innings. Brandon Kintzler got his fourth save in as many chances.

PIRATES 6, YANKEES 3

Josh Bell hit his second home run in as many games and the Pittsburgh Pirates got to CC Sabathia early for a win over the New York Yankees. Jordy Mercer led off with a solo shot against Sabathia (2-1) in the first and Bell followed an inning later with a two-run homer to the left field bleachers to give Pittsburgh a four-run cushion. Juan Nicasio (1-2) pitched 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief after Tyler Glasnow faltered with two outs in the fifth. Tony Watson got out of a two-on, two-outs jam in the ninth for his fifth save as the Pirates ended a three-game losing streak.

ASTROS 6, RAYS 3

Carlos Beltran, playing three days before his 40th birthday, led off the second inning with his 423rd home run, and the Houston Astros rallied past the Tampa Bay Rays. Beltran homered off Alex Cobb (1-2) and also singled in the fourth as the Astros won for the ninth time in 11 games. With 1,040 extra-base hits, Beltran is one behind Pete Rose for third among switch-hitters behind Eddie Murray (1,099) and Chipper Jones (1,055). Corey Dickerson, Logan Morrison and Evan Longoria hit solo homers in the first three innings off Mike Fiers as the Rays took a 3-1 lead. Houston tied it in the fourth on RBI singles by Brian McCann and Yuli Gurriel, who had three hits each, and George Springer hit into a run-scoring forceout in the seventh for a 4-3 lead. Josh Reddick added a sacrifice fly in the ninth, and Danny Farquhar threw a run-scoring wild pitch. Mike Feliz (1-0) pitched a perfect sixth in relief of Fiers, who allowed three runs and seven hits in five innings. Ken Giles retired the side in order in the ninth for his fourth save.

RANGERS 6, ROYALS 2

Joey Gallo and Robinson Chirinos each homered twice to back a season-high eight innings from Cole Hamels as the Texas Rangers beat the Kansas City Royals. Gallo's first homer was a tiebreaking two-run shot in the second inning on a 3-0 pitch - a liner that matched teammate Carlos Gomez for the longest in the majors this season at 462 feet and was the hardest with an exit velocity of 116 mph, according to MLB's statcast. All four homers came against Nate Karns (0-1), facing his hometown team for the fourth time. The right-hander allowed six runs in 4 2/3 innings, losing for the first time since last June in Texas when he was with Seattle. Hamels (1-0) retired 12 straight from the first to fifth innings.

PHILLIES 4, BRAVES 3

Jeremy Hellickson pitched seven strong innings and Cesar Hernandez had three hits and scored two runs to lead the Philadelphia Phillies over the Atlanta Braves. Hellickson (3-0) allowed two runs and just three hits with five strikeouts and no walks. Freddy Galvis, Aaron Alther, Tommy Joseph and Maikel Franco each drove in runs for the Phillies, who snapped a seven-game losing streak to Atlanta. Freddie Freeman and Adonis Garcia homered for the Braves, who have dropped four straight after sweeping four games from San Diego. Bartolo Colon (1-2) allowed four runs and 11 hits in seven innings. Hector Neris gave up a leadoff home run to Garcia in the ninth and waited out a 24-minute rain delay before recording his second save in as many tries.

PADRES 5, MARLINS 3

Austin Hedges hit a three-run homer and Trevor Cahill pitched seven strong innings in his home debut for his hometown San Diego Padres, who beat the Miami Marlins for their third straight win. Hedges gave the Padres a nice cushion when he homered off the front of the balcony on the fourth floor of the Western Metal Supply Co. Building in the left field corner, his fourth. It was off reliever David Phelps (2-2). Giancarlo Stanton hit a two-run homer, his fifth, with one out in the ninth. Cahill (1-2) who signed as a free agent on Jan. 20, held the Marlins to one run and three hits in seven innings. He allowed Marcell Ozuna's homer into the second deck in left to tie it at 1 with one out in the second.

DIAMONDBACKS 13, DODGERS 5

Paul Goldschmidt, Yasmany Tomas and Chris Iannetta each drove in two runs in a nine-run eighth inning as the Arizona Diamondbacks turned a close game into a rout of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Chris Taylor's pinch-hit home run had put the Dodgers up 5-4 in the seventh. Taylor's homer was the first run allowed this season by Archie Bradley (1-0), who went two innings to get the victory. The Diamondbacks had six hits and five walks in the eighth. It was the sixth time Arizona has scored nine runs in an inning. The club record is 13. Luis Avilan walked in the tying run in the eighth and Sergio Romo was called for a balk to bring home the go-ahead score. Ross Stripling (0-1) pitched one inning plus two batters in the loss.

ATHLETICS 3, MARINERS 1

Yonder Alonso and Trevor Plouffe homered, helping the Oakland Athletics beat the Seattle Mariners. Sean Manaea (1-1) allowed one run and five hits over six innings, striking out six and walking three to help the A's win their season-high fourth straight after losing four in a row. Plouffe homered in the fifth and Alonso led off the sixth with a tiebreaking shot, with both coming off Seattle's Japanese starter Hisashi Iwakuma (0-2). Seattle fell to 1-8 on the road - a bad sign for a team that plays 17 of its first 26 games this season away from home.

BLUE JAYS 8, ANGELS 7

Jose Bautista hit a three-run homer in the 13th inning, Joe Biagini escaped a bases-loaded jam in the bottom of the inning and the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Los Angeles Angels 8-7 early Saturday morning. The Angels rallied after two Toronto errors in the 13th. Kole Calhoun drove in one run with a single, and Biagini plunked Mike Trout with the bases loaded for another. Biagini then struck out Albert Pujols and got C.J. Cron to line out to center field for his first save. In the top of the inning, Bautista hit his first homer of the season after two-out singles from Kevin Pillar and Ezequiel Carrera against Jesse Chavez (1-3). Bautista's homer came on a 1-1 pitch and soared out to left-center. The slugger had two hits to bring his average up to .131 this season. Ryan Tepera (1-0) pitched three scoreless innings in the game that lasted 5 hours, 36 minutes. — AP

RUSSIA BOSS JUGGLES EXPECTATIONS, AGEING SQUAD AND GROWING ANGST

MOSCOW: When he took over as Russia coach Stanislav Cherchesov was handed the mammoth task of transforming a failing and ageing squad into challengers for the country's first home World Cup in 2018.

But just two months ahead of the Confederations Cup, a World Cup dress rehearsal in Russia, he is struggling to get his team firing after a string of uninspiring results. "The team is undergoing a generational change," the brusque 53-year-old told AFP in an interview.

"Our fans want to see a squad with a strong character and we demand our players concentrate and work flat-out in every single match." The former Spartak and Dynamo Moscow coach took the reins after Russia crashed out of Euro

2016 without a win and their fans in disgrace after running battles with England supporters in Marseille.

In the wake of the disastrous tournament the ex-international goalkeeper-known as a tough disciplinarian-set out radically overhauling the squad and shipping out an array of players past their prime.

Only four of those who featured at the Euros in France were starters in Russia's latest friendly, against Belgium in March at Sochi's Fisht arena.

But Cherchesov's new charges are yet to convince. Against Belgium they clawed back two goals to draw 3-3 but that followed a humiliating 2-0 home defeat to the Ivory Coast-Russia's first loss to an African team.

Fed-up fans made their feelings known and the Russians trudged off the field in Krasnodar with whistles and jeers ringing in their ears.

"I have to work with the players that I currently have," Cherchesov said. "There is nowhere I can get any others from." Respected football writer Igor Rabiner, of the Sport Express newspaper, said the coach's no-nonsense approach was needed to give Russia's footballers a much-needed jolt, but agreed Cherchesov did not have much to work with. "Cherchesov is definitely one of Russia's top coaches," Rabiner told AFP. "There's a very limited choice of players in Russia and the managers that have recently worked here, including Italian guru Fabio Capello and Russia's top

coach Leonid Slutsky, all failed to achieve success."

BECOMING A TEAM

Since taking over there are only glimmers to suggest that Cherchesov-who also won the Polish league with Legia Warsaw-will be the one to lift Russia out of the doldrums and avoid humiliation on home soil. Under his tenure the team have only managed to chalk up two victories from seven friendlies.

But the moustachioed manager is putting a brave face on it and insists that gaining experience ahead of the World Cup is for now far more important than the results.

Cherchesov refuses to talk effusively about individual players-it does not fit in

with his team philosophy-and he weighs every word carefully before answering.

"We have a set of young players who are improving from match to match," the coach said. He mentioned goalkeeper Marinato Guilherme, Mario Fernandes the full-back and Roman Neustadter-their names give the clue away. "We didn't ask them to receive Russian passports, it was their desire, but now they're candidates like the others."

Cherchesov refused to close the door on seasoned campaigners such as Sergei Ignashevich (aged 37) and Vasily Berezutsky (34), whose international careers are on hold.

"We watch all of them closely," he said, stressing: "We need to become a team with a capital T."—AFP

CRICKET

WINDIES REVIVAL FRUSTRATES PAKISTAN IN FIRST TEST

KINGSTON: Half-centuries by Roston Chase and Shane Dowrich engineered a West Indies revival in reaching 244 for seven at stumps against Pakistan on the opening day of the first Test at Sabina Park on Friday.

Coming together immediately after lunch when opener Kieran Powell became Mohammad Amir's third wicket with the innings in tatters at 71 for five, Chase battled with confidence and fluency for a top score of 63.

His sixth-wicket partnership with Dowrich was worth 118 runs, the wicket-keeper-batsman enhancing his reputation with a polished 56, the pair making a mockery of the West Indies' earlier struggles after they were put in to bat.

On the same ground where an unbeaten hundred in just his second Test match saved the West Indies from defeat against India a year earlier, Chase looked at ease against all bowlers although his penchant for the uncontrolled hook resulted in a couple of narrow escapes.

Yet it was Yasir Shah who removed both him and Dowrich off successive deliveries in the final session.

Made to look ordinary by the pair's positive play through the afternoon, the leg-spinner had the last laugh when he lured Chase into the lofted stroke and Wahab Riaz held an outstanding catch running back from mid-off almost to the boundary rope. Dowrich was then completely deceived and bowled by the next delivery.

At 189 for seven, Pakistan's hopes of dismissing the West Indies on the opening day were revived, only for captain Jason Holder (30 not out) and specialist spinner Devendra Bishoo (23 not out) to frustrate the visitors with an enterprising unbroken eighth-wicket stand of 55.

Earlier, Mohammad Abbas had a dream start to his Test career, having Kraigg Brathwaite caught at second slip by Younis Khan without scoring with his second delivery sharing the new ball with Amir.

It was an important early breakthrough

as the opener had made history in their last Test match meeting with unbeaten scores of 142 and 60 that earned the Caribbean side a five-wicket win in Sharjah last November at the end of an otherwise miserable tour of the United Arab Emirates.

West Indies played two debutants in the middle-order in the pair of Guyanese left-handers Shimron Hetmyer and Vishaul Singh, and Pakistan pressed the advantage even further with Aamir claiming his first wickets for three Test matches.

Maintaining a nagging accuracy, the left-arm fast bowler bowled both Hetmyer and Shai Hope, scattering the stumps with deliveries that jagged in sharply off a good length. Pakistan's third seamer in their bowling armoury, Riaz, then removed Singh via a fine diving catch by Azhar Ali at backward square-leg to have the home side tottering at that point at 53 for four.

"I was struggling to swing the white ball (during the limited-over matches) but got things working well today," said Amir about his effort on the day of three for 28 off 19 overs. "(Bowling) coach Azhar Mahmood has been working a lot with me and I got the results, but we have to keep working hard to keep the West Indies down to a manageable total."

West Indies opted to omit Jermaine Blackwood from their final eleven to accommodate the debutants in the batting line-up, meaning there was no Jamaican in the home side for a Test match at Sabina Park for the first time since 1997 when, incidentally, the opponents were also Pakistan.

Notwithstanding his impressive entry to senior international cricket during the limited-over leg of the tour, the visitors resisted the temptation to include the uncapped Shadab Khan in their team as a second spinner in support of Shah, choosing instead to introduce 27-year-old Abbas to Test cricket.

This is the 50th Test between the two nations and also the 50th Test match to be played at Sabina Park since the very first at the venue in 1930. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the first day in the first Test between West Indies and Pakistan on Friday in Kingston, Jamaica.

West Indies 1st innings		Extras (lb-17)	17
K. Brathwaite c Y. Khan b Abbas	0	Total (for 7 wickets, 81 overs)	244
K. Powell c Y. Khan b Amir	33	Fall of wickets: 1-1 K. Brathwaite, 2-24 S.	
S. Hetmyer b Amir	11	Hetmyer, 3-32 S. Hope, 4-53 V. Singh, 5-71 K.	
S. Hope b Amir	2	Powell, 6-189 R. Chase, 7-189 S. Dowrich	
V. Singh c Az. Ali b Riaz	9	To bat: A. Joseph, S. Gabriel	
R. Chase c Riaz b Shah	63	Bowling: Mohammad Amir 19-8-28-3;	
S. Dowrich b Shah	56	Mohammad Abbas 17-4-42-1; Wahab Riaz 21-4-	
J. Holder not out	30	66-1; Yasir Shah 24-3-91-2.	
D. Bishoo not out	23		



KINGSTON: West Indies vs Pakistan 1st Test - Day 2 Match officials inspect the pitch before the start of day two of the first Test match between West Indies and Pakistan at the Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica, yesterday. —AFP



SANT JOAN DESPI: Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez (L) eyes a ball with Barcelona's Turkish midfielder Arda Turan during a training session at the Sports Center FC Barcelona Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi, near Barcelona yesterday on the eve of their Spanish League Clasico football match Real Madrid vs FC Barcelona. — AFP

PREVIEW

GARETH BALE BACK BUT BARCA DESPERATE FOR MUST-WIN CLASICO

MADRID: Luis Enrique says his last Clasico in charge of Barcelona at Real Madrid today is a must-win for the reigning La Liga champions. Anything other than a Barca victory at the Santiago Bernabeu would more or less hand Madrid their first Spanish league title in five years. Zinedine Zidane's men hold a three-point lead at the top with a game in hand on their rivals. "Given how close it is to the end of the season it is a decisive weekend," said Enrique yesterday.

"This time a Clasico can decide or almost decide the league or leave it very open. "For us it is like a final, only a win will do." Madrid could be boosted by the return of Gareth Bale from injury, but the fact the Welshman may not be risked is a further sign that Real have far more room for error. Bale has been sidelined by an inflammation of the muscles around where he suffered ligament damage in his right ankle that kept him out for three months earlier in the season.

"He will be with us tomorrow," said Zidane. "You will see tomorrow what team we are going to start with." Should Bale not start, the on-form Isco is favourite to take his place, as he did for Madrid's thrilling 4-2 win over Bayern Munich after extra-time in midweek.

Centre-backs Raphael Varane and Pepe are Madrid's only injury absentees meaning Zidane is expected to name the same starting XI as against Bayern.

"It is another important game. There is a lot of tiredness, but also a lot of excitement and desire to keep doing what we are doing," added the Frenchman.

Barcelona are expected to be without one of their key men despite the club going to extraordinary lengths to try and have Neymar's ban suspended. The Brazilian is in the midst of a three-game suspension for his red card and subsequent sarcastic applause of the officials in Barca's 2-0 defeat to Malaga two weeks ago.

In an unprecedented move Barca deliberately delayed their final route of appeal to Spain's Court of Arbitration for Sport (TAD) until after the court's normal meeting time on Friday in the hope that would automatically see the ban suspended. However, even if no ruling from TAD is forthcoming before Sunday, Barca face a legal quagmire as they could be sanctioned with defeat for fielding an ineligible player should Neymar feature. "As a coach I am prepared to play with Neymar or without him," said Enrique. Only victory will salvage Barca's season just four days after crashing out of the Champions League at the quarter-final stage to Juventus.

However, Enrique called on his players to embrace that challenge as an extra stimulus rather than be cowed by the pressure at the Bernabeu. "For some it means it is a very attractive challenge and for others it means pressure," he said. "I prefer to take it as an attractive and marvellous challenge. It's a chance to move level on points with Madrid." — AFP

NAPOLI FORWARD LORENZO INSIGNE EXTENDS CONTRACT UNTIL 2022

NAPLES: Napoli forward Lorenzo Insigne signed a new five-year contract yesterday, tying him to his hometown club until 2022.

Insigne, who progressed from the youth team, has long said he wanted to spend his entire career at Napoli but contract negotiations lasted for months. "I'm really happy, my dream as a child has come true," the 25-year-old Insigne said in a press conference alongside Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis. "I always dreamed of wearing the Napoli shirt and now I hope to never take it off and win important trophies with this shirt. I grew up in De Laurentiis' Napoli and I have become a man here as well as a footballer."

Insigne, who spent time on loan at Foggia and Pescara from 2010-2012, has scored 16 goals for Napoli this season in his most prolific campaign for the club.

"I have grown up at Napoli but, if someone told me a few years ago that I would become a symbol of Napoli, I wouldn't have believed them," Insigne said. "But now I hope that in five years' time there will be another renewal because my dream is to play my whole life in

this shirt."

Insigne's parents were also present at the press conference. "I'm happy also for my family and for my father who accompanies me every day to training," Insigne said.

No financial details were given of the Italy forward's new contract but reports say Insigne's salary has increased from 1.2 million euros (\$1.3 million) a year to 4.5 million (\$4.8 million). "I'm glad Insigne has become a symbol of Napoli," De Laurentiis said. "Lorenzo has grown with us showing all his attachment to this shirt and to his roots. He has always lived with love and passion for this region and wants to become a legend at Napoli."

"It's not a feeling that everyone has, but it's the feeling that we want from our players. Keeping people against their will doesn't help anyone. You must love Naples otherwise you better go. No one forces anyone to play here ... At Napoli we want symbols who love and fight for this shirt. And Lorenzo is one of our symbols." Napoli is third in Serie A, two points behind Roma in the fight for second spot and automatic Champions League qualification. —AP



NAPLES: This file photo taken on March 07, 2017 shows Napoli's midfielder from Italy Lorenzo Insigne during the UEFA Champions League football match SSC Napoli vs Real Madrid on March 7, 2017 at the San Paolo stadium in Naples. Italian international winger Lorenzo Insigne has signed a five-year contract extension with Napoli that will see him remain at the club until June 2022, it was announced yesterday. — AFP

WENGER IN WEMBLEY SPOTLIGHT AS ARSENAL FACE CITY TEST

LONDON: Arsene Wenger insists Arsenal's FA Cup fate won't define his future, but the beleaguered Gunners boss desperately needs a victory over Manchester City in today's semi-final to keep his growing army of critics at bay.

Wenger has been under siege like never before in his 21-year reign as furious Arsenal fans call for his resignation following a lacklustre campaign.

The Gunners' failure to challenge for the Premier League title was compounded by their slide out of the top four, leaving Wenger's record of qualifying for the Champions League for the last 19 years in grave danger.

Factor in a Champions League last 16 humiliation against Bayern Munich and it is easy to see why even the most

staunch Arsenal loyalists are starting to believe it is time for Wenger to go. With Wenger yet to reveal whether he will sign an extension to his contract, which expires at the end of the season, many Arsenal supporters are trying to shove the 67-year-old to the exit door.

Even becoming the first manager to lift the FA Cup seven times, surpassing George Ramsey's haul of six with Aston Villa between 1887 and 1920, wouldn't stop Wenger's critics questioning the alarming drop in standards he has presided over in recent years.

But those close to Wenger believe he is still leaning towards staying and, if that proves the case, the Frenchman could do with delivering some silverware to salve the wounds of the last

eight months. "My future is Sunday. The FA Cup is a very important game for me because it's the next game and because it's an opportunity to win a trophy this season," Wenger said.

"What I expect when you go into a semi-final is to go to the final. "We are maybe not at the maximum of our confidence because we had recently some disappointing results." But that is a good opportunity to show we are ready for a fight and how much we want to go to the final. "It's maybe our only opportunity to get a trophy this season."

BRITTLE

Against that backdrop, Arsenal head to Wembley to face City under the kind of pressure that has often proved too

much for Wenger's brittle team to handle. At least they steadied the ship a little with a win at Middlesbrough last Monday, while the FA Cup holds good memories for the north Londoners, who are bidding to reach the final for the third time in the last four years after winning the competition in 2014 and 2015.

While Arsenal would set a record if they make a 20th FA Cup final appearance, City are hoping to reach the final for the first time since 2013 as Pep Guardiola chases his first trophy in England.

It has been a trying debut season for City boss Guardiola, who admits to having learnt a lot in a league far more cut-throat than the Spanish and German divisions he dominated with Barcelona

and Bayern Munich.

City's 4-0 thrashing at Everton in January was the heaviest league defeat suffered by Guardiola in his glittering managerial career, while their Champions League last 16 exit against Monaco was the earliest he had bowed out of that tournament.

With fourth placed City 11 points behind leaders Chelsea, the Spaniard would gladly use FA Cup success as a way to accentuate the positives while he plans a summer overhaul of his under-achieving squad.

City took four points from their two meetings with Arsenal in the league this season and Germany winger Leroy Sane, who scored in both games, hopes to torment the Gunners again. — AFP

EPL results/standings

Bournemouth 4, Middlesbrough 0; Hull City 2, Watford 0; Swansea City 2, Stoke City 0; West Ham United 0, Everton 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	32	24	3	5	65	27	75
Tottenham	32	21	8	3	68	22	71
Liverpool	33	19	9	5	69	40	66
Manchester City	32	19	7	6	63	35	64
ManUnited	31	16	12	3	48	24	60
Everton	34	16	10	8	60	37	58
Arsenal	31	17	6	8	63	40	57
West Bromwich	33	12	8	13	39	42	44
Southampton	31	11	7	13	37	40	40
Watford	33	11	7	15	37	54	40

Stoke City	34	10	9	15	37	50	39
Bournemouth	34	10	8	16	49	63	38
West Ham	34	10	8	16	44	59	38
Leicester City	32	10	7	15	41	53	37
Burnley	33	10	6	17	33	47	36
Crystal Palace	32	10	5	17	44	52	35
Hull City	34	9	6	19	36	67	33
Swansea City	34	9	4	21	39	68	31
Middlesbrough	33	4	12	17	23	43	24
Sunderland	32	5	6	21	26	58	21

TEN-MAN HULL DEFY ODDS TO BOOST SURVIVAL BID

 Hull City	2
 Watford	0

KINGSTON UPON HULL: Hull ignored the controversial dismissal of Oumar Niasse to boost their bid for Premier League survival with a vital 2-0 win over Watford yesterday. Marco Silva's side played with 10 men for 65 minutes at the KCOM Stadium after Senegal international Niasse was sent off for a tackle on M'Baye Niang.

Despite that setback, the Tigers clawed their way towards safety thanks to second half goals from Lazar Markovic and Sam Clucas. Although third bottom Swansea beat Stoke, fourth bottom Hull remain two points above the relegation zone with four games left in a nerve-jangling battle to avoid crashing into the Championship.

Hull have earned 19 points out of 21 at home since Silva was hired and that impressive form could be enough to secure their survival.

Hull defender Harry Maguire almost scored an own goal in the first minute when his back pass eluded goalkeeper Eldin Jakupovic and went just wide of the post. That nervous opening foreshadowed

an anxious performance from Hull, who struggled to create any openings before finding themselves down to 10 men in the 25th minute.

When Niasse stretched to challenge Niang, the on-loan Everton forward made enough contact for referee Bobby Madley to rule it was worthy of a red card.

Silva was furious on the touchline and Watford almost added to his frustration when Sebastian Prodl's header was clawed away by Jakupovic.

With Watford dominating possession, Silva's men were being pushed to breaking point and Maguire nearly deflected Niang's cross into his own net just before half-time.

Watford felt Hull defender Andrea Ranocchia could also have been sent off for a crunching tackle on Niang, but this time Madley kept his cards in his pocket.

Etienne Capoue's close-range effort was kept out by Jakupovic early in the second half, but Hull snatched the lead in the 62nd minute. Kamil Grosicki crossed from the right and Markovic rose highest to head goalwards before finishing off from close-range after his initial effort bounced down on the line.

Hull bravely didn't sit back and doubled their advantage in the 70th minute. Clucas took possession 30 yards from goal after Watford cleared a corner and took one touch to steady himself before smashing an fierce shot into the top corner. — AFP

BUTLAND RETURN NO BARRIER TO 'SWANS' CRUCIAL WIN

 Swansea	2
 Stoke City	0

SWANSEA: Jack Butland's return to Stoke's first team after an absence of over a year didn't end in a fairytale for the England international goalkeeper as strugglers Swansea emerged 2-0 winners in yesterday's Premier League clash.

Goals by leading scorer Fernando Llorente and a deflected effort by Tom Carroll delivered the victory that Swansea manager Paul Clement had demanded after a recent slump put them back in deep trouble. The win wasn't enough for them to climb out of the bottom three — 10 man Hull beating Watford 2-0 kept the Tigers two points ahead-but at least keeps them in the hunt to escape.

Butland made his long awaited comeback after recovering from the broken ankle he suffered, playing for England

against Germany, last year but within 10 minutes he was picking the ball out of his net. Swansea's outstanding player of the season Gylfi Sigurdsson was at the heart of their opener as the Icelandic playmaker teed up Llorente and the club's leading scorer headed it past Butland.

The Swans felt vindicated as they had been angered to have a penalty appeal turned down moments earlier for handball against Ryan Shawcross.

Stoke battled their way back into the match and should have levelled later in the first-half but Saido Berahino, struggling for form since his move from West Brom in the January transfer window, put his header wastefully wide.

The visitors should have drawn level 20 minutes into the second-half but Marko Arnautovic shot high over the bar with his penalty attempt-after Xherdan Shaqiri had been brought down in the box. They paid double for the wastefulness as the hosts went straight down the other end and scored through Carroll's long range effort which might have tricked Butland having taken a wicked deflection off former Swans star Joe Allen in flight.—AFP



SWANSEA: Stoke City's Glen Johnson, left, and Swansea City's Fernando Llorente battle for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea, England, yesterday. — AP



LONDON: Everton's Romelu Lukaku, left and West Ham's Winston Reid battle for the ball, during the English Premier League soccer match between West Ham United and Everton, at London Stadium, in London, yesterday. —AP

SOCCER

HAMMERS LOCK DOOR ON LUKAKU'S EVERTON

 West Ham	0
 Everton	0

LONDON: West Ham moved one step closer to safety and Everton moved above Arsenal into sixth place after the two sides played out a 0-0 stalemate at the London Stadium. Neither side was able to find a way to break the deadlock with Everton striker Romelu Lukaku failing to extend his run of having scored in his nine previous games against the Hammers.

The Premier League leading scorer was not the only player to struggle during a drab game that left both managers frustrated. Victory for West Ham would have taken them to the 40-point mark while Everton would have moved above Manchester United and into fifth place with a win. West Ham blew the chance to effectively secure their Premier League future seven days previously when they twice allowed bottom club Sunderland to equalise before claiming a point in a 2-2 draw.

That was the latest disappointment in a dismal run for Slaven Bilic's side and the manager responded by dropping keeper Darren Randolph, at fault for both Sunderland goals, in favour of Adrian who made his first league appearance since early November.

A lengthy injury list together with suspensions for Mark Noble and Sam Byram meant Bilic was forced into other changes, including drafting in Jonathan Calleri for his first league start since arriving on loan from Deportivo Maldonado last August.

It came as no surprise then, that the home side appeared disjointed and struggled to make an impression on the well-organised visitors. Adrian in particular looked ring-rusty when he took too long to clear after Edmilson Fernandes directed a throw-in towards his keeper. The Spaniard's delay allowed Lukaku to block the attempted clearance and Adrian was fortunate to gather the loose ball comfortably.

Lukaku remained isolated up front and starved of quality service with Calleri and Andre Ayew made little impression on the Everton back-line. There were more promising signs for Bilic's side, however, during the latter stages of the first half when they twice came close to opening the scoring after the visitors defence were unsettled by crosses from either flank. West Ham left back Arthur Masuaku's delivery was excellent and forced a corner that led to Manuel Lanzini picking out James Collins at the far post where the centre-back directed a header wide. Then four minutes before the break, Everton were again forced into some desperate defending after a goalmouth scramble that followed Lanzini's free-kick.

Koeman was understandably dissatisfied with his side's first half efforts and reacted by replacing Tom Davies and Idrissa Gueye with Gareth Barry and Ademola Lookman in an effort to lift the side. The opening period of the second half, though, maintained the pattern of the first with West Ham continuing to press with Lanzini

unfortunate to see a powerful shot deflected clear after striking Everton defender Phil Jagielka in the face.

Lukaku had remained a peripheral figure, never looking like adding to his 24 league goals, but finally burst into life with a positive run that was stopped by Collins' challenge. And

Lookman's presence had the desired effect from Koeman's point of view with the teenager producing Everton's first shot of the game in the 70th minute. The winger's long-range effort flew wide, but he quickly followed that up with a rising shot struck from the edge of the penalty area that almost tested Adrian.— AFP

LIVERPOOL LOOK TO RAMP UP TOP FOUR BID

LIVERPOOL: In-form Liverpool will aim to move a step closer to qualifying for the Champions League when they host Crystal Palace today.

Jürgen Klopp's side are on a seven match unbeaten run that includes five wins and has lifted them up to third place in the Premier League. The Reds are sixth points clear of fifth placed Manchester United, who have two games in hand, as the race to reach Europe's elite club competition enters the final furlong.

The most encouraging thing for Reds boss Klopp is his team appear to have learnt how to grind out victories, as demonstrated by last Sunday's 1-0 win at West Bromwich Albion.

Liverpool have found life difficult against physical sides for much of the season, and have been particularly vulnerable when defending set-pieces. For both of those reasons, they were expected to struggle at The Hawthorns, yet were rarely troubled by their opponents. Such discipline will be required once more against a Palace side who have beaten Chelsea and Arsenal since the beginning of April. Klopp has made clear that the quality of football is less important now than securing the wins that will ensure a top-four finish. Liverpool have had to do that without their leading scorer Sadio Mane, whose season has ended early as a result of the knee injury sustained during the 3-1 victory over Everton on April 1.

They have also missed the influence of captain Jordan Henderson, whose foot injury means that he has not played since February 11. Asked about Henderson's chances of playing again this season, Klopp said:

"I don't know. We will have to see. He cannot really train so we have to wait for when he can. "That was always the plan with the medical department. He is not patient any more, I can tell you that. He looks really healthy but nothing has changed."

IMPRESSIVE RUN

With Mane and fellow injury victim Adam Lallana absent, Liverpool will continue to rely on Roberto Firmino, Philippe Coutinho and Divock Origi to lead their attack.

Firmino has scored the winner in each of Liverpool's last two matches, while Coutinho has contributed goals in three of his last four appearances. Elsewhere, Klopp has several defensive injury concerns.

Joel Matip and Lucas Leiva have been unable to train this week because of muscle problems, while Ragnar Klavan has a minor medial knee ligament injury. —AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLAND FA CUP

Arsenal v Manchester City **17:00**
beIN SPORTS HD 2

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Burnley v Manchester United **16:15**
beIN SPORTS HD 5

Liverpool v Crystal Palace **18:30**
beIN SPORTS HD 6

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA

Real Sociedad v Deportivo La Coruna **13:00**
beIN SPORTS

Celta de Vigo v Real Betis **17:15**
beIN SPORTS

Las Palmas v Deportivo Alaves **19:30**
beIN SPORTS

Real Madrid v Barcelona **21:45**
beIN SPORTS HD 1
beIN SPORTS HD 3

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Sassuolo Calcio v Napoli **13:30**
beIN SPORTS

Lazio v Citta di Palermo **16:00**
beIN SPORTS

Milan v Empoli **16:00**
beIN SPORTS

Udinese Calcio v Cagliari Calcio **16:00**
beIN SPORTS

Chievo Verona v Torino **16:00**
beIN SPORTS

Sampdoria v Crotone **16:00**
beIN SPORTS

Juventus v Genoa **21:45**
beIN SPORTS

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Freiburg v Leverkusen **16:30**
beIN SPORTS

Schalke v Leipzig **18:30**
beIN SPORTS HD 5

FRENCH LEAGUE

Toulouse v Nice **16:00**
beIN SPORTS HD 6

Saint Etienne v Stade Rennes **18:00**
beIN SPORTS HD 4

Olympique Lyonnais v Monaco **22:15**
beIN SPORTS HD 6

Sports

Former Giro winner
Scarponi dies after
collision with van

16

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017

Foul-mouthed Ilie
Nastase expelled
from Fed Cup tie

17



TEN-MAN HULL DEFY ODDS TO BOOST SURVIVAL BID

Page 19



LONDON: Chelsea's Nathan Ake, 2nd right, heads the ball away from Tottenham's Harry Kane, right, during the English FA Cup semifinal soccer match between Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur at Wembley stadium in London, yesterday. —AP

SOCCER

HAZARD FIRES CHELSEA INTO FA CUP FINAL

LONDON: Eden Hazard fired Chelsea into the FA Cup final as the Belgian's blistering strike ensured Antonio Conte's selection gamble paid off in his side's dramatic 4-2 win over Tottenham yesterday.

Blues boss Conte sprang a major surprise by starting with Hazard and Diego Costa on the bench in the Wembley semi-final as he looked ahead to the Premier League leaders' vital fixture against Southampton on Tuesday.

But Conte's bold moves proved inspired as Hazard's replacement Willian put Chelsea ahead early on and then restored their lead in the second half after Harry Kane's equaliser.

Dele Alli levelled again for Tottenham, but Conte had all the answers and, when he sent on Hazard, the Belgian blasted Chelsea back into the lead. Nemanja Matic's thunderous long-range effort sealed a final date against

Arsenal or Manchester City, who meet in the second semi-final today. Having seen their lead at the top of the league cut to four points by second placed Tottenham last weekend and looking vulnerable following a limp defeat at Manchester United, this should be a huge psychological boost for Conte's men. They rode their luck at times but showed a decisive killer instinct while their London rivals came up short in crunch time.

Tottenham, losers yet again at Wembley and still without an FA Cup final appearance since 1991, need an immediate response in their mid-week trip to Crystal Palace if they are to get revenge by pipping Chelsea to the title.

Conte's decision to pick Willian and Michy Batshuayi instead of Hazard and Costa triggered a round of second guessing, but it took just five minutes for the former Juventus coach to be vin-

dictated. Breaking at pace, Chelsea worked the ball towards Batshuayi and his deft backheel sent Pedro surging clear.

When the Spaniard was sent sprawling by Toby Alderweireld's lunge, Chelsea were hoping for a more severe punishment than the yellow card shown by referee Martin Atkinson.

But their frustration was short-lived as Willian stepped up to exact retribution from the free-kick, the Brazilian's superb 20-yard strike eluding Tottenham goalkeeper Hugo Lloris before nestling into the far corner.

Kane has been the spearhead of Tottenham's impressive run this season and the England striker's typically predatory finish drew them level in the 18th minute.

EXPOSED
As Christian Eriksen prepared to whip over a

cross, Kane was already on the move and his awareness gave him a valuable extra yard of space on Chelsea defender Nathan Ake as he stooped to guide a delicate header past Thibaut Courtois.

But, despite controlling possession for long periods, Pochettino's side still ended the half behind as his decision to play Son Heung-Min out of position at left wingback was exposed in the 43rd minute.

Kante slipped a pass to Victor Moses and when the Nigerian's surge into the penalty area was halted by Son's rash tackle Atkinson gave the penalty on the advice of his linesman.

Batshuayi wanted to take it, but Conte demanded Willian step up and he stroked home the spot-kick in confident style.

It could have been a major momentum changer, yet Tottenham were level again in the

52nd minute. Barely looking up as he received the ball, Eriksen unfurled a majestic pass towards Alli, who timed his run perfectly to slide in front of Luiz and direct a close-range finish past Courtois.

Conte responded by sending for the cavalry as Costa and Hazard came on for Willian and Batshuayi in the 61st minute, while Cesc Fabregas was introduced soon after.

Once again, Conte's instincts were spot on and the Italian's changes brought the winner in the 75th minute.

Fabregas's corner was only partially cleared and Hazard seized the ball just inside the area before drilling a blistering finish beyond Lloris.

If that was a memorable strike, there was even better to come five minutes later when Hazard teed up Matic and Serb's thunderous 30-yard rocket sent Chelsea into raptures. — AFP



MUNICH: Bayern's Juan Bernat, top, and Mainz's Levin Oztunalı challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and FSV Mainz 05 at the Allianz Arena stadium in Munich, Germany, yesterday. — AP

THIAGO'S EQUALISER SPARES BAYERN BLUSHES

BERLIN: Thiago Alcantara's second-half equaliser rescued Bayern Munich in yesterday's 2-2 draw at home to Mainz as the runaway Bundesliga leaders twice came from behind. Having bowed out of the Champions League quarter-finals 6-3 on aggregate following Tuesday's 4-2 second-leg defeat at Real Madrid, the draw caps a week to forget for Bayern, who are winless in their last four games. Relegation-threatened Mainz came close to another shock win in Munich, but Bayern extended their unbeaten home run in the league to 20 matches dating back to March 2016, when they lost 2-1 to Mainz. Spain star Thiago hit the equaliser 17 minutes from time against a team just one point above the relegation places with four games left. Second-placed RB Leipzig can cut Bayern's lead to six points by winning at Schalke on Sunday.

Leipzig host Carlo Ancelotti's Bayern on the penultimate weekend of the season on May 13.

It was a poor performance from double-chasing Bayern ahead of Wednesday's German Cup semi-final at home to Borussia Dortmund. "It wasn't easy to play after the shock against Real Madrid, but we could have done better," admitted Ancelotti.

"We expected more. We weren't good in the first half and not compact enough. "I am sure it will be better against Dortmund on Wednesday. We

have time to prepare ourselves and we will play better." Mainz took the lead just three minutes after kick-off at the Allianz Arena. Arturo Vidal lost the ball on the edge of Bayern area and ex-Barcelona midfielder Bojan Krkic snapped up possession to slot his first goal for Mainz and stun the home crowd. Normal service was resumed when Arjen Robben sprinted onto Franck Ribery's superb pass and rifled home Bayern's first equaliser on 16 minutes. Munich lost Austria defender David Alaba, clutching his thigh, moments later.

Bayern's problems were compounded when his replacement Joshua Kimmich fouled Mainz's Japan striker Yoshinori Muto in the area. Bayern's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is sidelined with a foot fracture for the rest of the season and his replacement Sven Ulreich could not stop Daniel Brosinski's penalty on 41 minutes that put Mainz 2-1 up at the break. But Bayern finally made their 75 percent possession count through Thiago's equaliser from 17 yards out.

KRUSE HITS FOUR

Elsewhere, Germany striker Max Kruse scored all four goals to cancel out Pascal Gross's penalty and Dario Lezcano's goal for relegation-threatened Ingolstadt as Werder Bremen's 4-2 win took them

into the top six. Kruse is playing his way into Germany's squad for June's Confederations Cup with nine goals in his last seven league games.

Second-from-bottom Ingolstadt remain five points from safety and four points behind Augsburg in 16th place, which carries a two-legged promotion-relegation play-off against the third placed team in the second division.

Hertha Berlin stayed fifth-and on course for a Europa League berth next season-after Vedad Ibisevic's second-half goal sealed a 1-0 win over Wolfsburg, who dropped to 14th.

The 2009 Bundesliga champions and 2015 German Cup winners are just one point above the bottom three.

Bottom side Darmstadt delayed their impending relegation by another week with a 2-1 win at Hamburg as captain Aytac Sulu and striker Felix Platte netted for the visitors in the first three minutes after the break. However, Darmstadt, coached by ex-Germany midfielder Torsten Frings, are 12 points from safety with four games left and have only a mathematical chance of staying up. Eintracht Frankfurt picked up their first win in eight games as Mexico midfielder Marco Fabian netted two late goals in their 3-1 comeback win at Augsburg. — AFP



PYONGYANG DRIVERS SCRAMBLE AS GAS STATIONS LIMIT SERVICES

Page 22



WASHINGTON: Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors pose for the Family Photo during the G20 at the 2017 World Bank Group Spring Meetings in Washington on Friday. — AP

G20: PROTECTIONISM DAMAGING FOR GLOBAL ECONOMY

GLOBAL FINANCE CHIEFS ARGUE FOR THE BENEFITS OF FREE TRADE

WASHINGTON: The Group of 20 major economies sent a message Friday on the threat that rising protectionism poses to the global economy, but the United States cast doubt over its adherence to that stance.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin reiterated the Trump administration's emphasis on defending America against what it sees as unfair trade practices, and called on the IMF to do more in its watchdog role.

His comments came just hours after a meeting of G20 finance ministers in Washington which saw Germany's Wolfgang Schäuble say there was "broad agreement" that "free trade is better for global growth." "There was a broad consensus" that "protectionism would be damaging to the global economy and the concerned economies as well," the German minister, whose country holds the rotating G20 presidency, told reporters.

That seemed to mark a striking change of tone since the last finance ministers meeting in Germany, one month ago, when the United States prevented the G20 from including a traditional pledge against protectionism in its final communique, calling the language "irrelevant."

It was unclear how far the renewed "consensus" extended. The group did not release a communique this time, and Mnuchin's statement appeared to weaken Schäuble's declaration of unity.

Rising protectionist and anti-globalization sentiment in key economies has created a tense atmosphere at the normally placid and formulaic gathering of finance ministers, where the G20 officials met ahead of a semi-annual meeting yesterday of the International Monetary Fund.

Concerns have been fuelled by President Donald Trump's threats to impose tariffs on countries that have trade surpluses with the United States, by the British decision to leave the European Union, and anti-internationalist rhetoric by some candidates in the French presidential election campaign.

In a short but tough statement, Mnuchin said the United States "will continue to promote an expansion of trade with those partners committed to market-based competition, while more rigorously defending ourselves against unfair trade practices."

Trump officials have directed some of their most aggressive language at Germany and China. Mnuchin said "excessively large trade surpluses... are not conducive to supporting a free and fair trading system."

"Countries with large external surpluses and sound public finances have a particular responsibility for contributing to a more robust global economy by deploying

fiscal policy aggressively to boost growth and help facilitate global rebalancing," he said.

He said the IMF should to do more to monitor these countries and "identify specific policy adjustments" they should implement.

Make growth more 'inclusive'

The IMF has flagged rising protectionism and possible trade wars as a threat to the global economic recovery, just when it is finally gaining momentum. And German central bank chief Jens Weidmann said the G20 finance ministers "underlined the negative growth effects of raising barriers to trade." "Almost everybody underscored the importance of (an) open market and free market access," he said. Schäuble said the G20 ministers also agreed that economic growth must be made "more inclusive" in order to stem the rise of protectionism.

"Many people feel that they do not benefit from the advantage of growth and globalization, and we need to tackle this, otherwise we will see more protectionism and countries retreating from globalization down the road," Schäuble said. Officials agreed on the "need to do more" to spread the benefits of growth and globalization, which includes investments in education and infrastructure.

That echoes the repeated urgings of IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde who this week has turned up the volume on the call to wealthy countries to help those left behind by global prosperity.

US policy undecided

On the issue of financial regulation, Weidmann said there was consensus about continuing reforms agreed previously and there were few fears about the risk of seeing erosion of the regulations implemented in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The "debate about the regulatory 'race to the bottom' has disappeared" from G20 discussions, Weidmann said. But there, too, US actions contrasted with that statement as Trump on Friday signed an order directing Mnuchin to review the US financial regulations known as Dodd-Frank that were erected in the wake of the crisis.

"A significant amount of time has passed since the crisis. With the passage of time and with your leadership, we are now well-positioned to evaluate what works and what doesn't," Mnuchin said on Friday. "Where we can do so, we will lift the burden of excessive regulation to make sure that banks can lend, small businesses can borrow, and American workers can thrive," he said. —AFP

'URGENT' TO REACH DEAL ON LOAN FOR GREECE: IMF

WASHINGTON: It is "urgent" to reach an agreement on a loan program for Greece but a commitment is still required from Athens on reforms and from Europe on debt relief, a senior IMF official said Friday. "It is urgent that we agree on a program and that we conclude these discussions because it's taking a toll on the Greek economy," Poul Thomsen, head of the IMF's European department, said.

"There is no doubt about that, it's serious," he told reporters. Talks between Greece, the International Monetary Fund and the eurozone have dragged on for many months. But Athens needs a fresh infusion of funds soon to make its debt payments due in July.

Despite pressure from European heavyweight Germany, the IMF so far has refused to participate in the 86 billion euro loan program the eurozone agreed with Greece in mid-2015, the third since 2010, largely over the issue of the nation's debt sustainability. On the reform side, while some outstanding issues remain, Thomsen said "good progress" has been made with the Greek authorities in recent weeks, including on budget issues. An IMF mission will be back in Athens "next week."

Budget surplus

Greece announced on Friday a budgetary surplus (excluding debt charges) of 3.9 percent of GDP in 2016, in line with a target set by Europeans. European Commissioner Pierre Moscovici welcomed the result. "This should contribute to the will for the steps that lie ahead to find a lasting and comprehensive solution," he said on the sidelines of the IMF Spring meeting.

French Economy Minister Michel Sapin also was optimistic about a deal. "I am quite confident that we will find, with the IMF and Germany, a solution that will help Greece and thus the EU to stabilize the situation," he told AFP. Thomsen, however, said disagreements persist over the period of time in which

Athens will have to meet the surplus objective, which the IMF considers too ambitious.

The eurozone says Greece can deliver a primary surplus of 3.5 percent of GDP in 2018 but the IMF has said only 1.5 percent is feasible. The IMF also needs more clarification from Europe on the how it will implement the promised debt relief for Greece, he said. If these two issues are resolved, the IMF will be

able to participate financially in the aid plan, as it did in 2010 and 2012, Thomsen said. IMF chief Christine Lagarde on Friday met with Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos and she had "constructive" discussions, but did not provide further details.

She has stressed that the fund cannot participate in any loan program unless the debt level of the country is considered sustainable. — AFP



WASHINGTON: Chinese Finance Minister Xiao Jie shakes hands with International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde in Washington. — AP

TRUMP WARMING TO EU TRADE AGREEMENT WITH BRITAIN BEHIND IN QUEUE

LONDON: The United States could strike a free-trade agreement with the European Union after President Donald Trump warmed to a deal with the bloc, the Times reported yesterday, quoting sources from both sides of the discussion. Post-Brexit Britain would be pushed behind Europe in the race to secure a US deal after Germany's Angela Merkel persuaded Trump that talks on a deal would be simpler than he thought, the newspaper said.

Britain will not be free to agree new trade deals until it has left the EU in 2019. A source close to the White House was quoted as saying that there had been a "realization" in the Trump administration that a trade deal with the EU - allowing the tariff-free exchange of goods and services - was more important to US interests than a post-Brexit deal with Britain. "Ten times Trump asked her (Merkel) if he could negotiate a trade deal with Germany," the newspaper quoted a senior German politician as saying. "Every time she replied, 'You can't do a trade deal with Germany, only the EU,'" the politician said. "On the eleventh refusal, Trump finally got the message, 'Oh, we'll do a deal with Europe then.'"

Trump, who has repeatedly criticized the EU, had welcomed Britain's 2016 vote to leave the bloc and said he would work hard to get a quick bilateral trade deal done.

But German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble said on Friday he was optimistic a US-EU trade deal could be reached soon after he met his US counterpart in Washington. He said he had seen a relaxation in the dispute with the US over trade and believed a "non-confrontational solution" would be reached when financial leaders of the world's 20 top economies meet in Hamburg in July under Germany's presidency. Any quick deal between the US and Europe could come as a blow to British Prime Minister Theresa May who had hoped to win a promise of deeper trade ties when she became the first foreign leader to meet Trump in office in January.

Trade became a major issue during the Brexit campaign when the then-president Barack Obama said Britain would go to "the back of the queue" for a deal if it voted to leave. The comment was denounced as meddling by those campaigning to leave the bloc, who argued that Britain would be free to negotiate quick trade deals with major economies around the world once it had left the bloc. — Reuters



PYONGYANG: A customer talks to a gas station attendant in Pyongyang, North Korea. Car users in Pyongyang are scrambling to fill up their tanks as gas stations limit services and close their gates amid concerns of a possible shortage. — AP

PYONGYANG DRIVERS SCRAMBLE AS GAS STATIONS LIMIT SERVICES

CONCERNS OVER SPREADING SHORTAGE CREATE PANIC

PYONGYANG, North Korea: Car users in Pyongyang are scrambling to fill up their tanks as gas stations begin limiting services or even closing amid concerns of a spreading shortage.

A sign outside one station in the North Korean capital said Friday that sales were being restricted to diplomats or vehicles used by international organizations, while others were closed or turning away local residents. Lines at other stations were much longer than usual and prices appeared to be rising significantly. The cause of the restrictions or how long they might last were not immediately known.

North Korea relies heavily on China for its fuel supply and Beijing has reportedly been tightening its enforcement of international sanctions aimed at getting Pyongyang to abandon its development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. The issue was raised at a regular Chinese Foreign Ministry news conference in Beijing on Friday after a Chinese media outlet, Global Times, reported gas stations were restricting service and charging higher prices.

But spokesman Lu Kang gave an ambiguous response when asked if China was restricting fuel deliveries. "As for what kind of policy China is taking, I think you should listen to the authoritative remarks or statements of the Chinese government," he said, without elaborating on what those remarks or statements are. "For the remarks made by certain people or circulated online, it is up to you if you want to take them as references."

One of China's top North Korea scholars, Kim Dong-jil, director of the Center for Korean Peninsula Studies of Peking University, said he had not heard of new restrictions on fuel to pressure Pyongyang, but said they are considered to be an option.

China's Ministry of Commerce had no immediate comment. Gasoline was selling at \$1.25 per kilogram at one station, up from the previous 70-80 cents. According to a sign outside a station where ordinary North Korean vehicles were being turned away, the restrictions took effect on Wednesday. Gasoline is sold in North Korea

by the kilogram, roughly equivalent to a liter (0.26 gallon). When buying gas in North Korea, customers usually first purchase coupons at a cashier's booth for the amount of fuel they want. After filling up the tank, leftover coupons can be used on later visits until their expiration date. A common amount for the coupons is 15 kilograms (19.65 liters or 5.2 US gallons).

Supply is controlled by the state. The military, state ministries and priority projects have the best access. Several chains of gas stations are operated under different state-run enterprises - for example, Air Koryo, the national flagship airline, operates gas stations as well.

Prices can vary from one station to another. Traffic in Pyongyang has gotten heavier than in past years, when visitors were often struck by the lack of cars on the capital's broad avenues.

The greater number of cars, including swelling fleets of taxis, has been an indication of greater economic activity, as many are used for business purposes, such as transporting people or goods. —AP

TRUMP SETS US TAX PLAN, ORDERS TAX RULE REVIEW

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Friday promised a big announcement about tax reform next week and ordered an administration review of Obama-era tax rules written to discourage US companies from relocating overseas to cut their tax bills.

"We'll be having a big announcement on Wednesday having to do with tax reform. The process has begun long ago, but it really formally begins on Wednesday," Trump said during a visit to the US Treasury Department. First reported in an Associated Press interview with Trump, the news came as a surprise to lobbyists and congressional aides who had no idea what Trump's announcement might include.

In February, Trump promised to release a "phenomenal" tax plan within a few weeks, without offering details. But none emerged. A White House official said the impending announcement could come later than Wednesday, adding: "The president was saying what we've been saying all along, that he wants to do tax reform as quickly as possible while still doing it right."

Trump's latest comments got a warm reception from the Republican tax chief in the House of Representatives. "I appreciate the president's leadership and strong com-

mitment to comprehensive tax reform," House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady said in a statement.

Brady added that the panel's Republican members "are ready to work with President Trump and his team." During the 2016 election campaign, Trump initially issued a plan that proposed deep cuts in tax rates for individuals and corporations, a reduction in the number of tax brackets to four from seven, repeal of the estate tax, an offshore profits repatriation tax holiday for multinationals and a cap on the deductibility of business interest. He later revised the number of tax brackets to three.

The plan partly resembled one developed by House Speaker Paul Ryan. Trump on Friday also signed an executive order directing the Treasury to review tax-related regulations adopted over the past 18 months under former President Barack Obama. Asked if that would include rules against tax-driven foreign corporate deals known as inversions, Mnuchin said: "It's one of the significant things and one of the things we would be looking at."

Trump and Republicans in Congress view tax reform as the best vehicle for eliminating what they say are tax incentives for US companies to move their headquarters, manufacturing facilities and jobs overseas.



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump shakes hands with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin at the Treasury Department in Washington on Friday where the president signed an executive order to review tax regulations set last year by his predecessor, as well as two memos to potentially reconsider major elements of the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial reforms passed in the wake of the Great Recession. — AP

EX-HEAD OF GREECE'S PIRAEUS BANK CHARGED WITH FELONY

ATHENS: A Greek prosecutor has filed felony charges against the former chairman of Piraeus Bank, Michalis Sallas, and six other executives over property transactions involving real estate firms linked to Sallas, court officials said. The charges were based on an October 2016 report by a deputy financial crimes prosecutor, which examined six real estate transactions conducted by the bank in 2006.

The report, which has been seen by Reuters, alleges that companies affiliated to Sallas and members of his family acquired properties with loans taken from the bank, which were then sold at a lower price to intermediaries, and then sold on to Pireaus at a considerable premium in five of the six cases.

Sallas and the other bank executives face charges of repeated breaches of faith against the bank that amount to felony, court officials said on Wednesday. Sallas' family members have never been accused

or charged. In a statement on Wednesday, Sallas, who stepped down last July after 25 years at the helm of the bank, denied the charges.

Sallas said he had not been formally notified about the charges. He said the property transactions were "transparent" and "legal" and the Bank of Greece, the country's central bank, had issued a report confirming that the purchases of the properties had not damaged Piraeus.

Referring to the charges, he said: "I see this as an effort to target me, which I am certain will not bear fruit as there has been no damage to the bank."

The other bank executives charged are former vice chairman Theodoros Pantalakis; general managers Constantinos Georgiou and Ioannis Sgourovassilakis; head of financial services Constantinos Liapis; and employees Leia-Elissavet Baloglou and Christos Boules.

Pantalakis declined to comment on the

filing of charges when contacted by Reuters. The other executives and employees did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment. A Piraeus Bank spokesman declined to comment.

The 2016 financial crimes prosecutor's report stated "those implicated" in the property transactions denied they had in any way impaired the bank. It did not identify the individuals in question. The report went on to cite general managers Georgiou and Sgourovassilakis as saying that any transactions between the primary sellers of real estate and intermediaries were done without the bank's knowledge. Both executives say the bank followed normal practice, denying the transactions in any way impaired the bank.

Following the charges, an investigating magistrate is expected to be appointed to look further into the case and to question the accused, in line with standard Greek practice. Those charged would normally

respond formally at this point. The case is in keeping with allegations made by a by a former Piraeus employee and in a 2012 Reuters report headlined

"A Greek banker's secret property deals" that were owned by a series of private investment companies, directed among others by Sallas's wife and two children. Their acquisition by family members was financed by Piraeus bank loans, Reuters reported.

Family members contacted by Reuters in 2012 declined to comment. Representatives contacted after the filing of charges on Wednesday did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment on the case. In 2012, Piraeus Bank sued Reuters over its report, seeking damages of 50 million euros. Piraeus said that the bank had never acquired or leased property from its chairman or family. The lawsuit was ruled inadmissible by a Greek court on technical grounds a year later. — Reuters

FITCH DOWNGRADES ITALY'S DEBT RATING; 'STABLE' OUTLOOK

WASHINGTON: The ratings agency Fitch on Friday downgraded Italy's long-term debt rating a notch to BBB, one level above the "speculative" grade, citing the country's persistent debt and fiscal problems.

However Fitch said Italy's outlook was stable. Italy has been unable to reduce its overall debt burden due to weak economic growth and a recurring failure to meet spending targets, leaving it exposed to adverse shocks, the agency said in a statement. "This is compounded by an increase in political risk, and ongoing weakness in the banking sector which has required planned public intervention in three banks since December," the statement said. Italian sovereign debt rose 0.5 percentage points to 132.6 percent of GDP last year and will likely rise at the same rate this year, falling only marginally to 129.3 percent by 2020, according to Fitch.

The agency noted that the failure of a constitutional reform referendum in December had left the interim government weakened, reducing its ability to implement reforms. "Risks of weak or unstable government have increased, as has the possibility of populist and eurosceptic parties influencing policy," the statement said. "Greater populism may dampen political appetite for reform, increase the pressure for fiscal loosening, and weigh on investor sentiment." — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.806
Indian Rupees	4.737
Pkistani Rupees	2.916
Srilankan 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

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 Peso	6.155
Cyprus pound	168.510
Japanese Yen	3.800
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.955
Malaysian Ringgit	70.150

Selling Rate

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.760
Thai Bhat	9.865
Turkish Lira	82.700

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY

	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.384056	0.394056
Czech Korune	0.004149	0.016149
Danish Krone	0.039922	0.044922
Euro	0.321744	0.330744
Norwegian Krone	0.031488	0.036688
Romanian Leu	0.071960	0.071960
Slovakia	0.009141	0.019141
Slovenia Krona	0.029976	0.034976
Swiss Franc	0.299486	0.310486
Turkish Lira	0.077881	0.088181
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.220633	0.233633
New Zealand Dollar	0.208499	0.217999

America

Canadian Dollar	0.220998	0.229988
Georgina Lari	0.137890	0.137890
US Dollars	0.301200	0.305600
US Dollars Mint	0.301700	0.305600

Asia

Bangladesh Taka	0.003422	0.004006
Chinese Yuan	0.042838	0.046338
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037177	0.039927
Indian Rupee	0.004276	0.004964

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002717	0.002897
Kenyan Shilling	0.002944	0.002944
Korean Won	0.000257	0.000272
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065543	0.071543
Nepalese Rupee	0.003016	0.003186
Pakistan Rupee	0.002709	0.002999
Philippine Peso	0.006060	0.006360
Sierra Leone	0.000038	0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.213023	0.223023
South African Rand	0.016940	0.025440
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001638	0.002218
Taiwan	0.009910	0.010090
Thai Baht	0.008525	0.009075

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.803243	0.811743
Egyptian Pound	0.014058	0.019966
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000195	0.000255
Jordanian Dinar	0.425248	0.434248
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020404	0.044404
Nigerian Naira	0.000397	0.001032
Omani Riyal	0.786566	0.792246
Qatar Riyal	0.083047	0.084497
Saudi Riyal	0.080327	0.081627
Syrian Pound	0.001295	0.001515
Tunisian Dinar	0.128596	0.136596
Turkish Lira	0.077881	0.088181
UAE Dirhams	0.081697	0.083397
Yemeni Riyal	0.000993	0.001073

GULF BANK WELCOMES AL-DANAH WINNER AT ITS HEAD OFFICE

FATMA AHMAD MOHAMMAD AL-RABEE RECEIVES KD 200,000 PRIZE

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank was pleased to welcome Fatma Ahmad Mohammad Al-Rabee, the winner of Al-Danah's first quarterly draw for this year. Al-Rabee received her KD200,000 cash prize upon visiting the bank's Head Office on Thursday, April 13, 2017 and meeting management representatives who congratulated her for winning the prize.

Commenting on winning Al-Danah's cash prize for this quarter, Al-Rabee said: "I thank God for granting me with this valuable unexpected gift. I was shocked when I knew that I won one of Al-Danah's cash prizes, it was a dream that actually came true! Thank you Gulf Bank."

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah first quarterly draw for this year was held live on the Al-Dewaniya

program at Marina FM 90.4, Thursday, March 30, 2017, under the supervision of Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2017 draw line-up includes daily draws, quarterly draws, and the final and biggest draw of the year, which is Al-Danah KD1 million yearly draw. For the daily draws, two winners are awarded with KD 1,000 each, for every working day in the week. The quarterly draws each include a large cash prize with the prize amount increasing every quarter. The quarterly prizes are as following: KD200,000 in the first quarter - which took place on March 30; KD250,000 in the second quarter to take place on June 29; KD 500,000 in the third quarter, which will take place on September 28, followed by

the largest yearly prize for KD1 million, which will take place on January 11, 2018. In fact, our annual prize of KD 1 million set a Guinness World Records achievement as the 'largest prize linked to a bank account payout in the world'.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers who open an account and/ or deposit more will enter the draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2017 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must have an Al-Danah account containing at least KD 200; customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, transfer on line, or call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance.



Winner of Al-Danah KD 200,000 prize with Gulf Bank team.

KFH LAUNCHES NEW FINANCING CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched new financing campaign with exclusive privileges in an attempt to meet clients' aspirations and financing requirements. The campaign finances the purchase of furniture, kitchen appliances, electronics, education, and health care with installments at the price of cash for 5 years settlement period.

Mohamed Ghandour, Group Deputy General Manager Products at KFH said that the KFH strives to uniquely offer competitive discounts to its customers. The bank plays a significant role in energizing the retail market and addressing clients' requirements in installment financing in the domestic market. The campaign has been launched in collaboration with 50 suppliers in different fields and businesses. This reassures the bank's endeavors towards meeting its customers' ambitions, while having competitive advantage on the market level.

He added that KFH is keen on strengthening partnership with suppliers to reinforce strategic relationships with all sectors in the local market including furniture, electronics, kitchens, constructions materials and vehicles in efforts to ensure customer needs are fully explored, understood and agreed.



KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 480 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.

KFH's mission is to achieve highest levels of excellence and innovation in the field of client service, while developing common interest for all those concerned with the financial institution. KFH's vision is to spearhead the global development in Islamic financial services, and to upgrade the bank into the level of becoming the most sustainable profitable Islamic bank in the world. KFH's values include cementing leadership through all its businesses, including leadership in the Islamic banking services worldwide, through innovation and in client service and the development of its employees. In addition, KFH is committed to all its procedures, and to setting up long-life partnerships with the concerned authorities.

EUROPE TO SET NEW COURSE AFTER EU MEET, FRENCH VOTE

FRANKFURT: Europe's political fog may finally start to lift in the coming week, with the French presidential election and the European Union's summit on Brexit strategy putting the bloc on a new path after months of uncertainty. With growth on its best run in years and sentiment indicators pointing to buoyant consumption, clarity in an election-heavy year could help Europe move past a decade of economic pain.

Indeed, cautious optimism from normally reserved central bankers suggests Europe could be nearing a turn towards normalization after years of economic firefighting and improvisation.

The biggest immediate obstacle is the French election and the outlier scenario of far-right candidate Marine Le Pen and far-left contender Jean-Luc Mélenchon squaring off in the second round next month. "The election of Le Pen or Mélenchon would trigger a period of financial turmoil and economic instability, which might require authorities to step in," Barclays analysts Francois Cabau and Philippe Gudin said in a note.

"We cannot rule out capital outflows taking place immediately after the election, which in an extreme case could require the deployment of some form of capital controls."

Even after last year's shock victories by Donald

Trump and the Brexit campaign, however, businesses, consumers and investors seem unconcerned by the possibility of an extremist leader and anticipate that a mainstream candidate will win.

Euro zone purchasing managers' index (PMI) data, a strong indicator of growth, climbed to six-year high in April, with French business activity also blowing past expectations.

"France seems to be going from strength to strength, obviously dismissing any concerns about the election," IHS Markit chief economist Chris Williamson said after the release of the PMI, which Markit compiles. "A lot of companies are saying there is a very positive outlook for business once this election is out of the way."

The European Central Bank, whose policymakers may acknowledge Europe's unexpected strength. Board member Benoît Coeuré, a top lieutenant of ECB President Mario Draghi, has already broken with the bank's long-standing line that economic risks are tilted to the downside, arguing this week that they were broadly balanced. Discussing a topic that has been largely taboo within the ECB, Coeuré also said he saw prospects for policy normalization, an indication that policymakers may soon start to formally discuss a reduction of stimulus. —Reuters

TRUMP'S SONS TAKE HELM OF COMPANY, EYE EXPANSION

ERIC AND DONALD TRUMP JR ARE NO MORE APPRENTICES

NEW YORK: Apprentices no more, Eric and Donald Trump Jr are now at the helm of the Trump Organization and adjusting to the reality presented by their father's presidency. They're eyeing ways to use the new lease on the family fame by expanding the brand into parts of the United States that embrace him. Some business has slowed as a result of the pledge to stall international dealmaking while Trump is president. But a US push is planned, and two new hotel chains are being considered - a four-star brand and a less luxurious line - possibly in states where Trump triumphed over Democrat Hillary Clinton last November.

"I think it makes it naturally easier if you're going into a place that's not adversarial to you," Donald Trump Jr. said in a recent interview. The Trump Organization is a private, family-run business that owns billions of dollars' worth of hotels, office buildings, golf courses and management and licensing agreements. Although foreign deals are on hold, the company will complete existing projects, including ones in India, the United Arab Emirates and the Dominican Republic. Because overseas markets have been hotter for the Trump brand, the company could lose some new revenue, the president's sons suggested.

Last fall, the company announced the creation of a four-star hotel chain called Scion, which is meant to offer upscale service in US cities that could not support a full-fledged Trump luxury property. More than two dozen letters of intent have been signed, though no ground has been broken yet.

Among the possible locations being considered: Texas, parts of the South, and perhaps the nation's capital, where the hotel would exist with the Trump luxury property in the former home of the Old Post Office not far from the White House. The company is also in the very early stages of considering a three-star hotel chain. Experts said the plan would not seem to run afoul of any ethics standards, even if the hotels ended up in some of the economically depressed regions whose voters rallied for Trump and may not be able to afford a luxury brand. It would be no different from cashing in on the name of a non-political celebrity, they said.

Similarly, daughter Ivanka Trump has made a pitch for Trump's blue-collar sup-

porters by replacing her high-end jewelry line with a mass-market brand.

"It would not seem to blur any lines with the presidency," said Kathleen Clark, a law professor at Washington University. She said that while "questions can be raised" about some of some of company's

procedure that changes the dynamic. There are plenty of deals that two years ago or eight years from now, "Oh, yeah, you can do this," he said. "Today, we have to take that much more seriously. There is an optical component that has to be taken into account."



CLEVELAND: Donald Trump, Jr. son of President Donald Trump, speaks during the second day of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. —AP



CINCINNATI: In this July 6, 2016 file photo, Eric Trump, son of President Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally at the Sharonville Convention Center in Cincinnati. —AP

behavior, a pitch into Trump-friendly states seems like "a reasonable business strategy." Any new investment, particularly if it involves foreign funds, will face additional scrutiny, including a review by an in-house and outside ethics counsel, Donald Trump Jr. said. "It's a complicated

He bristled at the idea that his father ran for president to enrich himself or his family, as some critics contended during the campaign. "He spent \$75 million of his own money to run against 17 incredibly seasoned Republican candidates to then go against Hillary Clinton," Donald

Trump Jr. said. "No one in their right mind would do that. That's not a good business model! I get it, it sells papers, it creates headlines. But it's ridiculous." Donald Trump Jr. said he barely spoke to his father during his first weeks in office. That changed after the younger Trump's 5-year-old son, Tristan, was hurt in a skiing accident. Eric Trump said he does talk to his father more regularly but insists that any discussions about the family business are limited to broad strokes and adheres to the guidelines the president laid out in January.

"We don't talk about the business. At most it's 'How's Turnberry? Turnberry's great,'" Eric Trump said, referring to a Trump golf property in Scotland. He would tell his father, if asked, "A profit or loss in a quarter, that's it." "That doesn't talk about any business sectors, that doesn't talk about any assets, that doesn't talk about anything specific in the business. That is a pure number, one number on a piece of paper," Eric Trump said. "That's more than permissible. None of these laws even apply to him - he's the president - but that is more than permissible in a trust structure."

Experts disagree, noting that it is not a true trust structure because Trump retained ownership of the company. "As long on President Trump insists on owning the Trump Organization, the conflicts of interest that may occur run directly to him and the so-called firewall plays no role in preventing them," said Fred Wertheimer, head of the ethics watchdog group Democracy 21. "It's an illusion and does not protect the American people."

Both Eric and Donald Trump Jr. said they missed their father's presence. Eric Trump said he sometimes looks upon the stack of \$1 bills that he won during a series of friendly business bets with his father. The winner would give the other a dollar bill with a note scrawled upon it. The elder Trump would use the bills, or a newspaper clipping about a Trump property, as a means of communicating to his sons, and his trademark scrawl would carry his congratulations - or his wishes - to those he was training to someday lead his company. "It was his way of saying 'Get this done' or 'Great job, ET - this is going to be amazing,'" said Eric Trump. "It's a simple way of communicating but I learned a lot. I miss that." —AP



Etihad Airways' flagship Airbus A380 aircraft sporting the Year of Giving logo.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS AND EMIRATES RED CRESCENT LAUNCHES NEW 'UAE YEAR OF GIVING' INITIATIVE

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways yesterday confirmed that it will donate one dirham from every flight ticket sold in the United Arab Emirates during 2017 towards the UAE's Year of Giving causes.

The initiative is one of dozens being rolled out in the air and on the ground by Etihad Aviation Group (EAG), including offering free Etihad Cargo space for humanitarian causes, as part of efforts to touch the lives of those in need around the world.

Each month, the airline will donate all proceeds to Emirates Red Crescent's local and international projects, including the recently launched campaign 'For Your Sake, Somalia' targeting famine in the African nation. Etihad Airways' guests will also shortly be able to donate to Emirates Red Crescent during flights using a credit card.

Etihad Airways Chief Executive Officer, Peter Baumgartner, and the airline's Executive Vice President Commercial, Mohammad Al-

Bulooki, launched the initiative with a special Etihad Airways dirham podium, inscribed with the message 'A dirham can go a long way'.

"We are proud to embrace the Year of Giving, a remarkable initiative which truly reflects the Emirati spirit of philanthropy," said Baumgartner. "This donation is one of many philanthropic initiatives we are announcing throughout 2017, in a mission to embed giving within our corporate culture and in the way we do business."

Secretary-General of Emirates Red Crescent, Mohamed Ateeq Al-Falahi, said: "We are proud to have worked for many years with Etihad Airways. Their unrelenting commitment, whether through donations or volunteering, has been heart-warming. We will continue to work together throughout the Year of Giving to support the UAE's humanitarian mission."

The airline's Year of Giving drive is visible on its flagship aircraft, the Airbus A380, with

all four engines of the double-decker displaying the Year of Giving logo to promote the national initiative overseas in Etihad's A380 destinations of Sydney, Mumbai, London Heathrow and New York.

This latest initiative builds on the group's track record as a socially responsible organization. Annually, EAG conducts dozens of community engagement initiatives among the local community in the UAE and internationally, including earlier programs in India, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. In 2016, EAG employees volunteered over 4,300 hours of time in support of charities and community causes.

2017 was officially declared as the Year of Giving by the UAE's President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. In support of this national initiative, EAG's strategy is based on the government's three Year of Giving pillars: Corporate Social Responsibility, Volunteering and Serving the Nation.



ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways Chief Executive Officer, Peter Baumgartner and Executive Vice President Commercial, Mohammad Al-Bulooki launch Etihad Airways' dirham donation pledge.

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY					SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %	Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	36,604,077	2.53%	1,820,679	1.37%	OIL & GAS	1,013.29	980.04	3.39%	29.80%
BASIC MATERIALS	3,035,112	0.21%	1,171,337	0.88%	BASIC MATERIALS	1,305.10	1,328.59	-1.77%	29.89%
INDUSTRIALS	66,181,021	4.58%	11,882,889	8.91%	INDUSTRIALS	1,763.29	1,738.25	1.44%	31.19%
CONSUMER GOODS	4,160,677	0.29%	1,007,992	0.76%	CONSUMER GOODS	1,115.95	1,127.96	-1.06%	-0.81%
HEALTH CARE	131,076	0.01%	26,385	0.02%	HEALTH CARE	1,336.68	1,523.52	-12.26%	7.41%
CONSUMER SERVICES	11,950,715	0.83%	1,202,950	0.90%	CONSUMER SERVICES	937.50	945.89	-0.89%	1.40%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	51,725,806	3.58%	6,730,037	5.05%	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	634.95	660.73	-3.90%	-0.19%
BANKS	126,515,293	8.75%	27,628,253	20.72%	BANKS	940.92	965.47	-2.54%	12.39%
INSURANCE	353,551	0.02%	37,296	0.03%	INSURANCE	1,072.00	1,111.27	-3.53%	7.82%
REAL ESTATE	684,907,485	47.38%	45,763,392	34.32%	REAL ESTATE	993.21	1,053.48	-5.72%	14.14%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	457,946,890	31.68%	35,854,564	26.89%	FINANCIAL SERVICES	739.07	777.57	-4.95%	23.79%
TECHNOLOGY	1,969,438	0.14%	201,970	0.15%	TECHNOLOGY	718.15	773.73	-7.18%	18.28%

BOURSA KUWAIT ENDS LOWER IN LACKCLUSTER TRADE

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the red zone. The Price Index closed at 6,813.53 points, down by 2.77 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index decreased by 1.81 percent after closing at 408.87 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 923.34 points declining by 2.09 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 2.69 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 26.67 million, whereas trading volume average was 289.10 million shares, recording a drop of 19.35 percent.

The three indices of Boursa Kuwait closed mixed last week, and all the trading levels declined compared to a week earlier, especially the average traded volume, which dropped by 19.35 percent to close at level 289.10 million stock, as a result to the strong selling and speculative operations witnessed by the market and executed on many leading and operational listed stocks. On the contrary, the market was able during some daily sessions of the week to increase supported by the random purchasing operations witnessed by some stocks of leading and small-cap ones, which limited the three indices' losses on the weekly level.

Moreover, the market is currently watching for the listed companies results for the first quarter of the 2017, which started to flow after disclosing some companies and banks its financial data, amid optimism of being such results within the positive range.

As far as the daily trading activity of the market during the last week; the three indices initiated the first session with mixed closings, whereas the Price Index lost 38.71 point to drop below its previous 7,000 point level, affected by the selling pressures on the small-cap listed stocks of most market sectors, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices received support from the purchasing and quick speculative operations on some leading stocks, amid a general decline in the trading activity. However on the second session, the three market indices recorded noticeable decrease, as the selling and profit collection operations executed on the leading stocks and the selling pressures on the low-priced stocks, caused the three market indices to record different losses by the end of the session, amid a continued decline in the trading value for the second consecutive session.

On Tuesday's and Wednesday's sessions, the three market indices sled to close in the red zone, after recording noticeable losses, especially the Price Index which decreased by 96.70 point on Wednesday's session, to close at level 6,788.03 point. Also, none of the Weighted or the KSX-15 indices were able to record gains in the same two session, which increased its losses recorded over the three consecutive sessions of the week. The Boursa witnessed

on Thursday's session a return of the three indices to fluctuate once again, where the Price Index was able to reverse its direction and realize increase, compensating some of its weekly losses, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices continued its downward direction, to end the week in the red zone.

The market capitalization reached by the end of last week KD 27.11 billion, down by 1.23 percent compared to its level in a week earlier, where it was KD 27.45 billion. On an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in the main market increased by 6.71 percent from its value at end of 2016, where it reached back then KD 25.41 billion.

For the annual performance, the Price Index ended last week recording 18.54 percent annual gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the Weighted Index increased by 7.57 percent, and the KSX-15 recorded 4.33 percent growth.

Sectors' Indices

Only two of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, while the other ten recorded losses. Last week's highest gainer was the Oil & Gas sector, achieving 3.39 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,013.29 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Industrial sector's index closed at 1,763.29 points recording 1.44 percent increase. On the other hand, the Health Care sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 12.26 percent to end the week's activity at 1,336.68 points. The Technology sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 7.18 percent, closing at 718.15 points, followed by the Real Estate sector, as its index closed at 993.21 points at a loss of 5.72 percent. The Consumer Services sector was the least declining as its index closed at 937.50 points with a 0.89 percent decrease.

Sectors' activity

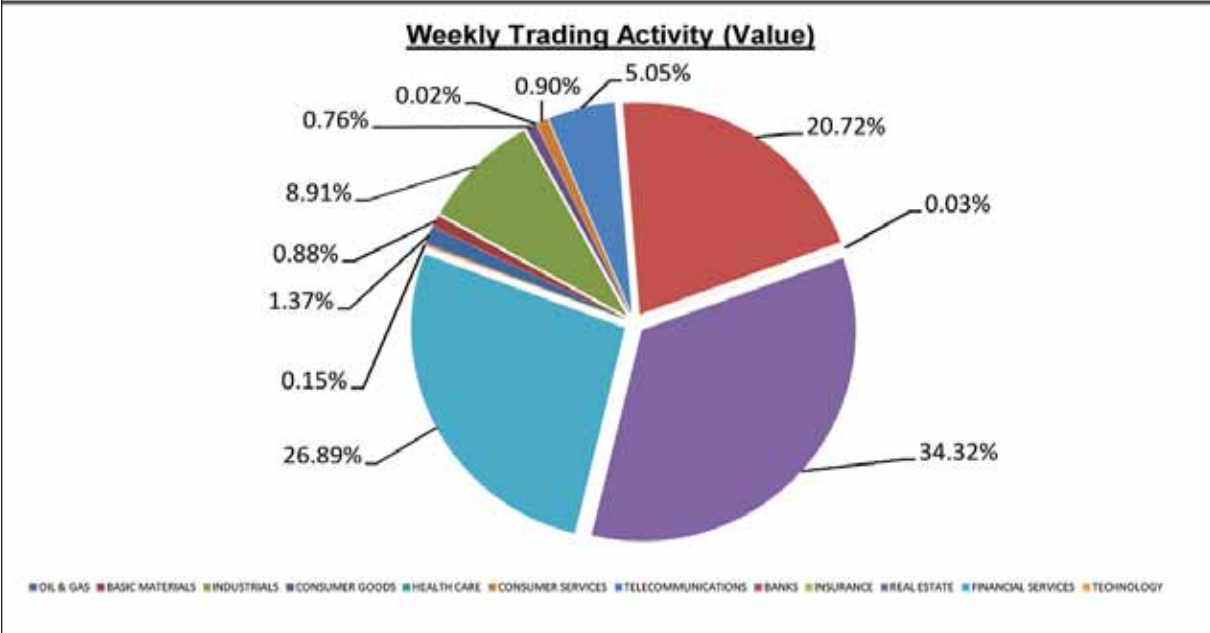
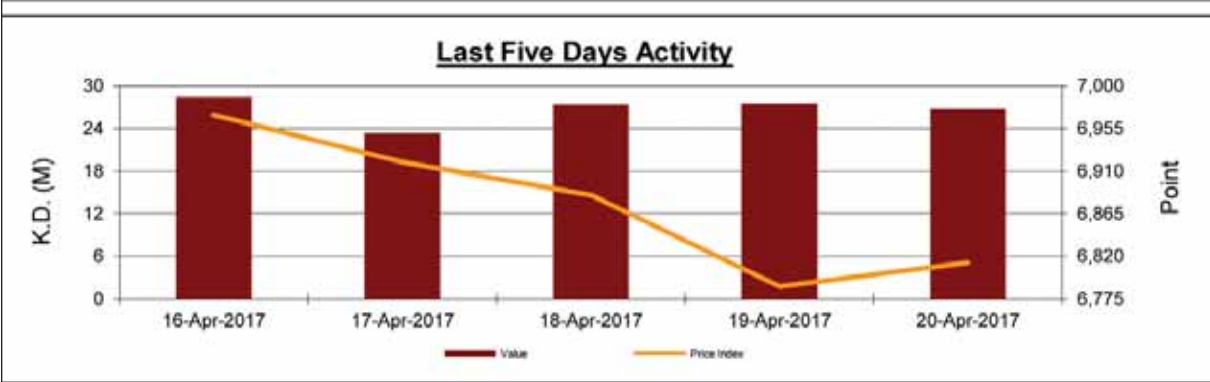
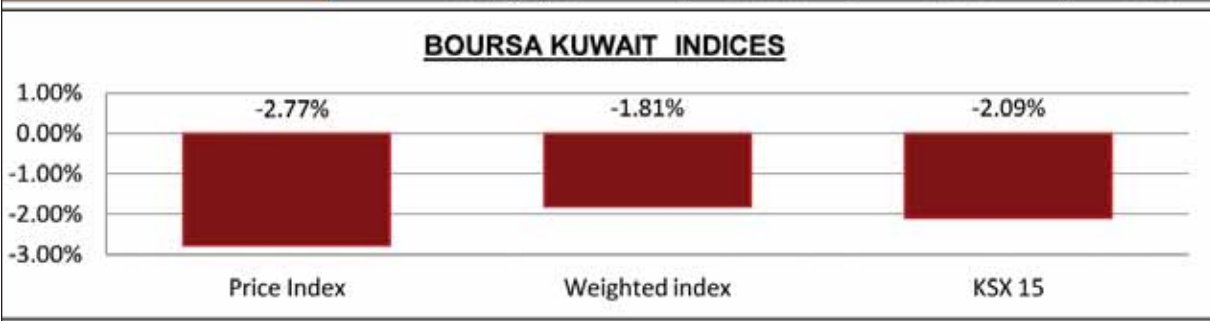
The Real Estate sector dominated a total trade volume of around 684.91 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 47.38 percent of the total market trading volume. The Financial Services sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 31.68 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 457.95 million shares.

On the other hand, the Real Estate sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 45.76 million or 34.32 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 35.85 million representing 26.86 percent of the total market trading value. — Prepared by: Studies & Research Department - Bayan Investment Co.

MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	1,445,481,141	1,792,260,449	-19.35%
Value (K.D)	133,327,744	137,018,436	-2.69%
Deals	28,403	33,240	-14.55%
MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
27,113,417,235	27,451,906,259	-1.23%	6.71%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
AMWAL	104.00	77.00	27.0	35.06%
EQUIPMENT	600.00	475.00	125.0	26.32%
AAYAN	53.00	44.00	9.0	20.45%
AAYANRE	95.00	80.00	15.0	18.75%
TAAMEER	56.00	48.50	7.5	15.46%

BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES				
Weekly		Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15
	Last week	6,813.53	408.87	923.34
	Previous week	7,007.89	416.40	943.04
	Change (Point)	-194.36	-7.53	-19.70
Annual				
	Last year	5,748.09	380.09	885.02
	Change (Point)	1,065.44	28.78	38.32
	Change (%)	18.54%	7.57%	4.33%



TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
REAM	240.00	350.00	-110.0	-31.43%
MHC	310.00	385.00	-75.0	-19.48%
REMAL	69.00	82.00	-13.0	-15.85%
ENERGYH	45.00	53.00	-8.0	-15.09%
GIH	43.00	49.50	-6.5	-13.13%

LOSSES FOR FINANCE, HEALTHCARE COMPANIES SEND STOCKS LOWER

NEW YORK: US stocks slumped Friday as financial and health care companies moved lower. Industrial companies rose as stocks continued the up-and-down pattern they've been stuck in for the last month. Stocks slumped in morning trading as banks fell in tandem with bond yields and interest rates and energy companies sank with oil prices.

Strong results from Honeywell and aviation electronics maker Rockwell Collins helped industrial firms. Toy maker Mattel plunged after it reported its second disappointing quarter in a row. Stocks climbed in the final minutes of trading and left the Standard & Poor's 500 index 1 percent higher for the week.

US President Donald Trump gave the market a fleeting boost in the afternoon when he said his administration will release a tax reform proposal next week that includes a large tax cut. He didn't provide details.

"I don't think anything's actually going to happen or be implemented any time soon," said Scott Wren, senior global equity strategist for the Wells Fargo Investment Institute. He said he thinks a corporate tax cut is more likely to pass Congress and become law than a tax cut for individuals, and added that he wants the administration to focus on moves that can keep the economy growing.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 7.15 points, or 0.3 percent, to 2,348.69. The Dow Jones industrial average dipped 30.95 points,

or 0.2 percent, to 20,547.76. The Nasdaq composite fell 6.26 points, or 0.1 percent, to 5,910.52. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks fell 4.30 points, or 0.3 percent, to 1,379.85. Financial companies fell. Professional services firm Marsh & McLennan skidded \$1.41, or 1.9 percent, to \$71.88 and wealth management company Morgan Stanley dipped 70 cents, or 1.6 percent, to \$41.80. Bank of America fell 36 cents, or 1.6 percent, to \$22.7.

Bond prices rose early on but wound up little changed. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note remained at 2.24 percent. Health care companies moved lower. Biotech drugmaker Alexion Pharmaceuticals lost \$1.90, or 1.6 percent, to \$116.82 and Merck declined 66 cents, or 1.1 percent, to \$61.89. Pharmacy benefits manager Express Scripts dipped 59 cents to \$66.46.

Stocks did well this week, but they've wandered up and down over the last few weeks. That may persist. Next Friday the government will release its report on first-quarter GDP growth, something investors pay a lot of attention to. On the same day, the federal government is scheduled to reach its borrowing limit, which could trigger a government shutdown unless Congress agrees to extend it.

"The stock market's been willing to wait to see what, if anything, comes out of Washington," said Wells Fargo's Wren. He adds

that stock prices aren't too high even though they've been breaking records lately.

Next week the market may also react to the first round of voting in the French presidential election. Polls between the top four candi-



NEW YORK: Specialist Peter Mazza (left) and trader Brandon Barb work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. — AP

dates are fairly close, and a good showing by far-right candidate Marine Le Pen or leftist Jean-Luc Melenchon, as opposed to their more centrist rivals, could unsettle investors. The top two candidates will advance to a final

round of voting in early May. Mattel, the largest toy company in the U.S., said its sales dropped 15 percent in the fiscal first quarter as it continued to deal with effects of poor sales over the holiday season. The company's revenue totaled \$735.6 million, which was \$67 million less than expected, according to FactSet. The stock lost \$3.42, or 13.6 percent, to \$21.79.

Mattel also took a steep loss after it reported its fourth-quarter results. Its stock is down 21 percent this year. Benchmark US crude shed \$1.09, or 2.1 percent, to \$49.62 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, fell \$1.03, or 1.9 percent, to \$51.96 a barrel in London. Schlumberger, the world's biggest oilfield services company, fell after it reported less revenue than analysts had forecast. The company said revenue in China, Russia and the North Sea fell more than it had expected. The stock gave up \$1.67, or 2.2 percent, to \$74.84 and competitors Halliburton and Baker Hughes both fell, too.

Honeywell's profit and sales were better than expected, and the industrial conglomerate raised its profit projection for the year. The stock jumped \$3.31, or 2.7 percent, to \$127.08. Aviation electronics company Rockwell Collins raised its profit and sales forecasts after its \$8.6 billion purchase of former competitor B/E Aerospace. Its stock rose \$5.11, or 5.1 percent, to \$104.70. — AP

KUWAIT'S POPULATION GROWTH AND ISSUES

AL-SHALL WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Reading of ancient and contemporary history reaffirms that development does not succeed unless it is identified and associated with the state and failure to achieve it is the mate of failure in the nation-building. The above is a conclusion of reviewing four centuries of modern and ancient history and the summary of a nice book entitled “Why Do Nations Fail”. One of the most important foundations of any state is its effective policy to ensure its financial and economic stability, sustainability, neutrality and strength of its legal network, reinforcement of citizenship value, i.e. the identity so much so that some states’ constitutions mobilize their fleets in defense of their citizens.

In Kuwait, what is happening is running completely to the opposite of the requirements of building the foundations of a state. Successive Governments have become addicted to buying political loyalty by money at the expense of competitive economy and the State’s financial sustainability, which is a devastating tool, picked up by opponents and loyalists alike and became addicted to using it to the extent that Kuwait currently in financial and economic trouble. The government harnessed laws to serve short-term special goals, which was picked up by opponents and supporters and laws have become drafted in favor of this party or against that party who is in a position of strength, to achieve short term political gains. The country has become a hotbed of corruption, and the second state foundation has been shaken. Not only that but tampering did not spare the national identity which was used not to bolster affiliation to the country, but to support one party against another in accordance with the political game in a certain condition, and was branded by grant or bonus-a house and a job-for loyalty, even if it violates the law as long as this loyalty is for a party in power. Trading in it has become an available tool for the government’s antagonists and supporters.

If these three foundations are shaken, the whole construction they are built on is also shaken. In prudent states, wise people do not

with the fraudulent. But holding inspection courts undertaken by citizens or political investigation committees is first an approach which did not succeed in big powers and is secondly subject to a large amount of spiteful and political caprice and their outcome is sowing discord and hatred in a small country that can’t bear it under the worst and most dangerous geopolitical conditions.

Domestic real estate market

The latest released data by the Ministry of Justice -Real Estate Registration and Authentications Department- (after excluding the craft activity and the coastal strip) indicate rise in the real estate market liquidity in March 2017 vis-a-vis February 2017 liquidity. Total value of contracts and agencies trading scored KD 304.5 million which is higher in value by 84.6 percent than its counterpart value in February 2017 which scored KD 164.9 million. It also rose by 23.9 percent compared with March 2016 liquidity. We have no explanation other than liberating some blocked savings in stocks after the activity at Boursa Kuwait since the beginning of the year which drove individuals to purchase private residence after restoring those savings simultaneous with some looseness in real estate prices.

Real Estate trading during this month was distributed between KD 255.3 million in contracts and about KD 49.2 million in agencies. Real Estate deals scored 614 with 436 deals went for contracts and 178 deals went for agencies. The highest rate went to Mubarak Al-Kabir Governorate by 252 deals representing about 41 percent of the total number of real estate deals.

Ahmadi Governorate came second by 155 deals representing about 25.2 percent. The lowest share went to Al Jahra Governorate by 25 deals representing about 4.1 percent.

Value of private residential trading scored KD 211.9 million, up by about 146.7 percent compared with KD 85.9 million in February representing 69.6 percent of total real estate trading vis-a-vis 52.1 percent in February

Table (1) Population and growth rates (1975-2016)											
Kuwait		1975*	1980*	1985*	1995*	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	CAGR
	Nationals	307	390	470	709	898	993	1,146	1,314	1,338	3.7%
	CAGR		4.9%	3.8%	4.2%	4.8%	2.0%	2.9%	2.8%		

* Statistical data from the Ministry of Planning during (1975-1995), Statistical data from the Public Authority for Civil Information during (2000-2016)

Table (2) Population and growth rates comparing with other GCC countries											
GCC Countries		1975	1980	1985	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	CAGR
UAE	Nationals	194	281	404	597	702	824	940	1,121	1,153	4.4%
	CAGR		7.6%	7.6%	4.0%	3.3%	3.3%	2.7%	3.6%		
QATAR	Nationals	64	100	130	148	156	211	243	291	309	3.9%
	CAGR		9.5%	5.4%	1.3%	1.0%	6.2%	2.8%	3.6%		
KUWAIT	Nationals	307	390	470	709	898	993	1,146	1,314	1,338	3.7%
	CAGR		4.9%	3.8%	4.2%	4.8%	2.0%	2.9%	2.8%		
SAUDI ARABIA	Nationals	6,429	7,890	9,568	13,183	14,905	16,854	18,974	21,130	21,459	3.0%
	CAGR		4.2%	3.9%	3.3%	2.5%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%		
OMAN	Nationals	666	805	973	1,562	1,790	1,843	1,955	2,150	2,161	2.9%
	CAGR		3.9%	3.9%	4.8%	2.8%	0.6%	1.2%	1.9%		
BAHRAIN	Nationals	202	233	276	362	391	484	570	634	633	2.8%
	CAGR		3.0%	3.4%	2.8%	1.5%	4.4%	3.3%	2.2%		

Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF), Statistical Information Departments of each country, Central Banks, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), United Nations Statistics Division

percent of the total current energy sources to 75 percent by 2035. It will be achieved-according to their estimates-due to superior growth rates of demand on renewable energy to approximately 7.6 percent, or slightly less than 6 times the overall growth rate with solar and wind energy taking the lead.

That Outlook supports the likelihood of oil prices remaining weak. The price of a barrel of oil which scored US\$ 52.8 in the end of the first quarter is anticipated at best to score about US\$ 61 per barrel in the foreseeable future. Because parity prices-balanced budget-in the vast majority of oil-producing States exceed expected oil prices, even at their best, and because the internal increase on demand on oil for local consumption reduces available

advanced sick case. The oil age even if it continues for five forthcoming decades began being replaced by renewable energy. The prudent is the one who works in advance to introduce a real programmed reduction in relying on oil, both in income and in consumption. Working in both directions is available and possible. Limiting oil consumption is indirectly a positive factor for reducing dependence on oil revenues. The United Arab Emirates offers a successful model and it is fine to benefit from their experience, indeed and not by words.

NBK Q1 financial results

NBK announced results of its operations for the first quarter of 2017, which indicate that the bank’s net profits, after deducting taxes, scored KD 89.7 million, a KD 7 million, or by 8.5 percent, vis-a-vis KD 82.7 million in the first quarter of 2016. The bank achieved net profit for its shareholders about KD 85.4 million versus KD 78.9 million in the same period of last year, i.e increased by KD 6.5 million. The rise in the bank profits is due to the rise in the total operational income by a higher value than the rise in total expenditures. In detail, net operations income rose by KD 16.2 million, or by 9 percent, and scored KD 195.4 million versus KD 179.2 million in the same period of last year. That resulted from rise in all operations income items, such as interests’ income item (excluding for income from Islamic financing) rose by KD 12.5 million and interests’ expenses (excluding Murabaha expenses) rose by KD 4.6 million, therefore the net interests’ income rose by KD 7.9 million. The bank also achieved net income from Islamic financing by KD 25.9 million (KD 23 million in the same period of last year),

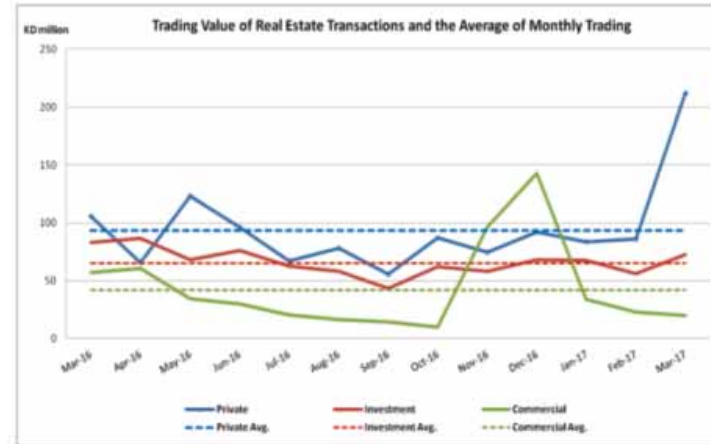
Boubyan Bank’s results on operational expenses, the increase in operational expenses would be from about KD 48 million to about KD 49.2 million, i.e increased by 2.5 percent. Total provisions scored KD 37.7 million, rose by KD 6.8 million compared to KD 30.9 million.

The bank financial statements indicate the bank’s total assets increased by KD 610.2 million, or by 2.5 percent, compared with the end of 2016, which scored KD 24.814 billion and rose by KD 142 million, or by 0.6 percent, when compared with the total in the end of the first quarter of 2016. If we exclude the impact of consolidating Boubyan Bank, it will decrease by 1.3 percent. Portfolio of loans, advances and Islamic financing to customers, the largest contributor of the bank’s assets, increased by 3.2 percent, KD 437.3 million, to KD 14,049 billion (56.6 percent of total assets) versus KD 13.611 billion (56.2 percent of total assets) in December 2016. It increased by KD 489.3 million, or by 3.6 percent, when compared with the end of the first quarter of 2016. If we exclude the impact of consolidating Boubyan Bank in its Islamic financing part, it will increase by 0.8 percent. Percentage of non-performing loans to the total credit portfolio scored 1.27 percent in the end of March 2017 compared with 1.32 percent in 2016. The coverage percentage of the non-performing loans increased to 348 percent compared with 335 percent.

Figures indicate that the bank liabilities (without including total equities) increased by KD 668.4 million, or by 3.2 percent, and scored KD 21.468 billion compared with the end of 2016. While it decreased by KD 122.5 million, or by 0.6 percent, if compared with the total in the end of first quarter of the last year. Excluding the impact of consolidating Boubyan Bank, the retreat will be about 2.3 percent. Percentage of total liabilities to total assets scored 86.5 percent compared with 87.5 percent.

Results of analyzing financial statements calculated on annual basis indicate that most of the bank’s profitability indexes rose compared with the same period of 2016. The average return on assets (ROA) increased to 1.5 percent versus 1.4 percent. Likewise, the average return on equities relevant to the banks’ shareholders (ROE), which scored 12 percent versus 11.7 percent. While, the average return on capital (ROC) dropped to about 62.1 percent compared with 64 percent. Earnings per share (EPS) rose to 15 fils versus 14 fils for the same period in 2016. (P/E) scored 11 times - improved- compared with 12 times, due to the rise in earnings per share by about 7.1 percent against a drop in the market price per share by 1.5 percent compared with its price on March 31, 2016. (P/B) scored 1.17 times compared with 1.15 times.

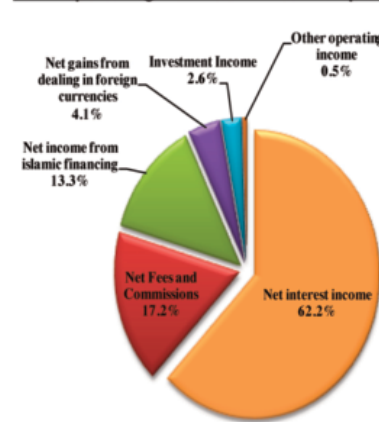
The weekly performance of Boursa Kuwait The performance of Boursa Kuwait for last week was less active compared to the previous one, where all indexes showed a decrease, the traded value index, the traded volume index, number of transactions index, and the general index. Al-Shall Index (value weighted) closed at 388 points at the closing of last Thursday, showing a decrease of about 6.2 points or about 1.6 percent compared with its level last week, while it increased by 25 points or about 6.9 percent compared with the end of 2016.



allow constant aggression on those rules. The shocking model presented today is the debate about the indigenous citizens in which each party got involved except the Government to the extent that each party gave itself the right to search the entitlement of the other to citizenship, which is a unique sedition! Deciding this debate is a too simple matter, i.e. the government presents the correct numbers, which it owns, and limits the scale of manipulating the nationality files, if any, and deals with it in accordance with the law, not according to the political position. Until the government publishes its numbers to contain the sedition that deeply disturbing the already torn community, under dark regional conditions, we will publish population figures from two government sources. Those official numbers, if true, and if we compare them with the regional figures reaffirm that the problem scale is much less than the estimates of some.

The maximum biological limits for the nat-

Total operating incomes in the first quarter 2017



ural growth rates-births minus deaths-are 4 percent, but no one scores this ratio by natural increase. It has been customary for the maximum natural growth to reach 3.6 percent. Whether the increase reaches this maximum rate or less, the increase is the outcome of law, i.e. naturalization. Separation between the two ratios is quite easy in any state

that is interested in the identity and keeps correct or valid records, both are present in Kuwait. Figures of population growth in Kuwait, do not suggest appalling figures. Reading through the comparative figures with neighboring countries, it is clear that rates of population growth of small and wealthy states, is higher than in others, the so-called the result of the wealth impact. Arranging the population growth rates for citizens, the UAE is the highest in growth, then Qatar and then Kuwait, though without big differences among and with the other three states, which also do not suggest appalling figures. Therefore, we call for quiescence and for wise and urgent government intervention by publishing and analyzing the figures while allowing law to be implemented starting with the official who sanctioned forgery or tolerance in verification and scrutiny and ending

2017. The monthly average value for private residence trading in the last 12 months scored about KD 93.4 million. This means that trading value in this month was higher by 126.9 percent than the average. The number of deals for this activity also rose to 528 deals in March 2017 versus 251 deals in February 2017. Therefore, the average value per deal of private residence activity scored about KD 401.4 thousand.

Investment housing activity went up to about KD 72.6 million, up by 29.6 percent, vis-à-vis KD 56 million in February 2017. However, its percentage out of total liquidity dropped to about 23.8 percent versus 33.9 percent in February 2017. Monthly trading average value of investment housing during 12 months scored KD 65 million. This means that trading value in March was higher by 11.7 percent than the 12 months’ average. Its deals dropped to 81 (120 deals in February). Therefore, the per deal average value for investment housing scored KD 895.8 thousand.

Commercial activity trading value dropped to about KD 20 million, a drop by -13.2 percent compared with KD 23 million in February 2017. Its percentage out of total real estate trading value declined to 6.6 percent compared with 14 percent in February 2017. Average value of commercial activity trading in 12 months scored about KD 41.9 million. This means total trading in this month is lower by -52.2 percent compared with 12 months’ average. Its deals scored 5 deals (7 deals in February 2017). As such, the average value per deal for the commercial activity scored about KD 4 million. There were no deals in the warehousing activity.

When we compare March 2017 trading with the same month of last year (March 2016), we note a rise in the real estate market liquidity from about KD 245.8 million to KD 304.5 million, i.e. 23.9 percent. The rise involved the private residence activity by 100.6 percent up from KD 105.6 million in March 2016. It rose by KD 211.9 million in March 2017. The investment housing activity declined by 12.7 percent and the commercial activity liquidity dropped by -65 percent.

When we compare sales of the first quarter of last year in 2016, we note a decline in total liquidity by -11 percent. Sales of first quarter of last year scored KD 735.4 million and declined to KD 645.8 million in the last quarter. The decline involved the investment housing and the commercial activity by about -28.8 percent and -55.8 percent respectively. But private housing activity rose by 35.1 percent.

Renewable Energy and Oil

“BP Future Energy Outlook” report issued in January 2017 projects increasing demand on energy by about 30 percent by the year 2035, an average annual growth of 1.3 percent, which is logical.

But the importance of the report lies in the different increase in the components of that demand. In brief, it includes the drop in the fossil fuel contribution, including oil, from 86

available-for-export quantities and raises the budget parity price, some States began to encourage renewable energy production.

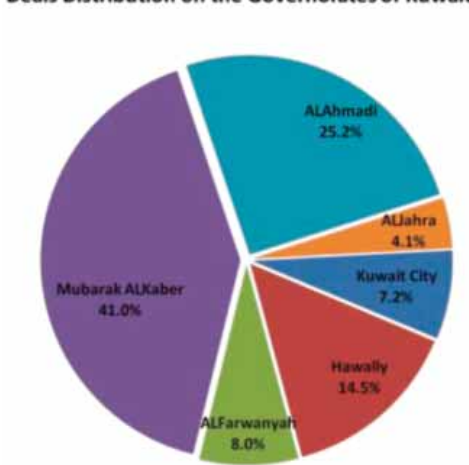
The report of the International Renewable Energy Agency -IRENA- indicates that Gulf oil-rich countries will save 400 million barrels of oil by 2030, or a reduction by nearly 25 percent of their oil consumption of oil for electricity generation and water production if they achieve the declared goals of expansion in the use of renewable energy. The report stressed that Gulf countries can achieve additional financial revenues estimated at US\$ 55-87 billion during (2015 - 2030) if they move to integrate the renewable energy plans and projects. The number of renewable energy projects in the Gulf States scored 37 projects completed, under construction or being planned, most of them are solar energy (27 projects), 4 for waste conversion, three for wind energy and three projects are mixed projects for renewable energy sources.

The UAE is one of the first six Gulf States which began investing in renewable energy. It owns about 68 percent of energy production capability in the region and about 10 percent of the global capacity. It is planning to produce approximately 24 percent of its total energy consumption from renewable energy sources by 2021. Saudi Arabia is currently more active in establishing specialized institutions and authorities in the support and encouragement of renewable energy in the region.

Renewable energy was highlighted in the Vision 2035 in Kuwait which aims to secure about 15 percent of domestic consumption of electricity using renewable energy, it is expected to save more than US\$ 2.463 billion annually if realized.

In conclusion, addition on reliance on oil, both income and consumption, recorded an

Deals Distribution on the Governorates of Kuwait



which increased net interests’ income (traditional and Islamic) to about KD 147.5 million (KD 136.6 million), a rise by KD 10.9 million. Likewise, investments item rose by about KD 3.7 million and scored KD 5.1 million versus KD 1.5 million.

Total operations expenditures increased by a less value than the rise in total operational income by about KD 2.9 million, or by 4.9 percent, and scored KD 61.5 million versus KD 58.7 million in the first quarter of 2016. This was achieved due to the rise in the item of staff expenses by KD 2.6 million and scored KD 36.5 million versus KD 33.9 million. According to Al-Shall estimates, assuming the exclusion of the impact of consolidating

	31/03/2017 (Thousand KD)	31/03/2016 (Thousand KD)	Change Value	%	
Total Assets	24,814,250	24,672,260	141,990	0.6%	↑
Total liabilities	21,467,689	21,590,219	(122,530)	-0.6%	↓
Total Equity attributable to the equity holders of the bank	2,826,950	2,647,180	179,770	6.8%	↑
Total Operating Incomes	195,381	179,238	16,143	9.0%	↑
Total Operating Expenses	61,511	58,651	2,860	4.9%	↑
Provision	37,737	30,917	6,820	22.1%	↑
Taxation	6,415	6,966	(551)	-7.9%	↓
Net income	89,718	82,704	7,014	8.5%	↑
Ratios					
**Return on Average Assets (ROA)	1.5%	1.4%			↑
**Return on Average Equity Relevant To The Bank Shareholder (ROE)	12.0%	11.7%			↑
**Return on Average Capital (ROC)	62.1%	64.0%			↓
Earnings per share (EPS) – (Fils)	15	14	1	7.1%	↑
Closing price – (Fils)	660	670	(10)	-1.5%	↓
*Price to Earnings Per Share Multiplies (P/E)	11.0	12.0			
Price to Book Value Multiplies (P/B)	1.17	1.15			

* Indicators Ended March 31, 2017 on an annual basis

** Calculated based on the average rate of the financial data at the end of December 2016 and 31 March 2017



ALGHANIM AUTO FIRST IN REGION TO DEPLOY FORD'S 'SERVICE EXCELLENCE 2.0' PROGRAM

SYSTEM TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE, INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

KUWAIT: Ford Middle East and Alghanim Auto are proud to announce the addition of Service Excellence 2.0 to Alghanim Auto's dedicated premises in Kuwait's Shuwaikh Industrial Area. Alghanim Auto, the only Ford-authorized importer in Kuwait, is the first Ford partner in the region to install this new operating system that is intended to improve dealership service department performance and increase customer satisfaction.

Service Excellence uses a simple and effective six-step process, from an initial appointment reservation, to arrival and customer interaction, dispatch of repair order, diagnosis repair, invoice and customer pick-up, and finally, a follow-up. This sequence, in turn, delivers the four tenets of a superior customer experience - trust, respect, relationship, and control - that make this Ford Service Operating System so efficient and effective.

Ford training of technicians to qualify for the Service Excellence system is delivered in three methods, including eLearning modules by position, in-dealership classroom training, and in-dealership on the job training.

"Alghanim Auto is proving to be a pioneer in the region once more with the commencement of the Ford Service Excellence 2.0 operating system," said Thierry Sabbagh, managing director, Ford Middle East. "We commend Alghanim Auto's drive to improve dealership service

department performance and continue delivering some of the highest levels of customer satisfaction in Kuwait."

Tim Zimmerman, Vice-President, Alghanim Auto, added: "Alghanim Auto is determined with the full support of Ford to improve even further customer service and satisfaction, by fully delivering on customer expectations and promises. By helping us to optimize the customer experience and our own efficiency and quality at every step of the maintenance and repair processes, Ford Service Excellence 2.0 has been an invaluable and objective tool in perfecting our approach, which we openly invite existing and future customers to come and experience themselves."

Ford Middle East reminds Ford and Lincoln customers to get immediate access to original Ford and MotorCraft parts as well as warranty and Extended Service Plan (ESP) contracts, in addition to maintenance and body shop repair services by Ford trained and certified technicians at the dedicated Alghanim Auto Ford service centre in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite the Classical Car Museum and Sirbb Circuit.

The main service centre working hours are 7AM to 7PM from Saturday through Thursday. For added convenience, the Express Service working hours are 7AM to 10PM Saturday through Thursday, and 2PM to 7PM on Friday.



MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS OPENS ITS 175TH SHOWROOM IN NAGERCOIL, TN

CHENNAI: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the world's leading jewellery retailers and Flagship Company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified business house of India is expanding its network with the inauguration of the new world-class showroom in Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu. The spacious and artistically done showroom at Avvai Shanmughi Salai, Meenakshipuram, inaugurated by popular Actress Tamannaah Bhatia on 17th April, 2017 in the presence of M.P. Ahammed, Chairman - Malabar Group, O. Asher, Managing Director - India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, invited guests, media & well-wishers.

The store displays the exclusive range of

Malabar Gold & Diamonds sub brands: Mine - Diamond jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Precia - Gem Jewellery, Divine - Indian Heritage Jewellery, Ethnix - Handcrafted designer Jewellery, Hi - Casual jewelry collection and Starlet - Kids' Jewellery. Apart from gold and diamonds, there is an impressive stock of silver jewellery and silver articles in the showroom.

"The state of Tamil Nadu has a rich jewellery tradition dating back to centuries. Malabar Gold & Diamonds conducts in depth analysis of the jewellery tradition of a particular region before setting up business. Wedding rituals, festivals, ornamental preferences, are all looked into and we ensure that the jewellery is not only inno-

vate and trendy, region specific and occasion specific jewellery is also sufficiently stocked to cater to the ethnic taste and social preferences endemic to the region. Precisely why we could successfully expand the network to different regions, each with its unique cultural, religious and social fabric", said M.P. Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group.

Apart from being a successful business entity, Malabar group has always been in the forefront of social responsibility initiatives. Malabar Gold & Diamonds earmarks a distinct share of its annual profit for CSR initiatives in the field of health, education, housing, environmental conservation and woman's empowerment.

AHLI UNITED BANK'S CASH-BACK 100%+50% CAMPAIGN HAILS GREAT SUCCESS

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced yesterday the names of its cash-back 100 percent+50 percent campaign draw winners.

The names of the 100 percent cash back winners are: Rami Nabil Tabiaat, Mazen Hamad and Ahmed Fathallah. Moreover, the names of the 50 percent cash back winners are: Mohammad Eid Al Nassar, Bader Adnan Al-Ali, Altaf Abdulla Al-Ghanim, Adel Majd Bourasli, Ahmad Salem Al-Mansouri, Saad Ahed Hejjawi, Fotouh Ali Al-Asfour, Fatemah Faisal Al-Saria, Yousef Saleh Al-Fadhel and Mohammad Khaled Al-Qabandi.

Ahli United Bank's campaign, which lasts for three months only, has attracted a large number of customers that were part of a unique program that rewards the bank's customers and delivers innovative initiatives that add value to their overall banking experience.

The campaign will remain for two more months, where 13 customers will be rewarded every month. Anyone using Ahli United Bank's cards is eligible to become a winner in the new campaign.

To become eligible for the 100 percent cash-back draw, customers are required to spend KD 500 or above during one

month. In addition, customers wishing to participate in the 50 percent draw, if spend KD 150 and above in the same time period. Customers spending KD 500 and above in any month will be eligible to enter both draws and have chances to win up to KD 1,500.

For each draw, customers' chances are calculated based on the statement cycle from the 12th of the current month and up to the 11th on the following month. For every KD 50 spent on credit cards, customers will earn one chance in the draw.

In addition the campaign benefits, It is also important to note that AUB's customers will continue to receive a number of benefits and discounts as part of the Pearl Rewards program, which allows customers to win more Pearl Points in an easy manner. Customers who use their credit cards receive more Air Miles and benefit from free flights on Kuwait Airways, Qatar Airways or Gulf Air, and also receive upgraded travel options and enjoy upgraded hotel accommodation.

This also includes other benefits that the program offers to its members on the selected airlines, in line with their terms and conditions.



The representatives of the Ministry of Trade and Industry during the draw cash-back 100 percent+50 percent campaign at Ahli United Bank.

BURGAN BANK'S PREMIER CUSTOMERS HAVE ACCESS TO 600 LOUNGES AT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS

KUWAIT: As part of its constant strive to meet the needs of its clients and provide the best of services, Borgan Bank announced the addition of more value-added services to its Premier customers. Especially created for its travel-savvy clients, the new feature entitles Premier customers to enter more than 600 lounges in over 300 airports around the world. Clients can also entertain guests in the lounges for a small fee.

This service is part of the 'Premier Banking' package and is an addition to an array of specialty, convenience and luxury offerings. Borgan Bank's Premier Banking

service offers a world of opportunities, together with added benefits and privileges to support clients in every aspect of their lives. To find out more about the different participating lounges and airports available, customers are encouraged to download the dedicated smartphone application, LoungeKey or simply visit the website www.loungekey.com/visasignaturemena.

Furthermore, to learn about Borgan Bank's Visa Signature Debit Card and the newly upgraded services for Premier Customers, one can contact the personal banking executive at the branch.

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank's salary account promotion has been receiving great feedback from customers; a true testament to the great value of this offer. Running until 31st December 2017, the salary account has been tailored for the

Kuwaiti customers with a minimum salary of KD500, whereby they are entitled to enter a draw and win the biggest salary cash prize in Kuwait of KD250,000 along with 3 quarterly prizes of KD25,000. Stay tuned for the first draw

that will take place on 8th May 2017. New Gulf Bank customers are also rewarded for transferring their salaries to the bank. Customers have the option of receiving a KD100 upon salary transfer or apply for an interest-free loan. Both new and existing customers are automatically entered into the quarterly and annual draws.

In line with this great success, Gulf Bank is expanding its presence through the Direct Sales Team across Kuwait to ensure that all existing and potential customers are aware and up to date with the offerings of this promotion. Gulf Bank is offering customers additional benefits under the salary account promotion. These include a credit card with no fee for the first year and an automatic membership in the best and fastest rewards program in Kuwait with Gulf Bank credit cards and a free access to Gulf Bank Entertainer Application; a mobile and Geo-Locator application that provides credit card customers with 'buy one get one free' offers in the form of digital vouchers in Kuwait, UAE and London, and discounted rates and presence in over 17 car showrooms.



ONE-IN-TEN TWEAK THE TRUTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MORE LIKES

DUBAI: People are turning to social media in order to show-off to friends, collect as many 'likes' as possible and to feel good about themselves. But in this quest for social validation people are playing with the truth and white-washing their lives. New research from Kaspersky Lab shows that one-in-ten people would bend the truth on social media in order to get more people to like their posts.

The research also shows that in their pursuit of likes, men are more likely than women to post their privacy away. To attract attention and secure a significant number of likes, around one-in-ten people (12 percent) pretend to be somewhere or doing something that might not be strictly true. This rises to 14 percent of men, suggesting that many would rather get social media attention than share a realistic portrayal of their lives. The research uncovers that men are sensitive about how many likes they get on social media and, in their hunt for likes,

men are more likely than women to reveal something embarrassing or confidential about their co-workers, friends or employers.

Thus, 14 percent of men said they would reveal something confidential about a co-worker, compared to 7 percent of women, 13 percent are willing to post something confidential about their employer, and 12 percent would reveal something embarrassing about a friend compared with 6 percent of women. Men also get upset if they do not get the likes they hope for - 24 percent worry that if few people like their posts, their friends will think they are unpopular, compared to 17 percent of women.

29 percent of men also admitted that they get upset if somebody who matters to them doesn't like their posts. In the hunt for likes, men tend to go even further than women, posting things that present themselves and their friends in a compromising light, which according to Dr. Astrid Carolus, Media

Psychologist at the University of W, rzburg, "is in line with the assumption of men being rather less focused on social harmony and rather more willing to take risks."

Sergey Malenkovich, Head of Social Media at Kaspersky Lab agrees, but warns that this risky behavior on social media can put people at risk. "In their search for social approval, people have stopped seeing the boundary between what it is okay to share, and what is better kept private," he says. "But it is important to protect ourselves, as well as the privacy of others. The research shows that 58 percent of people feel uncomfortable and upset when their friends post photos of them that they do not want to be made public. All in all, people need to become more aware and cyber-savvy about the information they share on social media and install security software on their devices to protect themselves and their loved ones from cyberthreats."



PHOENIX: In these undated photo, a Grand Canyon National Park employee operates a drone at the park. —AP

DRONES USED FOR FIRST TIME IN MAJOR SEARCH AT GRAND CANYON

PHOENIX: The desperate effort this week to find two hikers who disappeared at the bottom of the Grand Canyon represented the National Park Service's most extensive use yet of drones in a search-and-rescue mission. The Grand Canyon is the only national park with its own fleet of unmanned aircraft for locating people who have gotten lost, stranded, injured or killed. Under a program that began last fall, it has five drones and four certified operators.

While the aerial search for the two hikers came up empty, it threw a spotlight on technology that can enter crevices and other rugged spots unreachable by foot while sparing searchers the dangers of going up in a helicopter. With its steep cliffs, nearly 2,000 square miles and mesmerizing views, the Grand Canyon can be as dangerous as it is captivating.

Rangers were confronted with 1,200 medical emergencies, 293 search-and-rescue missions and 17 deaths in 2016, a year in which the park had nearly 6 million visitors. Last summer, a 35-year-old Yelp executive tripped while hiking, fell backward and was found dead 400 feet below. "Our historic model was to take the helicopter to look and see," said Grand Canyon chief ranger Matt Vandzura. But now, drones can offer "that same close look but without putting any people at risk. It has dramatically increased our ability to keep our people safe."

The drones are about 18 inches across and 10 inches high, with a battery life of about 20 minutes. Drone operators watch the video in real time and then analyze it again at the end of the day. The aircraft were used Monday through Wednesday in the search for LouAnn Merrell, 62, and her step grand-

son, Jackson Standefer, 14. The park also sent out three ground search teams of about 20 people in all, an inflatable motor boat and a helicopter.

Merrell and Standefer vanished last weekend after losing their footing while crossing a creek near the North Rim. They were on a hike with Merrell's husband, Merrell Boot Co. co-founder Randy Merrell, and the boy's mother. The park soon scaled back the operation and stopped using the drones but continued the search. In a statement, the hikers' families backed the decision and said they were "still praying for a miracle."

The drones have been used a few times already. In November, after a visitor drove off a cliff and died, drones were sent in to examine the trees and brush and make sure it was safe for a helicopter to fly in and lift the car out. The next month, rangers used a drone to locate a woman who had jumped to her death. Then they rappelled down to retrieve the body. The dangers of flying choppers in the canyon were illustrated in 2003, when a Park Service helicopter experienced a mechanical failure and crash-landed on the North Rim.

Those aboard suffered only minor injuries; the helicopter was totaled. Other national parks use drones, but for wildlife research. The use of private drones is prohibited in national parks. James Doyle, a spokesman for the park service's Intermountain region, said other national parks will probably seek their own drone fleets, too. He said the Grand Canyon's extreme topography - it is a mile deep - makes it a perfect candidate. "It's a wonderful tool for the unfortunate situation we just found ourselves in at Grand Canyon," Doyle said. —AP



Harry Huskey examining one of SWAC's Williams Tube memory units.

PIONEERING COMPUTER SCIENTIST HARRY HUSKEY DIES AT 101

SANTA CRUZ, California: One of the last surviving members of the team that created the pioneering ENIAC computer in the 1940s has died. Harry Huskey was 101. The University of California-Santa Cruz says Huskey died April 9 at his home in the city. Huskey was a professor emeritus at the university.

Huskey was teaching mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania in the

1940s when he joined the ENIAC team. ENIAC made its public debut in Philadelphia in 1946 as one of the world's first electronic computers. It weighed 30 tons and was 150 feet long. Huskey later designed the Bendix G15 in the 1950s, which was billed as the first personal computer. He taught at the University of California from 1954 to his retirement in 1986 at the age of 70. —AP

MATCH FOR MUTTS NEW WEBSITE HELPS PEOPLE ADOPT THE BEST DOG

WEBSITE MATCH PEOPLE WITH PETS USING QUESTIONNAIRE

BOSTON: People looking for the perfect family pet tend to choose a dog based on appearance or breed - but that's barking up the wrong tree. "If you think they're cute, you bring them home," said Jodi Andersen, a dog trainer and author. That's why Andersen, along with MaryAnn Zeman and Sharon Mosse, founded the new online business How I Met My Dog. It works like Match or eHarmony, fitting humans with dogs based on what really matters: personality, lifestyle and behavior.

Several other online services match people with pets, but the founders of How I Met My Dog say they take things to a new level with a more detailed, science-based questionnaire that narrows the number of dogs that meet a human adopter's lifestyle and expectations. The service is needed because about 4 million dogs per year are handed over to shelters and rescues, they said. Too many end up back in shelters, and too many are being euthanized because they can't find good homes.

"The system we're using now is broken and has to be fixed," Andersen said. Placing a pet in the wrong home is one of the biggest concerns at the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which finds homes for thousands of dogs and other animals every year, spokesman Rob Halpin said. Persuading adopters not to fall in love with the first dog they see is a major issue. "Sometimes our emotions take leave of our senses," said Halpin, who was not familiar with How I Met My Dog.

The MSPCA has "adoption counselors" who try to ensure people are matched with the right dogs, but Halpin embraced the idea of services that smooth that process. "We welcome the notion of technology helping people do some of the hard work it takes to pick the right pet," he said. How I Met My Dog, which also helps people who want to find a new home for a dog they just can't live with anymore, so far has partnered with 24 Boston-area shelters and rescues. The plan is to role it out nationally by the end of the year.

Pet profile

A person looking to adopt fills out what the founders call a "PET profile" for personality, expectations and training style. Are you a couch potato or an active athlete? Do you want a dog that gets along with children? Are you a disciplinarian when training a dog or more laid back? The dog profiles are completed either by the shelter staff or the current owner. The algorithm matches the humans

with dogs that complement their lifestyle. "For example, if you have kids, you will never see a dog from us that doesn't get along with kids," Zeman said.

Once the website matches someone with a dog, it's up to the adopter to meet that dog in person. The shelter or owner ultimately determines whether there's a match. Pawfect Life Rescue, of Uxbridge, Massachusetts, was one of the first rescue organiza-

tions to sign on with How I Met My Dog. "They have been pretty spot on so far with having the right people come and look at the right dog," Pawfect Life founder and president Julie Uthoff said. The Fredette family, of Waltham, Massachusetts, adopted their dog, Roscoe, from Pawfect Life after being matched through How I Met My Dog. Kate Fredette, her husband and two children had been thinking of getting a new dog for

about a year, but they just didn't know how to ensure they would get a good fit. "It was confusing," Fredette said. They obviously wanted a dog that gets along with children. They wanted a dog they could take on family trips. They wanted a social dog they could take to the park. They couldn't be happier with Roscoe, a 4-month-old mixed breed. "Mornings are so much better around here," Fredette said. —AP



MASSACHUSETTS: In this photo Kate Fredette greets the family dog, Roscoe, at their home in Waltham, Massachusetts.



MASSACHUSETTS: In this photo Morgan Fredette, 13, left, holds the family dog Roscoe as her mother Kate, center right, and brother Lucas, 11, right, play with the dog at their home in Waltham, Massachusetts. —AP Photos

SINGAPORE RESEARCHERS TURN WATER INTO VIRTUAL LEMONADE

SINGAPORE: It looks like lemonade, tastes like lemonade, but it's simply water. Researchers in Singapore say they have invented "virtual lemonade," using electrodes to mimic the flavor of the beverage and LED lights to imitate its color that could one day allow people to digitally share drinks over the internet.

"We are primarily motivated by the fact that our current digital interactions are not supportive for sharing beverages and food, which is something very common in our everyday lives," said Nimesha Ranasinghe, who led the team that did the research. The team conducting the research at the NUS-Keio CUTE Center, a collaboration between the National University of

Singapore and Japan's Keio University, decided to focus on the sour taste of lemonade to prove their idea.

A sensor dipped into a glass of real lemonade collects data on its acidity and color, which is transmitted via Bluetooth to silver electrode strips on the rim of a tumbler. The action of a drinker running their tongue over the strip in taking a sip causes the electrodes to simulate the sour taste, while a light-emitting diode (LED) flashes yellow. The technology can also simulate bitter and salty sensations, Ranasinghe said, adding that it could help people on restricted diets who need to cut back on salt or calories.

"We can even help the people who want to cut down their calorie intake," she added.

"If he craves lemonade, and can have a virtual lemonade, he can get the same experience, but zero calories." Still, the design needs some improvement, said student Genevieve Low, a volunteer who participated in tests of the drink.

"I think it's definitely the way the tongue touches the cup, because no one would, sub-consciously or consciously, put their tongue onto the electrode and then drink the water," she said in a recent test round. Another volunteer student, Wang Pan, was surprised by the taste. "I was imagining the electronic taste, but it's actually quite real to me because it's really mild, like mild-sweet. It's less sour than the real lemonade," she said. —Reuters

ANXIOUS FOR WIN, REPUBLICANS REVIVE US HEALTH CARE PUSH

NEXT WEEK VOTE MARKS CHANGES TO LEGISLATIVE EXPECTATIONS

WASHINGTON: US lawmakers and the White House on Friday braced for a hectic coming week in Washington, with Republicans readying new legislation to repeal Obamacare as Donald Trump seeks a victory to cap his 100th day as president. After an embarrassing health care defeat last month, Trump has suddenly heaped pressure on Republican leadership by saying he expects a vote on a revived version of the bill "next week or shortly thereafter."

"We're doing very well on health care. We'll see what happens," Trump told reporters Thursday. "It's evolving." Conservative and moderate Republicans were working with the White House on outlines of a deal. But with no legislative text to sell, it remained unclear whether the plan would receive majority backing in the House of Representatives, which resumes Tuesday after a two-week recess.

Scheduling a vote next week would mark sharp changes to legislative expectations in Washington, where the administration and lawmakers are up against a hard deadline of funding federal operations by next Friday, or face a government shutdown. Asked whether he would seek to prioritize a vote on health care or a government funding bill next week, Trump eagerly replied: "I want to get both."

In the days following the collapse of Trump's initial attempt to dismantle Barack Obama's health care reforms, he signaled his intention to turn next to his pledged tax overhaul. On Friday the president hinted that an announcement on tax reform-potentially including major tax cuts-could also come within the 100-day mark, which falls on April 29. "We'll be having a big announcement Wednesday having to do with tax reform," Trump said. That would make next week an especially busy time in Washington.

Controversial new draft

As the president seeks more victories, the White House appears keen to take a stab at swiftly passing an Obamacare repeal-something candidate Trump had repeatedly pledged to do within his first 100 days as president. For years, Republicans have promised to overturn Obama's reform, describing it as government overreach. Several conservatives wanted to see the bill lift burdensome and costly regulations that require insurance companies to keep a standard, minimum package of benefits-such as maternity care and hospitalization. The new draft, a copy of which was posted online by Politico, controver-

sially would allow states to opt out of including the benefits. They could also opt out of the so-called community rating provision, which requires insurers to charge the same for people regardless of their health status. The revision is aimed at drawing enough support from Republican moderates and core conservatives.

The latest changes were reportedly drawn up by Tom MacArthur, co-chair of the Tuesday Group of moderates, with input from Mark Meadows, leader of the conservative House Freedom Caucus which spearheaded opposition to the party's initial bill. Some Republicans expressed skepticism Friday, including Congressman Rodney Davis of the Tuesday Group who said he has had discussions with the White House on how to proceed. "I'm not going to be for a plan that's going to allow for preexisting conditions to not be covered," he told CNN.

Get it done right

Any deal would have to play the tricky game of winning over both conservatives and moderates in the Republican Party to surpass the 50 percent threshold of 216 votes in the House of

Representatives, seeing that Democrats will almost certainly unite against the plan. As for whether reaching that threshold is possible, "the answer isn't clear at this time," a senior Republican aide said. The plan would also need the support of nearly every Republican in the Senate to become law.

Despite stressing that Trump wanted to move quickly, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said the focus was to "get it done right," and not necessarily within the first 100 days. Even Trump appeared to downplay the need for speed. "No particular rush," Trump said Friday. "Next week doesn't matter." Meanwhile, Congress has five working days until government funding expires.

Complicating that timetable, the administration has indicated its desire to include several controversial elements in the spending measure. "We've made it very clear that we want border wall funding, we want greater latitude to deny federal grants to sanctuary cities, we want hiring of immigration agents, and we want \$30 billion to infuse the military budget," Spicer said. Democrats have warned that such "poison pills" would make the spending bill, which will require some Democratic support in the Senate, a non-starter.—AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks during a news conference in the East Room of the White House in Washington.—AP



IOWA: In this file photo, eggs sit waiting to be cooked at a cafe in Des Moines, Iowa.—AP

GERM IN RAW MILK, POULTRY NOW TOPS FOOD POISONING LIST

NEW YORK: The US government's latest report card on food poisoning suggests that a germ commonly linked to raw milk and poultry is surpassing salmonella at the top of the culprit list. The report counts cases in only 10 states for nine of the most common causes of food borne illness, but is believed to be a good indicator of national food poisoning trends. Highlights from Thursday's report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

What's making us sick?

The most common bug last year was campylobacter (kam-pih-loh-BAK-tur). It's mostly a problem in unpasteurized dairy products, but also is seen in contaminated chicken, water, and produce. Salmonella was No. 1 for the last 20 years but last year moved down to Number 2. Other causes like listeria, shigella (shih-GEHL-uh) and E. coli trail behind.

Is food poisoning getting worse?

Actually, no. Last year, there were no significant changes in new case rates for most kinds of food poisoning, compared to the previous three years. The new report tallied about 24,000 illnesses and 98 deaths in the 10 states. The CDC estimates that 1 in 6 Americans get sick from contaminated food each year, though most cases are not reported.

Any other good news?

Yes. There's been a continued decline in illnesses from what used to be the most common strain of salmonella - called Salmonella Typhimurium. That's possibly because of vaccinations of chicken flocks and tighter regulations.

What changed in the report?

Before this report, the CDC only counted results from traditional lab tests, which can take a couple of days. But the agency is now including results from new rapid tests, which check for 20 or more bugs and give results in an hour. Those tests are picking up more campylobacter but with the caveat that those might be dead germs that didn't cause any illness. While quicker, the new technology doesn't offer as many specifics and is making it more difficult to understand food poisoning trends.

Can I prevent food poisoning?

Yes. Carefully wash and clean food, and cook meat, poultry and eggs thoroughly. Avoid raw milk and unpasteurized juices. Promptly refrigerate leftovers. According to a U.S. government report, leafy greens like lettuce and spinach are the biggest source of food poisoning, and produce, in general, accounted for nearly half of all illnesses.—AP

FDA APPROVES 2ND NEAR-COPY OF REMICADE FOR IMMUNE DISORDERS

WASHINGTON: Federal regulators on Friday approved another alternative version of Remicade, an expensive injected drug widely used for rheumatoid arthritis and other immune system disorders. The US Food and Drug Administration approved Renflexis, developed by Samsung Bioepis Co. of South Korea. Its US partner, Merck & Co. of Kenilworth, New Jersey, will market Renflexis. Merck said Renflexis should be available in six months.

The delay is required under US regulations for a relatively new category called biosimilars. That's the industry term for generic but not quite identical versions of biotech drugs. Without insurance, Remicade generally costs more than \$30,000 annually for adults; dosage varies by weight. The first biosimilar for Remicade, Inflectra from New York-based Pfizer Inc., went on sale in November at a 15 percent discount. The companies refused to dis-

close the list price of Renflexis. Many US insurers are requiring patients to switch to lower-priced biosimilars, and the new competition will help insurers negotiate bigger discounts from manufacturers. Remicade is health care giant Johnson & Johnson's top seller, with 2016 sales totaling \$7 billion. It's approved to treat eight different immune disorders, including two in children.

Renflexis is approved for seven of those: Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and plaque psoriasis, plus Crohn's in children. Remicade and Renflexis both carry serious risks. More-common side effects include respiratory infections, headache, rash and stomach pain. Because the drugs suppress the immune system, their use can also result in serious infections, including tuberculosis, and unusual cancer types. — AP

DUTCH ABORTION BOAT ARRIVES OFF MEXICO

IXTAPA, Mexico: A Dutch sailing boat offering abortions, often in defiance of some country's laws, arrived in international waters off Mexico on Friday, the organization crewing it said. The "Women on Waves" vessel was expelled from near Guatemala in February without carrying out a single pregnancy termination. It had taken up position off Guerrero state, on Mexico's Pacific coast.

The "Women on Waves" group said in an online statement that it was offering "free legal medical abortions till 9 weeks of pregnancy" to women who needed them. It said its ship "has all required permits" and would

receive women until today. It noted that Mexico permitted abortions in cases of sexual violence. Abortion is limited in other cases to different degrees across the 31 Mexican states.

The Dutch group has previously sent its ship to waters off Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Spain. In a media conference given in the Mexican coastal town of Ixtapa, "Women on Waves" president Rebecca Gomperts said access to safe abortions was a matter of "social justice" in Latin America, especially after the Zika crisis which increases the risk of birth deformities.—AFP

EUROPEAN SALAMANDERS AT RISK OF EXTINCTION: STUDY

PARIS: Europe's already endangered salamander population faces extinction due to a new, virulent fungus that also poses a broader threat to biodiversity, according to a new study. Even a small amount of the highly infectious pathogen could wipe out fire salamanders from Western Europe, as the amphibian lacks the immune response to fight it off, researchers reported Wednesday in the journal Nature. "The fungus presents a 'perfect storm,'" said senior author An Martel, a professor at Ghent University in Belgium.

"The result is that within six month's time, infected fire salamander populations are reduced by more than 90 percent, and are finally extirpated." Following an outbreak in 2014, a team of biologists led by Ghent University monitored a colony of vulnerable salamanders for two years, leading to the grim discovery of the pathogen's fatal impact. Fungal spores-protected by cells with

thick, water-resistant exteriors-have a long lifespan and can thrive even when they do not inhabit a living organism.

The pathogen can spread through soil, water and air. It can also attach itself to less susceptible birds or frogs, which in turn spread the infection to salamanders. Dubbed "Bsal"-short for Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans-the deadly fungi first appeared on the European continent in 2010. Scientists believe the global trade in forestry, agricultural and wildlife species are responsible for the invasion of fungi in non-native habitats.

Given the super-fungus' characteristics-high virulence and rapid expansion-biologists worry that methods to contain the disease may prove ineffective. "Classical measures to control animal diseases such as vaccination and repopulation will not be successful and eradication of the fungus from the ecosystem is unlikely," said Gwij Stegen, one of the authors.—AFP

AFTER EBOLA, LIBERIANS SLOWLY EMBRACE MENTAL HEALTH CARE

MONROVIA: Drawn-out deaths. Communities torn apart. Survivor's guilt. Patrick Fallah says his memories of the days when the Ebola virus swept through Liberia are so awful that he sometimes has trouble focusing on the present. "Sometimes when I have a flashback of the death of my son and others who died in the Ebola treatment unit, I don't want to speak to people. I grieve so much that my mind is not really on what I am doing," said Fallah, 30, who lost his 8-month-old son and stepmother and is president of the National Ebola Survivors Network of Liberia.

The trauma of the world's deadliest Ebola outbreak, which killed more than 11,300, mostly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, has left many survivors fighting a battle some worry will never end. But Liberia, one of the world's poorest countries and with just one psychiatrist, has announced the ambitious goal of expanding access to mental health care to 70 percent of its population in the next few years.

The World Health Organization declared an end to the Ebola outbreak in June, estimating that more than 10,000 people who had been infected have survived in the three West African countries, including more than 4,000 in Liberia. As the world's attention has turned to other crises, many Ebola survivors still face the psychological consequences of the epidemic, feeling guilt over their pasts and worry for their futures without resources to deal with the pain.

Mental health is often an expense far beyond the reach of impoverished countries. Liberia is still struggling to rebuild its basic health services

after more than a decade of back-to-back civil wars that left a quarter-million people dead, with many killings carried out by drugged, under-age fighters notorious for hacking off survivors' limbs. Then Ebola arrived, frightening Liberians with its lack of a cure and its transmission through contact with body fluids.

Expand mental health care

Many people became too scared to touch others or offer comfort as the death toll grew. Now Liberia's government has announced its ambition to expand mental health care access to its more than 4.2 million people, with help from the US-based The Carter Center. "After the civil war, people didn't go through enough counseling. You have people already going through post-traumatic depression. Then Ebola came, and that built on what was already going on," said Dr. Francis Kateh, Liberia's deputy health minister and chief medical officer.

The Carter Center is helping to train Liberia's health care workers to identify mental health issues. Last month, 21 clinicians specializing in child and adolescent mental health graduated from the training. They join 187 mental health professionals who have been trained by the center since 2010 to work in prisons, with refugees or in other settings and are based in primary care clinics and hospitals around the country.

The Carter Center hopes to replicate its program in other countries, including Sierra Leone. But educating the public will take time, the new mental health workers say. "There are many people living with mental health problems in

Liberia without knowing they are," said one of the new specialists, Theophilus A. Joe. Stigma remains around mental health issues, said Musulyn Massaquoi, a registered nurse and another recent graduate.

Most people come to clinics only for physical issues, she said. Ebola survivors often have hearing and vision problems, joint pain or chronic fatigue, according to the medical aid charity Doctors Without Borders. Many also are shunned by their communities and family members, making them vulnerable to mental health issues. Children left orphaned by Ebola or who watched family members die are especially challenged, said Fallah with Liberia's survivors' network, which has about 1,800 members.

"They continue to have depression. They are still thinking about their parents," he said. "Sometimes when they sit in the class, they don't concentrate." During the holidays, some feel so neglected that they "want to take up knife to kill themselves." Some of Liberia's newly trained mental health workers have been placed in schools and orphanages to lessen the chances of stigma, said The Carter Center's mental health program director, Eve Byrd.

That approach is critical, she said. "If you address childhood trauma early, you're most likely to decrease symptoms of illness as the person ages." Stigma in Liberia has proven to be deadly. In March, an Ebola survivor who made the cover of Time magazine for her work as a nurse during the outbreak died when she experienced complications after childbirth and the nurses on duty were too afraid to touch her.—AP



LIBERIA: In this file photo, a medical worker sprays people being discharged from the Island Clinic Ebola treatment center in Monrovia, Liberia.—AP

BELGIUM'S FAIRYTALE BLUEBELL FOREST VICTIM OF OWN BEAUTY

HALLE, Belgium: A carpet of bluebells bursts into flower in Belgium in a wonder of the natural world-but one that is at risk of being trampled by tourists drawn to its beauty. For two or three weeks in April the ground of the Hallerbos wood just outside the drab capital of Brussels is transformed into a breathtaking sea of shimmering purple. "The scene is like in a fairytale,

the forest floor and allow the flowers to bloom. Huge swathes of the 555-hectare woodland are covered in millions of the delicate purple flowers for as far as the eye can see.

"This place is unique, the only one like it in Europe, in the world I think," says Adrien, who is taking 360 degree photos of the forest. Bluebells have been growing in Hallerbos for cen-

authorities to set up special parking lots and shuttle buses, with visitors finding themselves among school parties, groups of tourists and photographers lugging their equipment.

Centuries to grow again

More importantly they set up signs asking visitors to keep off the carpet of flowers and stick to the pathways, with especially vulnerable areas being taped off. "When there's too much trampling the bluebells disappears and it takes dozens if not hundreds of years for them to grow again," says Bruno Verhelpen, a guide who organizes nature walks at Hallerbos. "The interest in this forest is only going to grow. There are photographers, naturalists, members of the public. So we have had to take measures to limit traffic."

In the next two weeks as the flowers are in full bloom the forest paths will be so busy they will be "like a commercial street in central Brussels." One of the biggest risks is from people taking selfies in the woods, says Pierre Kestemont, a forest ranger who runs the www.hallerbos.be website. "A few years ago you'd get a few people taking pictures in the middle of the flowers, sometimes in strange outfits, but it was nothing serious. But now everyone has a smartphone and has turned into a photographer," says Kestemont, who spends up to 12 hours a day cycling around making sure people keep to the paths. "At the end of each day I can see where they have been walking. You can destroy in a week what nature has taken centuries to create." —AFP



BELGIUM: This file photo shows bluebells in the Hallerbos in Halle.—AFP

we're still expecting a little elf or witch to appear from nowhere," says Marie-Rose, who is walking through with her husband.

They are among tens of thousands of visitors from as far afield as India, Finland and Japan who flock each year to what had long been one of Belgium's best kept secrets. At the start of spring the tall beech trees are still bare enough to let enough sunlight reach

turies, experts say. The forest was largely cut down by the invading German army during World War II but replanted afterwards with beech trees and a few Californian sequoias, and the fresh cover has allowed them to really flourish.

But its growing popularity in recent years comes at a cost. At the weekends, the sheer numbers coming to visit the forest have forced Belgian



ROYAL HAYAT HOSPITAL WINS FOUR AWARDS

Royale Hayat Hospital won the 2017 Kuwait Public Relations and Customer Service Social Networks Accounts Excellence Award, Customer Service Excellence Award, Website Services Excellence Award and Call Center Excellence Award. The four awards, presented by Kuwait Public Relations Association, were announced during a ceremony on March 29, 2017 at Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber Cultural Center under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Ahmed Abdul Aziz Al-Ghannam, Executive Member at Royale Hayat Hospital, expressed his honor in RHH's achievement, knowing that the Kuwait Public Relations Association measures the implementation of international customer service systems and standards, which in essence takes into account the integrated work and level of cooper-

ation between departments and employees in institutions in order to provide the best service to customers.

In this regard, Al-Ghannam stressed on the fact that Royale Hayat Hospital implements new and innovative programs to optimize the level of performance, and develop effective communication among departments to improve patient experience. Kuwait Public Relations Association is a public benefit organization, established under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs in January 2006. KPRA recognizes excellence in public relations and customer service sectors in private and government institutions. In addition to highlighting the role and importance of public relations in bringing institutions together, providing effective solutions to customers and raising the level of professionalism in this sector.



AL-SAYER PARTNERS FOR IDEAL MOTHER AWARD ORGANIZED BY AL-KHARAFI ACTIVITY KIDS CENTER

Al-Sayer Group Holding CSR and Al-Sayer Medical Company have partnered as a "Platinum Sponsor" for the Ideal Mother Award, to recognize the hard work and dedication of mothers of children with intellectual disabilities from Gulf Cooperation Council Countries and Arab world.

The Awards ceremony was attended by Sheikha Sheikha Al-Sabah honorary Chairman of Kuwait Sports Club for Handicapped, Sabeeka Al-Jasser President of the Kuwait Foundation for Disabled Children, Aisha Al-Salem, Director of Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Centre, Ibrahim Al-Fouzan Vice Chairman Al-Sayer Group Holding CSR Committee, Bader Faisal Al-Sayer Deputy Marketing Manager

along with other distinguished guests and participants of the award.

The program of the event Started with an introductory movie reflecting the uniqueness of the event relevant to the current socio, cultural recognition essential for mothers with disabled children. A real life successful story of "Mohamed" was also played to share the confidence and enthusiasm among the audience.

The event was entertaining with poetry and operetta which was played by the well-wishers. The Ideal Mother Award which is being organized for the fifth year in a row by Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center were presented to 20 mothers from Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the Kingdom of

Bahrain, the Sultanate of Oman, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. The distinguished mothers were honored for their enduring love and hope to raise and develop the children with intellectual disabilities. They were recognized for setting examples as role models by encouraging parents to cope with such situation and letting the society accept them with respect and care.

Social Sustainability and Responsibility

"We convey our best wishes to the winners as well as all the participants of this prestigious award. We are confident this initiative by Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center will encourage many more individuals to initiate engagements in such noble causes.

The award reflects the respect of our community and rewards the patience, pain and sacrifices undertook by such mothers and families and Al-Sayer Group Holding and Al-Sayer Medical Company are proud to partner and promote this event. As part of its Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility (CSR) Al-Sayer Group Holding is keen to take part in the initiatives that work towards enhancing the society's welfare, especially within the special needs sector," commented Eng. Ibrahim Al-Fouzan.

Life Care

Al-Sayer Medical Company, provider of advanced health care products and services also joined this event with a "Life Care" stand,

exhibiting latest products and services available for the community with special needs in Kuwait encouraging them and promoting independent lifestyle.

Commenting on Al-Sayer's market leading services, Dr. Hossam Afify General Manager Al-Sayer Medical Company said, "Al-Sayer is known in the GCC region as a leader in its commitment to best-in-class customer service as driving continuous efforts towards enhancing customer satisfaction. Life Care, our premium healthcare outlet provides world class solutions that focus on innovation, functionality and value to incorporate a healthy life style, improve the quality of life and to promote independency for a productive community."

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
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Dr. Fabad Al-Mukhaizeem
ر. فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال
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ACK AWARDS AVIATION CLUBS FROM GCC

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) honored Gulf Cooperation Council's aviation clubs who participated in Kuwait's First Aviation Forum, as well as organizers of the Forum. On this occasion, Director of Aviation department at ACK, Captain Abdul Hameed Al Refai presented trophies to: Manager of Qatar Aviation club, Representative of the Saudi Aviation club, Manager of Al-Jazeera Aviation club, Representative of Al-Wa'lan Aviation, and Representative of the Organizing Committee of Kuwait's First Aviation Forum.

Commenting on the event, Captain Al Refai welcomed the participants in

Kuwait's First Aviation Forum, assuring them that they are in their second country Kuwait and at their second home, referring to their presence at ACK campus in Mishref, Kuwait. Al-Refai stated that participants are gathered due to their passion for aviation and adventure, while commending on organizing the first aviation forum in Kuwait, stating that the event has been a dream that came true. He added, "Behind each pilot is a story of hard work that could be overlooked by many. However, any effort exerted would disappear once the wheels of a plane rise off the runway. We should not also forget the efforts of aviation engineers and technicians."

The Commercial Real Estate Company participated in the Health and Safety Expo that was organized by the Arab Open University on April 17 and 18, 2017 in Ardiya. During the event, the company gave away 'Al Tijaria Elite' gift cards to the students, faculty and visitors which provides exclusive benefits and discounts to medical and health clinics and pharmacies available at Al Tijaria properties such as: Al Tijaria Tower, Symphony Style Mall and Boulevard to name a few.

Rawan Adnan, Dept. Manager of Marketing & Leasing has stated that the Commercial Real Estate Company 'Al Tijaria' aims to support the students and make it easier for them to get exceptional health services by providing them with "Al Tijaria Elite" Card. This card will also give the munique shopping discounts in the 'Lobby Project' located in Al Tijaria, Symphony and Boulevard malls.

The lobby project consists of shops owned by small business entrepreneurs offering various new products and services. During the official opening of the expo Dr. Moudi Al Humoud, President of AOU and Dr. Naif B. Almutairi, Director of AOU-Kuwait Branch thanked Al Tijaria Company for its efforts in supporting the youth and for participating in this expo organized by AOU management.



LOYAC LAUNCHES 'A BIG WORLD IN LITTLE HANDS' PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

LOYAC's 'Little Loyacers' program designed for age category of 5-12, launched a program of cooperation with a number of foreign embassies in Kuwait under the title of 'A Big World In Little Hands', which will be due throughout April. Preparations for the 'Culture Camp for Kids' program

started in February by selecting a number of countries from various continents through contacting their embassies in Kuwait. In this regard, LOYAC's voluntary programs manager, Ninar Al-Qamis said that the aim of the program was to introduce various cultures to kids and have them exchange infor-

mation with peers from other countries. She also noted that the program includes kids with 120 different nationalities. On her part, LOYAC's board member, Fetooh Al-Dallal thanked all participating embassies for their efforts and role in achieving the program's success.

ZUHEIR KHALEK APPOINTED AS GM AT THE PALMS BEACH HOTEL & SPA

The Palms Beach Hotel & Spa welcomes its new general manager, Zuheir Khalek who is American national and holds more than 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry, spent in USA, and UAE and now in Kuwait. Khalek commented on his appointment "I am very excited to join the family of The Palms Beach Hotel & Spa. It is absolutely a spectacular icon in Kuwait."

He also said, "My mission is to continue positioning the hotel as the premium resort in Kuwait while embedding the true Kuwait hospitality with our remarkable American flair." The American hotelier gained his vast experience in different departments which contributed a lot to developing his dynamic leadership skills. Previously, he used to hold the position of General Manager of Radisson Blu Fujairah Resort. He also worked in New York City, Washington DC, Las Vegas, Nevada, Dubai and more.



Greetings



Colleague Yasser Sukkar recently celebrated the graduation of his daughter Mariam Sukkar and her cousin, Reem Adel Sukkar from Al-Jeel AL-Jadeed School.



Yousif Saleem Mahmoud Saleem recently celebrated concluding his grade three on a special ceremony held at Al-Muthanna Primary School in Farwaniya. Yousif received congratulations from his parents and from the school director, Khaled Al-Ansari.



BURGAN BANK CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY AT ANNUAL TOWN HALL MEETING

Borgan Bank celebrated its annual employee town-hall gathering this year and highlighting four decades of continued success across the board. The annual corporate event which was held on April 19, 2017 commended employees' continued contributions towards the success of Borgan Bank which was, at its establishment in 1977, a small local Kuwaiti bank and is now a celebrated regional financial powerhouse.

The annual event started with a message from the Chairman of the

Board, Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, and was held with the presence of Eduardo Eguren - Group CEO, and the Bank's executive management. The event highlighted the achievements of the employees, the Bank's performance, and acts as a platform for alignment of objectives and trajectory.

Unlike tradition, this year's town-hall was structured as a panel discussion session as the bank's Human Resources department aimed to solidify a culture of dialogue and cooperation as part of its strategic progressive

approach and application of best practices of employee engagement. The unique forum allowed room for open discussions among executive management and employees. Additionally, the employees witnessed the launch of a new progressive scheme that involved internal initiatives to strengthen employee engagement with the aim of supporting an innovative, efficient, and productive workforce.

Halah El Sherbini - Borgan Bank's Group Chief Human Resources & Development officer said: "We, at

Borgan Bank, have achieved various milestones throughout our 40 year journey. We acknowledge and celebrate the dedication and perseverance of staff's efforts under the leadership of a highly driven management team; a momentum that has transformed the Bank to become a regional financial institute which applies best practices at every level. The Town Hall event this year served as a median to showcase our unified vision for the upcoming years. It also conveyed our business model and culture of customer-centricity which we

take pride in." "Thanks to our employees, Borgan Bank today celebrates a 40-year journey filled with accomplishments. In our pursuit and hunger for success, we must stop and acknowledge our work and our beginnings. We look forward to more years of success as we move into the next chapter of Borgan Bank's journey," added El Sherbini. Borgan bank management solidified its appreciation to the staff for constituting a driving force behind a well-executed strategy and maintaining a solid base against the headwinds

that challenged the banking industry throughout the years.

The Bank rewarded the staff for their loyalty, years of service and astounding achievements. The employee Town-Hall constitutes a crystallization of the Bank's belief that adapting an efficient, collaborative, and objective-driven environment is merely a result of its successful performance culture clubbed with transparent two-way communication between the employees and the management; an articulation of the Bank's high-standards at its best.



Participants and officials are pictured during an art exhibition to support K's PATH recently. K's PATH rescues, cares for and provides sanctuary for abandoned domestic and wild animals in Kuwait. It offers education to schools and individuals about the animals and natural habitats of Kuwait. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



INDIAN AMBASSADOR HOSTS FAREWELL MEETING FOR DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION

By Sajeev K Peter

Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain hosted a farewell luncheon in honor of Shubashis Goldar, Deputy Chief of Mission, HOC and Appellate Authority, who is leaving Kuwait after completing his tenure at the Indian embassy. Incidentally, Goldar is also retiring as a career diplomat after completing 37 years of service in Indian Foreign Service (IFS).

Addressing a cross section of community members and embassy officials on the occasion, Ambassador Jain applauded

Goldar for the commendable work he has done as Deputy Chief of Mission in his 'second inning' in Kuwait. Jain said, "Great credit goes to Goldar for the wonderful work he put in over the last six years." Jain also praised Goldar's wife Manushi for helping Goldar in carrying along his responsibilities.

In his vote of thanks, Goldar said he was honored by the well-organized farewell meeting. "My first posting in Kuwait was in 1989 and Invasion took place in August 1990," he said. Recalling the harrowing experience in the aftermath of the Invasion, he said, "We had to go through a very traumatic

experience. While driving to Basra on August 24, several tormenting thoughts flashed through my mind. I wondered what would happen to my family and if we would be able to go back to India or not." "But incidentally, I could also be part of one of the largest evacuations in the world. We could manage to evacuate 190,000 Indians from Kuwait over a period of 39 days which was a record," he recalled.

"After 25 years, when I came back to Kuwait for my second tenure here, I found a lot of positive changes in the country. I wanted to be in Kuwait in good times also. But the most

rewarding thing for me was that I found some of my good old friends again here. The community also has grown from 160,000 of 1990 to 950,000 today," Goldar said.

Goldar said he is happy that he was part of a team who could help improve the counselor services at the embassy and could develop some modalities to push forward the work which could be helpful for his successors. A good singer, Goldar rendered two songs on the occasion. A good number of community representatives and embassy officials attended the farewell meeting.

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



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



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 Salwagef
19:43 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salwagef
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



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 Zhuzhus
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



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

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



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 Cookabout
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



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



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



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



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



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



MY OLD LADY ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL



INVICTUS ON OSN MOVIES HD

11:50 Battle 360
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 Forged In Fire
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 American Pickers

16:35 Night Stalkers
17:30 Wild Case Files
18:25 Africa's Deadliest
19:20 Sharks Of Lost Island
20:10 Natural Born Monsters
21:00 Night Stalkers
21:50 Wild Case Files
22:40 Africa's Deadliest
23:30 Amazon's Electric Fish



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
23:30 Finding Nemo



00:00 Correspondence
02:00 Still Alice
04:00 50 To 1
06:00 Foreverland
08:00 Before 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



00:45 Moomins And The Comet Chase
02:30 Marco Macaco
04:15 Rugrats In Paris: The Movie
06:10 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



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



00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Sport Science
02:10 Ecopolis

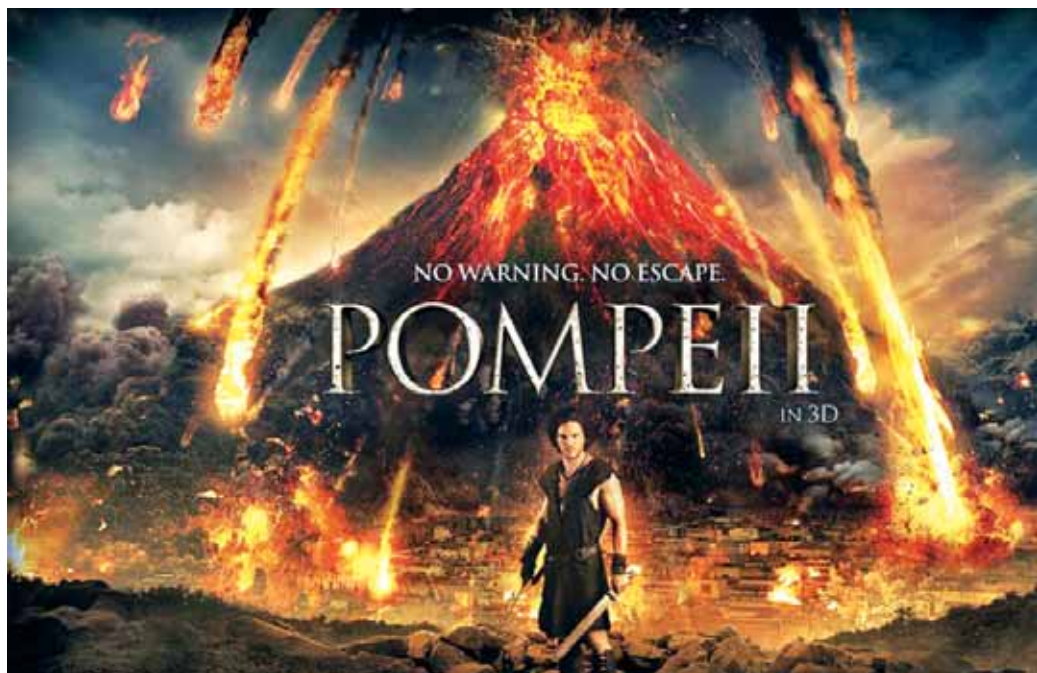
03:00 Prototype This
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How Do They Do It?
05:00 Food Factory
05:24 Sport Science
06:12 Ecopolis
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 Prototype This
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 Ecopolis
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory
10:38 Sport Science
11:26 Prototype This
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How Do They Do It?
13:26 Food Factory
13:50 Ecopolis
14:38 Prototype This
15:26 Sport Science
16:14 Mythbusters
17:02 Ecopolis
17:50 Prototype This
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 Strip The Cosmos
20:20 How Do They Do It?
20:45 Food Factory
21:10 Ecopolis
22:00 Strip The Cosmos
22:50 Prototype This



00:10 Monster Fish
01:00 Wicked Tuna
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
03:00 Alaska Fish Wars
04:00 Monster Fish
05:00 Nat Geo Amazing!
06:00 Situation Critical
07:00 Dog Whisperer
08:00 Dog Whisperer
09:00 Nat Geo Amazing!
10:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware
11:00 Parched
12:00 Science Of Stupid
12:30 Science Of Stupid
13:00 Situation Critical
14:00 Dog Whisperer
15:00 Dog Whisperer
16:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware
17:00 Parched
18:00 Gender Revolution: A Journey With Katie Couric
20:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware
20:50 Parched
21:40 Gender Revolution: A Journey With Katie Couric
23:20 Situation Critical



00:20 Jaguar: Catching The Cat
01:10 Animals Gone Wild
02:00 Super Pride
02:50 Wild 24
03:45 Dangerous Encounters
04:40 Natural Born Monsters
05:35 Super Pride
06:30 Wild 24
07:25 Dangerous Encounters
08:20 Natural Born Monsters
09:15 Africa's Deadliest
10:10 Wild Case Files
11:05 Savage Kingdom
12:00 Amazon's Electric Fish
12:55 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
13:50 Wild 24
14:45 Africa's Deadliest
15:40 Natural Born Monsters



POMPEII 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



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
05:00 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



00:05 Broad City
00:30 South Park
00:55 South Park
01:20 Tosh.0



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
08:55 The Zhuzhus
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

04:45 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Zou
06:15 Calimero
06:30 Loopdidoo
06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
07:25 Sofia The First
07:50 The Lion Guard
08:15 PJ Masks
08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:05 Goldie & Bear
09:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
09:35 The Lion Guard
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Doc McStuffins
10:55 Miles From Tomorrow
11:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
11:50 Sheriff Calie's Wild West
12:15 Gummi Bears
12:40 Miles From Tomorrow
13:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
14:30 The Lion Guard
15:00 Sofia The First
15:30 Doc McStuffins
15:55 Goldie & Bear
16:20 Miles From Tomorrow
16:50 PJ Masks
17:15 Sofia The First
17:40 Doc McStuffins
18:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
18:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
19:00 PJ Masks
19:25 PJ Masks
19:50 Doc McStuffins
20:05 Goldie & Bear
20:35 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
21:00 Gummi Bears
21:30 Miles From Tomorrow
22:00 Sofia The First
22:25 Sofia The First
22:55 PJ Masks
23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
23:35 The Hive
23:45 Loopdidoo



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 The Wheel: Survival Games
02:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
02:50 American Tarzan
03:40 Fast N' Loud
04:30 Storage Hunters
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Railroad Australia
06:50 Street Outlaws
07:40 Fast N' Loud
08:30 Marooned With Ed Stafford
09:20 Storage Hunters
09:45 How Do They Do It?
10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 The Wheel: Survival Games
11:25 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
12:15 American Tarzan
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 Storage Hunters

CLASSIFIEDS

Kuwait Times

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017



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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (20/04/2017 TO 26/04/2017)

SHARQIA-1 GHOST IN THE SHELL 1:15 PM THE BOSS BABY 1:30 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 3:30 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 5:45 PM UNFORGETTABLE 8:00 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 10:15 PM UNFORGETTABLE 12:30 AM	BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic FANAR-2 THE BOSS BABY 11:30 AM THE BOSS BABY 1:30 PM THE BOSS BABY 3:30 PM THE BOSS BABY 5:30 PM THE BOSS BABY 7:30 PM UNFORGETTABLE 9:30 PM Real Madrid Vs Barcelona - Live Game 9:45 PM UNFORGETTABLE 12:05 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:05 AM MARINA-3 GHOST IN THE SHELL 11:45 AM THE BOSS BABY 2:00 PM THE BOSS BABY 4:00 PM THE BOSS BABY 6:00 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 8:00 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 10:15 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 12:30 AM	COLOSSAL 7:00 PM COLOSSAL 9:15 PM COLOSSAL 11:30 PM
SHARQIA-2 FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:30 PM THE BOSS BABY 3:15 PM THE BOSS BABY 5:15 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 7:15 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 10:00 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:45 AM	FANAR-3 COLOSSAL 11:30 AM SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE 1:45 PM COLOSSAL 3:45 PM COLOSSAL 6:00 PM COLOSSAL 8:15 PM COLOSSAL 10:30 PM COLOSSAL 12:45 AM	AVENUES-1 UNFORGETTABLE 12:00 PM UNFORGETTABLE 2:15 PM UNFORGETTABLE 4:30 PM SAFRA 5 NJOOM 6:45 PM UNFORGETTABLE 9:00 PM UNFORGETTABLE 11:15 PM	360°- 3 BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 1:15 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 3:30 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 5:45 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 8:00 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 10:15 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 12:30 AM
SHARQIA-3 BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 12:15 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 2:30 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 5:00 PM THE BOSS BABY 7:30 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 9:30 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 11:45 PM	FANAR-4 THE BOSS BABY 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 Real Madrid Vs Barcelona - Live Game 9:45 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:30 AM	AVENUES-2 THE BOSS BABY -3D-4DX 11:45 AM THE BOSS BABY -3D-4DX 2:00 PM THE BOSS BABY -3D-4DX 4:15 PM THE BOSS BABY -3D-4DX 6:30 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX 9:15 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8-2D-4DX 12:05 AM	AL-KOUT.1 FAST & FURIOUS 8 11:30 AM FAST & FURIOUS 8 2:15 PM SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE 5:00 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 7:00 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 9:45 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:30 AM
MUHALAB-1 GHOST IN THE SHELL 12:45 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 3:00 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 5:15 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 7:30 PM UNFORGETTABLE 9:45 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 12:05 AM	FANAR-5 GHOST IN THE SHELL 11:45 AM GHOST IN THE SHELL 2:00 PM SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE 4:15 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 6:15 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 8:30 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 10:45 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 1:00 AM	AVENUES-3 COLOSSAL 1:00 PM COLOSSAL 3:15 PM COLOSSAL 5:30 PM COLOSSAL 7:45 PM COLOSSAL 10:00 PM COLOSSAL 12:15 AM	AL-KOUT.2 BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 1:00 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 3:15 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 5:30 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 7:45 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 10:00 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 12:15 AM
MUHALAB-2 BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 1:15 PM THE BOSS BABY 1:30 PM COLOSSAL 3:30 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 5:45 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 8:00 PM COLOSSAL 10:15 PM COLOSSAL 12:30 AM	MARINA-1 BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 1:15 PM SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE 1:30 PM SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE 3:30 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 5:30 PM COLOSSAL 7:45 PM COLOSSAL 10:00 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 12:15 AM	AVENUES-4 FAST & FURIOUS 8 1:30 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 4:15 PM Special Show "THE BOSS BABY" 4:45 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 7:00 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 9:45 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.3 GHOST IN THE SHELL 11:45 AM GHOST IN THE SHELL 2:00 PM THE BOSS BABY 4:15 PM THE BOSS BABY 6:15 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 8:15 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 10:30 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 12:45 AM
MUHALAB-3 THE BOSS BABY 12:45 PM THE BOSS BABY 2:45 PM THE BOSS BABY 4:45 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 6:45 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 9:30 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:15 AM	MARINA-2 FAST & FURIOUS 8 1:00 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 1:30 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 3:45 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 6:30 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 9:15 PM	360°- 1 THE BOSS BABY 11:30 AM THE BOSS BABY -3D 1:45 PM THE BOSS BABY 4:00 PM THE BOSS BABY -3D 6:15 PM THE BOSS BABY 8:30 PM THE BOSS BABY 10:45 PM GHOST IN THE SHELL 1:00 AM	BAIRAQ-1 FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:15 PM THE BOSS BABY 3:00 PM THE BOSS BABY -3D 5:00 PM THE BOSS BABY 7:00 PM THE BOSS BABY 9:00 PM FAST & FURIOUS 8 11:00 PM
FANAR-1 BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 12:45 PM MINE 3:00 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 5:15 PM MINE 7:30 PM BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 10:00 PM		360°- 2 COLOSSAL 12:15 PM COLOSSAL 2:30 PM COLOSSAL 4:45 PM	BAIRAQ-2 BISTERI RAJEL - Arabic 11:45 AM FAST & FURIOUS 8 2:00 PM

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Contact:

60900554 - 99412885

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Abdullah** Abdur Rashid s/o Abdul Rashid, holder of Indian Passport No. J5395474 and Civil ID No. 273022102554 has changed my name to Abdullah Shaikh, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5301)

change my name from Mario Pedro Costa to Mario Costa, hereafter in all my dealings and documents I will be known as Mario Costa. (C 5300) 23-4-2017

ACCOMMODATION

Room available in C-A/C flat for Asian couple/ Family/Working Ladies in Khaitein Airport Road. Just one minute to all routes bus stop. Tel: 51614467. (C 5298) 18-4-2017

I, **Mario** Costa R/o H.No. 1310, Cuncolim Voddi Salcete, Goa, hereby

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PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	03:50	Asr:	15:22
Shorook:	05:14	Maghrib:	18:19
Duhr:	11:46	Isha:	19:41



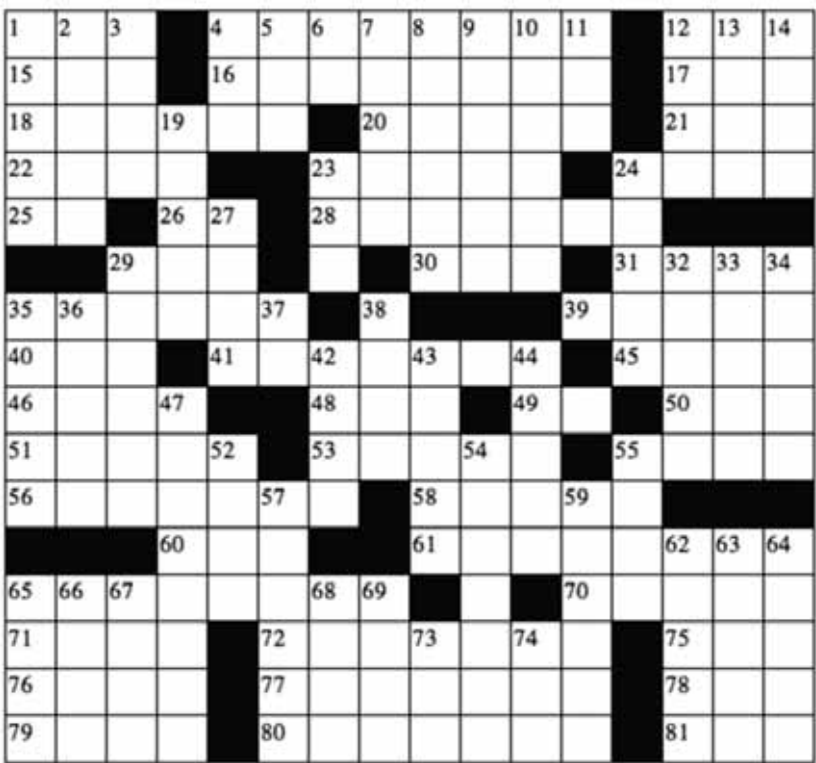
Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 23/4/2017				Departure Flights on Sunday 23/4/2017				Arrival Flights on Sunday 23/4/2017				Departure Flights on Sunday 23/4/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	JZR	124	Bahrain	13:30
JZR	125	Bahrain	00:10	AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	13:35	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	QTR	1078	Dubai	13:55	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:05	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	FDB	059	Dubai	14:15	THY	773	Istanbul	01:40	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	102	London	00:55	KAC	618	Doha	14:20	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:35	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	KAC	692	Muscat	14:55	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55	KKK	6505	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:40
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	KAC	563	Amman	15:40
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50	OMA	645	Muscat	15:10	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	502	Beirut	15:25	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:30	QTR	1087	Doha	04:10	KAC	619	Doha	16:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:10	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	RJA	640	Amman	16:00	KAC	417	Manila	04:20	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	FDK	801	Damascus	16:00	KAC	861	Istanbul	04:25	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:30
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	FDB	051	Dubai	16:15	JZR	560	Sohag	04:45	FDK	802	Damascus	16:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	KAC	103	London	05:00	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	VIZ	204	TEQ	16:20	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	JZR	125	Bahrain	16:25	CEB	019	Manila	05:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35	QTR	1077	Doha	05:35	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	KAC	118	New York	16:55	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:40	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05	RJA	643	Amman	06:25	JZR	240	Amman	17:30
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:50	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
CEB	018	Manila	04:00	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35	QTR	8512	Doha	06:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	JZR	177	Dubai	17:45	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05	KAC	381	Delhi	17:50
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	CLX	612	Luxembourg	17:45	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	QTR	1080	Doha	18:05	KAC	521	Al Najaf	07:35	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05	KAC	501	Beirut	07:50	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05	KAC	156	London	08:20	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
QTR	8511	Doha	05:20	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10	KAC	741	Dammam	08:30	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:10	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	18:45
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20	KAC	773	Riyadh	08:35	QTR	1081	Doha	19:15
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30	KAC	117	New York	09:00	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
BAW	157	London	06:05	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	09:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15	CLX	612	Luxembourg	19:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	620	Doha	19:50	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	163	Rome	09:20	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	KAC	104	London	20:00	KAC	691	Muscat	09:30	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15	KAC	101	London	09:45	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:35
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15	KAC	856	Dubai	09:50	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00	KAC	353	Bangalore	20:55
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	164	Rome	20:55	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00	DLH	634	Doha	21:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	564	Amman	21:00	IRC	529	Ahwaz	10:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:10	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:05	KAC	617	Doha	10:15	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:40
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30	KAC	203	Lahore	21:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15	QTR	1071	Doha	10:35	QTR	1089	Doha	21:45
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	676	Dubai	21:35	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00	MSC	416	Sohag	11:05	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:15	KAC	155	Istanbul	22:00
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	MEA	405	Beirut	11:35	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	BBC	043	Dhaka	22:30	JZR	776	Jeddah	11:55	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	JZR	241	Amman	22:55	VIZ	203	Baghdad	12:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
KAC	522	Al Najaf	11:20	JZR	185	Dubai	22:55	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	FDB	071	Dubai	23:35	JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10	JZR	528	Asyut	23:05
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	PIA	205	Lahore	23:40	PAL	669	Manila	13:10	KAC	783	Jeddah	23:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	THY	764	Istanbul	23:45					QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

CROSSWORD 1587



ACROSS

1. The network in the reticular formation that serves an alerting or arousal function.
4. A genus of herbs of the family Cruciferae.
12. The sign language used in the United States.
15. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
16. British informal.
17. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
18. A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
20. A Russian dish made with patties of ground meat (mixed with onions and bread and milk) and served with a sauce of sour cream.
21. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
22. United States poet and critic (1899-1979).
24. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
26. A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
28. African antelopes.
30. An informal term for a father.
31. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
35. An electronic pulse counter used to count pulses that occur too rapidly to be recorded individually.
39. A republic in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea.
40. An argument opposed to a proposal.
41. An intersection or crossing of two tracts in the form of the letter X.
45. A river in southwestern England rising in Gloucestershire and flowing through Bristol to empty into the estuary of the Severn.
46. A barrier consisting of a horizontal bar and supports.
48. One-thousandth of an equivalent.
49. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali metal group.
50. Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus Iva with small greenish flowers.
51. (Greek mythology) A Titan who was forced by Zeus to bear the sky on his shoulders.
53. A doctor's degree in musical arts.
56. Performance by or technique of a pianist.
58. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
60. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
61. A woman's headscarf folded into a triangle and tied under the chine.
65. A toothed wheel that engages another toothed mechanism in order to change the speed or direction of transmitted motion.
70. A cry or shout of approval.
71. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
72. Suffering from abulia.
75. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
76. British artist and writer of nonsense verse (1812-1888).
77. (or in some classifications family Zosteraceae) Small genus of widely distributed marine plants.
78. (British) Your grandmother.
79. Scottish chemist noted for his research into the structure of nucleic acids (born in 1907).

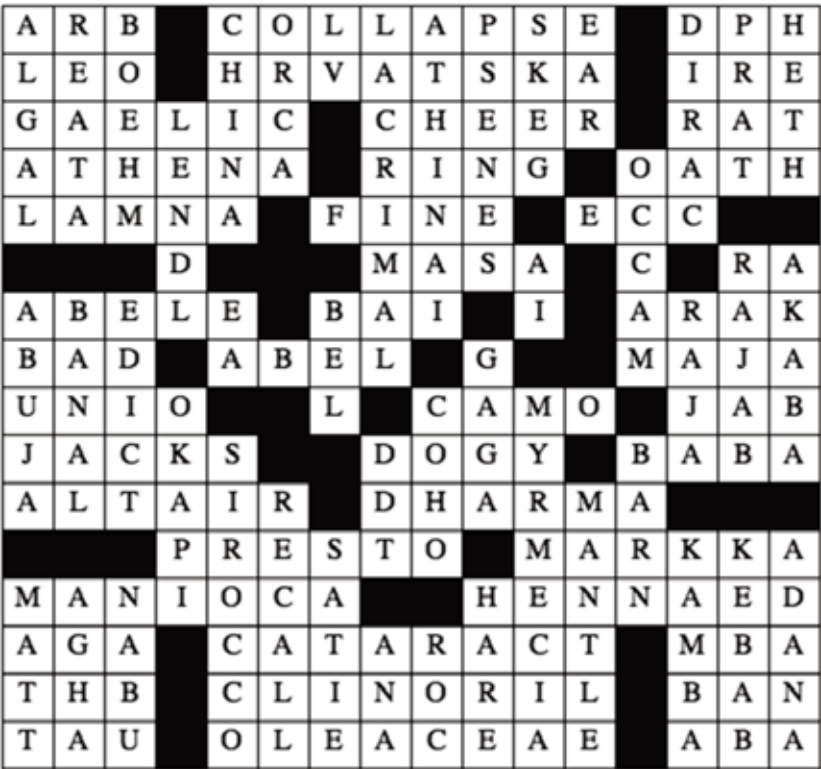
80. Of or relating to the enteron.

81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
2. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
3. The universal time coordinated time on board the spacecraft.
4. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
5. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
6. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
7. To fix or set securely or deeply.
8. (of spatial position) In or brought into line with or into proper relative position.
9. The light-sensitive membrane covering the back wall of the eyeball.
10. Any of various small terrestrial or aquatic crustaceans with seven pairs of legs adapted for crawling.
11. Inquire about.
12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
13. A fraudulent business scheme.
14. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
19. Of or like a cecum.
23. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
24. Boiled or baked buckwheat.
27. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
29. A strong paper or thin cardboard with a smooth light brown finish made from e.g. Manila hemp.
32. Type genus of the Caviidae.
33. A statistical method for making simultaneous comparisons between two or more means.
34. Obvious and dull.
36. Omnivorous mammal of Central and South America.
37. A blood group antigen possessed by Rh-positive people.
38. A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
42. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
43. Short and fat.
44. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
47. Toward land.
52. Of or relating to the Sikhs or Sikhism.
54. Small or little relative to something else.
55. A vigorous blow.
57. Tastelessness by virtue of being cheap and vulgar.
59. Of or relating to or toward the cheek.
62. A reddish brown dye used especially on hair.
63. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
64. A particular environment or walk of life.
66. A spread made chiefly from vegetable oils and used as a substitute for butter.
67. Showing or causing joy and pleasure.
68. Very dark black.
69. No longer in your possession or control.
73. A member of the Shoshonean people of Utah and Colorado and New Mexico.
74. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may have new and promising ideas today. This may be a day to start new ventures-or adventures. Your creative thinking is enhanced and your eager mind will learn things very quickly. Being in the spotlight may be familiar to you. You should realize that it is a good time to be humble and see where you can best help others, perhaps yourself. If you have not enjoyed your hobby recently, this afternoon may be the time to dive in and give it your attention. You enjoy being with your friends and you busy yourself in planning the next gathering. It is time to plan some an unusual entertainment that brings everyone together in a fun participation. This does not have to be expensive and can be a combined meal or game night.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your inventions, or inventive ideas, are as ready as they ever will be; what could be holding you back from showing off your ideason your own, you could develop these ideas with your own name. You may not think you need it but a patent attorney would be the next step and a good precaution to take. You are open-minded and seem to think of wonderful ways to create comfort for yourself and others. Your intuition is strong and you seem to be at the right place and at the right time in order to show off your ideas. Your interest can be turned into most any direction and before the day is over you will probably find yourself at an art show, a museum or a circus performance. Keep a notebook handy for new ideas and then relax. Happy birthday!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Tremendous personal insight may come today. Any situation that seemed foggy or clouded in the past will become better understood now. Denial is not a word for today. Something you say or communicate may go against your own best interests. You could blurt out the wrong thing or be unable to convey what you really intend to someone. Ideas and thoughts may be easy for you to understand but difficult to explain. Listening and assimilating the facts is in your best interest at this time. This is a period of transformation for you and if you accept the change and use it as a path to new growth, you can move into positive new directions. Be prepared for good things to happen-whether you think you have earned them or not-they are yours for the taking.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A desire to be noticed for your hard work will not go unrewarded. You have a balance of dignity and integrity, which leads to earned positive results. Take on a sense of knowing that you belong where you are because you achieved this place through your own efforts. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. Your judgment and planning abilities are in high focus now. There is a sense of fulfillment. General good feelings and a sense of everything working together well makes this a happy time. This evening you may find yourself thinking, planning and studying; for you have a real appreciation for thoughts and ideas. Family members are voting to invest in moving or enlarging the home.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You value what is honest and straightforward and have a particular aversion to what is secret, intense and private-you do not enjoy gossip just now. You may need to speak up for your beliefs so that particular people will respect your standards. Your inner resources and emotions are accented. Expect a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. Social affairs, group meetings, neighborhood gatherings are all possibilities after a project is completed. You are at your most elegant when it comes to social situations. Be prepared to create a balance for your inner and outer life so that the material issues of life do not take control over everything else. This may mean you learn new ways to meditate.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your concentration is so intense that you could find others will be calling your name before you realize that a one-sided conversation occurred and it was not you conversing. Thoughts and ideas that come to you may be just what are needed to help in an office dispute. Speak up and be heard; co-workers or teammates will be pleased with your insight. Your idea of conflict resolution and someone else's idea of solving problems may be two different avenues to the same desired outcome. However, once you have expressed your style of solving problems, you might as well know that people will come to you for encouragement and continued advice. Two of your innermost efforts are to not judge and to only come from the truth. A smile is contagious.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There is continued success and attention in whatever you decide to do today. Quick answers, great wit and a surplus of insights and discoveries are available. It is a good time to write and converse with real originality. Your family may be calling you from time to time. If the calls interrupt your train of thought or work project, jot down a couple of key words and get back to what you were doing quickly; you will be glad you did. Inventions and breakthroughs are possible. There will be invitations from friends to enjoy their fellowship later. If there are emotional wounds between you and a loved one, tonight would be a wise time to repair those wounds. You don't want to miss the wonderfully romantic events coming up very soon.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your attitude toward decision making has and will be going through some transformations. Today you could be tested by the negative attitude of an authority figure. Perhaps the business has some problems and higher-ups recognize your problem-solving abilities. You may want to delegate your regular job to others in order to become as helpful as possible. Your work will not go unnoticed; however, you must also show your appreciation to the ones that help you. If you do not delegate your work, you may have to work an excessive amount of overtime. It is time to barter for what you want. You will benefit through your flexibility. Be confident in expressing your viewpoints. Good news about a family matter may boost your spirit this afternoon.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are extremely creative and can come up with some great ideas for business management. You may or may not be working this Sunday but your ideas are excellent for making a presentation. If you have time, create an improvement or addition to your presentation ideas as it will gain you positive attention and help to make your point. You are particularly witty and make for good company. Your special relationship to the material world will allow you to be practical and precise in your choice of risks-financially speaking. Firm up a relationship through committing yourself honestly. Progress can be realized now. There are ways to multiply your financial holdings this weekend. There is talk of a camping trip and a few purchases will help.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Building successful communication bridges in the professional world will bring you excitement and direction. You may look forward to learning all about the news that people do not see every day. Much of your morning may be spent visiting a library, reading a newspaper or finding the news through reputable sources on the internet. You are just plain witty today and the ideas roll off your tongue. This is a great time for communication-by phone, letter or in person-and a visit with a relative might be planned for later in the day. A community organization would benefit from having you on their team. A new direction is in the picture for your personal life-perhaps it is travel, education, technical school or romance. There are wonderful experiences to come.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

A friend may meet you as you are halfway into your exercise task this morning. You could be walking or running a distance and enjoy the company. Later, you and your friend may attend a group meeting. You are fast to discover what others need and a most positive person to have at any gathering. You can be easily be influenced by your surroundings or other people's attitude. Practice using your powerful intuition to help you make the right move at the best time, particularly if you want to make suggestions while in this group gathering. A time of change may not be met with grace; however, with your encouragement, you will be able to clear up any fears of others. This afternoon you may enjoy a new book or perhaps, take in a movie.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You have an inborn ability to see the sunny side of life. Although your concentration may not be up to par today, you manage to make this a fairly successful day. Take a little trip, or get outside, weather permitting. You may discover insights into day-to-day problems that will be of great value later. Your feelings could be more inward and more like sharing some time with your lover or with close friends. Close relationships take on more meaning. Feeling cared for and needed is comfortable; the lack of these things can cause an instinctive feeling of uneasiness. Your secret for successful relationships is the way you communicate and share information. This evening you have an opportunity to grow closer to your loved one by cooking a meal together.

WORD SEARCH

Winter

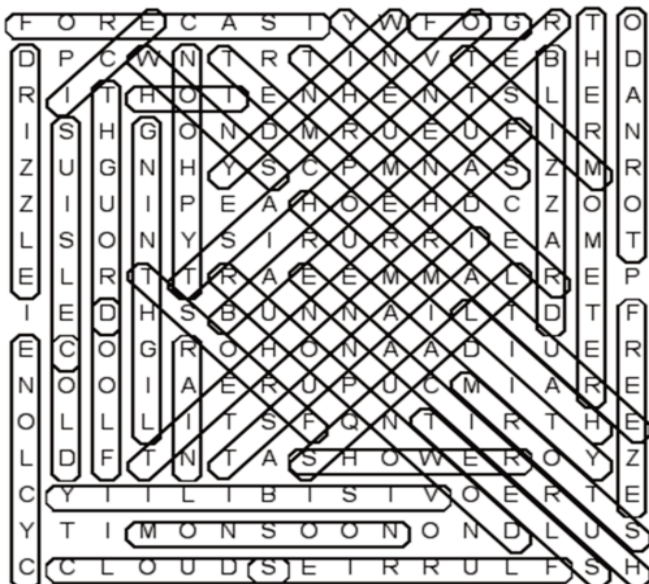
Find and circle all of the Winter related words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Japanese proverb.



- | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| BLACK ICE | HAIL | SEASON | SNOWBOARD |
| BLIZZARD | HEADBAND | SKATES | SNOWFLAKE |
| BOOTS | HIBERNATION | SKI DOO | SNOWMAN |
| CARNIVAL | HOCKEY | SKI PANTS | SNOWSHOES |
| CHRISTMAS | HOLIDAYS | SKIING | SOLSTICE |
| COLD | ICE FISHING | SLED | SOUP |
| EGG NOG | ICICLES | SLEET | STEW |
| FIREPLACE | KNIT CAP | SLIPPERY | STORM |
| FOG | LONG UNDERWEAR | SNOW CASTLE | SWEATSHIRT |
| FREEZE | MITTENS | SNOW PLOW | TOBOGGAN |
| FROST | OLYMPICS | SNOW SHOVEL | VACATION |
| GLOVES | PARKA | SNOW TIRES | WIND CHILL |
| | SCARF | SNOWBALL | WOOL SOCKS |

Yesterday's Solution

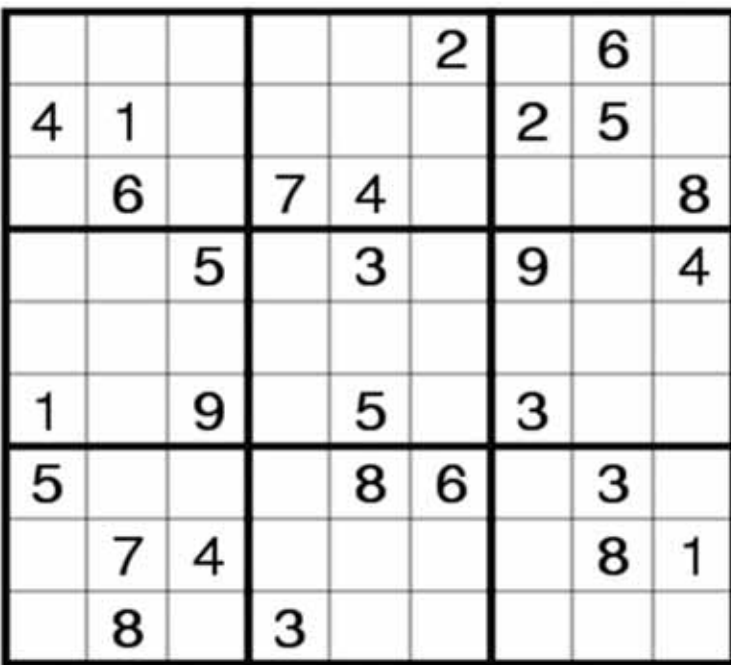
Weather



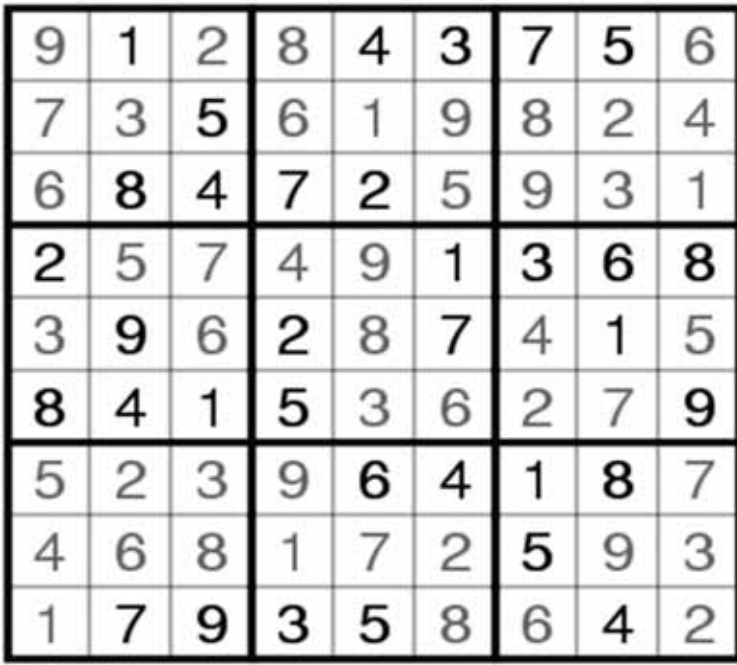
- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| BAROMETER | FLOOD | ICE | STORM |
| BLIZZARD | FLURRIES | LIGHTNING | SUNNY |
| CELSIUS | FOG | MIST | TEMPERATURE |
| CLOUDS | FORECAST | MONSOON | THERMOMETER |
| COLD | FREEZE | OVERCAST | THUNDER |
| CYCLONE | FROST | RAIN | TORNADO |
| DOWNPOUR | HAIL | SHOWER | Tsunami |
| DRIZZLE | HOT | SLEET | TYphoon |
| DROUGHT | HUMIDITY | SNOW | VISIBILITY |
| FAHRENHEIT | HURRICANE | SQUALL | WINDY |

The hidden word is: PRECIPITATION

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 Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlis 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



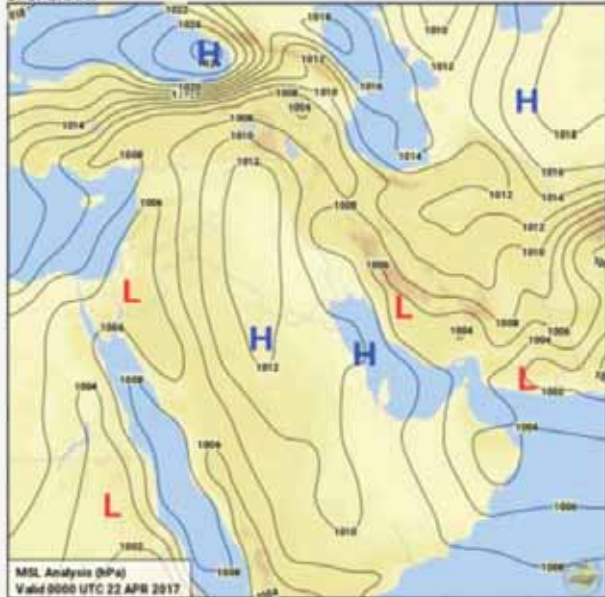
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 22/04/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 38 °C

By Day : Relatively hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 45 km/h causing raising dust.
By Night : Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Expected Weather	hot	partly cloudy + chance for scattered light rain later on	cloudy + chance for scattered rain	partly cloudy
Min Temp °C	24	26	24	22
Max Temp °C	40	39	35	36
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable	south easterly changing to north westerly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 30	15 - 38	15 - 38	12 - 35

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Weather Watche



Fresh wind

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	24	37
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24	38
ABDAILY	20	37
BUBYAN	20	37
JAHR	22	37
FAILAKA ISLAND	22	36
SALMIYAH	24	33
AHMADI	25	35
JAL ALIYAH	20	36
QAROH ISLAND	23	28
UMM AL-MARADEM	23	30
NUWAISIB	21	36
WAFRA	22	36
SALMY	19	35
MUTRIBA	20	37

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	37
Min Temp (°C)	20
Max Rel Hum (%)	33
Min Rel Hum (%)	07
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	64 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm



Sunrise

05:14



Sunset

18:18

Prayer Times

Fajr	03:50
Sunrise	05:14
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:22
Sunset	18:18
Isha	19:40

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Nigar	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

PRIVATE CLINICS



Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons	Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor 25622444	Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf 22547272	Dr. Khaled Hamadi 25665898	Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman 25339330
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea 25752222	Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari 22617700	Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed 25340300	Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888
Dr. Masoma Habeeb 25321171	Dr. Abdel Quttainah 25625030/60	Dr. Zahra Qabazard 25710444	Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy 25739999	Family Doctor	Dr. Sohail Qamar 22621099	Physiotherapists & VD
Dr. Mohsen Abel 25757700	Dr Divya Damodar 23729596/23729581	Dr. Snaa Maarroof 25713514	Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl 25732223	Psychiatrists	Dr. Pradip Gajare 23713100	Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees 22666288
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly 25732223	Dr. Esam Al-Ansari 22635047	Dr. Zacharias Mathew 24334282	Rheumatologists:
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan 22613623/0	Dermatology	Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner 24555050 Ext 510	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University 23845955	Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah 25722290
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali 25644660	DrAdrian arbe 23729596/23729581	Dentists	Internist, Chest & Heart
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel 25646478	Dr. Verginia s.Marin 2572-6666 ext 8321	Dr Anil Thomas 3729596/3729581	DR.Mohammes Akkad 24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah 25311996	Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan 22655539	Dr. Shamah Al-Matar 22641071/2	Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory 25731988	Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami 25343406	Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed 22562226	Assistant Professor Of Medicine
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary 22620166	Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly 25739272	Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer 22561444	Head, Division of Cardiology
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz 25651426	Dr. Salem soso 22618787	Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan 22619557	Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital 25339667
General Practitioners	General Surgeons	Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash 22525888	Consultant Cardiologist
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi 24555050 Ext 123	Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer 22610044	Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan 25653755	Dr. Farida Al-Habib 2611555-2622555
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar 24719312	Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher 25327148	Dr. Bader Al-Ansari 25620111	MD, PH.D, FACC
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaazem 257326920	Internists, Chest & Heart	Neurologists	Inaya German Medical Center
Dr. Kathem Maarafi 25730465	Dr. Adnan Ebil 22639939	Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri 25633324	Te: 2575077
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadad 25655528	Dr. Mousa Khadada 22666300	Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan 25345875	Fax: 25723123
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi 24577781	Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan 25728004	Gastrologists	
Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae 25333501	Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra 25355515	Dr. Sami Aman 22636464	
Urologists	Dr. Mobarak Aldoub 24726446	Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly 25322030	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy 22641534	Dr. Nasser Behbehani 25654300/3	Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali 22633135	
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul 22639955			
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi 22616660			
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) 25313120			
Dr. Leons Joseph 66703427			

Psychologists
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Kelly Osbourne once had a Subway sandwich thrown at her

The 32-year-old reality TV star shot to fame in 2002 when her famous family invited the cameras into their home for their show 'The Osbournes' but she has admitted she wasn't prepared for the scrutiny she'd receive over her weight and remembers vividly one time when a cute guy asked her to roll down her car window, which she assumed was to ask for directions, in Los Angeles and he launched the messy roll at her. Recalling the moment in her new autobiography 'There is No F***ing Secret: Letters From a Bada** B***h', obtained by DailyMail.com, she said: "Instead, he threw a foot-long Subway sandwich in my window, which hit me on the side of my head and exploded. Then he called me fat b**h and sped off." Kelly's friends tried to persuade her to report the incident but she refused because she thought the police would laugh if she told them she'd been assaulted by a sandwich. The memoir documents Kelly's childhood and life in the spotlight, as well as her

famous father Ozzy Osbourne's battle with drugs and alcohol and how he relapsed when her mother Sharon was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2002. She explained: "Whenever something bad happened, like when my dad would start using again or mum was diagnosed with cancer, I was convinced that it was 100 percent my own fault, even if it was entirely out of my control ... Dad was there in his boxers [when Sharon got her diagnosis], and I watched him scoop his hands into a bowl of pills, swallow a handful of something, and then wash it down with vodka." Although she could see how much drugs had taken over her dad's life, Kelly turned to the substances herself when her mother was fighting for her life in hospital and Ozzy was lying in a coma in a hospital in the UK following an ATV accident.

HARRY STYLES NEARLY BURNT DOWN SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE



The One Direction singer was left fearing for his - and everyone else in the vicinity - life last Saturday when he accidentally set his shirt on fire back stage in New York's Rockefeller Plaza following his live performance of his single 'Ever Since New York'. A source told The Sun newspaper: "Harry nearly burned the place down. His manager asked if he could smell burning - he'd thrown his shirt onto a candle and the whole sleeve had set alight. He tried to stamp it out but then his sock caught on fire." The 23-year-old hunk reportedly started the small blaze by whipping off his shirt after his sweaty gig under the spotlights and accidentally threw the sleeve into candle. He tried to stamp out the fire with his foot but, instead, caught his sock alight. The insider explained: "Luckily, the whole team got involved and managed to stamp the flames out, but it was one step away from needing a fire extinguisher." This isn't the first time Harry has almost gone up in flames as he nearly walked into a pyrotechnic on stage at a One Direction concert in Chicago four years ago. The heart-throb avoided a catastrophic disaster by the skin of his teeth as his former bandmate Zayn Malik - who quit the group in 2015 just months before they announced they were taking an extended hiatus to go solo - pulled him back. The 'What Makes You Beautiful' hitmakers have all released their own solo content since they went their separate ways and Harry will drop his debut album in May.



Chris Brown's documentary to release soon

The 27-year-old singer regularly finds his face splashed across magazines due to his public run ins with the law and explosive relationships but he will now get the chance to share his side of the story in his forthcoming biopic 'Welcome To My Life'. The film's website said: "This compelling documentary moves beyond the spotlight and past the attention-grabbing headlines to give pop superstar Chris Brown a chance to tell his own story. New interviews with the international phenomenon reveal long-awaited answers about his passion for making music, his tumultuous and much publicized relationships, and the pitfalls of coming of age in the public eye." The documentary will also feature some familiar faces - Usher, Jennifer Lopez, DJ Khaled, Mary J. Blige, Mike Tyson, Rita Ora and Jamie Foxx - and some never-seen-before footage from concerts, work projects and in the studio. Speaking in the trailer, the 'Privacy' hitmaker said: "I went from being

America's sweetheart to public enemy number one." The sneak peak, which was released last month, sees Chris opening up about his abusive relationship with Rihanna, in which he attacked her, in 2009. He said: "I felt like a f***ing monster. I was thinking about suicide and everything else. I wasn't sleeping, I wasn't eating. I just was getting high." And his mother, Joyce Hawkins, admitted the incident marked the "worst day" of her life. She said: "That was the worst day of my life and probably his life. I felt like I was going to lose my child." Despite the way his reputation plummeted after the assault - for which he was sentenced to five years of probation, one year of domestic violence counselling, and six months of community service - and subsequent other legal problems, the 'Beautiful People' singer insists he will never be "finished".

Kate Beckinsale has responded to Wiseman's divorce petition

Six months after the 'Total Recall' director filed court papers to end his marriage to the 'Love & Friendship' actress, Kate has filed her own response, with just one difference. While Len insisted the pair are not seeking spousal support from each other, Kate's filing states that she is reserving the right to support from Len, TMZ reports. The pair - who married in 2004 - had a pre-nuptial agreement and Kate has asked for all of her earnings, following the breakdown of their relationship, to remain hers. She is also seeking to keep her own jewels and other personal items. In court papers previously filed by Len in October, 11 months after they split, he cited irreconcilable differences. News of the pair's split surfaced in November 2015, with one source claiming they had secretly separated several months prior to that. A source said: "They are still friendly and spend time together in LA when Kate is there. There has been no drama. It's just not Kate's style. They have both had complicated schedules and have grown apart." Kate, 43, previously in a relationship with actor Michael Sheen, 48, for eight years until 2003. They have an 18-year-old daughter Lily together. Despite their separation 14 years ago, Kate and Michael have remained close friends and have always co-parented Lily. Their bond is so close that Michael finds himself the butt of jokes made at his expense by Kate, Lily and his girlfriend Sarah Silverman



Professor Green rushed back into hospital

The 'Read All About It' hitmaker was discharged from the ward earlier this week after undergoing a five-hour operation to repair three hernias but was readmitted on Friday (21.04.17) night and is now strapped up to a catheter due to "stomach bloating." Taking to his Instagram account shortly after he ended up back in hospital, the 33-year-old rapper uploaded a photograph of him looking a little worse for wear in his hospital gown with a tube up his nose and a drainage bag in his hand. He wrote: "Living it up. Discharged only to be readmitted (sic)." He then shared a close-up picture of his nasogastric intubation - a tube that is inserted into the nose for continuous drainage of the stomach - and reflected on how unwell he's been recently and how his wealth is determined by his health. He explained alongside the somewhat gruesome photo: "After ending up back in the hospital (due to bloating post surgery) I've now got one of these in my stomach draining it. The joys. When people say 'Health is wealth' it really is, isn't it. "I always have an album in my head; right now that isn't the issue. Right now I also have a catheter in my willy. Anyone else going through the same struggle? (sic)." Pro Green - whose real name is Stephen Manderson - has spent the past few months battling extreme pain after part of his organs within his stomach burst through a weakness in the muscle or surrounding tissue wall and left him doubled over. He thought the end was in sight earlier this week when he underwent an intense operation to fix the problem, which he believes was caused by his battle with anxiety.



Gigi Hadid and Zayn Malik have a 'great relationship'

The 21-year-old model and the 'Pillowtalk' hitmaker are still going strong, according to Shiva Safai, who is engaged to Gigi's dad Mohamed Hadid. Shiva told E! News: "Whatever makes Gigi happy is what we want. As long as she's happy in a relationship, that's all we want. So I'm just happy that she's happy. "He's a great guy and she's a very smart girl and she's amazing. They have a great relationship." Meanwhile, Zayn previously gushed about his girlfriend, admitting she is the one person he wants by his side. In a Twitter Q & A, Gigi asked: "When you're alone, who do you want next to you?" Without hesitation, Zayn replied: "You." Gigi, off camera, appears shy after she pauses before adding "Thank you baby", to which Zayn then elaborates further: "And our dogs, and sometimes my mum, she cooks some good food. And family members in

general, yeah, I love you all." Meanwhile, Gigi recently admitted she struggled to keep it together when the couple went on their first date and says the pair "connected really quickly". She said: "We actually met at a friend's birthday party a few years ago. Then, he was in New York to come to the Victoria's Secret show ... and ended up not coming. I was like, 'I'll play it cool, I'll go to the after party.' He wasn't there. And then later that week, we ended up going on our first date. We played it cool for like ten minutes, and then I was like, 'You're really cute.' We connected, like, really quickly." These days, Gigi and Zayn like to keep their evenings casual, as she's always so tired from all the travelling around the world for her job.

GOSSIP



Tyga is dating Justin Bieber's ex

The 27-year-old rapper recently split from 19-year-old reality TV star Kylie Jenner and was spotted on a date earlier this week with Jordan Ozuna, who previously dated Justin - a friend of Kylie's. Tyga and former cocktail waitress Jordan, who walked in Kylie's brother-in-law Kanye West's fashion show for his Yeezy line, were spotted cuddling after their lunch date in Los Angeles. Reports of Tyga's new relationship comes after he had an awkward encounter with Kylie at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival earlier this month. Speaking about the moment the 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star came face to face with the 'Rack City' hitmaker to PEOPLE, a source said: "Kylie looked really sad as she walked away." And it has been reported the pair shared an "awkward hug" at the bash. The source added: "[They] shared an awkward hug." The teen entrepreneur - who set up her beauty empire Kylie Cosmetics last year - was accompanied by her close

friend Jordyn Woods at the festival, whilst Tyga was accompanied by a group of his own pals. It has also been reported Tyga - whose full name is Micheal Ray Stevenson - wanted to get closer to the stage when Kendrick Lamar performed, but was pulled out by bodyguards. An onlooker explained: "Once Kendrick went on stage, Tyga and his crew were escorted to the front of the stage to watch the performance. "A bodyguard began pushing through the crowd with a flashlight to get Tyga and his friends away from the stage." Despite bumping into his former flame and being pulled out of the crowd, Tyga - who has four-year-old son King Cairo with his previous partner Blac Chyna - was adamant he wasn't going to leave the venue entirely and opted to watch the acts perform from a distance.

Chloe Sevigny deals with Instagram trolls by liking pictures

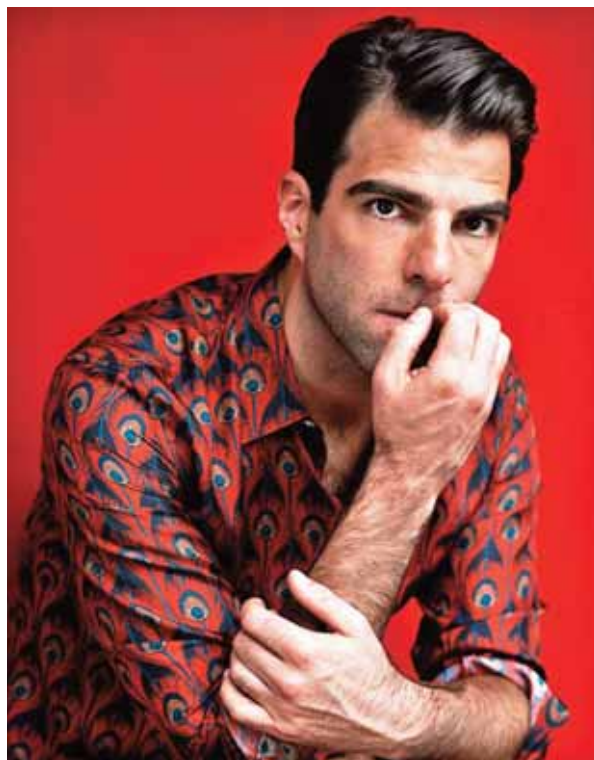
The 'American Horror Story' actress has a social media following of nearly 570,000 and though not all the comments she receives on the photos she shares are positive, she has found a clever



strategy to keep haters at bay. She told Net-a-Porter's The Edit magazine: "I go onto their profile after they have said something mean and I 'like' a picture. "It humanises me. And I've actually had people then apologise for what they said." The 42-year-old actress created her own Insta-series to show "alternative beauty ideals" as she finds it "inspiring to see women who are not conventional beauties who have been judged". She said: "If Rihanna was in my outfit, the tabloids would love it. I don't court mainstream success so they have a hard time understanding me. "It's impossible for me to go somewhere and not be judged. We are in a culture of darkness where everybody is a critic. "Susan Sarandon and Katy Perry get s**t from liberals and conservatives. And I'm horrified at the insults that Lena Dunham has to put up with." The outspoken actress also condemns self-promotion and believes social media "white-washes" everything. She said: "I'm 42 and I'm already famous - why would I self-promote myself like that? It's disgusting. "I'm very confused by millennials. When I was a teenager, your wardrobe identified who you were. There aren't any tribes anymore; just teenagers dressing as one." Although starring in a number of successful films and TV shows, Chloe has yet to star in big-budget movie but she said she would love to be part of something that makes an impact. She said: "I'd love to be part of a movie that made a big impact. I compromised, once, to get a pay cheque to help my mom with a mortgage. But I've been able to maintain my integrity."

Oscar Isaac 'fortunate' to spend time with mother

The 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi' actor's mum Maria discovered she was suffering from a serious illness last October so Oscar shelved as many of his work commitments as possible to be with her. During the final months of her life before she passed away in February, Oscar did as many special things as he could with Maria, including taking her to the Golden Globes with him and flying her to Madrid, Spain, so she could see his latest movie 'The Promise' being made and show her a cut of the film and he is grateful for all the moments they shared. In an interview with The Guardian newspaper, the 38-year-old Hollywood star said: "I was really fortunate to be able to just be with her the entire time and not be off on some set somewhere. At first, we didn't know how ill she was, and she didn't either, but as things progressed, it was much easier to say no to things. At a certain point, it was like, clearly, 'I'm not going to be doing anything.' " Oscar was very happy that his mother enjoyed the final film of his that she watched as 'The Promise' - a World War I period drama focusing on the Armenian genocide - is a project he is personally very proud of. He said: "It's like a great movie for moms. I have to say when I first watched it, I said, 'I think moms are really going to like the movie. I showed it to her, and sure enough, she's like, 'I love it, Oscar. I love it.'"



Zachary Quinto devastated by the death of his dog

The 'Star Trek' actor has paid a heartbreaking tribute to "true prince" Noah, in which he told how the pooch made him a "better person" and thanked his canine companion for always being by his side. He wrote on Instagram alongside a picture of himself and Noah: "anyone who has ever truly known me in the last 14 years has known this true prince. noah has been by my side through up and down. thick and thin. feast and famine. in loving him i learned to love myself more fully. he taught me compassion and patience and generosity... and oh how he made me laugh. "he made friends wherever he went. his spirit was pure. his love was legend. i am a better person for having had him in my life. but tonight we had to let him go. surrounded by love he went to sleep. and may he forever rest in peace. (sic)" The 39-year-old actor's partner Miles McMillan - who he has been dating for over two years - has also paid tribute to the dog on Instagram and shared the pet's last moments with his followers. He shared a photo of Noah and wrote: "We had to say good bye to our dear sweet Noah last night. He was surrounded by love flowers and music. I'll always remember his big grin and how happy he always was to get a little lovin'(sic)" and generosity ... and oh how he made me laugh."

ELSA PATAKY AND CHRIS HEMSWORTH HAVE A PET SNAKE

The couple - who have four-year-old daughter India and three-year-old twin sons Tristan and Sasha - moved from Los Angeles to Byron Bay in Australia in 2015 and the 40-year-old Spanish actress admits she is far more suited to life in the "wild" than Hollywood "glamour". She said: "I don't mind the wild, people are like 'You have a snake in your bedroom!' And I'm like, 'I know! I love it! It's so exciting. "My kids don't like huntsman and that, but I'm a very fearless person. "It's totally me, more than any inch of glamour. People don't know me in that way because they see you all dressed up and with your makeup done, but when I feel my most happy is when I'm the total opposite. "And the whole family have embraced life as "farmers" so Elsa hopes when her kids get older they will appreciate rural living as much as she does now. She told Husskie: "I can't wait to take

off my heels and my fancy dresses and just enjoy nature and being with the horses. Every morning I go to my horse barefoot and I clean out the stalls. "My daughter asked me, 'Mumma, are we farmers now?' And I was like, 'Yes! We are farmers!'"She doesn't admire anything about the movies, she's just excited to be at home and being with the horses - giving them hay. I hope that [the children] appreciate that kind of life because I didn't have it when I was growing up and I always dreamt of being a farmer."Elsa and her 33-year-old husband always swore not to "make" one another move back to their home countries, but the Spanish star fell in love with the 'Captain America' hunk's hometown as soon as she visited for the first time.



Blige accuses ex-husband of spending \$420,000 on his new girlfriend

The 46-year-old singer filed for a divorce with Martin 'Kendu' Isaacs - who was also her manager - last year after 12 years of marriage and in new court papers obtained by TMZ, Mary J says he claims he spent the huge amount on "travel expenses" but she believes they were not business related. She alleges he spent the money on his girlfriend. Martin is seeking \$110,000 a month in support from Mary but she is fighting back, saying: "I am not responsible for supporting [Martin's] parents and his children from another relationship which he lists as ongoing monthly expenses." She also claimed her estate is "underwater to the tune of \$10 million" and she is solely responsible for expenses. Mary J previously claimed she filed for divorce because she could "sense" her partner didn't want her anymore, and she was left "suffering" by herself. She said: "I can sense that I'm not what you want anymore. "You start to see that this man doesn't want you and

he's just gone all the time and you're by yourself in the relationship. When you see you're by yourself and you're just suffering through it, now it's time to do some investigating. "When I got the full proof, I didn't have to investigate it. It just showed up." And the vocalist praised her fans for saving her and for helping her get her life back on track. She said: "I've finally got my life back. My fans have saved me. I have to keep going for them ... I chose life. At anytime we all go through dark times. You might lose something when you make a positive choice and lose something when you make a negative choice, so for me it's best to just lose whatever you're going to lose to get your life back." — Bangshowbiz



FEATURE



Shonda Rhimes tells all about how to become a screenwriter

Shonda Rhimes, the TV mastermind whose hits include "Grey's Anatomy" and "Scandal," keeps a lid on plot twists. But she's giving aspiring screenwriters a behind-the-scenes look at how to succeed in her craft. In six hours of online classes, Rhimes offers lessons on writing scripts, pitching pilots, and how series' writers work together to create stories and screenplays. Scripts from "Scandal" and the "story bible" that laid out the characters and structure of "Grey's Anatomy" are part of her master-class.com course. So why spill?

"I love the idea that for \$90, somebody who couldn't afford to go to film school would get to take this class," Rhimes said. "No matter where you are, what you were doing, where you were in life, you could stop for a little bit of time and take this class

and get this education." "It felt like an equalizer to me, and that was great," she said of the project from San Francisco-based company MasterClass, adding, "I'm also the child of professors, so it seems to be the way to go: You teach things."

The so-called second golden age of television with its expanded number of outlets, including streaming platforms, has created new but not unlimited opportunities. Breaking into the competitive field requires creative thinking on and off the page, Rhimes suggested. She went the "film school route," she said, but there are other ways to get started.

"I would suggest getting a job as a PA (production assistant), anywhere, because it is a way in and lot of this is about knowing people," Rhimes said. Entering - and winning - the many available writing contests is

another path, she said. Keep in mind the advantage of writing over other entertainment industry occupations, Rhimes said. "For young TV writers trying to get in, writing is the only job you can do in this business when no one is hiring you to do it," she said. "You can sit at your computer or your legal pad and write a script ... and have a calling card." And there are jobs to be had, she assures the hopeful. That includes at Shondaland, her production company that also is behind "How to Get Away with Murder." "We're always looking for people not from here (the industry), because they have new and fresh voices," Rhimes said. — AP

Graceful in melancholy, rocker Mitski embraces discomfort

With a voice that glides gracefully from melancholy to rage, Mitski asks through her intricate indie rock about the meaning of home. For the artist herself, she has an answer-she doesn't have one. Born to a Japanese mother and American father, Mitski spent her childhood in a dozen countries from Africa to Asia to America. As an artist she established herself in New York but feels equally comfortable-or, perhaps, uncomfortable-everywhere.

short burst of passion as Mitski contrasts her undying wanderlust with the drabness of daily life and she envisions herself like the crucified Christ, declaring, "Would you kill me, Jerusalem!"

'Great propensity for nostalgia'

Mitski describes herself as having a "great propensity for nostalgia" but she rarely returns to the countries her parents took her due to her father's job. "Even if I returned, I won't be wel-

and energy for my art," she said. But Mitski said she was heading in new directions as she writes new music.

"It's very tempting when somebody says they like this about you, to want to do that over and over. And you see that especially with pop-punk bands that made it big in the early 2000s and they're in their 40s now but still dressed the same way," she said. "I remember David Bowie saying something like, 'If you are in an uncomfortable place, then that's where you should be.' "So I've almost been trying to push myself to do something I'm not used to, to try to be uncomfortable. I think it's very dangerous as an artist to be comfortable." — AFP



Mitski performs in Coachella Valley Music And Arts Festival.

"I've stopped wanting a home, I think, because I've been on tour all my life basically," she told AFP after playing at Coachella, the premier music festival that takes place over two weekends in the California desert. "I used to obsess over where is my home-I need a home, I'm lonely without a home-but now it's actually very freeing to not have any anchor," she said. Mitski last year released her fourth album "Puberty 2," a metaphor-rich, emotionally searing exploration of identity and longing that figured on several critics' lists of the top albums of 2016.

At first listen Mitski has similarities to 1990s alternative rockers such as Liz Phair with a heavy bass leading a jangly guitar. But Mitski-who plays guitar, bass and piano-brings a personal intensity more in line with Kate Bush, delivering vocals that can build within seconds from breathy lightness to chilling screams.

"Puberty 2" opens with the airy "Happy" as Mitski wonders if a one-night stand can free her from depression. "Your Best American Girl" delves into her upbringing as she questions if she can be American enough for a desired man. "My Body's Made of Crushed Little Stars" is a

comed as their own, because I'm still a foreigner. So there is that strange relationship with the places I've lived where they are home to me but I will never be one of them," she said.

Her parents collected music from around the world which she said influenced her, if indirectly. She has only performed once in Japan but found her style in line with Japanese pop's emphasis on strong vocal melodies. "Those kinds of sensibilities I still hear in my music," she said. "The chord progressions, and the intervals of the melody, are very Japanese." After a year of touring, Mitski said that she cannot imagine her life before "Puberty 2." "I think I've stopped thinking about the songs. They are now just part of me and when I play them, I am on muscle memory," she said.

Seeking discomfort

For all the drama in her lyrics, Mitski summed up her lifestyle by quoting Flaubert: "Be orderly in your life... so you can be violent and original in your art." "I try to be regimented and try to stay healthy and work out and eat properly and go to sleep. And not get too caught up in the industry in my regular life, so I can save all my expression



Musician Mitski poses at Coachella Valley Music And Arts Festival on April 16, 2017, in Indio, California. —AFP photos



This Thursday, April 20, 2017 photo provided by Strategy PR shows director Kathryn Bigelow at the Tribeca Film Festival Virtual Arcade in New York. — AP

KATHRYN BIGELOW ON VR AFTER HER FIRST TRY: 'I LOVE IT'

As a filmmaker drawn to the most visceral forms of cinema, it was probably inevitable that Kathryn Bigelow's high-adrenaline curiosities would lead her to virtual reality. The Oscar-winning director on Friday at the Tribeca Film Festival premiered her first VR experience, "The Protectors: Walk in the Rangers' Shoes," an eight-minute, 360-degree plunge into the lives of the Garamba National Park rangers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Bigelow directed it with Imraan Ismail, a virtual-reality veteran, and the two used the nascent, immersive medium to give a full sense of the dangers the 200 ragtag rangers face daily in guarding the Delaware-sized park, including its hundreds of perishing elephants, from the constant plundering of poachers and gunmen.

"The most important thing was to put a human face on this issue," Bigelow said in an interview alongside Ismail in the back room of a Tribeca restaurant. "My hope was that if the eyes of the world realized and recognized the kind of sacrifice they're making, then perhaps not only could they be better equipped but it also might raise recruitment."

National Geographic will release the film May 1 on the VR app Within, and on YouTube and Facebook360 the following week. It's a co-production of the VR company Here Be Dragons and the film production company Annapurna Pictures - making it a kind of fusion of both worlds. Even in its brief eight minutes, viewers of "The Protectors" will readily recognize the same cinematic command Bigelow brought to her Academy Award winner "The Hurt Locker" and her most recent film, the Osama bin Laden hunt thriller "Zero Dark Thirty."

"The Protectors" follows the rangers through the tall grass, on the trail of poachers and in an apparent fire-fight with attackers. In one memorable shot, a helicopter lands right on top of the viewer. Bigelow's virtual reality debut left her excited for its journalistic potential to inform and foster empathy. "I love it," Bigelow said of the medium. "I think it's all about content, though.

It's not tech first; it's content first. "It opens up corridors to awareness and information about social geopolitical issues that you would otherwise have very little access to," she added. "That's the beauty of journalism is to bring you to environments, stories, profiles of people that you otherwise have little or no access to. I think what's beautiful is the piece is that it's very objective. Here are these men and these are their thoughts. It's very intimate and yet what they're doing is so profound."

Gaining attention

A number of big-name filmmakers have recently tried their hand at VR, including Jon Favreau and Alejandro Inarritu, who's to debut a virtual reality work next month at the Cannes Film Festival. But Bigelow, 65, may be the most significant of the bunch because of her interest in getting as close as possible to her subjects and in combining storytelling with journalism. She often works in tandem with journalist-screenwriter Mark Boal, including on their upcoming feature film, "Detroit," about the 1967 riots. Ismail, too, has a journalistic sensibility. His award-winning "The Displaced," a New York Times VR film Ismail co-directed, followed three children refugees from Syria, Ukraine and Sudan. With "The Protectors," he said: "Hopefully we're able to tell some of that story and make this complex, abstract position something a little more granular that you can grasp. And you can be like: 'That guy, I feel for him.'"

So does Bigelow see great potential in virtual reality? "Hard to say," she responds. "I think so, if the desire to use it is content-driven and you want to have it be an experiential, totally immersive, empathetic understanding of the subject, then, yes, 100 percent. Not that film can't do that. Film, of course, can do that. But the beauty of this is there is a kind of 'x factor' that it provides."—AP

Retirement for O'Reilly? He'll have other options

Chances are you haven't heard the last of Bill O'Reilly. He'll have options, and retirement seems unlikely. At least three conservative news outlets are eager to speak with him. O'Reilly, the top cable news personality for two decades until Fox News Channel fired him this week following harassment claims by women, would be a game-changer for any company trapped in Fox's shadow. "He's an incredible, unparalleled, unchallenged talent and I would be very eager to discuss the possibility of him on Newsmax," said Chris Ruddy, CEO of the Florida-based media company. "I think he has been unfairly treated."

Another right-leaning outlet, One America News Network, has been inundated with emails from O'Reilly fans who want their hero back on television, said Robert Herring, Sr., the network's founder and CEO. One America is currently in 35 million homes, while Newsmax's television operation is in 10 million. Fox, in 90 million homes, is the nation's most popular cable network, carried on most cable or satellite systems. Fox also commands fees commensurate with its status, squeezing out rivals since many carriers believe they don't need more than one news network appealing to conservatives. O'Reilly's representatives had no comment Friday on his plans.

Toxic image

The 67-year-old host, despite his reported \$25 million payout from Fox, doesn't seem ready for a rocking chair. He had just signed a contract extension to keep him on Fox into 2021.

He drew an audience of 4 million viewers a night in the opening weeks of the Trump administration, his best ever. He's a fighter who continues to maintain the accusations against him are unfounded. "He's been known for pushing back really hard," said CBS News' Norah O'Donnell, speaking Friday at Variety magazine's Power of Women event. "It will be interesting to see what Bill does next and what he says next about what all has transpired."

One thing seems certain: he won't be in a studio next to O'Donnell or any other mainstream media operation, including direct Fox rivals CNN and MSNBC. His image is too toxic. "Who needs women protesting out in front of your building?" said one media executive, who spoke under condition of anonymity since he was not authorized to speak on personnel matters.

The accusations didn't seem to hurt O'Reilly with his fans. During his only full week on the air between The New York Times story detailing settlements reached with five women and his firing, O'Reilly's ratings went up. Herring said he hadn't examined the validity of claims against O'Reilly.

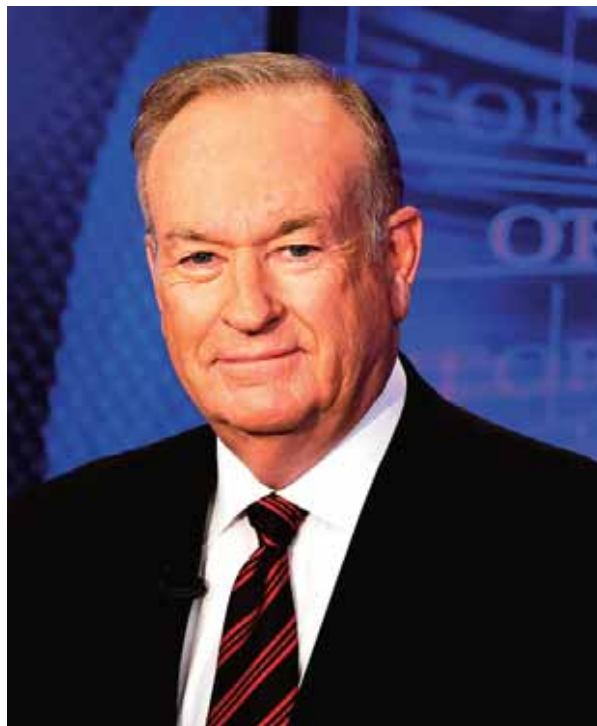
"Clearly, Mr O'Reilly should have the opportunity to address the accusations made against him," he said. "I also recognize anyone expressing a viewpoint can come under attack and Bill has been a big target for years due to his top-rated political talk show. From the top down, our organization doesn't tolerate discriminatory or inappropriate behavior of any kind. It's an open issue that would need to be vetted by any television organiza-

tion, including One America News." He said he believed O'Reilly has a future in television.

'He's made for TV'

Ruddy said he believed Newsmax's populist leanings were a good match with O'Reilly's. The host essentially put Fox on the map, and has the opportunity to lead another media revolution with Newsmax's plans to establish itself as the go-to conservative stream for mobile devices, he said. "In a lot of ways we would be a perfect fit for him," he said. Ruddy and Herring said there hadn't been any discussions with O'Reilly's representatives. That's also the case with former Fox colleague Glenn Beck's network, The Blaze, but a spokesman said Beck would be interested in speaking to him. Beck spoke out strongly in O'Reilly's defense this week but it attracted little attention since it happened hours before O'Reilly's firing. SiriusXM satellite radio simulcast "The O'Reilly Factor" along with other Fox News programming, but that ended with O'Reilly's TV show. O'Reilly had his own syndicated radio program that aired between 2002 and 2009.

His show did well, but wasn't nearly at the level of radio stars Rush Limbaugh and even Fox colleague Sean Hannity, said Michael Harrison, publisher of the radio trade publication Talkers. Limbaugh ruled radio but never translated to TV; the opposite was true with O'Reilly, Harrison said. "He's made for TV, this guy, as opposed to radio," Harrison said. "He talks with his face." — AP

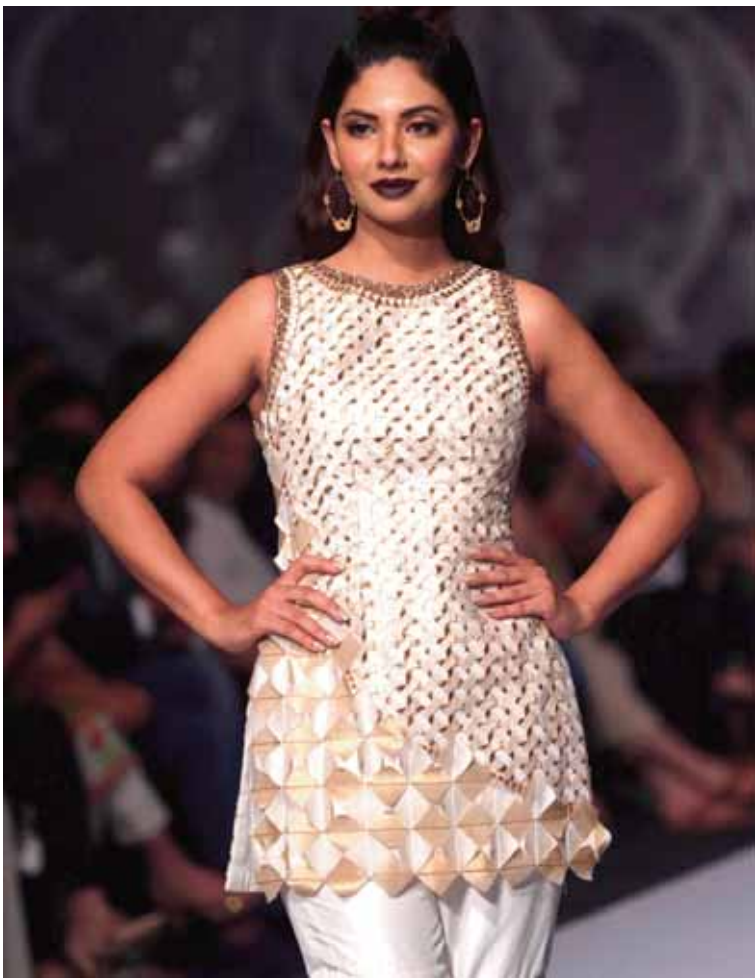


In this Oct 1, 2015, file photo, Bill O'Reilly of the Fox News Channel program "The O'Reilly Factor," poses for photos in New York. — AP



PAKISTAN FASHION WEEK

Models present the creations of Pakistani fashion designers during the Pakistan Spring/Summer 2017 Fashion Show Week in Karachi. — AP photos



Shonda Rhimes tells
all about how to become
a screenwriter

38



In this April 12, 2017 photo provided by the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens, Fiona a prematurely born hippopotamus, swims in her quarantine enclosure at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens in Cincinnati. — AP photos



Fiona a prematurely born hippopotamus, rests in her quarantine enclosure at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens.



Bibi, a pregnant Nile hippo at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens, roams her Hippo Cove exhibit enclosure.



Visitors read a sign depicting Fiona, the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens' new baby hippopotamus, as they pass through the Hippo Cove exhibit.

Premature hippo a happy hit for Ohio zoo after Harambe

A prematurely born hippo in Ohio has been providing regular doses of happiness for animal lovers, in a show of public affection that's also given an emotional lift to Cincinnati Zoo workers. After months of backlash over the zoo's fatal shooting of Harambe, a gorilla who became a pop culture phenomenon in death, baby Fiona is the new center of attention there. "She has brought everyone together," said Jenna Wingate, one of Fiona's caregivers. "It brings us to tears sometimes."

Blog and video updates such as Fiona taking a bottle, splashing in a pool or learning to run have drawn tens of millions of online views. Tens of thousands of people have bought Team Fiona T-shirts, and thousands more have eaten a Cincinnati bakery chain's Fiona-themed treats, with proceeds supporting the zoo's efforts. She gets so many cards and letters that she has her own mail bin.

Lots of excitement

On a recent sunny afternoon at the zoo, Gina Brockman, of Taylor Mill, Kentucky, got her children in place for a photo near the hippopotamus area and just before snapping it, said: "Say Fiona!" "They can't wait to see her," Brockman said. "I think she has brought everybody lots of excitement." Zoo officials say zoos are increasingly using newer media to interest the public, such as the recent livestream of April the giraffe giving birth in New York's Animal Adventure Park.

Zoos "are utilizing new ways to give the public a firsthand account of caring for the animals at their facilities," said Rob Vernon, spokesman for the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, based in Silver Spring, Maryland. "Fiona is a great example of using social and traditional media to tell her story." Some animal rights activists are skeptical. "Basically, it's a marketing tool," said Michael Budkie, who leads the Cincinnati-area group Stop Animal Exploitation Now! "They focus so much attention on baby animals because people like to see them. What happens to these animals when they're grown?"

Budkie, who said animals should be in natural habitats, not "gawked at by human beings," was among many who criticized the zoo after the May 28, 2016, shooting of Harambe by a zoo special response team to protect a 3-year-old boy who fell into the gorilla enclosure's moat. Harambe's death was mourned and satirized in a social media response that swept the globe. The

Cincinnati Zoo shut down its Twitter account for two months last year after hacks and waves of negative comments.

Year of Harambe

The strong positive response to Fiona has helped what the zoo's director has described as a healing process after Harambe. "It's been a very welcome thing," Wingate said. But there

hippo warm and moist, and getting her into the pool as much as possible. Some of the early updates were about setbacks; one day she wasn't gaining weight, another she wouldn't take the bottle.

Zoo spokeswoman Michelle Curley said the policy is to be transparent, sharing bad news as well as good. "You'd have these awesome days with her then you have a couple bad days,"



In this Wednesday, Jan 11, 2017, file photo, Bibi, a pregnant Nile hippo at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens, reaches for lettuce leaves in her Hippo Cove exhibit enclosure.

was no guarantee that Fiona's story would be a happy one. Born Jan 24, six weeks early, the calf was 29 pounds, well below the normal birth weight of 55 pounds to 120 pounds. The first Nile hippo born there in 75 years was unable to stand or to nurse, so zookeepers, vets and volunteers began raising her with 24-hour attention. "We weren't expecting this premature hippo to survive," said Wingate.

She got advice from the Thula Thula Rhino Orphanage in South Africa, which raises baby rhinos whose mothers are killed by poachers. Wingate said they advised keeping the baby

Wingate said. "You try to keep yourself guarded. But she's doing well now. Something could still happen, but we're not as stressed now." The zoo workers have been increasing Fiona's contact with her parents, and they plan to slowly get her ready for in-person viewing by her fans. That likely will come in May, around the time of the one-year anniversary of Harambe's death. "We've had the spotlight on us for almost a year," Curley said. "It's nice for it to be for positive reasons now." — AP