



Coptic Pope says Church bombings aim at Egypt unity



Ivanka forced to defend Trump at Germany women's summit



Thai man broadcasts daughter's murder live on Facebook



Warriors come out swinging, complete sweep of Trail Blazers



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KUWAIT OKs \$100M GRANT FOR IRAQ, FIRST SINCE 1990

KUWAIT EARMARKS \$100M FOR YEMEN, \$1.1BN PLEDGED



Min 23°
Max 32°
High Tide 11:38
Low Tide 05:48 & 18:16

Conspiracy theories

GROW YOUR OWN...



By Badriya Darwish
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I'm fighting with our American editor over social media. Every time I come to her with news and my source is social media with all its branches - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc, she shouts and asks: "Why are you sourcing social media?" May I know whom should I source in this century, in 2017? Shall I source the history books in libraries, which haven't even been dusted in decades?

All this shouting started because we were discussing a newspaper report about the UAE banning vegetables and fruits from five countries: Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen and Oman. A while ago, sorry to say again, news was everywhere that the US government had stopped the import of frozen strawberries from Egypt due to a reported hepatitis A outbreak.

My editor insisted to confirm all the specific facts with the FDA website, but I told her I had seen the photos of the strawberries on WhatsApp. It could be fake photos and fake news. In fact, nowadays, much fake news floats around social media. We have written about it before and people are aware, but still as a consumer, what should I do? Leave alone infotainment about Kim Kardashian's latest Mexico holiday or George Clooney's wife being pregnant, but when we are talking about serious issues that can affect our lives and our health and our children's lives, where can we turn to?

Where does the consumer stand in all of this? Is it really due to health concerns and awareness? Or could it be due to political issues? I have no idea. The truth of the matter is that all media - social or traditional - could be manipulated for political reasons. But would you as a consumer take a chance? Myself, I'm a coward and wouldn't.

The good news that I heard guys is that Sudan is ramping up its agricultural production, so hopefully we'll have some good Sudanese vegetables before Ramadan. Otherwise, I guess we all need to start planting urban gardens on our rooftops and balconies. But as water prices are going up, be careful and don't overwater them!



KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (center) and other ministers and MPs are seen during a National Assembly session yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ASSEMBLY DEFERS PREMIER'S GRILLING DEBATE TO MAY 10

'MAID COMPANY' STARTS WORK IN AUG

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday overwhelmingly approved a request by the government to delay the debate of two grillings against HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah until May 10. The postponement was approved with little opposition and virtually without any discussion. Only eight MPs opposed the delay, with MP Mohammad Al-Mutair threatening to file another grilling.

The prime minister is facing two separate grillings filed by five lawmakers over allegations that the government has failed to check rampant corruption, mismanagement, deciding to hike petrol and power prices and others. The government did not raise any objection against the two grillings - as was expected - but this could happen before the start of the debate. Some government sources have claimed that at least one grilling is not in line with the rules of the constitution.

Meanwhile, the Assembly decided after a brief debate to form a five-member committee to investigate the resignation of Kuwait Airways' Chairwoman Rasha Al-Roumi. MP Jamaan Al-Harbash said the KAC chief resigned after claiming that local private airlines were being given preferential treatment ahead of KAC, the national carrier. The government had accepted the resignation and appointed a new board of directors. The Assembly is studying a draft law on the future of KAC.

The Assembly also asked the interior and defense committee to investigate allegations that up to 400,000 naturalized Kuwaitis had obtained citizenship through forgery. MPs strongly criticized the allegations raised in an Assembly session two weeks ago, mainly by Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and others. Attempts by a number of MPs to have the reference to forgery taken off the minutes of the session failed.

The allegations were raised before the Assembly rejected a key legislation giving the judiciary the right to look into citizenship cases. The rejection by a comfortable majority that included all Cabinet members triggered opposition lawmakers to file to grill the prime minister. One of the issues was the revoking of citizenships. The committee was given until the next term starting late October to present its findings to the Assembly.

MPs also wanted to launch an investigation into why the domestic workers company has not yet been established in accordance with a law passed last year. But Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh told the Assembly that the company has indeed been established and it will commence full operations in August this year.

KUWAIT/GENEVA: Kuwait has approved a \$100 million grant for Iraq to support humanitarian and reconstruction projects in areas retaken from Islamic State militants, an Iraqi official said yesterday. The grant is the first Kuwaiti financial assistance to Iraq since Baghdad's occupation of the state from Aug 1990 to Feb 1991, ordered by then-President Saddam Hussein.

Officials from the two countries signed the grant agreement in Kuwait yesterday, a spokeswoman for Iraq's Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorist Operations said. "The grant agreement signed today is an encouraging start for further future cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait," the reconstruction fund chief, Mustafa Al-Hiti, said in a statement.

The fund aims to rebuild cities and territories recaptured from Islamic State, the ultra-hardline group which declared a "caliphate" over parts of Iraq and Syria in 2014. The war with Islamic State escalated as crude prices tumbled, curtailing the Iraqi government budget as it relies almost exclusively on oil sales. Saddam was toppled by the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Iraq and Kuwait are now close allies against militants.

Separately, countries around the world yesterday pledged more than one billion dollars to help prevent a looming famine in war-torn Yemen at a Geneva conference UN chief Antonio Guterres called a "remarkable success". Yet the \$1.1 billion promised fell far short of the \$2.1 billion the United Nations has estimated is needed this year alone in a country facing "a tragedy of immense proportions". But Guterres praised the generosity of donor nations, pointing out that such conferences generally do not gather more than a third of the requested amount.

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EMIRATES CEO SAYS LAPTOP CARRY-ON BAN PUZZLES HIM

DUBAI: The chairman and CEO of Dubai's long-haul carrier Emirates said yesterday he "can't dig into somebody's mind" to understand why the US instituted a ban on laptops and other personal electronics in carry-on luggage from 10 cities in Muslim-majority countries. However, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum said he believes US President Donald Trump is a businessman who "wouldn't want to affect American business" in his decisions.

Sheikh Ahmed's careful phrasing mirrored that of his rival, Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al-Baker, the day before at the Arabian Travel Market exhibition in Dubai.

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Sheikh Ahmed



DOHA: This file photo taken on May 4, 2015 shows foreign laborers working on the construction site of the Al-Wakrah football stadium, one of the Qatar's 2022 World Cup stadiums, walking back to their accommodation at the Ezdan 40 compound. — AFP

QATAR WORLD CUP WORKERS GET NUTRITION HEALTH CHECKS

DOHA: As many as 1,000 Qatar World Cup construction workers are receiving health checks as part of a pilot program agreed between the 2022 tournament organizers and Weill Cornell Medicine. In a statement yesterday, World Cup organizers said workers, selected at random, are being tested for such things as diet, blood pressure, and kidney function. Researchers say the results are primarily aimed at improving workers' nutritional requirements and could help other companies and Qatar deal with the desert country's harsh climate.

"The impact of this initiative... could be huge particularly if, as we hope, the findings are taken on board by other companies and international businesses operating in Qatar," said Weill's research leader Dr Shahrad Taheri. The project began in February, the World Cup organizing body,

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SAUDI WINS TOP ARAB FICTION AWARD

BRITAIN REFUSES TO APOLOGIZE OVER BALFOUR PROMISE

RAMALLAH: Palestinian leaders said yesterday Britain had rejected their request for an apology for a 1917 declaration that helped pave the way to the state of Israel, and they would pursue international court action unless London backtracked. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for the apology in an address to the UN General Assembly in September, but Britain plans to hold celebrations along with Israeli officials to mark the Nov 2 centenary of the Balfour Declaration.

British Prime Minister Theresa May has invited Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu to attend events commemorating the Balfour Declaration in November. Other commemorations are expected to take place in Israel during the year. "The answer came in a written letter to the (Palestinian) Foreign Ministry that the apology is refused," Manuel Hassassian, the Palestinian ambassador to Britain, told Voice of Palestine Radio yesterday. "It means the Queen and the government of Britain will not apologize to the Palestinian people and the celebration marking 100 years since the Balfour promise will be held on time."

A British Foreign Office spokesman confirmed that there would be no apology and described the Balfour Declaration as "an historic statement", but said Britain continued to work for an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal. "We continue to support the principle of

Continued on Page 13

ABU DHABI: A Saudi novelist has won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction, becoming the third author in 10 years from the kingdom to grab the Arab world's most prestigious literary award. Mohammed Hasan Alwan won for his novel "A Small Death", which is a fictionalized account of the life of a Sufi scholar and philosopher, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, from his birth in Muslim Spain in the 12th century until his death in Damascus.

The novel follows Ibn Arabi's mystic Sufi experience and heroic travels from Andalusia to Azerbaijan, via Morocco, Egypt, the Hijaz in today's western Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Turkey, according to an abstract posted on the prize website. "Of a sensitive and anxious nature, Muhyiddin struggles with inner turmoil throughout the course of his travels," the abstract said. Though "90 percent of the novel is fiction," Alwan said after receiving the award, "I felt the pain while writing it." "Ibn Arabi remains a controversial figure... but I believe that a reader of the novel would not disagree with the human side it portrays," he added.

Continued on Page 13



ABU DHABI: Saudi Arabian writer Mohammed Hasan Alwan poses for a photo after winning the 2017 International Prize for Arabic Fiction yesterday. — AFP



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Kairat Abdrakhmanov. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Qatar Embassy's Acting Charge D'Affair Ali Jaber Al-Marri.

KAZAKH PRESIDENT INVITES AMIR TO ATTEND FUTURE OIC EVENT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Kairat Abdrakhmanov who handed His Highness Sheikh Sabah a written letter from Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The letter included an invitation to His Highness the Amir to attend the OIC science and technology conference to be held in Kazakhstan's capital Astana next September. The letter also included an invitation to attend the Expo 2017 also to be held in Kazakhstan. The meeting was attended by Deputy Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Boosting bilateral ties in all fields was the focus of a meeting between Kuwait First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his Kazakh counterpart late Monday. The two ministers also shared views on different developments and issues of common concern.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled held a dinner banquet in honor of the visiting minister and his accompanying delegation at the ministry's headquarters. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister's Office Affairs' Director Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Ambassador Ali Suleiman Al-Said, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols' Affairs Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, Kuwait



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Ambassador of the Republic of Benin to Kuwait.

Ambassador to Kazakhstan Tareq Al-Faraj and a number of the ministry's officials.

Doha forum

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received a written letter from Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who invited him to attend the Doha forum 2017. The



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Ambassador of Mongolia to Kuwait Chintushig Zorigt.

Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Later, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also met with Sheikh Meshal and His Highness Sheikh Nasser at Bayan Palace.

Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince

received the newly appointed Ambassador of Mongolia to Kuwait Chintushig Zorigt. His Highness the Crown Prince also met the new ambassador of the Republic of Benin to the country. Both meetings were attended by Chief of Protocol in the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Tawadros II, the visiting Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark. — KUNA

PREMIER HOSTS POPE TAWADROS II

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomed Tawadros II, the visiting Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark, at Al-Seif Palace yesterday. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and Chief of His Highness the Prime

Minister's Diwan Sheikh Etimad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the two ambassadors of both countries. On Monday, Pope Tawadros II received at his residence Sheikh Fareeha Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwaiti Society for the Ideal Family and Sheikh Dr Maymouna Al-Khalifa Al-Athbi Al-Sabah. —KUNA

KUWAIT EAGER TO RECRUIT PALESTINIAN TEACHERS: OFFICIALS

RAMALLAH: The applications of 180 Palestinian teachers, eager to seek jobs in Kuwait, are under evaluation, said officials who are part of a Kuwaiti delegation visiting Palestine yesterday. Undersecretary at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education Fatma Al-Kanderi said that the applicants would go through a written exam, which will be followed by an interview to determine whether they would be getting the job. She added that Kuwait was keen on recruiting Palestinian teachers, hoping that the procedures to acquire the services of the applicants will run smoothly.

Meanwhile, Administrator at the Ministry of Education Fahad Al-Gais revealed that the Palestinian authorities were in contact with the Israeli government to make sure that the procedures would not be interrupted. The contracts with the Palestinian teachers will be of an open kind, said the Kuwaiti official who added that this was not the first time that

Kuwait sought the services of Palestinian educators, noting that in the past Palestinians were prominent employees at Kuwaiti educational facilities.

Expressing gratitude to the Kuwaiti gesture, undersecretary at the Palestinian Education Ministry Basri Saleh said that the step to accept Palestinians into the Kuwaiti educational system was important to reinforce cooperation between Kuwait and Palestine. Hopefully this type of cooperation would continue in the future to achieve the mutual interest of Palestinians and Kuwaitis, said the Palestinian official. Meanwhile, Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah received the Kuwaiti delegation earlier with the meeting focusing on bolstering relations between Kuwait and Palestine within the educational domain. The Kuwaiti educational delegation began its visit last Friday and will continue its mission to recruit Palestinian teachers until Saturday. — KUNA

UK EMBASSY CELEBRATES QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY



KUWAIT: Cabinet Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah (right), Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kuwait Matthew Lodge (center) and the ambassador's wife cut the cake during the ceremony.

KUWAIT: Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kuwait Matthew Lodge hosted a reception Monday evening to celebrate the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II.

State officials led by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, diplomats, media per-

sonalities and other dignitaries attended the event, which was hosted at the embassy's premises in Sharq.



Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kuwait Matthew Lodge and his wife welcome Emiranda Winter AGM, Corporate Communications at Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait.—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kuwait Matthew Lodge and his wife welcome guests at the ceremony.



Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kuwait Matthew Lodge and his wife welcome Cabinet Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

LG Champions Inverter Technology for Gulf Homes with Latest DUAL Inverter Air Conditioning Solutions

The latest LG air conditioner, DUAL Inverter, works even up to 65°C, offers 60 percent faster cooling, optimal energy efficiency and cleaner air

The Gulf witnesses an upsurge in the demand for air conditioners during the summer season as the temperatures shoot up to as high as 50° Celsius or sometimes even more. On account of this extreme climatic conditions, air conditioners have always been a necessity in the region and industry reports confirm a robust residential air conditioning market in the coming years.

Inverter technology is the latest innovation in conditioning, known for its low energy consumption, saving the consumer money and more importantly, reducing environmental impact. This innovative technology can reduce energy consumption significantly compared with non-inverter models. This is because inverter unit controls cooling and heating intelligently, adjusting to the ambient temperature of a room, and reducing power usage while maintaining strong performance levels. For example, while regular air conditioners can only turn on and off, LG Inverter Technology can control rotation frequency to produce cooling more efficiently. The energy saving efficiency has been certified by TUV.

LG Electronics (LG), has launched across Kuwait its latest state-of-the-art, family-friendly residential LG DUAL Inverter air conditioning (AC) solutions, equipped with LG's pioneering technological innovation known as 'inverter technology.' Now LG introduces the next generation of air conditioning solutions that ensures optimal cooling performance, energy efficiency, cleaner air and durability unlike any other.

The LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner generates faster, more powerful cooling than competing solutions. It is able to reach the set temperature 60 percent faster, quickly providing the optimal home temperature for users. Not only does the Tropical Inverter Compressor boast higher fan speeds to enable faster cooling, its bigger fan and wider outlet also help project streams of cool air with more force over greater distances.

"LG always presents solutions with innovative technology at the core, technology that is carefully crafted and developed for what matters most - the family. As we launch LG's latest air conditioning solutions with our innovative inverter technology in the Kuwait today, we are proud that our solutions bring the best of LG to families across the country. And with the support of our valued partners, we can continue to ensure families benefit from durable air conditioners that also cool faster, better, and afford the home the cleanest air possible and most efficient solution available," said Mr. Yong Geun Choi, President of LG Electronics Gulf.

In a bid to introduce its most family friendly air solutions, LG showcased its DUAL Inverter air conditioner that works even up to 65°C, thanks to its Dual Inverter Compressor of which LG offers a 10-year warranty so users can enjoy the benefits of the LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner for longer periods of time.

Additionally, LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner maximizes cooling performance, providing 60 percent faster cooling and 20 percent more cooling. A leader in energy efficiency, the LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner saves energy up to 65 percent as compared with conventional air conditioners. Another key feature the LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner, is that it offers a 'Smart Diagnosis,' which allows users to remotely and conveniently check setup, installation, troubleshooting, and other information directly from a smartphone via a SIMs module.

Also, LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner includes LG's exclusive Gold Fin™ coating, which forms a protective shield on the surface of the heat exchanger, making the surface more resistant to corrosion while improving the overall durability of the heat exchanger. Other key features include: Comfort Sleep, Comfort Air, Dual Protection Filter, Quiet Cooling, Auto Cleaning, and Smart Display, whereby users can check the status of the air conditioner more easily.

LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner is now available at all leading retail showrooms and leading hypermarkets across the Kuwait.



LG Life's Good

LG DUAL Inverter

Cools even at 65°C
with 10 Year Compressor Warranty

65°C

TROPICAL COMPRESSOR 65°C OPERATION

INVERTER COMPRESSOR 10 YEAR WARRANTY

In Brief

NEW UK ENVOY

KUWAIT: Michael Davenport has been appointed as the United Kingdom's new Ambassador to the State of Kuwait in succession to Matthew Lodge, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Davenport will take up his appointment during September 2017, the UK Government posted on their website.



AMIR CONGRATULATES MALAYSIAN KING

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to the new Malaysian King Sultan Muhammad V. In his cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his congratulations and wishes of good health and happiness for the new King, wishing him further success and prosperity. — KUNA



AMIR ATTENDS AHMADI HOSPITAL OPENING

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will attend and patronize the opening ceremony of Al-Ahmadi Hospital which will be held at 10:30 am local-time today. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: The white-eared bulbul, one of the more common species in Kuwait. A native to Iraq and Iran, the species is a very common resident that breeds in Kuwait, although it is said to be absent from the country before the 1950s (information courtesy of 'Birds of Kuwait: A Comprehensive Visual Guide'). — KUNA photo

EQUATE COLLABORATES WITH KIDZANIA ON KIDS FOR A GREENER WORLD INITIATIVE FOR THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR

KUWAIT: EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, launched collaboration with KidZania on the Kids for a Greener World initiative for the third consecutive year to promote preserving the environment.

EQUATE's establishment within the KidZania Facility marks the first petrochemical establishment in KidZania worldwide. The Kids for a Greener World initiative, which runs in collaboration with EQUATE, is themed this year around the "Underwater World" while integrating the importance of plastic and its benefits to our daily lives. EQUATE focuses on informing and educating children about plastic, as well as providing information on efficient waste management for plastics and others to preserve different

ecosystems including the aquatic life. This initiative encourages children's learning by combining fun activities with education in a special setting designed for them.

EQUATE'S Senior Executive of Corporate Communications and Government Affairs Dr. Abeer Sulaiman Al-Omar, commented on this occasion: "As a leading global industrial organization, we at EQUATE, seek to implement our sustainability objectives in partnership with reputable



Dr Abeer Al-Omar

partners around the world. Our collaboration with KidZania has the objective of reaching a large number of children and others to educate them about the significant role of sustainability preserving our environment within a framework of innovative interaction. This initiative with KidZania is part of a holistic approach applied by EQUATE to protect and maintain the environment that constitutes a major cornerstone in our lives as a whole. This is in alignment with EQUATE'S Sustainability Strategy focusing on the economy, society and environment."

Meanwhile, the Vice President of Leisure and Entertainment at M H Alshaya Company Fernando Medroa said: "We are pleased to join hands, once again, with EQUATE in launching our annual Kids for a Greener World Initiative. Having EQUATE on board for this initiative will definitely bring in the invaluable expertise their team has to better educate children in KidZania about sustainability and the great "Underwater World."

The initiative, which commenced in early April until May 27, will see EQUATE and KidZania's collaboration on an underwater themed program, giving children the opportunity to discover the exciting aspects of the aquatic ecosystems through various activities. The initiative also offers a collection of the most practical and achievable ideas to allow children to learn about the world of water, educate them about the importance of safe and clean potable water, as well as give them the opportunity to become certified Environmental Scientists.

Kids for a Greener World is an annual program launched by KidZania to in celebration of the World Environment Day. KidZania's initiative comes from a vision to host environmental and educational activities enabling children to learn more about the importance of sustainability in different ecosystems on the planet.



EAST JAVA, Indonesia: Kuwaiti Doctors attend to a patient who underwent an eye surgery funded by Kuwaiti charity. — KUNA

KUWAIT'S AID TO INDONESIA REACHES \$4.5 MILLION

EAST JAVA, Indonesia: The State of Kuwait contributed with \$4.5 million in humanitarian aid to Indonesia over the past two years and a half. The Kuwaiti financial allocation was disbursed for building mosques, schools and digging water wells, said ambassador Abdulwahab Al-Sagr during a ceremony held by the Indonesian Al-Bayt Charity, affiliated to the International Islamic Charity Organization. It was held on the occasion of conducting eye lens opacity surgeries for a number of blind locals, with Kuwaiti donations.

Kuwait has built a number of villages in Indonesia after late leaders; namely the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in Panda Aceh for victims of the 2004 tsunami and Village of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in Garut Java.

These philanthropic projects are supported by the International Islamic Charity Organization, Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, Sheikh Abdullah Al-

Nouri Charity Society, Al-Zakat House, Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society and others.

Commander of the naval force in eastern Indonesia, Dara Anto, lauded the project for treating many blind people in the city of Surabaya. Indonesia has witnessed alarming rise of blindness cases. Meanwhile, Sheikh Mariam Al-Sabah, speaking on behalf of the Kuwaiti donors, affirmed that the Kuwaiti charities were seeking to help people in various parts of the world, according to guidelines of His Highness the Amir.

Abdullah Al-Mayas, director general of Al-Bayt society, said up to 500 Indonesians have benefited from the project, noting that a cataract surgery costs KD 60. Al-Bayt society inaugurated "friends of the blind campaign" in 2017 to limit cataract cases in the Asian nation. The Kuwaiti ambassador, accompanied by the naval chief and donors, visited patients undergoing treatment at a local hospital. — KUNA

OPTIONS AVAILABLE CONCERNING IRAQI COMPENSATIONS

GENEVA: More options are available concerning the methods in which the Iraqi compensations to Kuwait will be paid, said a Kuwaiti official late Monday. Delivering a speech to the 82nd meeting for the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), Chairman of the Public Authority for Assessment of Compensation for Damages Resulting from Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (PAAC) Khaled Al-Mudaf indicated that Kuwait had reacted positively to the resolutions that the committee took during the last meeting in November of 2016. The committee called on both Kuwait and Iraq to seek means to facilitate the compensa-

tion procedure, he said, adding that PAAC took a decision in 2014 to allow Iraqis to postpone compensations due to the dire economic and security situations in the fellow Arab country. In between 2015 and 2016, the UNCC and Kuwait continued to take decisions to postpone the Iraqi compensations due several issues connected with the security situation in Iraq, said the Kuwaiti official. He affirmed that his country was willing to continue cooperation with the UN to facilitate and ease the procedures for Iraq to pay its compensations to Kuwait on damages suffered during the invasion in 1990. — KUNA



Egyptian Coptic Pope Tawadros II speaks during a mass at the inauguration of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Hawally yesterday.

TERRORISM WILL END SOON: POPE TAWADROS II

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II yesterday condemned attacks on two Coptic churches on Palm Sunday in Egypt, adding "terrorism will end soon." Speaking at a press conference yesterday, Tawadros affirmed that terrorism in Egypt will not break the strong bond between Muslims and Christians that has persevered for more than 14 centuries. "I had been longing to visit Kuwait, which I knew through Al-Arabi magazine, and I was obsessed with the knowledge and research here," he said.

About his first impression of Kuwait, Tawadros said: "I was amazed by the kindness of the Amir, officials and people of Kuwait. I know there are people from more than 100 nationalities living in Kuwait in harmony," noting Kuwait is fighting terrorism with culture, especially the beautiful Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre that he visited lately.

He revealed that the ministry of education in Egypt is working on a new curriculum to teach in schools that promotes tolerance and affection between religions, and offers a mix of values of Islam and

Christianity. "We are preparing to receive Pope Francis, who is coming to Egypt soon. Pope Francis will come to promote peace after we invited him to visit Egypt," Tawadros said.

He stressed the role of worship places in teaching people the right values of religion, because terrorists are not only distorting the image of Islam or affecting Christians, but also sabotaging their own people's lives. "Christianity and Islam complete each other," he explained.

Earlier, the pope inaugurated the Coptic Orthodox Church in Hawally, one of the largest Egyptian churches in the GCC, and prayed amidst large crowds of the people and in the presence of representatives of the Christian communities in Kuwait. Security measures were tight. Tawadros said the Egyptian church in Kuwait was the first church to be built and start services outside Egypt in 1961, thanking officials "in this good and tolerant land and the people of Kuwait". He also thanked the efforts of his predecessor Pope Shenouda. Tawadros arrived in Kuwait for four-day visit on Sunday at the invitation of HH the Amir, marking the first such visit to the state by a Coptic Orthodox patriarch.



KUWAIT: Egyptian Coptic Pope Tawadros II speaks during a press conference yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ARAB POLITICIANS CALL FOR RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA REPORTING

KUWAIT: Arab politicians, attending the Arab Media Forum in Kuwait Monday, called for differentiating between responsible and irresponsible reporting in social media. Chairman of the Council for Arab and International Relations, Mohammad Al-Saqer, said social media was not monitored and those writing in these media were not following self-monitoring principles.

Saqer, addressing "Media within Political Changes" session, said big countries around the world, including the US, failed to impose necessary monitoring means on social media. Absolute freedom is 'disastrous', and it does not exist even in Western countries, he added, which could stop publication of material they deemed harmful. Saqer, a former newspaper chief editor and MP, blamed governments, media and people for "the media chaos" happening now.

Libya's former Information Minister Mahmoud Shammam said technology was used to "destruct not construct." He called for raising awareness in the use of social media. He said he was not calling for monitoring media but for discipline because of lack of laws that protect privacy of individuals.

Shammam said the growing use of social media affected reading. Morocco's former foreign minister Mohammad Ben Essa said freedom has annoyed politicians. He said there was a new generation of responsible and professional journalists. The 14th Arab Media Forum was launched last night under patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

OIL MINISTER DEFENDS LIAISON OFFICE HEAD SELECTION

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq said "there is confusion in the duties of the liaison office, as it was created to follow up the execution of projects and not carry out execution process itself." He said the current head of the liaison office is an employee of the environmental compensations committee and had occupied several posts. She was appointed head of the liaison office due to her experience and good command of English. He said having the liaison office under the Environment Public Authority contradicts its establishment, according to a United Nations request, as an independent authority. He said the committee will continue until 2037 and is



Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq

doing well. Marzouq said it is currently under the supervision of the State Audit Bureau which checks its budget every six months. He said government supervision will lead to sanctions by the UN.

In other news, Justice Minister Faleh Al-Azeb said "we formed a committee to check the results of the experts' competition at the Justice Ministry and I asked for a review of the entire issue because it is not realistic to depend 70 percent on the personal interview." "I formed a neutral committee and checked into the complaints. The number of appointments reached 500 experts, exceeding the required number by 200," he said. "We will announce a new requirement for experts with new rules", he said adding "we do not have a problem with Kuwaitis, but they are reluctant because of employment cadres."

MAN ARRESTED FOR FORGING EXPATS' VISAS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residency detectives arrested a citizen for swindling and forging visas for expats. Tips were received about a citizen swindling expats by forging entry visas. He created replicas for the visas and made look identical to the authentic documents, then charged expats money in exchange for them. The suspect confessed to issuing 25 forged entry visas using forged seals and signatures. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Traffic campaigns

The traffic department carried out several campaigns in all Kuwaiti governorates from April 15 to April 22, resulting in issuing 33,985 citations, 566 vehicles and 5 motorcycles were impounded, 46 persons detained while two expats were sent for deportation.

Crackdown

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality branch carried out a campaign to remove unlicensed signs in residential areas in cooperation with the voluntary team 'Enough Damage!'. Head of the team Habbab Al-Tamimi thanked Kuwait Municipality officials for facilitating their work.

Exercise

The coastguard will carry out a live ammunition exercise on Qarouh and Umm Al-Maradem islands from Sunday, April 30 until May 2, according to a statement from the Interior Ministry. It asked seafarers to stay away from the training zone between 8:00 am and 2:00 pm.



Municipality workers remove unlicensed signs during a campaign in Mubarak Al-Kabeer.

'BURGANERS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM' WELCOMES NEW BATCH OF YOUNG BANKERS

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced the start of its periodic staff training and development module: 'Burganers Development Program'. The program, which caters to new batches of recruits, focuses on providing well-rounded training and professional preparation and acts as a comprehensive initiation of a career in banking.

The program has been established in 2009 and focuses on three aspects. The first part introduces new recruits to Burgan Bank Group: its core culture and values, standards of work and performance, and business model and strategic direction. The second part educates them on banking operating models, aligns them with international banking and regulatory standards, as well as provides intense technical and operational knowledge. In addition, the recruits perform professional role-playing to showcase their selling and customer service skills. The Burganers Development Program enables the bank's new recruits to be prepared to efficiently perform and adapt to Burgan Bank's working environment and requirements from day one.

Commenting on the program, Halah El-Sherbini, Group Chief Human Resources and Development Officer said: "The six-week development program is considered merely a trigger point to a long-term investment which the bank undertakes in its employees. It paves the way to a proper base for future bankers and professionals as it

equips them with banking knowledge and technical and operational know-how. The structure of the program acts as a fast-track lane for new recruits as they enter the banking sector."

"The program not only introduces local banking requirements and aligns them with international banking standards but it comes as part of a comprehensive career development strategy set to invest and enable staff to progress dynamically in their careers with emphasis on high learning and innovation at the same time. The strategy aims to properly and individually invest in each staff across Burgan Bank Group in order to continuously raise performance standards and productivity, provide a challenging and complex working environment, as well as set individual career trajectories based on identifying capability and performance," added Sherbini.

Burgan Bank Group is a diverse regional financial powerhouse which now includes more than 850 employees in Kuwait and a wide network of 186 branches strategically distributed across Kuwait, Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey. The Group, as part of its diverse operating module and high standards, aims at providing challenging, dynamic, and highly progressive career opportunities. It believes that investing in human development within Burgan Bank Group, is an investment in human development and progress overall.



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Crime

Report

POLICEMEN SUSPENDED

KUWAIT: Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah issued two decisions to discharge a female sergeant for violating the military code by appearing in an "unsuitable manner" on social media; and suspend a first lieutenant until the case of attempted murder in which he is the accused is solved.

Offender jailed

The prosecution ordered a citizen jailed for 21 days for insulting the Prophet (PBUH). The citizen tweeted words and sentences that insulted the Prophet (PBUH), so electronic crimes department arrested him. He is being sent to the central prison.

Arsonist caught

Detectives arrested an arsonist who set garbage containers on fire, after he started 30 fires in various areas. The suspect, a Gulf national, was caught while on his way to set yet another fire. He was found to be on drugs. Detectives are interrogating him to find his motives.

Fight

A Syrian and a Palestinian were injured during a fight, and ended up held at Nugra police station. The Syrian received a scalp wound, while the Palestinian suffered a broken nose, and both were taken to Mubarak Hospital under guard. Both will be sent to the prosecution.

Drug possession

An Egyptian man was caught with 10 bags of heroin. A police patrol noticed the man and asked him for his ID, but he ran away. He was pursued and arrested and found to be under the influence of drugs. The man was taken to the proper authorities to face charges.

Fugitive apprehended

An Indian woman wanted for swindling was arrested in Khaitan. The suspect was wanted by several police stations, and her residency permit had expired. The woman told police she was not carrying an ID, so they took her fingerprints and found her wanted in Kaifan, Firdous and Khaitan police stations. — *Translated from the Arabic press*

ABK SPONSORS 'GREEN SCHOOL' EVENT IN CELEBRATION OF EARTH DAY

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced its successful sponsorship of the Green School Program event, a Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS) initiative, which was held in celebration of Earth Day on 23 April, 2017 at Al-Resalah Bilingual School.

The event featured a workshop for special needs students whereby a representative from KEPS spoke to the children about prevailing environmental issues, best practices to help save the earth and engaged them in an open discussion. The event also featured an exhibition, in which the students' art work was displayed, in addition to a series of other engaging activities for the students.

Sahar Al-Therban, Senior Manager - Corporate Communications at ABK attended the event on behalf of the Bank to reinforce the Bank's support of Earth Day and special needs individuals, in line with the Bank's CSR focus.



Al-Jarida

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Al-Jarida

NOTE THE 80 GROUP

By Mudaffar Abdullah

"The executive authority is responsible for creating a distorted image for the nationality and linking it with services, grants and gifts, without accountability for production, that is why it is said about those whose nationality is revoked 'poor man, he lost his job, home and government services.'" What does the Kuwaiti nationality mean to its bearer if Kuwait was poor? And what does the Kuwaiti nationality mean if its bearer was paying part of his salary in taxes and lives in a true competitive work society?

I wonder here on the backdrop of superficial dialogue that took place over the nationality, after several proposals were submitted to amend the nationality law, and the statement of Salah Al-Fadhlah representing the so called group of 80. The polarization between political factions and former leading personalities calls for pity, as they do not want to shred the society and mess with the social fabric. These are terms that were used in the 1980s and are still being used, and all they warn against, as they believe of course, did not take place yesterday or today.

The group of 80 is not a topic here, and does not represent an influence nor is it the main subject, rather it is the government administration that is concerned all along

decades, since the issuance of the nationality law in 1959, and what events have uncovered in the form of documents' forgery to get it. The group of 80 cannot say this.

People cannot be blamed for this, because nationality at the end comes out of a welfare economy that does not hold to account as there is no tax nor accountability for employees' production. If revoking the nationality was subject to the judiciary, we would have not found ourselves in front of bogus heroes who violated the simplest of political game rules, and the government would not be in an unenviable situation, as it is being attacked by those close to it and leaders in its administrative apparatus.

Consecutive governments could not provide healthy environment to develop loyalty to the country, it granted but failed to hold them to account, so loyalty became unknown in people's minds. Rather, it was distorted and took intertwining forms so who insults expats loves Kuwaitis, and loyalty of who demand a solution for the bedoon issue becomes doubtful, and who holds ministers accountable for their mistakes wants to dismantle the cabinet, and so on. This is what is taking place, an insult to the idea of nationality being granting, revoked or withdrawn. — *Translated by Kuwait Times*



KIB SPONSORS 'BUSINESS KID'

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently sponsored 'Business Kid', an entrepreneurship program for children organized by Safira CSR Company in partnership with Newtonology. The first of its kind in Kuwait, the project is aimed at nurturing local talents from an early age, through a series of training programs designed to help them channel their entrepreneurial energies into starting their own "micro businesses."

The project targets young children aged six to 14 years, and seeks to foster basic business and professional skills, with levels that vary in accordance to each child's age. The project includes a training program for children conducted by specialists in the fields of business administration, commercial sciences and entrepreneurship. During which, children undergo empowering real-world experiences framed in a simple manner that is easy for them to understand. The project also provides practical experiences with the participation of parents.

Within this context, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "As evidenced by our sponsorship of this project, we are always keen to support edu-



cational programs that enrich a child's business and entrepreneurial skills. We believe that these skills are integral to nurturing their potential towards building a successful future. By awakening their entrepreneurial spirit, we hope to see a sense of commitment to professionalism that drives the country's young generation to establish their own businesses in the future."

Najia concluded by stating that

this sponsorship comes as part of KIB's strategy to support initiatives and activities which engage children in entrepreneurship education, inspiring them to lead confidently as architects of their own future. In line with the bank's social responsibility program, KIB focuses heavily on children in order to help them to achieve their highest potential, given that they are an essential foundation to build upon the future of the country.

KAC FORMER CHIEF SPEAKS FOR FIRST TIME AFTER FIRING

KUWAIT: Chairperson of the dissolved Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) Board of Directors Rasha Al-Roumi stressed that the decision to dissolve the board and appoint a new one was not right, because this is part of the authorities of the Supreme Aviation Council's chairman. "It is unacceptable to make such a hasty decision without taking enough measures to protect the company," she explained, noting that such sudden and random decisions might have very bad consequences on multibillion-dollar companies like KAC, which has a market value of KD 1.2 billion. "This process should have been started over two months ago at least to avoid chaos and make the old board hand over all files and information to the new one," she added.

Speaking in an interview with local daily Al-Jarida, Roumi said talk about State Audit Bureau's remarks over KAC was inaccurate, because some of the remarks had been accumulated from previous periods before the company's recent improvement. "Some are lies and some are untrue," she added, noting that some simple remarks were already responded to and that they had no financial implications. "The Audit Bureau has been making similar remarks about all government bodies," she underlined.

In addition, Roumi stressed that KAC's senior and medium managements were all Kuwaiti, which refutes some allegations about abusive treatment of some KAC staff resulting from misinterpretation of the KAC privatization law. Responding to a question about KAC's performance, Roumi said the recent development was the result of a strategic plan set jointly with the consultancy firm McKinsey & Company. She also stressed that the open skies policies followed in Kuwait must be reconsidered and restrained in the future to prevent flooding the market with too many offers.

New York route

Commenting on suspending KAC's direct flights to New York, Roumi said the operational flexibility KAC followed on handling this situation calls for pride, because it readily had a 'plan B' by stopping over in Ireland to ensure the continuation of this route's operation.

Responding to a question about the minister to whom she submitted her resignation, Roumi said according to article 10 of law number 6/2008, "KAC's seven-member board of directors will be appointed by a minister assigned by the Cabinet for three years, renewable for similar periods." She added that accordingly, the interior minister was the chairman of KAC's general assembly. "Therefore, the decision made by the minister of state for economic affairs to dismiss KAC's board is illegal after KAC turned into a shareholding closed company," she said.

Roumi elaborated by saying that the Audit Bureau remarks did not include any financial violations whatsoever. "Some of the remarks are procedural ones due to the nature of the aviation business that requires making quick decisions and seizing commercial opportunities," she explained, noting that under her chairmanship, KAC board had referred many employees to the public prosecution and filed several cases to protect public funds.

Further, Roumi strongly denied abusive treatment of KAC's Kuwaiti employees, noting that it was a priority to appoint Kuwaiti youth, train them and help them get promoted to higher positions. "The majority of the senior

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Al-Jarida

TIME OF TRANSGRESSION

By Youisif Al-Jassem

The unprecedented transgression and violations in the Kuwaiti society going on through various social media networks in the form of questioning the patriotism or loyalty of certain figures despite their status, great roles they played in serving the country and dedication for it, is but a new form of deterioration in terms of basic social bonds Kuwait has been brought up to. It also forms severe violations of people's dignity and instigates inter-social conflicts that will be as serious as the Iraqi Invasion with all the destruction tools and weapons used.

It seems that social media is leading towards even more destructive tools based on instigating conflicts amongst people and allowing slander through means that had been invented for social communication rather than for social fighting. The worst lies in a very terrifying possibility that a statement made by Saddam Hussein's foreign minister Tareq Aziz, when, after Iraqi troops were forced out of Kuwait and the country was liberated, he said: "We will leave Kuwaitis to fight each other and eventually fall in the hands of Iraq as a rotten apple."

This is what Kuwait's enemies said. So, are we going to help that dream come true with all the backbiting we are doing to each other on various issues? Things seem as if we are happy with utilizing social media in creating its most abusive uses. Of all the people around the world, we have unfortunately gone taken leading positions in using social media in the most ugly manners by slandering and backbiting each other, by talking about any issue and racing to forward any so-called news without even verifying or crediting it.

Bloggers dealing with slanderous news have the largest number of followers and have actually become the new role models and sources of inspiration. For them, it is enough to disfigure and distort someone individual or their family's or an official's reputation to win the title of the most important and effective 'Blogger'. We have unfortunately outperformed others in this regard while we are still way behind them in science and achievements. It is as if we are accelerating our own destruction through enhancing verbal violence and inter-fighting with this or that faction using the most humiliating methods. We no longer respect age, status or considerations.

We have been enhancing verbal and physical violence starting with the parliament and ending up in schools and streets. We have become specialists in mixing up things and twisting major issues into secondary paths only to score against our opponents. It is as if blogging on Twitter, Facebook or Snapchat has replaced judicial verdicts.

The most recent of such examples is pushing some honorable Kuwaiti names into the issue of dual citizenship or citizenship forgeries accusing about one quarter of the total number of citizens as mentioned by the speaker of the house on a session held last week to vote on a proposal to amend the administrative court law. The session talked about the dangers of this phenomena and called for reverting them to retrieve the missing balance in Kuwait's demography, tell the difference amongst forgers, dual citizens and worthy ones in addition to holding whoever facilitated the forgery legally accountable. So, we expect the parliament to retrieve the state's wasted rights and undo this illogical growth in the numbers of citizens. — *Translated by Kuwait Times*



Rasha Al-Roumi

management is Kuwaiti, while the medium management is entirely Kuwaiti - all directors and their assistants are Kuwaiti," she explained, noting that most administrative and supervisory positions are restricted to Kuwaitis.

Speaking about KAC's strategy, Roumi said in 2013, the previous board headed by Sami Al-Nisf signed a contract with IATA to study KAC and make recommendations concerning restructuring it, especially in terms of its operational plans and refurbishing its fleet. She added that by the end of 2015, a new operational plan was set by McKinsey and was submitted to the Supreme Aviation Council for approval, then put into practice in 2016.

Open skies policy

Responding to a question about the effect the open skies policy had on KAC's performance, Roumi stressed that Kuwait and Lebanon are the only two Arab states following it and that it had negatively affected KAC, because most countries still impose some restrictions to protect their national carriers and prevent over-flooding the aviation market with offers. "This policy needs to be reconsidered and any extra rights must be suspended until further studies are made, taking KAC's interests into full consideration," she stressed.

Moreover, Roumi said the US Transport Security Administration (TSA) had some remarks about security measures at Kuwait International Airport, and that relevant government authorities ignored warnings to suspend KAC's flights to the US, especially New York, which will have dangerous consequences on KAC's financial status. "Nonetheless, we had a 'plan B' ready by having flights stop over at Shannon Airport in Ireland, where our flights undergo standard TSA security measures," she explained, noting that this maneuver was a real source of pride for her and her team.

Finally, Roumi stressed that KAC's privatization law prioritizes it over other carriers in terms of passing the ownership of all KAC assets as a 'corporation' to KAC as a 'company' fully owned by the government. She added that her board had gone through serious challenges to defend these rights, which were listed for the first time in KAC's history, including all KAC assets, transportation rights, privileges given to other carriers, exemption from custom duties, exemption from spare part fees, exemption from civil fees at KIA, having the government cover its losses, the government's commitment to updating KAC's fleet, mandating other airlines to national labor ratios, and having airlines operating in Kuwait to get KAC's permission for some of their activities including airfares. Roumi also noted that as a company, KAC was given only two gates, while another smaller Kuwaiti airline has four. She added that KAC had demanding ownership of the land that used to house KAC's headquarters on Al-Hilali Street in downtown Kuwait City, with no response so far. — *Al-Jarida*



Turkish warplanes strike Kurdish militants in Syria, Iraq's Sinjar

IVANKA FORCED TO DEFEND TRUMP AT WOMEN'S SUMMIT

FIRST DAUGHTER ACCUSED IN US OF BENEFITING FROM NEPOTISM

BERLIN: Ivanka Trump, making her overseas debut as the US "First Daughter" at a women's summit in Berlin yesterday, was forced to defend her father's attitude towards women. Sitting on a G20 panel with female leaders including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Donald Trump's daughter drew chuckles from the audience when she praised "my father's advocacy" on the issue and his role as "a tremendous champion of supporting families and enabling them to thrive".

The panel moderator, a finance journalist, interjected, saying: "Some attitudes toward women your father has publicly displayed... might leave one questioning whether he is such an empowerer for women." "I've certainly heard the criticism from the media and that's been perpetuated," replied the 35-year-old Ivanka. "I think the thousands of women who have worked with and for my father for decades, when he was in the private sector, are testament to his belief and solid conviction in the potential of women and their ability to do the job as well as any man."

Trump 'enabled me to thrive'

Ivanka, a glamorous former model who started her own fashion line, has worked for her billionaire-father's company and now has an office in the White House. She said her father "encouraged me and enabled me to thrive." "I grew up in a house where there were no barriers to what I could accomplish beyond my own perseverance and my own tenacity ... There was no difference for me and my brothers."

Merkel is seen to be cultivating a good relationship with Ivanka as a key communication channel with the Trump presidency. News magazine Der Spiegel saw the meeting as "a summit of the two women who are supposed to moderate Donald Trump-if that is even possible". It said "the hopes of the free world rest on the two women because they supposedly have the power to influence the man who looks down on women".



BERLIN: (left to right) co-chairwoman of the W20 Stephanie Bschorr, First Daughter and Advisor to the US President Ivanka Trump, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Queen Maxima of the Netherlands and German Family Minister Manuela Schwesig arrive to pose for a family photo during the W20 women's empowerment summit sponsored by the G20 Group of 20 major economic powers yesterday in Berlin.—AFP

A veritable coup

The Sueddeutsche Zeitung daily said that for Merkel to "have lured Ivanka is a veritable coup for the chancellor". Even though there are higher-ranking US officials, it said, "it would be difficult to find a more important and influential representative". Ivanka has been accused in the United States of benefiting from nepotism, and was ridiculed on the "Saturday Night Live" comedy show for being "complicit" in promoting Trump's divisive policies.

Undeterred, she has spoken out on women's empowerment, most recently in a Financial Times op-ed article co-written with World Bank president Jim Yong Kim. They said only 55 percent of women participate in the paid labor force worldwide and called for better training, improved access to finance and legal changes. On the panel yesterday, however, Ivanka immediately faced a tough opening question from the moderator, Miriam Meckel, editor-in-chief of business weekly WirtschaftsWoche.

Asked whether she was in Berlin to represent her father, the American people, or her business, Ivanka replied: "Certainly not the latter... I am rather unfamiliar with this role as well, it is quite new to me. It's been a little under 100 days but it's just been a remarkable and incredible journey. You know as an entrepreneur and as an individual prior to this, in the private sector, I care very much about empowering women in the workplace."

A demonstration against Ivanka's visit was scheduled outside a gala dinner yesterday. Kathleen Brown, of the protest group

Coalition Berlin, charged that Ivanka's clothing line is produced in "sweatshops" with mainly female garment workers in China, Vietnam and Bangladesh. "How can Ivanka Trump talk of women's 'empowerment' at the same time President Trump has blocked funding for international reproductive care? Ivanka's silence on life-and-death matters for women is deafening." Trump was also due to visit electronics giant Siemens for a tour of its technical academy and talk with apprentices, and visit Berlin's Holocaust memorial.—AFP



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IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL UNDER REVIEW AS UNCERTAINTY GROWS

VIENNA: Iran and major powers met yesterday in Vienna to review adherence to their 2015 nuclear deal as uncertainty grows about the landmark accord's future under US President Donald Trump. The regular quarterly meeting was expected to hear, as Washington confirmed last week that Iran is sticking to its side of the deal with the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany.

The accord saw Tehran drastically curb its nuclear activities in order to ease concerns that Iran wanted to build an atomic bomb. In return nuclear-related Western and UN sanctions were lifted. However, Trump has ordered a 90-day review, saying last Thursday that Iran was "not living up to the spirit" of the "terrible" deal because of its actions in other areas. This refers to Iran's support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, rebels in Yemen, and militias in Iraq and in Lebanon as well as Tehran's ballistic missile program.

US State Department spokesman Mark Toner said Monday the review would examine the nuclear accord "in the larger context of Iran's role in the region and in the world, and then adjust accordingly." Trump's Secretary of State Rex Tillerson last Wednesday expressed misgivings about the

nuclear deal itself, in particular the time limits in key areas. Iran cut the number of centrifuges that "enrich" uranium-making it suitable for power generation and at high purities for a bomb from about 19,000 to 5,000.

Together with other restrictions and ultra-tight UN inspections, Iran pledged to stay at this level for 10 years and not to enrich uranium above low purities for 15 years. Its uranium stockpile will also stay below 300 kilos — well short of what would be needed for an atomic bomb for 15 years. Tillerson said the accord "fails to achieve the objective of a non-nuclear Iran" and had been a way of "buying off" Tehran "for a short period of time".

Tehran not satisfied

Iran is not happy either, with critics of President Hassan Rouhani-facing a tough battle for re-election next month-charging that the nuclear deal has failed to provide all the promised economic benefits. While nuclear-related sanctions were lifted, those related to human rights or missiles remained or have been expanded, frustrating Iran's efforts to boost trade. Last week Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif responded to Trump's comments by say-



VIENNA: EU senior diplomat Helga Schmid (C-L), Iranian deputy foreign minister Abbas Araghchi (C-R) and senior diplomats from other six major powers meet in Vienna, Austria. — AFP

ing that Washington was failing to live up not just to the spirit of the nuclear deal, but its wording as well. "So far, it has defied both," Zarif said on Twitter. Yesterday's "Joint Commission" meeting among senior diplomats was held behind closed doors in the same plush Vienna hotel where the deal was ham-

pered out with no press events planned. Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, was representing Iran in the talks. Iranian news agency IRNA quoted him as saying that Iran was adhering to the deal but that this did not completely hold true for the other side. —AFP



SYRIA: A medical helicopter, from the US-led coalition, flies over the site of Turkish airstrikes near northeastern Syrian Kurdish town of Derik, known as al-Malikiyah in Arabic. —AFP

TURKISH WARPLANES STRIKE KURDISH MILITANTS IN SYRIA, IRAQ'S SINJAR AT LEAST 20 COMBATANTS, OFFICIALS KILLED IN AIR RAIDS

ISTANBUL: Turkish warplanes bombed Kurdish militants in Iraq's Sinjar region and in northeastern Syria yesterday, killing at least 20 in a widening campaign against groups affiliated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The air strikes in Syria targeted the YPG - a key component of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which are backed by the United States and have been closing in on the Islamic State bastion of Raqqa.

The Turkish raids showed the challenges facing US-led attempts to defeat Islamic State in Syria and risks increasing tension between NATO allies Washington and Ankara over Kurdish combatants who have been crucial in driving back the jihadists. A US military officer accompanied YPG commanders on a tour of the sites hit near Syria's frontier with Turkey later on Tuesday, a Reuters witness said, demonstrating the close partnership.

The YPG said in a statement its headquarters in Mount Karachok near Syria's frontier with Turkey had been hit, including a media centre, a local radio station, communications facilities and military institutions. "As a result of the barbaric strikes by the Turkish warplanes at dawn today against the YPG centre ... 20 fighters were

martyred and 18 others wounded three of them critically," said spokesman Redur Xelil.

Ilham Ahmed, a senior Kurdish politician who co-chairs the political wing of the SDF, said they wanted the United States to provide aerial protection against Turkey. The Turkish military said the two regions it struck around 2 a.m. (2300 GMT), had become "terror hubs" and the aim of the bombardment was to prevent the PKK sending weapons and explosives for attacks inside Turkey.

Designated a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, the PKK has waged a three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state for Kurdish autonomy. More than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict, most of them Kurds. Turkish security sources said 13 PKK militants had been killed on Tuesday in operations backed by the air force in the largely Kurdish southeast. Two Turkish soldiers were also killed when a roadside handmade bomb planted by the PKK blew up in Sirnak province.

New Qandil

Turkey has regularly bombed the mountainous border area between Iraq and Turkey

where PKK militants are based, since a cease-fire broke down in July 2015. But yesterday's raid was the first time they have targeted its affiliate in the northwestern Sinjar area. The PKK established a presence in Sinjar, bordering Syria, after coming to the aid of its Yazidi population when Islamic State militants overran the area in the summer of 2014 and killed and captured thousands of members of the minority faith.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said he will not allow Sinjar, around 115 km from the Turkish border, to become a "new Qandil", referring to a PKK stronghold in Iraq near the borders with Turkey and Iran. The presence of a PKK affiliate in Sinjar is also rejected by Kurdish authorities who run their own autonomous region in northern Iraq and enjoy good relations with Turkey.

Five members of Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga forces, which are also deployed in Sinjar, were killed, and nine wounded in one of the Turkish air strikes, according to the peshmerga ministry, apparently by accident. It called the attack "unacceptable" but blamed the PKK for being there and demanded the group withdraw from Sinjar. —Reuters

KHAMENEI URGES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TO FOCUS ON IRAN

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called yesterday on candidates for next month's presidential election not to look to other countries as examples for progress. The May 19 election will see incumbent moderate Hassan Rouhani face off against two highly-touted conservative rivals. Speaking at a meeting of ambassadors from Muslim nations in Tehran, Khamenei encouraged candidates "not to look abroad (but) to pin hope on the capabilities of the nation for progress".

Under Rouhani, Iran in 2015 signed a landmark deal with world powers to lift economic sanctions on the Islamic republic in return for curbs on its nuclear program. A number of Western corporations have since announced deals with Iran. The nuclear accord alleviated some of the international isolation Iran experienced under Rouhani's

predecessor, the hardline Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who was last week barred from competing in next month's election. But disappointment with Rouhani's handling of the economy is palpable and analysts say his re-election bid will be far from straightforward.

Khamenei, who as supreme leader has the final say on matters of state, discouraged candidates yesterday from reaching out to other nations. "They fight against the Islamic Republic of Iran... as (Islam) blocks their interests," he was quoted as saying. With conservatives buoyant over the sluggish economy, hardline cleric Ebrahim Raisi, who is seen as a close Khamenei ally, is Rouhani's most likely challenger on May 19. Another hopeful, Tehran mayor Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, has support from powerful backroom hardliners and presents himself as a pragmatic problem-solver. —AFP

NETANYAHU CANCELS MEETING WITH GERMAN MINISTER AFTER DISPUTE

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cancelled talks yesterday with German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel after the visiting diplomat declined to call off meetings with rights groups critical of Israel's government, an official said. The Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed the meeting was cancelled after Gabriel decided to go ahead with talks with Israeli rights groups Breaking the Silence and B'Tselem.

Breaking The Silence seeks to document alleged Israeli military abuses in the Palestinian territories, while B'Tselem has worked on a range of issues and has

strongly opposed Israeli settlement building. Gabriel earlier told journalists in Ramallah, where he held talks with Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, that he had still hoped to meet Netanyahu and the rights groups. He had also told German public television station ZDF that a decision to cancel the meeting would be "extremely regrettable." "It is completely normal that we speak with civil society representatives during a visit abroad," he said. Gabriel added that it would be "unthinkable" to cancel a meeting with Netanyahu if he met critics of the German government during a visit to Germany. —AFP



JERUSALEM: German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel gives press conference at a hotel in Jerusalem. —AFP

IRAQ FORCES IN PUSH TO RETAKE UNESCO-LISTED SITE HATRA

BAGHDAD: Iraqi forces yesterday launched a fresh push southwest of Mosul to retake the Hatra area, which includes a UN-listed World Heritage site, a statement said. The operation marks the latest phase of an offensive launched by the Hashed al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation) paramilitary forces in parallel to the main assault on Mosul begun six months ago. The Hashed forces, dominated by Iran-

backed militias, have focused their efforts on a front southwest of Mosul which aims at retaking the town of Tal Afar as well as desert areas stretching to the border with Syria.

"Hashed al-Shaabi forces launched Operation Mohammed Rasool Allah aimed at liberating Hatra and neighboring areas," the organization said in a statement. It said that five villages had already been retaken from the

Islamic State group yesterday and that Hashed engineering units were clearing the road to Hatra of explosive devices. Hatra, known as Al-Hadhr in Arabic, was established in the 3rd or 2nd century BC and became a religious and trading centre under the Parthian empire.

Its imposing fortifications helped it withstand sieges by the forces of two Roman emperors: Trajan in 166 AD and Septimus Severus in 198. Hatra finally succumbed to Ardashir I, the founder of the Sassanid dynasty, a few decades later, but the city remained well-preserved over the centuries that followed. Hatra left its mark on pop culture as the location for the opening of horror film "The Exorcist", which was shot there in 1973.

The jihadists damaged parts of Hatra after taking over a third of Iraq in 2014, as part of a heritage destruction campaign that also saw them vandalize Mosul museum, blow up shrines and damage the ruins of the ancient city of Nimrud. The jihadists see such destruction as a religiously mandated elimination of idols-but they also have no qualms about selling smaller artifacts to fund their operations. The full extent of the harm to Hatra remains unclear, but the site risks further damage during the military operation to retake it. —AFP



MOSUL: This file photo shows sheep grazing in front of the temple of Shamash at the ancient UN-listed World Heritage site of Hatra in Iraq's northwestern desert area between Mosul and Samarra. —AFP

GREEN THE RED: INDIAN CITY BREAKS TABOOS FOR SUSTAINABLE MENSTRUATION

CHENNAI, India: The change in the sanitary pads was first noticed by maintenance staff at the Centre for Development Studies in India's southern city of Thiruvananthapuram a couple of years back. Suddenly, the traditional method of burying used pads with lots of lime to decompose them was not working - and the pads were just piling up in disposal pits on the leafy campus designed by eco-friendly architect Laurie Baker in the 1970s.

"It took us a while to realize that manufacturers were using increasing amounts of non-biodegradable plastics in the pads," professor J. Devika, who is leading waste management efforts at the centre, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "All efforts to dispose of them were suddenly failing." The campus committee decided to talk about the problem, breaking the silence around menstruation and holding numerous meetings with reticent students to see how to reduce the waste.

Today the students - both male and female - are part of Thiruvananthapuram's collective effort to "green the red" - a sustainable menstruation project promoted by the city's civic authority. From vending machines dispensing cotton pads to awareness campaigns and higher disposal fees for girls and women using disposable pads, the city of more than 1.5 million is taking measures to switch to eco-friendly menstruation products.

"In the next one month, we are looking at placing vending machines in schools, colleges and public spaces that will dispense three (cotton) pads of 10 rupees (less than \$1)," said Rakhi Ravikumar, deputy mayor of Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala state. "There are manufacturers willing to partner with us and we are determined to push this through." In India, women have traditionally used scrap cloth from old saris or towels, folded and held in place by underwear or a string "belt", adding a layer of

sand, ash or rice husk for added protection during heavy blood flow. The scraps are generally used for a couple of months before they are burnt or buried. As incomes rise for some women, an increasing number are switching to disposable pads, which are also being handed out as part of the government's menstrual hygiene initiative in many states. A 2016 study by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences on menstrual hygiene management among adolescent girls in India showed that one in five girls disposed their soiled sanitary products in "inappropriate locations".

In urban centers, disposal was mainly through routine garbage disposal and burning, while in rural areas burying and throwing away in public spaces was also common, the study found. "Safe disposal will become a growing problem across India as more females turn to commercial pads, with the potential for 9,000 tons of waste (for 432 million pads) annually," the report stated.

Taboo and shame

The conversation around menstruation in Thiruvananthapuram is extraordinary, say campaigners, as for many Indian women, especially adolescent girls, menstruation is both "shameful and uncomfortable". From being barred from religious shrines to dietary restrictions and enforced isolation during their periods to a lack of access to toilets, women continue to face many challenges during menstruation, campaigners say.

"Despite the backward views on menstruation, we felt we could slowly start talking about this in public," said Shradha Shreejaya of the Sustainable Menstruation Kerala Collective. "As we talked to women we realized that most thought the pads they were using were made of cotton. They were shocked to know that 90 percent of it is plastic, often not sterilized, heavily bleached and almost impossible to dispose of." —Reuters

SPY AGENCIES FROM FIVE EYES GATHER IN NEW ZEALAND

WASHINGTON: New Zealand Prime Minister Bill English was flying to the mountainous resort city of Queenstown yesterday to meet intelligence officials from the "Five Eyes" network, which includes the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, are being held at a sensitive time for the Asia-Pacific region as tension between the United States and North Korea escalates.

However, six US and allied government sources said it was a routine annual

get-together that was not being held to respond to any particular crisis. The confirmation of the meetings indicates that "Five Eyes" countries hold regular intelligence conferences, a fact not widely known outside intelligence circles until now, according to analysts. "I can confirm that it's Five Eyes, just part of the regular cycle of conferences that are held," English told reporters on Monday. He declined to specify which officials were attending.

The officials and English declined to discuss what topics would be on the agenda, although English said he would use the meetings as an opportunity to

stress New Zealand's dedication to the intelligence-sharing network. "It's becoming increasingly obvious, I think, that as you consider these supra-national threats like ISIS that you work together with other countries," English said, using a common acronym for the Islamic State militant group.

A source at one of the agencies confirmed that the New Zealand conference was an "annual get-together ... a regular meeting of all of the seniors". Activities by Russia's government and counter-proliferation of nuclear arms in North Korea would likely be discussed, alongside more mundane topics like manag-

ing diversity in the workplace and how to prevent whistleblowers, according to Massey University security and defence analyst Rhys Ball, who formerly worked for New Zealand's intelligence service.

"The interesting thing about this conference, I think, is that this might offer some of those senior officials the first opportunity to meet up with some of the new American intelligence officials," Ball told Reuters. US officials declined to discuss the movements of specific senior officials. A source familiar with the matter said senior Canadian officials were taking part. New Zealand media reported that FBI director James Comey would attend and

published photos of him disembarking from a plane in Queenstown on Sunday.

The sources told Reuters that agencies whose top officials were expected to attend included the FBI, CIA and National Security Agency from the United States, Britain's MI-5, MI-6 and Government Communications Headquarters, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and Communications Security Establishment Canada, the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, the Australian Signals Intelligence Directorate, and New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau and Security Intelligence Service.—Reuters



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, President Donald Trump poses for a portrait in the Oval Office in Washington.—AP

US EX-OFFICIALS TO TESTIFY AT MAY 8 SENATE HEARING ON RUSSIA PROBE

WASHINGTON: Two former US officials - intelligence director James Clapper and deputy Attorney General Sally Yates - will testify next month in a Senate investigation into alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 US presidential election, the Judiciary Committee said yesterday. Four congressional committees are investigating the issue after US intelligence agencies concluded in January that Russian President Vladimir Putin had ordered hacking of the Democratic political groups to try to sway the election toward Republican Donald Trump.

Moscow has denied any such meddling. Clapper, the former director of national intelligence, and Yates, the former deputy attorney general, will testify on May 8 before the subcommittee on crime and terrorism, Judiciary Chairman Charles Grassley said in a statement. More witnesses may be added, the statement said.

The two officials from the administration of former President Barack Obama, along with former CIA Director James

Brennan, had been scheduled to testify before the House of Representatives' intelligence committee in March, but that public hearing was canceled by the panel's chairman, Republican Devin Nunes. Nunes, a Trump ally and transition adviser, recused himself from the Russia investigation on April 6 after receiving information at the White House about intelligence agency surveillance of foreign nationals that swept up some information about members of Trump's transition team.

His decision to hold a news conference about the information and discuss it with Trump before disclosing it to Democrats raised questions about whether he could lead a credible investigation. The House committee on Friday invited Yates, Clapper and Brennan to appear at a public hearing to be scheduled after May 2, when it said FBI Director James Comey and Admiral Mike Rogers, director of the National Security Agency, would appear behind closed doors.—Reuters

ARKANSAS STAGES FIRST DOUBLE EXECUTION IN US IN 17 YEARS

WASHINGTON: The southern state of Arkansas, rushing to execute several inmates before a lethal drug expires next week, put to death two inmates late Monday, the first double execution in the United States in 17 years. Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge said that Jack Jones and Marcel Williams, both sentenced to death in the 1990s, were executed by lethal injection after higher courts rejected their final legal appeals.

Arkansas had planned to put eight convicted murderers to death in 11 days a record, had it been carried out-but four have won reprieves. Jones, 52, was executed after the US Supreme Court rejected an 11th-hour request from his attorneys asking justices to reconsider a procedural issue from his trial. Williams, 46, died hours later after his appeals were exhausted. His lawyers had filed a flurry of last-minute challenges, including accusations that the state had improperly carried out Jones' execution just minutes earlier. "Mr Jones was moving his lips and gulping for air" after the midazolam was administered, evidence that the drug did not properly sedate him, the lawyers said in a legal filing.

But attorneys for Arkansas said the accusation was not supported by media or witness accounts, and charges that the execution "appeared to be torturous and inhumane are utterly baseless." Williams' legal team had earlier argued that his extreme

obesity-Williams weighed 400 pounds (180 kilograms) — would make it difficult to find a proper vein for the lethal injection.

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson said the accelerated execution timetable was necessary as the state's stock of a sedative used in lethal injections will expire at the end of the month. Rutledge said in separate statements that the family and friends of the victims had "seen justice carried out." In each case, Rutledge described the crimes they committed in gruesome detail.

Legal clashes

The execution process began at 7.06 pm (0006 GMT Tuesday) and Jones was pronounced dead at 7.20 pm, Department of Correction spokesman Solomon Graves told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette newspaper. Jones was calm as he made a rambling final statement while strapped to the gurney, saying he tried to become a better person and apologizing to Lacey, a daughter of his victim, 34-year-old Mary Phillips, the paper said, citing media witnesses in the death chamber.

Three hours later the lethal injection process began on Williams, who according to the newspaper refused to make a final statement. He was pronounced dead at 10.33 pm (0333 GMT). Last-minute appeals had delayed the execution, which had been scheduled for one hour after that of Jones.—AFP

CHILE ROCKED BY 6.9 MAGNITUDE QUAKE

SANTIAGO: A strong earthquake of magnitude 6.9 struck off the west coast of Chile on Monday, rocking the capital Santiago and briefly causing alarm along the Pacific Coast but sparing the quake-prone nation of any serious damage. The quake was centered about 85 miles from Santiago, and some 22 miles west of the coastal city of Valparaiso.

The US Geological Survey twice revised the magnitude before settling on 6.9, a strength usually capable of causing severe damage. The epicenter's shallow depth of 15.5 miles below the sea allowed it to be felt hundreds of miles away. Santiago office buildings swayed for about 30 seconds at the end of the workday.

Closer to the epicenter, residents scrambled for higher ground, remembering the lessons of the country's devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2010. "It

was short but very powerful," said Paloma Salamo, a 26-year-old nurse, who was in a clinic in Viña del Mar, just north of Valparaiso, when the quake struck. People ran from the facility carrying children and some headed for the hills when the tsunami alarm sounded, she said, but calm was soon restored.

"So far there has been no human loss nor significant damage," President Michelle Bachelet said, praising people for evacuating in an orderly fashion in the immediate aftermath. Officials canceled a tsunami warning that had been issued in Valparaiso. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center reported small tsunami waves of half a foot. There were no reports of structural damage in Valparaiso, but cellphone networks were down in some places, a spokesman with the local government said.—Reuters

ARMED GANG STEALS MILLIONS IN STUNNING PARAGUAY HEIST

ROBBERY OF THE CENTURY LEAVES ONE DEAD

ASUNCION: Dozens of suspected Brazilian gangsters blasted into a secure vault containing millions of dollars in southeastern Paraguay on Monday, leaving a policeman dead in what officials called the "robbery of the century." Some 50 gunmen with explosives and military-grade weaponry left the city of Ciudad del Este looking like a war zone after a two-hour overnight assault on a security firm and police headquarters, authorities and witnesses said.

A joint Paraguayan-Brazilian police operation against the fleeing assailants on the country's porous border-near the famous Iguazu waterfalls killed three suspects and resulted in "at least four arrests," Paraguay's interior ministry tweeted. The tweet showed a photograph of a policeman standing over the body of a man in bloodied camouflage clothing. Other pictures on the ministry's Twitter page showed what were apparently the getaway cars snared by police and a collection of captured ammunition and flak jackets.

Brazilian authorities confirmed there had been a deadly clash but would not give more details. "There was an exchange of fire," a federal police source for the state of Parana told AFP. "There were dead and wounded but we are not giving more information for now. We're still looking for people." Brazilian President Michel Temer promised to support Paraguayan police "with all necessary resources." "The Brazilian government expresses solidarity with the victims of this criminal act and, especially, with the relatives of the dead Paraguayan policeman," he said.

Like bombs in a war

Shocked Paraguayan officials said it was an unprecedented attack for Ciudad del Este, a key trading hub near the borders of Brazil and Argentina in an area linked to drug gangs. The target of the raid was Prosegur, a firm specializing in safely transporting cash. Far from simply overwhelming security at the facility, the raiders caused multiple diversions around the city, setting vehicles on fire to block roads and detonat-



PARAGUAY: View of a car which was burned during a robbery in the premises of multinational company Prosegur in Ciudad del Este, Alto Parana department, Paraguay, in the triple border with Brazil and Argentina.—AFP

ing explosives near police headquarters. "The noise rang out around the city like bombs in a war," one man who witnessed the attack, Antonio del Puerto, told AFP.

Television images from the scene showed the Prosegur building was virtually destroyed, with rocket casings lying around and burned-out vehicles in the streets. Police reports said the attackers included members of First Capital Command, one of Brazil's most powerful drug gangs, which is based in Sao Paulo and has fought turf battles in Rio de Janeiro and across the country's prison system. Public prosecutor Denise Duarte said the men wore masks and spoke Portuguese, the language of Brazil.

Vault was packed

It remained unclear just how much the assailants made off with. Duarte said the

Prosegur vault "was full" at the time of the robbery. Police said the vault can hold up to \$40 million in cash but authorities had yet to verify the amount. The attackers abandoned several vehicles at the site, including armored trucks, one of them mounted with what was described as an anti-aircraft gun. "The security firm's premises has been destroyed and the attack caused chaos and terror in the city," the governor of surrounding Alto Parana state, Justo Zacarias, told reporters.

"Nothing like this has ever happened in Paraguay," Paraguay's police chief Luis Rojas said it was "very feasible" that the attackers had help from within the police force. He said he had contacted security forces in Brazil and Argentina to help catch the robbers. "I am going to seek the resources and the best men to work to catch these people," he said.—AFP



MINDANAO: Philippine soldiers hoist a national flag after clashes with Islamic State-affiliated extremists in the mountain area of Piagapo town, Lanao del Sur province, on the southern island of Mindanao.—AFP

FOREIGN EXTREMISTS KILLED IN PHILIPPINE CLASH: MILITARY

MANILA: The Philippine military said yesterday it had killed almost 40 militants loyal to the Islamic State group, including three Indonesians and a Malaysian, in a major land and air assault in the south. The foreigners were part of more than 160 fighters of the Maute group of militants who came under attack last weekend in Mindanao island, said national military chief General Eduardo Ano. "We inflicted about 37 enemy killed, 14 have been identified and 23 still unidentified, with three Indonesians and one Malaysian," he told reporters in Manila.

It was unclear how he arrived at the death toll. Lieutenant Colonel Jo-ar Herrera, spokesman for the brigade which led the assault in the town of Piagapo in Lanao del Sur province, said soldiers had recovered only

three bodies but informants and local residents had reported a far higher death toll among the extremists.

He said soldiers had found foreign passports belonging to some of the dead but declined to give details. Ano said the foreigners were former members of the Southeast Asian militant group Jemaah Islamiyah, which carried out the 2002 bombings in the Indonesian holiday island of Bali.

Jemaah Islamiyah has long had a presence in the southern Philippines and has trained locals in such skills as bomb-making. The military, using FA-50 jets, helicopter gunships, bomber planes and artillery, attacked and eventually captured the Maute camp which covered three to four hectares. The Maute group has "IS aspira-

tions" and was seeking to be recognized by the jihadist movement which has conquered swathes of Iraq and Syria, Herrera said.

Soldiers found black IS flags at the camp along with improvised explosive devices, grenades, a laptop computer, cellphones and a camera used to create videos for recruitment, he said.

Troops are still hunting for more than 100 members who fled to the hills, he added. The Maute group is just one of several Muslim armed bands in the strife-torn southern Philippines whose leaders have pledged allegiance to IS. The group has been linked to bombings and kidnappings and has launched several large-scale assaults on local communities.—AFP

10 MIGRANTS INJURED IN CLASHES AMONG RIVAL GROUPS IN FRANCE

LILLE, France: Around 10 people were injured in clashes between rival migrant groups in the northern French port city of Calais, until recently a magnet for people trying to reach Britain, local authorities said yesterday. A fight broke out on Monday night in a wooded industrial area

near what had been the site of a sprawling shanty town known as the Jungle, demolished last October as several thousand refugees were relocated across France.

Security forces stepped in and used tear gas in a bid to separate migrants caught up in the skirmishes, who were

mainly from Eritrea and Ethiopia. Some 20 minors were sent to reception centers, authorities said.

Around 400 migrants are estimated to still be living in the area, according to humanitarian groups. France's northern coast has for years drawn streams of

migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and Asia. They often hope to smuggling themselves across the Channel to Britain, drawn by the English language, family and contacts already there and the prospect of jobs. Earlier in April a fire destroyed most of the Grande-Synthe

migrant camp further east along France's coast, near Dunkirk, after fighting broke out there too. Authorities say they have now rehoused most of the more than 1,110 people who had taken shelter at Grande-Synthe at locations across the country. — Reuters

S SUDAN HOSTING REBELS TO EXTEND WAR IN SUDAN

KHARTOUM: Sudan's powerful security agency on Monday accused breakaway South Sudan of staging talks with rebels fighting Khartoum's forces in two southern states, with the goal of "extending the war" there. In a statement, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) said South Sudanese President Salwa Kiir, his deputy Taban Deng and top army commanders held meetings last week with the SPLM-N rebel group.

The group-the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) — is fighting Khartoum's forces in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states. "These meetings were aimed at extending the war in Sudan," NISS said. "South Sudan continues to host Sudanese rebels." As part of this policy, Kiir and Deng held "intensive" meetings with SPLM-N in Juba between Wednesday and Saturday, NISS said. "We are warning the South Sudanese government to stop intervening in Sudanese affairs," NISS said.

It bitterly contrasted South Sudan's policy with Khartoum's humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese refugees who have arrived fleeing war and famine in their own country. "While Sudan has opened its borders to South Sudanese citi-

zens, the government of South Sudan is responding by hosting Sudanese rebels," NISS said. Officials say that during his visit to Khartoum in September, Deng had given assurances that Juba would expel rebels fighting Sudanese forces. Armed revolts on both sides of the border have soured relations between Khartoum and Juba. South Sudan split from Sudan in 2011 under a peace deal that ended a 22-year civil war. But Juba and Khartoum have traded allegations of supporting each other's rebels on their territory, charges which both countries deny. South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, fell into a brutal civil war in December 2013.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed in the country since then and more than two and a half million people driven from their homes. Sudan is hosting about 380,000 South Sudanese refugees who have arrived since the war erupted, the UN's refugee agency says. The influx has swelled in recent months after South Sudan declared a famine in parts of the country. In late March, Sudan opened a "humanitarian corridor" for delivering food aid to thousands of South Sudanese suffering from famine in Unity State and Bahr El Ghazal. — AFP



PARIS: The coffin of slain police officer Xavier Jugele is carried at the Paris Police headquarters. — AP

MACRON, LE PEN TO ATTEND CEREMONY FOR SLAIN POLICEMAN

FRANCE REELS FROM SERIES OF JIHADIST ATTACKS

PARIS: The two candidates vying to be France's new president will yesterday honor a policeman killed in a jihadist-claimed attack on the Champs Elysees, as they ramp up a campaign marked by security jitters. Centrist Emmanuel Macron and far-right, anti-immigration candidate Marine Le Pen differ starkly on how to protect France, still reeling from a series of jihadist attacks since 2015 that has claimed more than 230 lives.

Le Pen has called for France to take back control of its borders from the European Union and deport all foreigners on a terror watch list, accusing Macron of being soft on terrorism. Macron, who at 39 is favorite to become France's youngest-ever president, has urged voters not to "give in to fear" and vowed to step up security cooperation with EU partners. Polls suggest that Macron, who won Sunday's first round of the presidential election with 24 percent of the vote, will comfortably triumph in the May 7 runoff against Le Pen.

But after the political shocks of Britain's exit from the European Union and Donald Trump's unlikely rise to the White House, analysts say a late-stage surge by Le Pen is still possible, if improbable. France's political establishment has rallied around the former investment banker in a bid to shut out the far right, with unpopular Socialist President Francois Hollande on Monday urging voters to turn out for Macron.

Thanking Hollande in a tweet for his support, Macron appealed to the French to "remain true to France's values" in the runoff. Le Pen portrays

her opponent as a member of the French political elite and says she is the only candidate for change in the bitterly divided country, weighed down by high unemployment and inequality. "Nothing in either Mr Macron's policies or his behavior suggests the slightest proof of his love for France," she said.

"We are going to win." Le Pen gained more than 1.2 million new voters compared with her last presidential bid in 2012, securing 7.7 million ballots, a result she hailed as "historic." Late Monday, she said she was setting party affairs to one side in order to concentrate on the campaign. "I will feel freer, I will be above partisan considerations, it's an important act," Le Pen said.

Total deregulation

Campaigning early yesterday at one of France's biggest food markets just outside Paris, Le Pen took aim at what she said was Macron's desire for "total deregulation, total opening up, total free trade." "I believe that the state should impose regulations on the market to make sure that one player does not destroy others, as is often the case with large retailers," she said. Analysts say that alongside security, the economy will likely dominate a critical TV debate between the two candidates on May 3.

Both Macron and Le Pen campaigned as rebels who transcend the left-right divide. The Socialist candidate was eliminated with a humiliating 6.36 percent and that of the centre-right Republicans came in third on Sunday with 20

percent. Republicans candidate Francois Fillon was seen as the favorite until January when his campaign was torpedoed by allegations that he gave his British-born wife and two of their children fictitious jobs as parliamentary assistants.

Fillon, who was charged in March with abuse of public funds, only just scraped ahead of radical left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon on 19.58 percent. Former prime minister Fillon and fifth-placed Socialist candidate Benoit Hamon have both rallied behind Macron, but Melenchon has pointedly avoided backing the centrist.

Legion d'Honneur

Hollande will lead the ceremony at the Paris police headquarters to honor the officer Xavier Jugele, shot on the French capital's world-famous Champs Elysees avenue just three days before Sunday's first round.

Karim Cheurfi, a 39-year-old Frenchman, shot Jugele and wounded two others in the attack, which was claimed by the Islamic State group, before being killed in return fire.

Jugele will be awarded with the Legion d'Honneur—one of France's highest honors—and be posthumously given the rank of captain. Jugele's civil partner will also speak, and both presidential candidates have said they will be present. Hollande's speech will revive memories of an emotional ceremony held for three officer killed during the January 2015 attacks in Paris that started with a shooting at the offices of satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo. — AFP



TOKYO: Chairman of a government advisory panel to discussions on emperor abdication Takashi Imai, right, presents the final report on a special law for the emperor's abdication process to Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the prime minister's office in Tokyo. — AFP

JAPAN'S ABE TO VISIT RUSSIA FOR PUTIN MEET

MOSCOW: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will visit Russia this week for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin and Tokyo said yesterday, as the two sides look to make headway on a decades-old territorial dispute. The Kremlin said talks, set for Thursday, would focus on "the state and prospects for development of Russo-Japanese cooperation in the political, trade and economic, and humanitarian spheres."

The meeting follows on from Putin's first visit to Japan in 11 years last December, when the two leaders failed to resolve a disagreement over an island chain that has prevented their nations signing a peace treaty to formally end World War II.

The Soviet Union seized islands off Japan's northern coast in 1945 in the closing days of the war. Known as the Southern Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan, they have been a thorn in relations ever since.

In Tokyo, Japan's top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga confirmed Abe's visit to Russia. North Korea is also

likely to be on the agenda of the talks "given the current situation," he said, referring to soaring tensions surrounding the hermit state's nuclear and missile programs. Both Russia and Japan have been part of more than a decade of multilateral efforts to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear program.

On Friday, Abe will visit Britain for talks with Prime Minister Theresa May at her country residence of Chequers, her office said. It will be his first visit since May took office in July after the Brexit vote, and comes as she campaigns for an increased parliamentary majority for her Conservatives in a snap election on June 8.

May's Downing Street office said the meeting was a long-standing engagement with a "close ally and key trading partner", with discussions expected "on a range of bilateral and global issues". Suga said the two leaders would "exchange views over Britain's exit from the EU as well as confirm close cooperation with Britain ahead of the G7 summit in late May". — AFP

20 DEAD AS BOAT CAPSIZES IN SENEGAL

DAKAR: At least 20 people, almost all women, were killed when a wooden boat capsized off Senegal's central coast in a delta region popular with tourists, firefighters said yesterday. The incident occurred on Monday night, with the traditional flat-bottomed boat overturning off Bettenty, an island area just north of The Gambia, with 72 on board. All except two of those on board were women, said Commander Umar Kane, a senior fire-fighting official.

"Unfortunately, we have 20 bodies and one person missing," Kane said, saying another 51 people had been rescued. He said there were only two men on board. The boat capsized as the women were on their way to look for seafood, he said. The incident occurred in a coastal area well known for its delicacies like oysters, where tourists flock in large numbers.

Bettenty is an island area in the Saloum delta where such boats, known as pirogues, are often used for travelling between the mangroves and from one islet to another. It was not immediately clear what caused the accident, with divers called in to help the search, Kane said. L'Observateur daily said the boat

had capsized in high winds, while other newspapers said it had foundered because it was overloaded.

Echos of Joola

Several papers recalled the Joola tragedy of 2002 when a ferry sunk during a storm, killing more than 1,800 people in what was one of the world's worst-ever maritime disasters. In that incident, the ferry was licensed to hold just 580 people, including crew, but investigators found it was carrying well over 2,000 when it went down while passing the Gambian coast. Only 64 people were rescued.

The Bettenty sinking came 12 days after a deadly fire ripped through a Muslim retreat in southeastern Senegal killing around 30 people. Police are still investigating the cause of the blaze which hit a site visited every year by hundreds and sometimes thousands of pilgrims from the country's powerful Tijaniyya Muslim brotherhood. Initial reports suggested it may have been caused by a gas canister which exploded while pilgrims were making tea in a straw shelter, with police arresting four people. — AFP

SPAIN HOLDS FOUR SUSPECTS OVER BELGIUM ATTACKS LINK

BARCELONA: Spanish police yesterday arrested four men with alleged links to suspects held in Belgium over their involvement in the Brussels airport and metro attacks last year, officials said. The four were among nine men arrested in a vast operation targeting suspected Islamic extremists that were carried out in the northeastern region of Catalonia in conjunction with Belgian police, Catalan police said in a statement.

The men—a Spanish national and eight Moroccans living in Catalonia, all 30 to 40 years old—are believed to belong to a terrorist organization, the statement added. "Four of those who were detained have links with people arrested for the attacks carried out at Brussels airport and metro," a spokesman for Catalonia's regional police force said. It is not clear if the four were directly involved in carrying out the Brussels attacks, the spokesman added. Belgium has been on high alert since March 22 last year when suicide bombers attacked Zaventem airport and the Maalbeek metro station, killing 32 people and leaving more than 320 wounded. The attacks were led by an Islamic State cell that was also responsible for the carnage in Paris in November 2015.

"The Belgian judge leading the investigation into the Brussels airport attack found ties between the suspected authors of the attack and the Moroccans who live in Catalonia," a spokesman for Spain's National Court, which handles terrorism investigations, said. The men arrested in Catalonia "may have participated or cooperated in past actions" and may have travelled to Belgium, Catalonia's regional interior minister Jordi Jane told radio Rac1. There were no "clear indications" that the suspects arrested yesterday intended to carry out an attack in Spain, he added.

Searches in Morocco

The authorities said the suspects were also being investigated for drug trafficking, robbery and other crimes. Most of the nine men arrested



BARCELONA: Mossos d'Esquadra regional police officers prior to arresting an unidentified man in Barcelona, Spain. — AP

yesterday have criminal records related to petty or organized crime, police said. Police raided 12 properties in six Catalan cities, including the regional capital Barcelona, as part of the operation which followed an eight-month investigation. Officers seized three firearms, drugs, cash and electronics during the dawn raids.

At the same time, police in Morocco searched several homes of family members of the suspects arrested in Spain. They were accompanied by Spanish police. Between 2012 and October 2016, Spain detained 186 people with suspected links to Islamic jihadism, including 63 in Catalonia, according to the interior ministry. Spain, the world's third most visited country, increased its terror alert to category four on a five-point scale in 2015 after attacks in France,

Tunisia and Kuwait. The country has been mentioned on extremist websites as a possible target for historical reasons, since much of its territory was under Muslim rule from 711 to 1492. But it has been spared major jihadist violence since March 2004, when bombs exploded on commuter trains in Madrid, killing 191 people in an attack claimed by Qaeda-inspired militants.

Unlike France or Belgium, Spain is less exposed to the risk that radicalized citizens who left to fight abroad will return with plans to commit attacks on home soil. Only around 160 Spaniards are estimated to have joined the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, according to a study by the Real Instituto Elcano think tank, compared with over a thousand from nearby France since 2012. — AFP

PAKISTAN HANGS FOUR MILITANTS

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan yesterday hanged four militants involved in attacks on civilians, police and troops after they were convicted by the country's controversial military courts, an army statement said. It said the four, who were hanged at a prison in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all belonged to the umbrella militant group Tehreek-e-Taleban Pakistan (TTP). Pakistan's powerful army chief last week confirmed

death sentences passed by military courts on 30 militants, some of whom were involved in the country's worst-ever extremist attack.

The assault on a school in Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saw Taliban gunmen slaughter more than 150 people, the majority of them children. The military courts-in which the army can try civilians on terror charges in secret, despite strong criticism from rights groups-were

established in the wake of the 2014 attack, which traumatized a country already grimly accustomed to atrocities.

They were seen as an "exceptional" short-term measure to give the government time to reform the criminal justice system as the military targeted militants in the tribal areas of the northwest. Security has dramatically improved since then. The law expired in January with the controversial tribunals

having hanged 12 people and ordered the executions of 149 more. But in February a fresh wave of militant violence killed 130 people across the country. Shortly afterwards, parliament voted to extend the courts for another two years. Figures earlier this month showed 161 executions have been ordered by the courts since they were created and 24 of them have been carried out-not including yesterday's hangings. —AFP

MYANMAR TO HOLD PEACE TALKS IN MAY WITH ETHNIC REBELS

YANGON: Myanmar will hold peace talks next month aimed at ending decades-long ethnic wars that have intensified since Aung San Suu Kyi's party took power a year ago, it was announced yesterday. Negotiators for the ethnic groups want the talks, which were pushed back from February due to a surge in fighting and political backbiting, to broach the issue of a federal power arrangement.

Ethnic fault lines have fractured the nation since it gained independence from Britain in 1948 and Suu Kyi, a Nobel peace laureate, has made peace a priority of her new government. But she has made little progress in sealing a peace deal since the first round of the so-called "21st Century Panglong" talks were held last year. Clashes between the army and insurgents on Myanmar's eastern borders have since reached their worst point in decades, sending tens of thousands fleeing their homes.

Government spokesman Zaw Htay said the next round of talks would begin on May 24 and last five days. Col Khun Okka, an ethnic negotiator, said they would aim to flesh out the key issue of what a new national federal system could look like. "If we can lay out the basic agreement on a federal system, I can say it would help a lot," said Khun Okka, chairman of the Pa-O National Liberation Organization.

Discontent with Suu Kyi's government has been growing among ethnic minorities, some of whom say she is working too closely with the military that ran the country for almost 50 years.

Under the constitution the army still controls a quarter of parliamentary seats and the ministries of borders, home affairs and defense. Suu Kyi's NLD party lost several seats to ethnic parties in by-elections last month that were seen as a test of her popularity after a year in office. "Ethnic people are not interested in the peace process as there has been a lot of fighting since the first meeting," said Sai One Lang Kham, an MP from the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy.

Analysts have criticized Suu Kyi for pushing a partial ceasefire deal first touted by the former military-backed government in 2015, which requires groups to lay down their arms before talks. Several of the most powerful groups, including the China-backed United Wa State Army and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), have grouped together to reject the agreement and call for international mediation. "As long as the intentional attacks to the ethnic groups are still going on, all the works by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will be lost," KIA spokesman Daung Kha said, using a Myanmar honorific.—AFP



KATHMANDU: In this file photo, buildings damaged in earthquake lean to their sides in Kathmandu, Nepal. —AP

A LOOK AT NEPAL'S PROGRESS IN EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

REBUILDING TOPPLED HOUSES AND LIVES

KATHMANDU: Two years ago, Nepal was ravaged by a massive 7.8-magnitude earthquake that killed nearly 9,000 people and left another 4 million homeless as their humble homes built from brick and stone were toppled within seconds. Only a small number have managed to rebuild since then, with the vast majority still sheltering in makeshift tents as they wait for government aid to be coordinated and dispersed across the Himalayan nation. Here are some of the main issues surrounding Nepal's recovery and reconstruction:

Damage

The quake decimated homes, infrastructure and temples across the country and the full extent of the damage is still being determined. The government estimates it will need \$9.4 billion to rebuild everything. The government has so far counted 626,694 homes as damaged, though it has only surveyed the 14 worst-hit districts and has another 17 districts to work through.

It is believed the actual number of homes damaged could be as high as a million. Foreign governments and agencies have pledged some \$4.2 billion in reconstruction aid, and Nepal has reached deals to collect three-quarter of that. But reconstruction officials say they have no source for the rest of the needed funds, and are relying

on foreign countries to provide that as well. There was also significant damage on Mount Everest during the earthquake, which set off an avalanche that swept through the base camp and killed 19 people and damaged many of the camps set up there. The 2015 climbing season was cancelled. Climbers returned to the mountain in the 2016 season and hundreds are expected to attempt scale the 8,850-meter peak next month.

Progress

In short, not much. In the quake's aftermath, Nepal immediately became embroiled in political squabbles, and has since shuffled through two administrations. A supply crisis also hampered progress and distracted officials, with thousands of protesters from ethnic minority groups demanding more constitutional representation blocking fuel and food shipments at the border in 2015 and for several months in 2016.

It took more than eight months for Nepal to create a National Reconstruction Authority to deal with all earthquake aid assessments, claims and payments, and then another three months to sort out the agency's leadership. To date, Nepal has managed to rebuild just over 22,000 homes - or about 3.5 percent of the number so far counted for reconstruction. Out of the 750

heritage structures damaged - including palaces, Hindu temples and Buddhist shrines - about 90 are now being reconstructed with private and community funding.

Quake victims

The vast majority of Nepalese made homeless by the quake are sheltering in makeshift tents built out of tarpaulin sheets and corrugated tin. The tents offer little protection from insects, vermin, winter cold or monsoon rains. The government has promised a total of \$2,910, in three installments, to each family in need of rebuilding. But so far, it has released only first payments of \$485 to 87 percent of those families. Banks also have yet to finalize terms by which they would offer low-interest loans on top of the aid payments.

Many have lost not just their homes, but also their jobs, as the quake also damaged buildings and ravaged the country's economy. Farmers are selling their fields for cash to rebuild; others are taking out high-interest loans. Non-profit aid groups have stepped in to help many with food, medicine and construction advice for rebuilding according to new government guidelines aimed at making homes earthquake-safe. But many living in remote, mountain villages remain mostly out of reach. —AP



KURRAM: A Pakistani bombing victim is treated at a hospital in the tribal district of Kurram yesterday. — AFP

TALEBAN ROADSIDE BOMBING KILLS NINE IN NORTHWESTERN PAKISTAN

PESHAWAR: A roadside bombing targeted a minivan in Pakistan's northwestern tribal region yesterday, killing nine people, a local official and the military said. The attack was claimed by a breakaway Taleban faction. The blast ripped through the van travelling through a minority Shiite region of the Kurram tribal area, which borders Afghanistan, said Arif Khan, a tribal administration official in the town of Parachinar. The area has long been the scene of sectarian violence.

A woman and two children were among the nine killed while 13 people were wounded in the explosion. With few adequate medical facilities in the area, a Pakistani army helicopter evacuated the wounded to a nearby military hospital. The breakaway Taleban faction of Jamat-ul-Ahrar said it was behind the attack on the Shiites. Pakistani Taleban and other Sunni

militant groups often target minority Shiites whom they consider to be heretics.

The Islamic State group has also claimed several recent attacks in the country. For over a decade, Pakistan has been fighting Islamic militants who have killed tens of thousands of people. Islamabad has also undertaken several large-scale offensives in the tribal regions in an effort to rout militants from the area. Also yesterday, four convicted members of the Pakistani Taleban were executed in a prison, the army said.

In the southern port city of Karachi, paramilitary forces raided an apartment following a tip that militants were hiding there, police officer Aurangzeb Khattak said. After a seven-hour siege, three militants, including a woman, blew themselves up inside the apartment. The explosion also killed a 5-year-old while a fourth militant was killed trying to flee the scene. —AP

COURT JAILS INDIAN FUGITIVE GANGSTER FOR SEVEN YEARS

NEW DELHI: Indian gangster Chhota Rajan was jailed for seven years yesterday for passport fraud, the first prison term handed to the so-called "Hindu don" who had evaded capture for more than 20 years. Rajan, once India's most wanted man, had been found guilty in a New Delhi court Monday of using a fake passport to flee the country in the late 1990s. Three retired government officials were also convicted of helping Rajan acquire the forged document.

"All accused had entered into a criminal conspiracy to do an illegal act by illegal means," the court said, according to the Press Trust of India news agency. "Accused Rajan intentionally and knowingly furnished false information with false address and other particulars whereas in furtherance of the criminal conspiracy," Rajan, a feared Mumbai underworld figure, was arrested in late 2015 in Indonesia after more than two decades on the run. He was extradited to India, where there are nearly 80 criminal cases registered against him.

Rajan is suspected of involvement in dozens of crimes including murder, extortion and drug trafficking. He dodged police for years even though Interpol flagged him in 1995 as a wanted man. He was the alleged former right-hand man of Mumbai crime kingpin Dawood Ibrahim, who is suspected of masterminding the 1993 bomb blasts in the city that killed more than 250 people in retaliation for anti-Muslim violence a few months earlier.

Rajan parted with Ibrahim after the attacks, becoming a rival to his former ally. He was accused of running one of several underworld

outfits that had a grip on Mumbai, India's financial and entertainment capital, in the 1980s and 1990s until a police crackdown. Rajan

portrayed himself as a "Hindu don" and began targeting those he considered to be "anti-India," including Ibrahim's men. —AFP



BALI: This file photo shows Indian national Rajendra Sadashiv Nikalje, known in India as Chhota Rajan, center, being escorted by Indonesian police from Bali police headquarters to Ngurah Rai Airport during his deportation from Denpasar on Bali island. — AFP

INDIA PLANS TO TAG MILLIONS OF COWS TO CURB SMUGGLING

NEW DELHI: India could issue millions of cows with unique identification numbers, the latest effort to protect the sacred animals amid a spike in violence by Hindu vigilantes against farmers accused of cattle smuggling. The government has told the Supreme Court that millions of cows will be tagged with a tamper-proof plastic tag linked to a national database in a bid to curb smuggling within India and beyond its borders.

Cows are considered sacred in Hindu-majority India, and their slaughter is a punishable offence in many states. "Each animal will have a unique number that will have details like age, breed, sex, height, color, horn type and special marks," a senior officer from India's home ministry that prepared the recommendations said.

A panel from the home ministry was tasked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's right-wing government to propose measures against cross-border smuggling after a petition was filed by an animal rights group in the Supreme Court. Nearly 175,000 cattle are seized annually on the largely porous borders with Bangladesh and Nepal, according to home ministry figures, with unofficial

estimates of the illegal cow trade pegged at nearly two million animals.

But the proposal comes amid a spike in violence by Hindu mobs against farmers transporting livestock, and a broader crackdown on butchers in India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh. Vigilante squads roaming highways checking livestock trucks for the sacred animals have proliferated since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in 2014. These so-called "cow protection squads" beat a Muslim man to death on a highway in Rajasthan this month, accusing him of secretly taking cattle to an abattoir for illegal slaughter.

The man was a dairy farmer transporting milk cows. Three men transporting buffaloes in their truck were beaten this week in the capital New Delhi. At least 10 Muslim men have been killed in similar incidents across the country by Hindu mobs on suspicion of eating beef or smuggling cows in the last two years. Most Indian states have banned cow slaughter and imposed heavy penalties and jail terms on offenders, while the transportation of cattle across state lines is also barred in several jurisdictions. —AFP

INDONESIAN VICE PRESIDENT DISMISSES CONCERNS ABOUT RISING INTOLERANCE

JAKARTA: Indonesia's vice president yesterday dismissed concerns a reputation for moderate Islam had been damaged in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country after Jakarta's Christian governor was defeated in a religiously charged election. In an interview with AFP, Jusuf Kalla insisted religion was only one factor in last week's run-off between governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama and a Muslim former government minister.

Purnama, Jakarta's first non-Muslim governor for half a century, was favorite to win until claims he insulted Islam sparked mass protests and led to him being put on trial for blasphemy in a case viewed as politically motivated. The vote was seen as a test of whether the moderate Islam traditionally practiced in Indonesia was under threat from hardliners, who led the protests against

Purnama, also Jakarta's first ethnic Chinese leader. But Kalla dismissed fears Indonesia's pluralistic traditions were being eroded, and that radical groups were set to become increasingly influential. "Indonesia will stay moderate," he said. "Religion is influential, yes but that it is not the only thing (in this election)." Kalla, 74, conceded the vote was polarizing, saying even his own house was divided over who should win. But he said Purnama, known for his often abrasive style, had lost more because of his "attitude."

"Of course there is the religion factor but if his attitude (was good) I think he could have won," he said. "We don't like a leader like that." Purnama, known by his nickname Ahok, was popular for making progress in cleaning up Jakarta but often got into trouble for his hot temper and being outspoken.

The blasphemy allegations stemmed from a speech last year in which he said his rivals were tricking people into voting against him by using a Koranic verse, which some interpret as meaning Muslims should only choose Muslim leaders.

Purnama will finish his term leading Jakarta in October, when Muslim rival Anies Baswedan will take charge of the teeming metropolis of 10 million. Following the poll defeat, he may avoid jail after prosecutors in his blasphemy trial recommended only two years probation. A verdict will be handed down on May 9. Kalla also dismissed speculation that Purnama could be appointed a minister by his ally President Joko Widodo after losing the Jakarta governorship. "It is completely unethical if Ahok is sentenced and is then promoted to become a minister," he said. —AFP



JAKARTA: Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla speaks during an interview with AFP at his office in Jakarta yesterday. —AFP



BUSAN: Nuclear-powered submarine USS Michigan approaches at the southeastern port city of Busan yesterday. — AFP

NORTH KOREA MARKS MILITARY ANNIVERSARY WITH FIRING DRILL

TENSIONS RISE AS US SUBMARINE DOCKS IN S KOREA

SEOUL: Nuclear-armed North Korea yesterday marked a military anniversary with a massive conventional firing drill, Seoul said, as a US guided-missile submarine docked in South Korea amid tensions over Pyongyang's weapons ambitions. Speculation had mounted that the North could carry out a sixth nuclear test or another missile launch to mark 85 years since the founding of its army. But no such event—which usually happens in the morning—had taken place by mid-afternoon, and instead Seoul's defense ministry said Pyongyang was conducting a "massive fire drill" in the eastern port city of Wonsan. The South's Yonhap news agency cited a government source as saying the exercise was the North's "largest ever" and presumed to have been overseen by leader Kim Jong-Un.

Washington has sent the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson to the Korean peninsula, where it is expected to arrive after a derision-provoking delay later this week. Confusion had clouded the carrier's whereabouts earlier this month after US officials indicated it was sailing towards North Korea when in fact it was heading south. The vessel will take part in joint naval drills with the South's forces to "demonstrate Seoul and Washington's strong determination to punish North Korean provocations", the South Korean Navy said in a statement.

They will take place in the East Sea, the South's name for the Sea of Japan, it said, and the two allies will also begin joint naval exercises in the West Sea—what it calls the Yellow Sea—on Tuesday "in relation to the current security situation". The

nuclear-powered US submarine USS Michigan also made a port call at Busan in the South yesterday in another show of force, while US navy destroyers carried out separate joint exercises with Japanese and South Korean vessels.

President Donald Trump has said the US was sending an "armada" to the Korean peninsula, including submarines. According to the US Navy's Submarine Force Pacific website, the USS Michigan carries more than 150 Tomahawk cruise missiles. They are capable of precision strikes against the North's nuclear facilities, but the South Korean Navy called the visit "routine" and said the submarine would not take part in any joint exercises.

Brutal punishment

North Korea has ambitions to build a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the US mainland. Tensions have soared in recent months as it carried out a string of missile tests that sparked tit-for-tat saber-rattling between it and Washington. Pyongyang's rhetoric always intensifies in the spring, when Seoul and Washington hold joint military drills which it sees as rehearsals for an invasion.

The North's Rodong Sinmun—the official mouthpiece of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea—warned yesterday of dire consequences in the event of a US-led pre-emptive strike. It promised "the most brutal punishment... in the sky and land as well as at sea and from underwater without any warning or prior notice". North Korea launched two missile tests this month while

Trump and his senior aides have warned that "all options are on the table" against Pyongyang, including military action.

Trump on Monday urged UN Security Council ambassadors to consider stronger sanctions against Pyongyang, and US senators will be briefed on North Korea at the White House today. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is to chair a ministerial-level Security Council meeting on the North on Friday. The North says it needs nuclear weapons to defend itself against invasion and a spokesman for its foreign ministry yesterday claimed the meetings—coupled with Trump's fresh policy of "maximum pressure and engagement" on Pyongyang—showed the threat it faced from the US.

"They are explicitly advocating pressure on us, which is as dangerous as lighting the fuse on an all-out war," he said in a statement carried by the state-run KCNA news agency. Meanwhile, top nuclear envoys from Japan, South Korea and the United States met yesterday in Tokyo and vowed "stern action" against any fresh North Korean provocations.

US special representative Joseph Yun said he discussed American policy to "enhance pressure" on Pyongyang "because we really do not believe that North Korea is ready to engage us towards denuclearization". The trio also agreed that China and Russia should play a bigger role in reining in the North, said Kim Hong-Kyun, South Korea's chief envoy on the issue. "Cooperation with China and Russia is the most important for effective pressure on North Korea," he said. —AFP

TRIAL OF CHINA HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER DELAYED

CHANGSHA, China: A Chinese court indefinitely postponed the trial of a prominent human rights lawyer yesterday, his supporters said, in a case that has sparked international concern after allegations he was tortured. Xie Yang, who had worked on numerous cases considered politically sensitive by the ruling Communist Party, was among hundreds of legal staff and activists detained in a crackdown in the summer of 2015.

Dozens of supporters and several diplomats gathered at the court in the central city of Changsha for the start of Xie's trial—believed to be on charges of "inciting subversion of state power"—were told the case would not be heard yesterday. Last-minute delays in sensitive trials are not uncommon even though Chinese law requires courts to give a defendant's family and lawyers three days notice of any changes, said Amnesty International China researcher Patrick Poon. A new date was not provided.

Xie, who was arrested in the so-called "709 crackdown", claims police have used "sleep deprivation, long interrogations, beatings, death threats, humiliations" on him, and the EU has voiced concern over his case. "Our country is always emphasizing the rule of law, so through Xie Yang's case we can tell whether or not there is any kind of reality in that," a supporter at the courthouse told AFP, requesting anonymity.

Eleven countries, including Canada, Australia and Switzerland, also cited Xie's case in a letter to Beijing criticizing China's detention practices. "We are following this case very closely and our human rights counselor is in Changsha today," a Beijing-based EU spokesman told AFP. State power-

Xie is being represented by a court-designated advocate after he was denied the right to pick his own defense, his former attorney Chen Jiangang said.

The new lawyer, He Xiaodan, could not be reached for comment and the courtroom also did not answer calls yesterday. Chen said He had contacted Xie's family on Monday night to advise them not to go to the courtroom. "But they did not get any clear information saying the trial date was different," he said. Court officials had confirmed to Xie's wife, Chen Guiqiu, that the trial would start yesterday, she said in a statement last week.

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.

"The lawyers are seen as threatening because what they do in the ordinary course is use courts to attack government policies," Karla Simon of the New York University School of Law said. Among Xie's clients were Chinese activists who supported Hong Kong democracy. 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. An AFP reporter at the court yesterday was taken into police custody for about an hour, with officials saying they wanted to verify his credentials. —AFP



CHANGSHA, China: Supporters of lawyer Xie Yang gather outside the Intermediate People's Court in Changsha yesterday. — AFP

THAILAND SETS OCTOBER DATE FOR LATE KING'S CREMATION

BANGKOK: The cremation of Thailand's late king Bhumibol Adulyadej will take place on October 26, just over a year after his death plunged the country into deep mourning, the junta announced yesterday. Government spokesman Lieutenant General Sansern Kaewkumnerd said five days of funerary rites would begin on October 25, with the cremation on the second evening. A public holiday will be declared that day. Cremations for senior Thai royals are huge and costly affairs but few subjects alive today will ever have witnessed one.

At the time of his death on October 13 last year Bhumibol, 88, was the world's longest-reigning monarch. His rule spanned seven tumultuous decades that

witnessed significant economic growth but saw democratic aspirations wilt under the weight of multiple palace-endorsed coups. The monarchy is also shielded from any criticism by a draconian lese majeste law. It was used more frequently towards the end of Bhumibol's reign, especially after the 2014 coup. While he had been ill for years, his passing still left many Thais bereft. There have been huge displays of mourning and many choose to wear monochrome black or white clothing for the duration of the one-year official mourning period. A huge cremation complex is being constructed on a parade ground specially reserved for royal funerals outside the Grand Palace in Bangkok. —AFP

THAI MAN MURDERS CHILD, KILLS HIMSELF ON FACEBOOK LIVE

BANGKOK: A man in Phuket filmed himself killing his child and then himself on Facebook Live, Thai police said yesterday, the latest example of the social network's live-streaming function being used to broadcast grisly crimes. Officers on the southern resort island said they were alerted to the video by friends of the man and rushed to an abandoned hotel near the international airport on Monday afternoon. "They had already died when I arrived there," Lieutenant Jullaus Suvannin, one of the first on the scene, told AFP, adding a smartphone was found propped up against a wall.

Police said they believed the man had previously argued with the mother of the murdered child, an 11-month girl. The man had hung himself and his daughter, they said. Channel 3 television broadcast footage of the child's distraught mother, flanked by relatives, picking up both her daughter's body and the man's corpse from the local hospital yesterday. Facebook was not immediately available for comment. The killing comes just days after Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg vowed to work to keep the world's leading social network from being used to propagate harrowing acts like murder and suicide. —AFP

AUSTRALIAN PM LOOKING FORWARD TO MEET TRUMP

CANBERRA: Australia's prime minister said yesterday he was looking forward to meeting face-to-face soon with President Donald Trump, three months after their heated telephone conversation over an Obama-era refugee deal. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was speaking to reporters at the al-Minhad air base in the United Arab Emirates after meeting in Afghanistan with

Defense Secretary James Mattis and greeting Australian troops in the Middle East ahead of Veterans' Day commemorations yesterday.

Turnbull met in Sydney at the weekend with Vice President Mike Pence, whose visit was intended to smooth over any lingering hard feelings after the prime minister's contentious phone call to Trump on Jan 28 over a refugee resettlement

deal struck by the previous Obama administration. Turnbull said yesterday he will announce his Trump visit "very shortly." The meeting will take place in New York, according to media reports.

"We've had very good meetings with Vice President Pence and the Defense Secretary James Mattis just in the last few days. I look forward to continuing those discussions with President Trump and will do so at an early opportunity," Turnbull told reporters. Australia is unhappy with Trump's decision to pull the United States out of the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact.

Under the refugee resettlement agreement, the United States will take up to 1,250 refugees that Australia houses in detention camps on the Pacific island nations of Nauru and Papua New Guinea. Trump, who campaigned on tough-on-immigration policies, was enraged by the agreement, prompting a tense phone call with Turnbull and an angry tweet in which the president dubbed the deal "dumb." White House spokesman Sean Spicer's subsequent mispronunciation of Turnbull's name as "Trumbull" did not help matters. The fallout has left relations between the US and Australia at their lowest point since the Vietnam War, when Australia's then-Prime Minister Gough Whitlam criticized a series of bombings authorized by then-President Richard Nixon. Turnbull yesterday left open the possibility of Australia increasing its military contribution in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. He also announced an additional 110 million Australian dollars (\$83 million) over three years in humanitarian and stabilization assistance for Iraq. —AP



SYDNEY: In this file photo, US Vice President Mike Pence, left, shakes hands with Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at Admiralty House in Sydney. — AP

KUWAIT OKS \$100M GRANT FOR IRAQ, FIRST SINCE 1990

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This shows a "remarkable solidarity with the Yemeni people," the UN secretary general told reporters.

Kuwait is earmarking \$100 million as its contribution towards international relief aid for the Yemeni people. Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, who declared the financial allocation at the conference, indicated that the specialized fund was follow-up to a previous sum of \$300 million allotted for the Yemeni people.

The previous amount was in the form of soft loans provided by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to finance development projects in Yemen. It was announced during a ministerial meeting of Friends of Yemen held in New York in 2012. Jarallah expressed in his speech a conviction that the ideal solution to the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Yemen required restoration of stability, "a matter that could be attained through

political settlement according to the three references and greater effort by the international community, represented by the Security Council".

The deputy foreign minister expressed concern that the UN Security Council's failure to resolve the crisis in Syria might be replayed in Yemen. He regretted that marathon inter-Yemeni negotiations ended without any tangible breakthrough.

He, however, expressed readiness to re-host "the Yemeni brothers" to sign a final reconciliation agreement, if the parties reach a settlement. Jarallah renewed his call on Yemeni groups to return to the negotiating table to find a settlement to the conflict.

When opening the conference yesterday morning, Guterres had said it was vital to act quickly. "We are witnessing the starving and the crippling of an entire generation," he said, adding that Yemen is gripped by "the world's largest hunger crisis". He warned that children especially

were already dying at an alarming rate, but stressed that "a famine can be prevented if we act quickly and commit to funding crucial life-saving assistance".

Yemen's Prime Minister Ahmed Obaid Mubarek Bin-Dagher had urged donors to be generous, describing how some of his compatriots were "writhing with hunger." "\$2.1 billion is the minimum that we should plan on raising," he told the conference. UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien meanwhile said that Yemen was "the world's largest humanitarian crisis today." "We must do more and can do more," he said, insisting that "we can, with your money and support, scale up, we can avert famine and the worst catastrophe." But O'Brien underlined that humanitarian aid alone would not resolve Yemen's crisis. "We need an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to negotiations and peace," he said.

The conflict has dramatically deepened Yemen's drawn-out humanitarian crisis, with a full 19 million people - two-

thirds of the population - now in need of humanitarian aid, the UN said. A total of 17 million of them are going hungry, including more than two million children currently considered acutely malnourished. "On average, a child under the age of five dies of preventable causes in Yemen every 10 minutes," Guterres said. "This means 50 children in Yemen will die during today's conference, and all those deaths could have been prevented." Many of the children who survive "will be affected by stunting and poor health for their entire lives," he added.

Anthony Lake, head of the UN children's agency, urged the world to act immediately, warning that "these children cannot wait for an official famine to be declared". Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom noted that with two million children out of school, there is a growing risk of recruitment by armed groups, while two-thirds of girls are married off before the age of 18. "We must act now," she said. — Agencies

EMIRATES CEO SAYS LAPTOP CARRY-ON BAN...

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The exhibition last year featured a stand by the luxury hotel chain bearing the new American president's name, but this year the company apparently decided not to take part.

Sheikh Ahmed didn't mince words, however, when describing what he thought after watching the video of a United Express passenger being forced off a flight. Those videos showed a bloody passenger being dragged off a flight in Chicago on April 9 by airport police after he refused to give up his seat to make room for crew members. "Those people who dealt with it,

they should be more professional," he told journalists. "That is something that should not be acceptable."

Sheikh Ahmed also acknowledged the challenges facing the global aviation industry, saying Emirates was considering so-called premium economy seats, planned on launching a new first-class "product" this year and was looking at other measures.

He even hinted that Emirates might work in closer partnership with budget carrier FlyDubai, another Dubai government-backed airline. "If I'm looking at it from the Dubai ownership of two airlines, I have Emirates, we have FlyDubai," he said. "We can do something there." He declined to elaborate. — AP

BRITAIN REFUSES TO APOLOGIZE OVER...

Continued from Page 1

a Jewish homeland and the modern state of Israel, just as we support the critical objective of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state," he said. Britain would mark the centenary "in an appropriate and balanced manner", he added. In the 1917 declaration, the British government said it viewed "with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". It also said "...nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine..." Palestine was under British rule when Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour made the policy statement in a letter to Lord Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community.

Palestinians have long condemned the document as a

promise by Britain to hand over land that it did not own. Hassassian said that unless Britain apologized, cancelled planned celebrations and recognized the state of Palestine, the Palestinians would go ahead with plans for a lawsuit. "This is the only condition upon which we can close this file permanently," he said.

Israel declared independence in 1948, at the end of British Mandatory rule and after the UN General Assembly voted in 1947 in favor of a plan, rejected by Palestinian representatives, to partition Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state. Israel captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the 1967 Middle East war, along with the Gaza Strip that is now controlled by Palestinian Islamist faction Hamas. Palestinians seek to establish an independent state in those territories. The last round of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed in 2014. — Reuters

SAUDI WINS TOP ARAB FICTION AWARD

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Alwan, 38, was for the second time among the short-listed novelists after his novel "The Beaver" made it to the last six in 2015. Its French edition went on to win the best Arabic novel translated into French for that year. This year, Alwan competed with five other authors from Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon and Libya. Born in Riyadh, he graduated with a doctorate in international marketing from Carleton University in Canada, and has published five novels.

Alwan was chosen in 2010 as one of the 39 best Arab authors under the age of 40 by the Beirut39 project. Dubbed as the "Arabic Booker", the \$50,000-prize is supported by the Booker Prize Foundation in London, but it is funded by the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture

Authority. The two other Saudi novelists who previously won the prize were Abdo Khalil in 2010 for his "Throwing Sparks" and Raja Alem, who shared the top prize in 2011 for her novel titled "The Dove's Necklace".

"The culture and arts arena in Saudi Arabia has been rather active over the past 10 years," Alwan told AFP, speaking of the ultra-conservative kingdom when public cinemas remain banned and women face tight restrictions, including a unique ban on driving. "The Saudi society is going through a phase of massive change. There is a young population facing various intellectual changes, which brings on many questions... When such questions are posed, novelists find their chance to repose them in a literary form," he added. Last year, Palestinian author Rabai Al-Madhoun won the award that was launched in 2008. — AFP

QATAR WORLD CUP WORKERS GET...

Continued from Page 1

the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, said in a statement adding that the results will be published in a "detailed report".

Weill Cornell is one of several American academic institutions which have a presence in Qatar, with a campus opening back in 2001. The head of the supreme committee, Hassan Al-Thawadi, said the research could help uncover "health concerns among our workers". Since controversially being awarded the 2022 World Cup - the first to be played in the Middle East - Qatar has

promised huge international criticism for its treatment of migrant workers.

Last year, Amnesty International accused Qatar of using "forced labor" at one World Cup site. And a recent Supreme Committee-commissioned report found that some World Cup venue laborers worked 18-hour days. Qatar though has denied many of the criticisms and says it has made significant steps in improving workers' welfare in areas such as pay, accommodation and on-site safety. There are some 14,000 workers employed directly on World Cup projects in Qatar. That number will jump to 36,000 in the 12 months, organizers said. — AFP



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EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
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Focus

TRUMP'S FIRST 100 DAYS: A CHAOTIC DISCOVERY OF POWER

From the resounding setbacks in Congress to the stunning policy flip-flops, Donald Trump has certainly been confronted with a steep learning curve in his opening months at the White House. While the new US president has shown a capacity to change both his tone and his positions, Trump has struggled to convey a clearly articulated worldview. As the symbolic milestone of his 100th day in power, which falls on Saturday, draws near, a cold, hard reality is setting in for the billionaire businessman who promised Americans he would "win, win, win" for them.

At this stage of his presidency Donald Trump is the least popular US leader in modern history (even if his core supporters still fully support him). The 70-year-old Trump, whose election victory unleashed a political shockwave around the world, is still clinging to the take-no-prisoners, unpredictable, impulsive style that made him a property mogul and reality TV star. But the onetime anti-establishment candidate who promised to "drain the swamp" in Washington appears to have recognized - with a mix of naivete and craftiness - that he has one of the most difficult jobs in the world.

In just his first few weeks in office Trump suffered some crippling blows - the federal courts halted his proposed travel ban, and Congress failed to move ahead on health care reform. "Nobody knew that health care could be so complicated," Trump said during his efforts to see Obamacare - his Democratic predecessor's signature domestic policy achievement - repealed and replaced. "After listening for 10 minutes, I realized it's not so easy," Trump said after talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping about North Korea.

Tweets-a-plenty

The demands and constraints of the Oval Office - where every word uttered counts - are quite different from the daily stump speeches Trump made on the campaign trail. Who to turn to for advice? Whose advice to heed? What kind of relationship to build with Congress, even when it's nominally controlled by one's own party? How much latitude to afford the usually powerful State and Defense Departments?

All of his predecessors have said it: Moving into the mansion at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is a shock to the system. "There's just something about this job as president every president faces - you know, that you think one thing going in and then the pressures of the job or the realities of the world, you know, are different than you thought," George W Bush said recently. Aside from his unwavering penchant for morning tweetstorms, often influenced by the ebb and flow of headlines on Fox News, Trump has changed.

In the choice of his teams as well as in some negotiations, a sort of "presidentialization" seems to be unfolding - albeit haltingly. Trump, who was elevated to the highest office in the United States with no prior political, diplomatic or military experience, says his ever-evolving approach works. "I do change and I am flexible, and I'm proud of that flexibility," Trump said, shortly before authorizing air strikes against the regime of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad over what Washington says was a sarin attack on civilians.

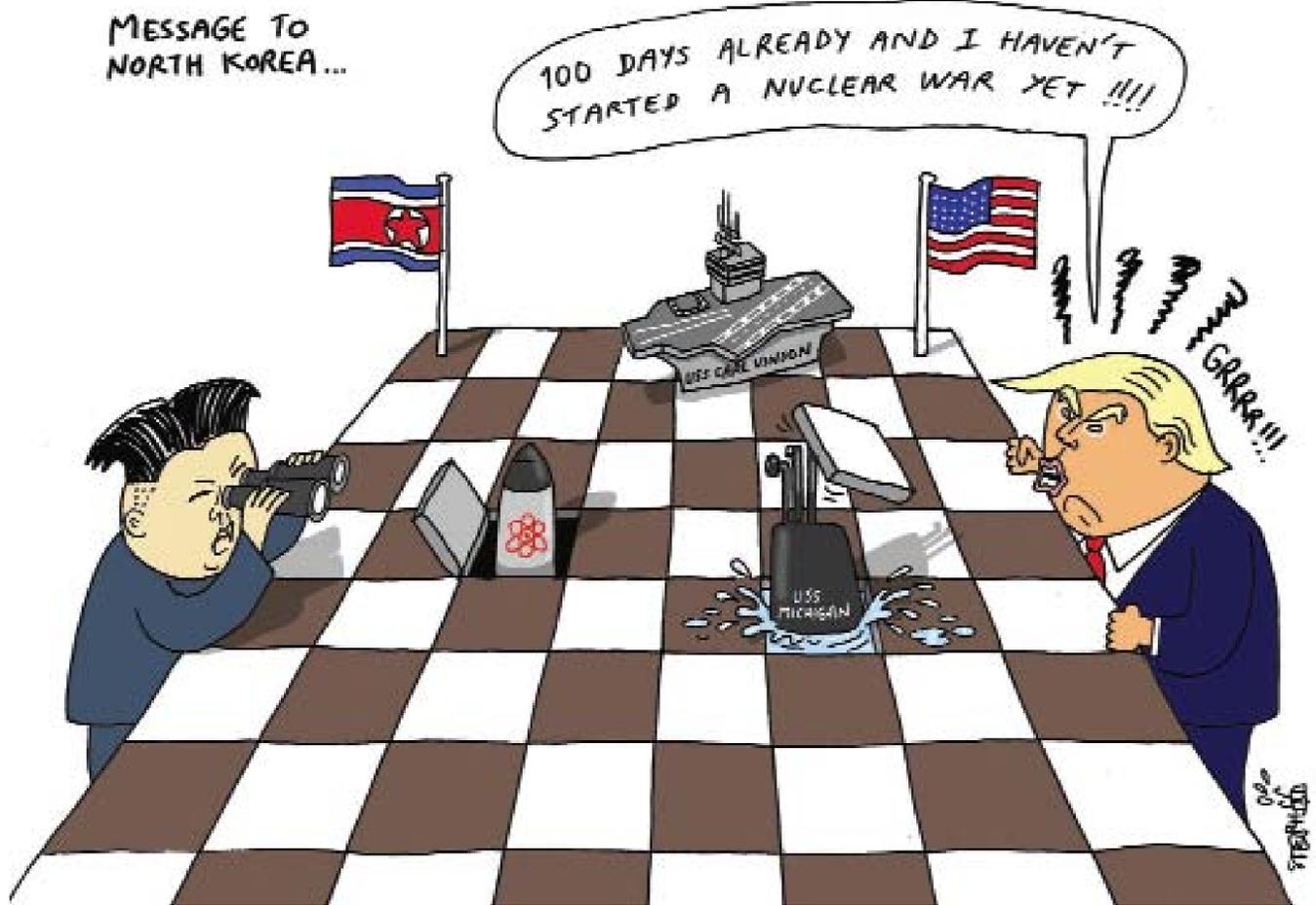
On China, Russia and NATO, his about-faces have - to some extent - reassured some Americans, and some of Washington's allies. "When a president moves from being so wrong to being so right on such important questions, the sensible response is not to carp but to celebrate, however cautiously," The Washington Post said in an editorial, reminding readers of the harsh, dark tone of Trump's inaugural address.

But his approach also includes risks. From Syria to North Korea, what is the risk of dragging the United States into a military conflict with an unpredictable outcome, a situation Trump warned against on the campaign trail? How would the Republican president react if a major terror attack were to happen on US soil, as it did on 9/11?

Trumpism?

Both style and substance reveal that Donald J Trump is an American president like no other before him. In a rather disconcerting interview given to Time magazine in March, in which Trump defended his controversial, far-fetched or just plain false statements one by one, he said: "What am I going to tell you? I tend to be right." More than three months after taking office, many of his detractors still deem the profile written by author Philip Roth for The New Yorker in late January to be a just one. He wrote of a president "ignorant of government, of history, of science, of philosophy, of art, incapable of expressing or recognizing subtlety or nuance... and wielding a vocabulary of 77 words." — AFP

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LABOR SHORTAGE STRESS TEST FOR JAPAN STORES

Japan's growing labor shortage threatens the nation's ubiquitous convenience stores, whose business model relies on an army of part-timers packing bento lunch boxes, manning cash registers and delivering goods 24/7. The big three "combi" operators 7-Eleven, FamilyMart and Lawson, which have expanded through Japan's long slump, are scrambling to ease the pressure on franchisees by offering a mix of financial aid and labor-saving automation.

But their earnings outlook is the bleakest in years. Lawson Inc projects its first drop in profit in 15 years this fiscal year, and 7-Eleven Japan, part of Seven & i Holdings, forecasts a meager 0.2 percent increase. Japan has around 55,000 convenience stores nationwide - roughly one for every 2,300 people - and each store needs around 20 part-timers to run it.

Some shop owners struggling to fill shifts find themselves working some nights as well as during the day. "The labor situation is starting to get health-hazardous," said one store owner who asked not to be

identified. Restaurant chain Royal Host and McDonald's Japan have begun moving away from 24-hour operations, but so far convenience chains aren't reducing hours or cutting store numbers. Indeed, all three of the major chains plan to expand. They fear that if they cut back they will lose market share and dent a reputation for catering to customers' needs at any time. "We are part of the social infrastructure," said Koji Takayanagi, president of FamilyMart UNY Holdings. "We have a mission we must fulfill."

Dwindling Pool

As Japan's population shrinks, its workforce has declined to 77.2 million in 2015 from a peak of 87.2 million in 1995. By 2065, it's expected to drop to just 45.2 million. The decline has hit labor-intensive sectors such as delivery services, restaurant chains and retailers especially hard. The worker crunch started last year, said a Lawson franchisee in Tokyo. Foreigners, many of them university students, are taking up some of the slack, but he predicts the shortages will continue "indefinitely."

Part-time wages, meanwhile, have increased, and some convenience stores have to pay more overtime to fill shifts. "Labor costs are rising precipitously," Ryuichi Isaka, president of Seven & i Holdings, told a recent earnings briefing. To ease the burden on store owners, who bear payroll costs, 7-Eleven said it would, for the first time, cut royalty fees it charges franchisees - a measure that will cost the company around 160 billion yen (\$1.47 billion) a year. "We want to turn this into an opportunity to boost store owners' management drive, and attract new owners," Isaka said.

Saving the Day?

The industry hopes technology can overcome the shortfall. 7-Eleven, with 19,423 stores and 390,000 part-timers in Japan, is bringing labor-saving dishwashers to all stores this year, while Lawson is issuing tablet computers to help store management, and installing automatic change counting machines. The industry also plans to introduce RFID (radio-frequency identification) tags that can track individual items

from warehouse to store - hoping this may usher in an era of low-cost distribution networks and unmanned cash registers.

With the government pledging to help roll out the technology by 2025, 7-Eleven estimates RFID tags, which it will trial around August, could save 8 billion yen (\$73 million) annually in labor costs. The increased investment in technology is partly to blame for Lawson's forecast profit decline. "Rather than simply focusing on increasing profits, we are critically looking at what shape Lawson should take," said company president Sadanobu Takemasu. "By making the necessary investments we will reap the rewards."

The labor-intensive business model is not just in the stores. It extends to a vast network of third-party suppliers and truck crews making deliveries around the clock. The convenience store industry was built when there were plentiful workers, says Takayuki Suzuki, analyst at Primo Research Japan. But now it "must rationally look again at its excessive and unnecessary services." — Reuters

YIWU OPENS DOORS BUT FUTURE UNCERTAIN

As Europe and the United States crack down on migrants from the Middle East and Africa, China is welcoming those with money with the boomtown of Yiwu, known as "Christmas Town", luring business-savvy Syrians, Yemeni, Libyans and Iraqis. Although China doesn't have laws recognizing refugees, it grants visas to people from war-torn countries who can afford to live in the country, paying language course fees or business taxes from their own pocket.

The rapid rise of Yiwu as a business center since the early 2000s has proved an attraction for migrants wanting to rebuild their lives. The eastern city of 1.2 million people, 285 km south of Shanghai, is nicknamed "Christmas Town" for producing 60 percent of the world's Christmas decorations - as well as a host of other goods from socks to plastic toys and electronics. A Yiwu government report showed that in 2016 the city issued 9,675 people temporary residence permits, a 17 percent rise on the previous year, of which over 4,000 were to those from war-torn countries including Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan.

Iraqis were the biggest group to apply for residence permits in China in 2016 with other applications from Yemen, India, Syria, Afghan, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Mali and South Korea. "Yiwu is a very embracing city," Ammar Albaadani, 38, from Yemen, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview at his apartment in Yiwu, with floors covered by Arabian carpets. "We Arabs were the first who came to Yiwu to do business and participated in the city's economic development. Now many of us - Yemenis, Syrians and Iraqis - have wars in our countries. We need to give all of them some warmth."

Known as the "world's largest small commodity wholesale market", Yiwu has transformed the fortunes of its Chinese workers but has also opened up a wealth of opportunities in cheap manufacturing for foreign migrants. An influx of Arab entrepreneurs - most of them on short-term business visas - has transformed the city into a bustling multi-cultural hub with numerous Middle Eastern restaurants and its own mosque. But with China's immigration rules among the strictest in the world for foreigners seeking permanent residency, many of the city's migrants are worried about how long they will be able to stay in what has become their second home.

'Safe in China'

Manar Abdulhussein, 38, left behind bombings and attacks in the Iraqi capital Baghdad five years ago and moved her family business to Yiwu with her husband and three sons, Ahmed, 15, Hussein, 11, and Yousif, 4, who was born in China. She runs a clothing factory with her husband, Alobaidi Mohammed, exporting to back to Iraq, which has expanded from one floor to three floors in the past five years. "We had our factory in Iraq. Then there was a war. Many people urged us come to China to continue our work. Our materials were originally from China," said Manar, who has adopted a Chinese name, Lan Lan, to help to fit in. With so many Iraqi migrants in Yiwu, there is now an Iraqi school in the city. But it is hard to plan for the future amid uncertainty over whether

they will be able to stay, said Manar. "It's very safe in China so I hope my children can settle down, finish their studies and find jobs. But even if we stay here for a long time, we won't get Chinese passports," said Manar, who also teaches parents Chinese at the Iraqi school.

Old Settlers

Ammar, from Yemen, first came to China 19 years ago as a student on a state scholarship. When fighting in his country escalated three years ago, he decided to settle in Yiwu. "The time I last left my country was a very bad memory. It was 2014, Houthi rebels had reached Sana'a and were about to occupy it," Ammar told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in fluent Chinese. "I expected the situation would get worse, so I left with sadness." Last year,

Ammar set up the "Silk Road Culture Club" to help foreign migrants integrate. The club organizes activities for expats and locals and is recognized by the local government. As he spoke, his club was about to host a New Year gathering for members to make Chinese dumplings. "It's a New Year festival, so we make dumplings, he said. "Many of us don't have families here and few relatives. So, we're trying to make them feel they belong to a big family." Despite Ammar's efforts to assimilate, his residency status remains uncertain. "I have lived more years in China than in Yemen, but I'm using a Yemen passport. It's really hard to get permanent residency." Since 2015, China's strict immigration laws have been relaxed - starting in the commercial centre Shanghai - to attract more highly-skilled workers. — Reuters

FRANCE IN UNCHARTED ZONE AFTER 'BIG BANG'

French politics has entered uncharted territory after the "big bang" that saw off the presidential candidates of both the traditional left and right parties for the first time. On May 7, voters will be asked to choose between Emmanuel Macron, a centrist upstart who has never held elected office, and Marine Le Pen, the anti-establishment populist of the far right. Polls currently show that Macron, 39, will defeat the 48-year-old Le Pen by a wide margin.

But will he be able to govern? "That's the big question," said Martial Foucault of the CEVIPOF research unit at Paris's Sciences Po university. "We have no new information" for judging whether Macron's year-old En Marche (On the Move) movement can win an absolute majority in June's parliamentary elections, he said. "It's totally new."

Macron was virtually unknown before his mentor, outgoing Socialist President Francois Hollande, made him economy minister in 2014. But as Hollande entered the fifth year of a tumultuous presidency, becoming France's most unpopular leader in living memory because of a dismal economic record, Macron struck out on his own. Styling himself as being "neither of the left or of the right", he has campaigned on a pro-EU, pro-business platform. But with liabilities such as a slim resume and association with Hollande's failed policies, Macron may owe more than he realizes to the fact that he is not Le Pen.

Enthusiasm deficit

Political scientist Frederic Sawicki, noting "a lack of enthusiasm" for Macron in voter surveys, said: "A lot of people voted to block (Le Pen's) National Front party, but don't share his ideals." The next two weeks will be "a

good test of Macron's ability to represent more than happy globalization and be the candidate of startups," said Sawicki, of Paris's Sorbonne University. Traditionally, a newly elected president can count on voters to deliver his (or her) party a majority in parliament.

But either candidate would be starting practically from scratch after what the financial daily Les Echos called Sunday's "big bang". En Marche - newly formed - has no seats in the outgoing parliament, while just two MPs from Le Pen's National Front (FN) sit in the 577-seat body. En Marche has says it will field candidates in every constituency, half of them drawn from civil society. The party says it has received 15,000 applications.

Macron "wants a solid majority so he can begin to reform the country very quickly," his spokesman Laurence Haim told AFP. But in addition to new blood, Macron must count on outgoing MPs from both left and right to get behind him. "He will have to recycle a lot of people from the left," said political analyst Philippe Braud. So far around 30 Socialist members - out of 295 in the outgoing parliament - have rallied to Macron's side while MPs from other parties have hesitated. Aides say he is already in negotiations to build alliances - which would result in a "coalition of circumstance", according to Sawicki.

Meanwhile, several commentators said the traditional right will bounce back after Sunday's crushing defeat of the conservative candidate Francois Fillon, who became mired in a fake jobs scandal in January. "It was not the right that was beaten, it was the personal failure of Francois Fillon," Braud said. Fillon, once the frontrunner to clinch the presidency, was charged last month with abuse of public funds in a fake jobs scandal involving his wife Penelope. — AFP

HERNANDEZ FAMILY TO GET COPIES OF SUICIDE NOTES

NEW YORK: The family of former New England Patriots tight end Aaron Hernandez will gain access to three handwritten notes the former NFL player wrote before killing himself, a family attorney said Monday. Lawyer George Leontire said Bristol Superior Court in New Bedford, Massachusetts, ordered release of the notes to the family, news that came minutes before funeral services began for Hernandez in Bristol, Connecticut. As part of his motion, Leontire said Hernandez's family deserved to "know their loved one's final thoughts" and termed it necessary to the "grieving process." Superior Court Judge Thomas F. McGuire Jr. ordered "the note(s) shall be produced in time for the family to have them for his burial" but also said any information pertinent to an ongoing probe into Hernandez's death would be redacted. Hernandez, 27, was discovered by guards in his cell at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center early last Wednesday and he was pronounced dead at a nearby hospital. —AFP



WOOD RECALLED TO ENGLAND CHAMPIONS TROPHY SQUAD

LONDON: Durham fast bowler Mark Wood has been named in England's 15-man squad for the ODI series against South Africa and the Champions Trophy tournament in June having recovered from ankle surgery. Wood, who has 11 one-day international caps but missed the winter tour of India, is joined by fellow paceman Liam Plunkett who is yet to play for Yorkshire this season because of a calf injury. A separate 14-man squad was named on Tuesday for two ODIs against Ireland next month with three players—Jos Buttler, Ben Stokes and Chris Woakes—not included because of their Indian Premier League commitments. All three are in the Champions trophy squad. Middlesex pace bowler Steven Finn made the squad for the Ireland games but is not included for the Champions Trophy which takes place in England and Wales in June. Yorkshire all-rounder David Willey is in both squads having missed the West Indies series in March with a shoulder injury. "We have made encouraging progress over the past 18 months in white ball cricket and the squads selected reflects consistency and gives options across all disciplines," National selector James Whitaker said in an England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) statement. —Reuters

BUMGARNER ON DIRT BIKE SPILL: 'NOT MOST RESPONSIBLE CHOICE'

SAN FRANCISCO: San Francisco Giants ace Madison Bumgarner, who injured his pitching shoulder in a dirt bike accident, admitted Monday his off-day recreation was perhaps "not the most responsible" choice. "It's terrible," Bumgarner said in his first public comments on the accident that could see him out of the Giants lineup for up to eight weeks with a sprained shoulder and bruised ribs. He had the accident on Thursday in Colorado, on the team's day off in Denver. "Obviously, it was not my intentions when we set out to enjoy the off day," he said. "I realize that's definitely not the most responsible decision I've made. It sucks not being able to be out here with my guys." Bumgarner's left arm was in a sling as he spoke with reporters. He was scheduled for a second MRI exam on Monday night. The 2014 World Series hero had never previously been on the disabled list in his eight major league seasons. The 27-year-old is 0-3 with a 3.00 earned-run-average this season. —AFP



ANAHEIM: Andrelton Simmons #2 of the Los Angeles Angels lays on the ground after getting knocked back on an inside pitch by Jason Grilli #37 of the Toronto Blue Jays in the eighth inning of the game at Angel Stadium of Anaheim on April 24, 2017. — AFP

CUBS KEEP ROLLING, CRUSH PIRATES 14-3

PITTSBURGH: Addison Russell set a career high with four hits while Jason Heyward homered for the third time in four games and drove in four runs as the Chicago Cubs jumped on the Pittsburgh Pirates early in a 14-3 victory on Monday night. Ben Zobrist added three RBIs for Chicago as the defending World Series champions won for the fifth time in six games. Anthony Rizzo had three hits to extend his hitting streak to 13 games. Chicago scored four runs with two outs in the first inning off Chad Kuhl (1-2) and added five more in the second to give Brett Anderson (2-0) all the breathing room he would need.

BREWERS 11, REDS 7

Eric Thames homered twice to raise his major league-leading total to 10 while Hernan Perez added a three-run shot and Matt Garza pitched for the first time this season as the Brewers beat the Reds. The left-handed batting Thames got just enough muscle on an 0-2 pitch from Amir Garrett (2-2) to slice an opposite-field, two-run homer in the second. He extended his home-run streak against the Reds this season to five consecutive games with a solo shot to right in the first. Perez's three-run homer capped that inning. Garza allowed one earned run on four hits. Five relievers followed and Carlos Torres (1-2) picked up the win.

ORIOLES 6, RAYS 3

Adam Jones hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the seventh inning while Hyun Soo Kim and Jonathan Schoop also went deep as the Orioles beat the Rays on a cold, damp night at Camden Yards. All three home runs

were off Chris Archer (2-1), who gave up five runs, six hits and five walks in 6 2/3 innings. The right-hander didn't allow a long ball in his previous four starts this season. Baltimore trailed 3-1 before Kim and Schoop connected on successive pitches in the sixth inning. In the seventh, Archer hit Seth Smith with a pitch and Jones followed with a drive deep into the left-field seats. It was the fifth win in seven games for the Orioles, whose 13-5 record is best in the American League.

TWINS 3, RANGERS 2

Brian Dozier hit a bases-clearing double as the Twins beat Texas, ending the Rangers' AL-best four-game winning streak. Dozier's two-out double in the fifth came after Martin Perez (1-3) walked the bases loaded, giving free passes to three of the bottom four batters in the Twins lineup. Dozier had only three RBIs his first 17 games this season. The Rangers (9-11), the AL West champion the past two seasons, missed a chance to reach .500 for the first time this year. They were coming off a four-game series sweep against Kansas City.

WHITE SOX 12, ROYALS 1

Matt Davidson had two hits and three RBIs in an eight-run sixth, Chicago's highest-scoring inning in five years, as the White Sox routed the struggling Royals. Miguel Gonzalez (3-0) lowered his ERA to 2.00, allowing an unearned run and two hits in eight innings. Davidson set a career-high with three hits and tied his best with four RBIs. Melky Cabrera, Todd Frazier and Tyler Saladino drove in two runs each for the White Sox, who out-hit the Royals 15-2. Chicago put together its high-scoring inning

since a nine-run fifth against Texas on July 3, 2012. The Royals have lost five straight and scored a major league-low 47 runs. Jason Vargas (3-1) gave up four runs - three earned - and seven hits in five innings. His ERA rose from a big league-best 0.44 to 1.40.

ROCKIES 8, NATIONALS 4

Charlie Blackmon hit a two-run homer in the seventh and Colorado's bullpen threw three-plus scoreless innings as the Rockies beat Washington, ending the Nationals' seven-game winning streak. Trailing 4-3, Blackmon lined a hanging slider from lefty Enny Romero (1-1) into the right-field stands. It was Blackmon's sixth homer of the season and followed a pinch-hit double from Pat Valaika - his first hit of the season. The Rockies' relievers came through once again after starter Tyler Anderson wore down. Carlos Estevez (2-0) got four outs and Adam Ottavino threw an effective eighth. Greg Holland pitched the ninth in a non-save situation after the Rockies added three insurance runs in the eighth. He got pinch-hitter Bryce Harper to ground out to end the game.

GIANTS 2, DODGERS 1

Matt Cain pitched six scoreless innings to beat the Dodgers for the first time in nearly four years as the Giants snapped a four-game losing streak with a win against Los Angeles. Joe Panik hit a second-inning sacrifice fly off Hyun-Jin Ryu (0-4) in just the Giants' second victory in their last eight games. Hunter Pence added a key RBI single for insurance in the seventh. Top prospect Christian Arroyo was promoted by the Giants to be the new regular third baseman and he went 0 for 4 with three groundouts to second and a strikeout. Cain (2-0) allowed two hits, struck out three and walked one and has been a steady presence in San Francisco's rotation so far. He beat the Dodgers for the first time since May 5, 2013, also at AT&T Park. Mark Melancon finished for his fourth save.

DIAMONDBACKS 7, PADRES 6

Zack Greinke struck out 11 in six innings and Chris Owings hit his first career grand slam as the Diamondbacks held on to beat the Padres. David Peralta homered and singled twice for the Diamondbacks, whose 9-2 start

at home ties the best in club history. Greinke (2-2) gave up a run on six hits, including three singles by Yangervis Solarte, with no walks and left with a 6-1 lead. Fernando Rodney pitched a scoreless ninth for his sixth save in six tries. Wil Myers and Austin Hedges homered for San Diego to make it a one-run game.

ANGELS 2, BLUE JAYS 1

With the infield playing in, Cameron Maybin broke from third on contact and scored on a close play at the plate in the fifth inning to give the Angels a victory over the Blue Jays. Right-hander Jesse Chavez, who took the loss in Friday's 13-inning loss to Toronto, went six innings for the Angels, holding the Blue Jays to one run on four hits. Chavez (2-3) walked four but struck out seven. Bud Norris pitched a scoreless ninth to earn his second save. Catcher Russell Martin's solo home run in the fourth accounted for Toronto's only run. The Angels tied the score in the bottom of the fourth when a Mike Trout double turned into a triple after right-fielder Jose Bautista slipped. Albert Pujols singled to score Trout.—AP

MLB results/standings

LA Angels 5, Toronto 4; Miami 6, San Diego 3 (11 innings); Arizona 11, LA Dodgers 5; Colorado 12, San Francisco 3; Texas 2, Kansas City 1; Cleveland 7, Chicago White Sox 0; St. Louis 4, Milwaukee 1; Philadelphia 4, Atlanta 3 (10 innings); Baltimore 4, Boston 2; Tampa Bay 6, Houston 3; NY Yankees 11, Pittsburgh 5; Oakland 4, Seattle 3; Washington 3, NY Mets 1; Detroit 5, Minnesota 4; Chicago Cubs 12, Cincinnati 8

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division			
	W	L	PCT	GB			
Baltimore	12	4	.750	-	Washington	12	5 .706
NY Yankees	11	6	.647	1.5	Miami	9	8 .529
Boston	10	8	.556	3	Philadelphia	8	9 .471
Tampa Bay	10	9	.526	3.5	NY Mets	8	10 .444
Toronto	4	13	.235	8.5	Atlanta	6	11 .353
Central Division				Central Division			
Cleveland	10	7	.588	-	Chicago Cubs	10	7 .588
Detroit	9	8	.529	1	Cincinnati	9	9 .500
Minnesota	8	9	.471	2	Milwaukee	9	10 .474
Chicago White Sox	7	9	.438	2.5	St. Louis	8	10 .444
Kansas City	7	10	.412	3	Pittsburgh	7	10 .412
Western Division				Western Division			
Houston	12	6	.667	-	Colorado	12	6 .667
Oakland	10	8	.556	2	Arizona	12	7 .632
Texas	8	10	.444	4	LA Dodgers	8	10 .444
LA Angels	8	11	.421	4.5	San Diego	8	11 .421
Seattle	7	12	.368	5.5	San Francisco	6	12 .333



SAN FRANCISCO: Brandon Belt #9 of the San Francisco Giants is tagged out by Yasmani Grandal #9 of the Los Angeles Dodgers in the first inning at AT&T Park on April 24, 2017. — AFP

'NO SHATTENKIRK' IS NO PROBLEM FOR BIGGER AND BETTER BLUES

WASHINGTON: Knowing Kevin Shattenkirk wasn't in their long-term plans, the St Louis Blues traded the talented defenseman and braced for the immediate blow to their playoff hopes. That never happened. The Blues actually got better without him. When the Blues dealt the pending free agent at the trade deadline, they seemed to be creating a giant void on their blue line and gift-wrapping the NHL-best Washington Capitals with their deepest defense in a decade.

Yet St Louis has thrived thanks to the elevated play of captain Alex Pietrangolo and second-year defenseman Colton Parayko while Shattenkirk plays a limited, specialized role for Washington. With



Kevin Shattenkirk

Pietrangolo taking over top power-play duties, Parayko pitching in and 6-foot-4, 221-pound Robert Bortuzzo providing some bulk on the back end, the new-look Blues cruised into the second round with a 4-1 series win over Minnesota and haven't missed a beat without Shattenkirk.

"We're bigger, all six guys are big men, and now we have two players that play with a little more nastiness than we had when we had five guys that played one way and sort of Joel Edmundson doing the majority of the physical work," general manager Doug Armstrong said. "Now we have two players that are bringing some of that physical play." Armstrong won't mince words: He didn't trade Shattenkirk to shake things up. He dealt the 28-year-old for picks and young forward Zach Sanford because there was no chance of re-signing him this summer. On the flip side, Capitals general manager Brian MacLellan only got involved

in the bidding when it became clear Shattenkirk was a rental and not long-term commitment. After being a top-four defenseman in St. Louis, Shattenkirk is a third-pairing player and power-play specialist for Washington. He was among the team leaders in overall minutes in Games 1 and 2 before having his ice time slashed to a career playoff low 12:54 in Game 4 and ranking fifth or six on the Capitals' blue line the remainder of their first round series against Toronto.

Shattenkirk said he's fine with that and doesn't need an explanation from coach Barry Trotz, who called ice time "irrelevant" to players this time of year. He's still on the top power-play unit, is counted on to feed Alex Ovechkin the puck from the point in crucial situations and leads Capitals defensemen with three points. But he's not in St. Louis anymore. "I do think that we roll our D pairings a little bit more here, and everyone gets to play a regular shift for the most part," Shattenkirk said. "St. Louis, we were a little more reliant on our top two guys of playing the big-time minutes, and then power plays and penalty kills kind of determined where the rest of us played more or played less."

Saying so long to Shattenkirk shifted the big-time minutes on the right side to Pietrangolo and Parayko. Ranked 26th among NHL defensemen in points and 11th in ice time before the Shattenkirk trade, Pietrangolo was second with 18 points and fourth at 26:35 a game after it. Thrown into tougher situations than his first playoffs last season, Parayko has grown up fast without Shattenkirk around. "It's good for me," the 23-year-old said as the Blues prepared to face the Nashville Predators. "I think that's the best way to do it, get in there and learn from experience."

Even the experienced Blues defensemen like Jay Bouwmeester and Carl Gunnarsson have thrived since the trade. Part of it is the structure of Mike Yeo, who replaced Ken Hitchcock as coach in early February, but the defensive improvements have made up for the loss of Shattenkirk's offensive talent that will earn him a big contract somewhere July 1. "Defensively I think we're sound as ever," Gunnarsson said. "Without Shatty I think we were lacking, especially the first couple games (of the playoffs), some offense. He was huge on the power play for us and that pose with the puck. Some guys stepped up." —AP

DODGERS AND YANKEES CUT PROJECTED LUXURY TAX BILLS

NEW YORK: The Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Yankees are cutting payroll and their luxury tax bills - just as Bryce Harper, Manny Machado and perhaps Clayton Kershaw near the free-agent market after the 2018 season. The Dodgers are on track to slice their tax bill by about a quarter this year and the Yankees by two-thirds. The San Francisco Giants also are set to slice their payment in the first season of base-



Rob Manfred

ball's new collective bargaining agreement, but the Detroit Tigers are slated to pay more despite saying they want to reduce payroll.

If a team doesn't pay tax in 2018, its tax rate would drop to 20 percent in 2019 - allowing perennially high-spending clubs to sign stars at a lower cost. "What the market produces is what the market's going to produce," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said. The Dodgers are forecast to

pay a \$25.1 million competitive balance tax this year, according to opening-day calculations by the commissioner's office obtained by The Associated Press, down from \$43.6 million in 2015 and \$31.8 million last year. The Yankees' bill is slated to be just under \$9 million, their lowest since the tax began in 2003 and less than one-third of the \$27.4 million they owed last season.

"The new CBA has had no influence on my belief that you don't need a 200-plus million dollar payroll to win championships," Yankees owner Hal Steinbrenner said in an email to the AP. The tax threshold increased from \$189 million to \$195 million under the new labor contract, and rates were simplified to three levels: 20 percent for first-time payers, 30 percent for those owing for a second straight season and 50 percent for clubs paying three times in a row or more. A pair of surtaxes were added to discourage high rollers: 12 percent on the amount from \$215 million to \$235 million this year and a 42.5 percent and 45 percent above that, depending on how many consecutive years a team is paying.

Another change calls for a team more than \$40 million above next year's tax threshold of \$197 million to have its top draft pick moved back 10 places - with an exception that if a club has a pick among the top six, that would be protected and its second pick would be moved back 10 slots. The Yankees appear to be trying to get below the threshold in 2018 to reset their tax rate in anticipation of that fall's free-agent class. "I think it's too early to make a judgment about the success of the new CBA," Manfred said. —AP



MINNESOTA: Devan Dubnyk #40 of the Minnesota Wild blocks a shot by Jori Lehtera #12 of the St. Louis Blues during the second period in Game Five of the Western Conference First Round during the 2017 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. — AFP

WILD DEALING WITH POSTSEASON DISAPPOINTMENT - ONCE AGAIN

ST. PAUL: Five straight appearances in the playoffs for the Minnesota Wild have produced just two series victories and a high volume of frustration. This year, a five-game loss in the first round to St. Louis marked the maddening peak of these spring letdowns. "Sure, we felt good coming in," captain Mikko Koivu said, alluding to the franchise-best 106 points compiled during the regular season that gave the Wild the second-best record in the Western Conference. "I thought we had a great year coming into the playoffs, and we played well. Just not good enough."

For all the excitement the Wild created, from hiring regular-season expert Bruce Boudreau as the new coach to winning 12 straight games in December to finishing second in the NHL with a plus-58 goal differential, their dedicated fan base was left with another disappointment. "Usually you remember what you last saw so, unfortunately, you're going to remember getting knocked out in five games," said left wing Zach Parise, who had two of the team's eight goals in the series. There's not really a common theme in these early exits, either, other than the core of the roster remaining the same throughout the run since Parise and defenseman Ryan Suter signed their landmark 13-year contracts worth \$98 million apiece in 2012.

Goalie injuries and the eventual Stanley Cup champion Chicago Blackhawks got in the way in 2013 after a 5-8-1 finish nearly kept the Wild out of the postseason. An upset of the Colorado Avalanche in a thrilling seven-game first round in 2014 led to a rematch with Patrick Kane and the Blackhawks and a six-game defeat. The only series-clinching win the Wild have ever recorded at home came in 2015 against the Blues, but the Blackhawks were waiting again on their way to another title. The defense was overwhelmed by Jamie Benn and the Dallas Stars in 2016.

Then the Blues exacted their revenge on Saturday for the loss in 2015, this time with former Wild coach Mike Yeo directing the bruising bunch and goalie Jake Allen performing like a Conn Smythe Trophy candidate. Despite leading the league in penalty killing, faceoff draws and shots allowed during the playoffs and posting the second-most shots on goal among the 16 teams, the Wild were left with yet another bitter loss. "This year definitely has a different feel: the feel of disappointment, the feel of having a team that could've gone far," Suter said. "It's extremely disappointing." Here are some relevant angles to watch with the Wild moving forward:

IF NOT HAWKS, THEN BLUES?

With the NHL's current postseason format that funnels division foes into the same bracket, the Wild have been bracing for the challenge of having to beat the Blackhawks early in the playoffs as long as they're both in it. It was ironic, then, that the Blackhawks were being swept by the Nashville Predators while the Wild were instead losing to Yeo and the Blues. There just aren't any favorable draws to be had in the

Western Conference these days.

NOT QUITE GOOD ENOUGH

Goalie Devan Dubnyk had a fine year with a franchise-most 40 wins, but his 7-14 record and .903 save percentage in the playoffs leave room for improvement. After playing in 67 and 65 games over the last two regular seasons, Dubnyk could benefit from more rest down the stretch. Alex Stalock is in line to replace Darcy Kuemper as the backup.

GENTLEMANLY GRANLUND

Mikael Granlund thrived at right wing after shifting from center and tallied career highs with 26 goals and 43 assists, becoming one of the NHL's three Lady Byng Memorial Trophy finalists for the

combination of sportsmanship, conduct and ability. He was bottled up by the bigger Blues during the playoffs, though, with only two assists in the five games. Granlund will be a restricted free agent, so the Wild brass must decide how much and how long to invest in the former first-round draft pick.

WHAT TO DO ON DEFENSE?

Suter and Jared Spurgeon have been a formidable duo on the blue line, but as good as the Wild were in stretches of both the regular season and the playoffs they could use another proven pair on defense. Marco Scandella had an exceptional series against the Blues. Matt Dumba had a career high 11 goals. Jonas Brodin has been a fixture for the last four years. Someone must be left unprotected in the expansion draft. — AP

NFL DRAFT: BROWNS HUNTING FOR FRANCHISE QUARTERBACK

CLEVELAND: Finding Bigfoot has been more productive than the Cleveland Browns' search for a franchise quarterback. This flawed football quest drags on. For nearly two decades, the Browns, once a standard of NFL excellence and now a league punching bag, have been running in circles as they try to find a quarterback to lead them from the darkness to relevance and respectability. Since the franchise's inglorious expansion return in 1999, they've started 26 quarterbacks, a roll call of names that haunt even the most loyal Cleveland fans holding out hope the team will one day get it right. From Tim Couch to Trent Dilfer, from Derek Anderson to Cody Kessler, and let's not forget that year of fun with Johnny Manziel, QBs have cycled through Cleveland like tourists, with none sticking around for long.

It's been a running joke. And until the Browns find that long-term answer at quarterback, they'll continue to be looked at as a laughingstock. They'll have another chance to perhaps end this long pursuit in this week's NFL draft. With the No 1 and No 12 overall picks, and four more selections in the first three rounds, the Browns are positioned to finally fix the most important position on the field. This could be the year Cleveland fans have longed for, the one when the Browns find their Tom Brady or Ben Roethlisberger. But as fate would have it, this year's QB class isn't highly regarded. Many draft experts feel there isn't a quarterback worth a first-round selection and that Cleveland should wait until 2018.

That's just so Browns, whose experiment with Robert Griffin III backfired last season, resulting in the latest QB confusion. "We're going to keep searching," coach Hue Jackson said recently. "I think we all understand, no one's really claimed this position yet on our football

team so we need to do everything we can to continue to add a player that we feel, as an organization, really good about, that can lead our football team and we'll continue to chase that." The chase continues Thursday when the Browns try to find that elusive, essential piece. Or fumble again. Here are some quarterback tidbits to chew on when the Browns go on the clock:

UP TOP

Cleveland seems locked in on Texas A&M defensive stud Myles Garrett at No. 1, and while he's proficient at sacks, there are no three- or seven-step drops in his future. The Browns are impressed with North Carolina's Mitchell Trubisky, a former Ohio Mr. Football, despite his inexperience (only 13 college starts), but probably not enough to take him first. Landing Garrett and Trubisky would be a dream scenario, but Cleveland may have to trade up as the rebuilding Jets have sent out vibes they prefer Trubisky.

WHY NOT WATSON?

Clemson's Deshaun Watson would seem to fit Jackson's profile of the ideal QB: mobile, dynamic, successful. The Browns, though, don't seem enthralled with Watson - not in the first round anyway - unless his silence is a smoke screen. There are other good options like Notre Dame's DeShone Kizer, Texas Tech's Patrick Mahomes or California's Davis Webb, who may all be available after Round 1.

DRAFT DEBACLES

The Browns' track record drafting QBs - or any position - is abysmal over the past decade, which is why many Cleveland fans fear the team will mess up again. — AP



The Karate Twins, Salman and Mohamed Al Mosawi

AUK'S 'KARATE TWINS' WIN BRONZE MEDALS AT KARATE PREMIER LEAGUE

KUWAIT: The American University of Kuwait's (AUK) Karate Twins, Salman and Mohamed Al Mosawi won bronze medals at the Karate1 Premier League - a championship organized by the World Karate Federation which was held in Dubai, in April, 2017. Representing Kuwait, the twins competed against dozens

of countries to eventually earn third place overall. The Karate1-Premier League is the most important league event in the world of karate. It comprises of a number of the most prominent karate competitions and to bring together the best karate athletes in the world in open championships of unprecedented

scale and quality. Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Hanan Muzaffar praised the twins for their success, "Salman and Mohamed are true examples of our wolfpacks in their perseverance and commitment to reach their goals. I'm very happy for them, and proud of this, their second vic-

tory this year. They had previously won bronze medals at a League in France in January of this year," she said.

Both Electrical Engineering students, Salman and Mohamed participate in several karate championships every year, which provides them with opportunities to hone their

skills in the sport. They have been recognized for their combating skills throughout their careers. In 2011, at the World Championship in Malaysia, they were crowned as the World Champions, and were later selected by Al Ahli Club of Dubai to compete in the UAE karate league, where they won gold medals.

STORM RETURN TO TOP OF THE NRL STANDINGS

ROOSTERS EDGE DRAGONS

SYDNEY: Melbourne returned to the top of the National Rugby League standings with 20-14 comeback win over the New Zealand Warriors in the last game of the eighth round. Josh Addo-Carr and Felice Kaufusi both scored tries in the last 14 minutes as the Storm won for the seventh time in eight games to move to 14 competition points - two clear over St George-Illawarra and Sydney Roosters, which played the annual Anzac Day clash earlier in Sydney.

Halfback Mitchell Pearce kicked a field goal four minutes into golden point extra time to lift the Roosters to a 13-12 win over the Dragons, ending his run of 18 missed attempts at a field goal. Pearce also scored an earlier try as the Roosters posted 12 unanswered points after trailing 6-0 at half-time. The Roosters were on the verge of winning in regulation time but Dragons winger Nene MacDonald barged through four tacklers to score a strong try and Josh Dugan landed a last-minute touchline conversion to level the score and force the extra time.

The Dragons played most of the match without their English playmaker Gareth Widdop, who injured his left knee and is likely to be ruled of England's test match

against Samoa next month. The eighth round yielded two other results decided on late kicks. On Friday, Manly edged the Canberra Raiders 20-18 in golden point extra time when center Dylan Walker landed a penalty from the 40-meter line and the Brisbane Broncos held off South Sydney 25-24 with Anthony Milford's 78th minute field goal.

Walker missed an earlier chance to win the match for Manly when he skewed his conversion attempt wide after Tom Trbojevic crossed for an equalizer in the 76th minute. He got another chance when Raiders lock Joseph Tapine was penalized for an illegal strip on Martin Taupau four minutes into extra time and converted it despite his penalty attempt hitting the cross bar. In other weekend matches, Parramatta beat Penrith 18-12, Wests Tigers beat the Canterbury Bulldogs 18-12 and the North Queensland Cowboys had a 24-12 win over Newcastle. The Gold Coast Titans scored two tries in the last 13 minutes to register their second win of the season, a 16-12 upset over the reigning champion Cronulla Sharks. Jarryd Hayne had one of his best games since joining the Titans following his return from the NFL.—AP



KINGSTON: West Indies' captain Jason Holder plays a shot on the final day of the first Test match between West Indies and Pakistan at the Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica yesterday. — AFP

SNOOKER

CHAMPION SELBY EASES INTO LAST 8

LONDON: Defending world snooker champion Mark Selby eased into this year's quarter-finals after a 13-6 victory over China's Xiao Guodong in Sheffield. The 33-year-old Englishman rattled off the three frames he needed right at the start of the session. "I played a really solid game. I didn't make too many mistakes and put him under pressure. And when he made mistakes I capitalized," Selby told the BBC. Selby, who has recorded just one century break so far in the tournament, said he felt confident he had something in reserve.

"I feel like my game has not been fantastic," he told the BBC. "But it's not been poor. I am happy with that going into the quarter-finals." "My opponent will know that when they play against me they will be in for a battle. I never give in and that has always been my philosophy."

In the quarter-final Selby will play Hong Kong's world number eight Marco Fu, who edged past 2010 champion Neil Robertson of Australia 13-11 in an nervy battle to reach his fourth quarter-final. Fu lost the first two frames of the final session to trail 10-8, but a 115 break leveled at 10-10. As the pressure mounted Robertson took a scrappy 21st frame on the black before Fu regained his composure to secure the next three and victory. "It was very tough. I had so many chances and missed so many chances," the 39-year-old Fu told the BBC. "It was one of those matches that neither of us deserved to win. For fighting spirit I was a 10 out of 10, but for snooker it was four out of 10."

A disappointed Robertson labeled his display as "garbage." "I played awful snooker," said the Australian. "It wasn't good to watch. I was awful in my first match too." Selby and Fu were joined in the last eight by England's 2013 finalist Barry Hawkins, who closed out his second round match

13-6 with Scotland's 2006 champion Graeme Dott. Hawkins, who turned 38 on Sunday, like Selby wasted little time in bringing his game to a close, winning the three frames he required. "You want to finish off as quick as you can because it's a long tournament," said Hawkins, who will play Dott's compatriot Stephen Maguire in the last eight. "Over the years I have had some unbelievably gruelling matches and it takes it out of you."—AFP



SHEFFIELD: Defending champion, England's Mark Selby plays a shot in his quarter final against Hong Kong's Marco Fu during the World Snooker Championship at the Crucible theatre in Sheffield, northern England yesterday. —AFP

MURRAY SET TO WORK OVERTIME IN BARCELONA TO STAY AT ON TOP

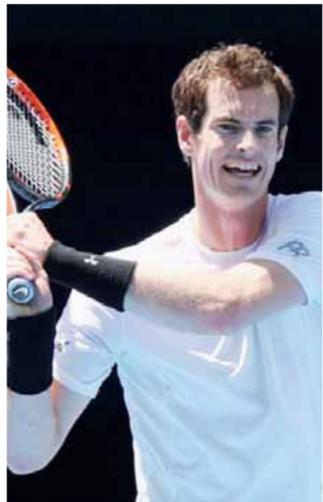
BARCELONA: World number one Andy Murray returns to the Barcelona clay courts that launched his career this week as he puts in some overtime ahead of the French Open. Murray, who played and lost his first professional match as a 17-year-old at the tournament in 2005, against Jan Hernych, took a late entry into the Barcelona Open after an early defeat to Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas in Monte Carlo last week. While giving him some crucial match time on a surface he has grown to love, it also offers the 29-year-old the chance to consolidate his position at the top of the ATP rankings.

Murray accumulated a barrel-load of ranking points during last season's clay-court swing, winning the Rome Masters and reaching the French Open final, where he lost to Novak Djokovic. With those points to defend and the effects of an elbow injury still lingering, Murray knows the pressure is on to keep the number one ranking he secured in November. "I hope to stay there for a long time, but it's hard," Murray, who spent two years at the Sanchez-Casal Academy in Barcelona as a junior, told the ATP's website.

"It took me 12 years to get there, and the physical and mental effort it took to do it last year was enormous. It's not easy to stay there, but I hope I can." "It's always hard to maintain your ranking at the top of the game. A lot of the young ones are starting to play better and better, so it's going to be tough." Surprisingly, Murray's first ATP title on the red dirt did not arrive until 2015 in Munich. He quickly followed that by beating king of clay Rafael Nadal in the Madrid final. Last year was even better, and he won 18 of his 21 matches during the European claycourt season. The transition from the hardcourts to the clay can still be tricky though, even for a player now so at home on the surface. "The best way to adapt to

new surfaces playing naturally against the best players in the world," he said.

Stepping back out on the Barcelona clay for the first time since 2012 is also something of a trip down memory lane for Murray. "I have great memories, not only from training and living here, but also because I played my first professional match on one of these courts and I remember it well," he said. "The last time I came here I hadn't won a claycourt tournament, nor been in big finals, nor beaten some of the best players on this surface. But in the past few years I've had great wins against Rafa (Nadal) and Novak (Djokovic)." The top seed will face Australian Bernard Tomic today.—Reuters



Andy Murray

ATHLETICS

BEKELE WAS NOT WEARING 'BREAKING2 SHOES': NIKE

LONDON: The running shoes that Kenenisa Bekele blamed for his struggles in Sunday's London Marathon were not the revolutionary new model designed for use in the Breaking2 attempt on a sub-two hour marathon, manufacturers Nike said yesterday. Track superstar Bekele was on world record pace and looking strong at halfway during Sunday's race but then dropped back dramatically before staging a superb recovery to finish second behind Kenya's Daniel Wanjiru. He later said that his problems had been caused by blistering from new shoes and that he had to change his running style to enable him to pick up his pace.

It was thought at the time that triple

Olympic champion Bekele was wearing Nike's new Zoom Vaporfly Elite shoes, which will be worn by Eliud Kipchoge, Leisa Desisa and Zersenay Tadese in their attempt to run a sub-two-hour marathon in Italy next month. However, Nike said yesterday that Bekele was wearing their Zoom Vaporfly 4% shoes and that the Vaporfly Elite were being used only by the three Breaking2 athletes. "As he has done in previous marathons, Bekele ran in the Zoom Vaporfly 4%, in which he set an Ethiopian record and the second-fastest time in history on a record-eligible course in Berlin," a spokesman said yesterday. "We are working closely with Bekele to understand what happened."—Reuters



LONDON: Ethiopia's Kenenisa Bekele runs during the Men's elite race at the London marathon on April 23, 2017. — AFP

GOLF

RULEMAKERS CHANGE TO PREVENT A 'LEXI' REPEAT

WASHINGTON: The Royal and Ancient and US Golf Association will announce a rules change to ensure what cost Lexi Thompson an LPGA major title does not happen again. Golfweek reported on Monday. Thompson, a 22-year-old American, incurred a four-stroke penalty a day after the error after a viewer spotted a violation in a slow-motion television replay and e-mailed the LPGA during the ANA Inspiration earlier this month.

Golf's governing bodies met the following week at the Masters and discussed the issue, and the magazine website, citing unnamed sources, said a new rule will take effect immediately to ensure no repeat of the situation. There was no indication of

exactly what wording or what form the "Lexi Rule" would take but the target would be to prevent future action on infractions spotted by TV viewers. The move is expected to be imposed instantly rather than wait for the update and evaluation of The Rules of Golf expected for 2019.

Thompson was found to have incorrectly replaced her ball after marking it on the 17th green during the third round, a violation only spotted clearly by a zoom lens and slow motion video. After reviewing the evidence, Thompson was issued a two-stroke penalty for incorrectly replacing her ball and another two-stroke penalty for signing an incorrect scorecard at the end of the third round. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

KINGSTON, Jamaica: Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the first Test between the West Indies and Pakistan at Sabina Park in Jamaica on Monday.

West Indies 1st Innings - 286		Pakistan 1st Innings (overnight 201 for 4)	
A. Ali c wkpr Dowrich b Joseph	15	(2nb), J. Holder 30-7-65-1 (4nb), D. Bishoo 33-2-106-1 (1w), R. Chase 8-4-1-37-1, K. Brathwaite 7-1-22-0.	
A. Shehzad lbw Holder	31		
B. Azam b Gabriel	72		
Y. Khan c Brathwaite b Gabriel	58		
Misbah ul Haq not out	99		
A. Shafiq c wkpr Dowrich b Gabriel	22		
S. Ahmed b Bishoo	54		
M. Amir c wkpr Dowrich b Joseph	11		
W. Riaz b Joseph	9		
Y. Shah run out	8		
M. Abbas lbw Chase	1		
Extras (b-4, lb-10, nb-12, w-1)	27		
Total (all out, 138.4 overs)	407		
Fall of wickets: 1-23 (Ali), 2-54 (Shehzad), 3-185 (Khan), 4-186 (Azam), 5-236 (Shafiq), 6-324 (Ahmed), 7-341 (Amir), 8-355 (Riaz), 9-373 (Shah), 10-407 (Abbas)			
Bowling: S. Gabriel 29-6-92-3 (6nb), A. Joseph 31-8-71-3			
West Indies 2nd Innings		Pakistan 2nd Innings	
K. Brathwaite b Shah	14		
K. Powell c Younis Khan b Shah	49		
S. Hetmyer b Shah	20		
S. Hope lbw Shah	6		
D. Bishoo not out	0		
V. Singh not out	0		
Extras (lb-4)	4		
Total (4 wks, 28 overs)	93		
Fall of wickets: 1-22 (Brathwaite), 2-72 (Hetmyer), 3-84 (Hope), 4-89 (Powell)			
To bat: R. Chase, S. Dowrich, J. Holder, A. Joseph, S. Gabriel			
Bowling: M. Amir 9-2-11-0, M. Abbas 6-0-21-0, Y. Shah 9-0-33-4, W. Riaz 4-0-24-0.			

on in the morning session by Alzarri Joseph running back at mid-off to the bowling of leg-spinner Bishoo. It was Bishoo who eventually broke an 88-run sixth-wicket stand between Misbah and Sarfraz Ahmed, the wicketkeeper batsman playing in his usual pugnacious manner in getting to 54 before he was bowled around his legs attempting a sweep shot just after lunch. "I just wanted to upset the fast bowlers' line by doing a few unorthodox things because they were bowling very well," Ahmed explained at the end of the day. "It's all part of my game to be positive and today it came off." During the course of his innings, Ahmed went past 2,000 runs in his Test career. Misbah achieved a milestone of his own when he notched his 5,000th Test career run before reaching the half-century mark and began to play an increasingly important role through the afternoon session as the West Indies

emerged from the listless indifference of the first session to finally get among the wickets.

DETERMINATION AND DISCIPLINE

Joseph removed Mohammad Amir and Wahab Riaz in quick succession to finish with three wickets in the innings, the same as fellow opening bowler Gabriel. When substitute fielder Jermaine Blackwood ran out Shah, Misbah was on 68 with the score at 373 for nine. However, Abbas displayed determination and discipline in surviving with his captain for 45 minutes while Misbah controlled most of the strike and edged towards the coveted century. Just one run away, though, he was denied when Chase trapped the newcomer in front. Misbah's innings spanned nine minutes short of six hours, during which he faced 223 deliveries, striking three sixes and five fours.—AFP

Spanish La Liga table

Spanish La Liga table after Monday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):															
Barcelona	33	23	6	4	94	32	75	Alaves	33	11	11	11	32	40	44
Real Madrid	32	23	6	3	84	36	75	Valencia	33	11	7	15	47	56	40
Atletico Madrid	33	20	8	5	60	24	68	Las Palmas	33	10	9	14	52	58	39
Sevilla	33	19	8	6	58	39	65	Real Betis	33	10	7	16	36	51	37
Villarreal	33	16	9	8	48	27	57	Malaga	33	9	9	15	38	49	36
Athletic Bilbao	33	17	5	11	46	37	56	La Coruna	33	7	10	16	35	51	31
Real Sociedad	33	17	4	12	49	45	55	Leganes	33	6	9	18	27	51	27
Eibar	33	14	8	11	52	45	50	Sporting Gijon	33	5	8	20	36	66	23
Espanyol	33	13	10	10	44	43	49	Granada	33	4	8	21	27	70	20
Celta Vigo	32	13	5	14	48	52	44	Osasuna	33	3	9	21	34	75	18

SPANISH LEAGUE

ATHLETIC BEAT
10 MAN EIBAR

MADRID: Midfielder Raul Garcia scored in the last minute for Athletic Bilbao to beat 10 man Eibar 1-0 in the Spanish league on Monday, moving his team into position to qualify for the Europa League next season. Garcia volleyed from inside the area in the fourth and final minute of stoppage time, putting Athletic in sixth place after 33 matches. Eibar played with 10 men from the 56th minute after a red card was issued

to midfielder Gonzalo Escalante. Athletic is one point ahead of seventh-place Real Sociedad and one point behind fifth-place Villarreal. The top four clubs qualify for the Champions League, and the teams in fifth and sixth places earn a spot in the Europa League. Eibar stayed eighth in the 20-team standings, six points behind Athletic. Barcelona and Real Madrid are level on points at the top.—AFP

PSG AND MONACO RENEW
BATTLE IN CUP SEMI-FINAL

PARIS: Leonardo Jardim's Monaco hold the edge over Paris Saint-Germain in the French title race, but the reigning champions haven't given up hope of landing a third successive sweep of the domestic trophies. PSG thrashed Monaco 4-1 at the start of April to retain the French League Cup, and with the principality club prioritizing Europe and Ligue 1, Unai Emery's side will again fancy their chances in today's French Cup semi-final. "This semi-final is an encounter between two very important matches, with only two days' rest each time," said Monaco boss Jardim, whose side lead PSG on goal difference with a game in hand in the razor tight title race.

"We don't have a choice, we'll have to rotate the squad and save those players who have played the most for Saturday against Toulouse. "We're going to use the players who have played sparingly and players from the reserves. There's mental fatigue as well... the league is the most important competition." Not only has Monaco's brilliant young side fired the club to within sight of a first French crown since 2000, but Jardim's men are also through to the last four of the Champions League, where they'll face Juventus for a place in the June 3 final in Cardiff.

PSG's European dreams were shattered in stunning fashion by Barcelona, but they have reeled off eight victories in succession since their Camp Nou meltdown to revive their campaign. A rejuvenated Angel Di Maria has been a central figure in their largely impressive 2017 form, the Argentine contributing 17 goals in 18 matches since the turn of the year. "During the League Cup final we were at 100 percent. We played the perfect game, it was an exceptional match," Di Maria, who scored

one goal and set up two more in the April 1 showpiece, told the PSG website. "Against Monaco in the semi-final we must reproduce the same thing. We must give our best, this time at home with our supporters behind us. To reach another final would be even better!"

SIXTY YEARS MAKING?

While Jardim is expected to make wholesale changes for Monaco, PSG will be without Javier Pastore-hurt in Saturday's 2-0 win over Montpellier-and likely Adrien Rabiot in midfield. Angers will host twice former winners Guingamp at a sold-out Stade Raymond Kopa in the first semi-final on Tuesday. The home side have reached the last four three times in the past six seasons, but a 6-3 defeat against Toulouse 60 years ago remains Angers' lone appearance in the final. "We really feel the enthusiasm of the fans for the semi-final," said right-back Vincent Manceau. "Even before the league match at Dijon (last Saturday), the people talked more about Guingamp."

"It's a big chance that has been presented to us. If we could write a new page in the club's history 60 years later, it would be fantastic," added Olivier Picque, the club's general manager. Guingamp striker Jimmy Briand is still smarting over last month's 3-0 league defeat to Angers and vowed to use it for motivation as Antoine Kombouare's men bid to reach the final for the third time in eight years after lifting the trophy in 2009 and 2014. "When I signed for Guingamp two years ago, I said that I wasn't coming just to keep the club in the top flight," said Briand. "This season has been a good one for the moment. With a French Cup final, it would certainly be a very, very good one."—AFP



PESCARA: Roma's forward from Bosnia-Herzegovina Edin Dzeko (left) vies with Pescara's Italian defender Cesare Bovo during the Italian Serie A football match between Pescara and Roma on April 24, 2017.—AFP

SLICK SALAH FIRES ROMA AS
DROP LOOMS FOR PESCARA

MILAN: A slick second-half brace from Mohamed Salah sealed a 4-1 Roma romp at Pescara that virtually sent the Serie A strugglers back to Italy's second division on Monday. Roma's 24th win of the campaign helped close the gap on leaders Juventus to eight points, although the Turin giants remain firmly on course for a record sixth consecutive scudetto. "This was a crucial win for us," Roma coach Luciano Spalletti told Mediaset Premium after seeing Roma build their lead on third-placed Napoli to four points. "The lads deserve to finish in second place and with five games remaining Napoli remain a threat."

The only blip for Roma on the day they appointed former Sevilla goalkeeper Ramon Rodriguez Verdejo, known as Monchi, as the club's new sporting director was striker Edin Dzeko being caught on camera launching a tirade at Spalletti after he decided to replace the Bosnian with Frenchman Clement Grenier 20 minutes from the end. Dzeko is tied with Torino's Andrea Belotti on 25 goals at the top of the Serie A scoring charts and was denied the chance to add to his tally, which is now under threat from Inter Milan hitman Mauro Icardi, on 24 following his hat-trick in a 5-4 loss at Fiorentina.

Reports claimed Dzeko told Spalletti: "You're trying to be clever again, eh?" But Spalletti was quick to calm suggestions sparks flew in the dressing room, adding: "We went back to the dressing room, we saw each other and we made up." "If he knew why I did it, then he'd understand. We have three key games coming up and we can't do without him. He's the only centre-forward I have." Dzeko had to settle for an assist on the night as Dutchman Kevin Strootman, Radja Nainggolan and Salah, with a second-half double that featured a superb counter from a wayward Pescara corner on the hour, got their name on the score-sheet-although Stephan El Shaarawy starred as well with three assists.

SCANT CONSOLATION

As Roma tired, Pescara finally came fighting back in a promising final third in which Wojciech Szczesny was forced into action on several occasions before finally being beaten by Ahmad Benali when he got in behind Kostas Manolas to meet a crisp cross from the right. It was scant consolation for the rock-bottom Adriatic coast side. Now 15 points behind Empoli and the safety zone with five games remaining, they are all but mathematically on their way back to Serie B. Veteran coach Zdenek Zeman, brought back to Pescara last month in a bid to beat the drop, had tried to instigate his usual brand of all-out attacking football only to find resources limited the league strugglers.

Sitting two points behind Palermo, he said: "Now, we will do our best not to finish last." After a recent run of four consecutive wins, Roma's title hopes were dented by a 1-1 draw at home to Atalanta last week. Spalletti's men were creative from the outset but it took until the 44th minute for the visitors to break the deadlock, Stephan El Shaarawy powering into the box to deliver a perfect square ball for Strootman to tap home. When Dzeko chased down Salah's overhit cross to the left of goal a minute later, he picked out Nainggolan with a precision pass for the Belgium midfielder to drill past Vincenzo Fiorillo. Roma resumed in commanding fashion after half-time, Salah beating Fiorillo down low at his near post with a great curling strike from the edge of the area on 48 minutes. The Egyptian created his own double, snatching a wayward corner from Pescara to power up the middle and exchange a one-two with El Shaarawy before firing low past Fiorillo.—AFP

LITTLE-KNOWN BRAZILIAN
BRIDGES CULTURAL GAP IN CHINA

CHONGQING: He does not have the fame-or enormous wages-of Shanghai-based Carlos Tevez or Oscar, and his nickname would be viewed as offensive by many. But Fernandinho, one of the growing number of Brazilian footballers in China, is bridging a wide cultural gap and finding celebrity in the southwestern city of Chongqing. At 10:45am, he arrives to smiles in the gym, where he stretches before lifting a barbell, alongside a dozen Chinese team-mates. He is known in the city by his nickname "Xiao Hei", or "Little Black". It is a reference to his age (24), and his skin color.

While some might be offended, Fernandinho-not to be confused with his more illustrious namesake at Manchester City-simply laughs it off. "The cultural differences are vast... Brazilians are quite boisterous, and people in China are more reserved," he said. "But everybody does his best to communicate, and I often make jokes with my Chinese team-mates, who do the same." The forward arrived at Chongqing, a metropolis of 8.5 million-roughly the population of Switzerland-in the summer of 2015, after a mixed experience at Estoril in Portugal's Primeira Liga. Today, he is one of 24 Brazilian footballers playing in the 16-team Chinese Super League.

They are among the 78 foreign players who have moved to the country in recent years, many after Chinese President Xi Jinping's demand for China to become a world football power unleashed a flood of spending. Some of the players have made headlines for their bumper-sized salaries and luxurious lifestyles. Oscar, the former Chelsea star, is paid \$24 million euros a year by Shanghai SIPG and lives in a sumptuous apartment of 400 square meters (4,300 square feet) with a view of the Shanghai Bund waterfront, according to media reports. But unlike some of the big-name stars, Fernandinho leads a relatively frugal life. "Foreign footballers come not only for the money, but also to participate in this football boom," he said.

MODEST AMBITIONS

In Brazil, Fernandinho started at Flamengo, a prestigious Rio club with a large fanbase, where competition was fierce. His Chinese club, Chongqing Dangdai Lifan, has more modest ambitions. Last season, it finished eighth out of 16 in the Super League and is happy merely to remain in the division. That makes Fernandinho a big fish in a little pond: he is the team's star, plays every game, and attracts fans in a stadium with a capacity of

60,000 spectators. One of the club's shareholders, Lifan Motors, even produced a 'Fernandinho limited edition' motorcycle, promoted by the player himself. The Brazilian player says he feels "very happy" in the club and eager to "work hard to give fans pleasure".

The level of play, though, is not what he is accustomed to: The Super League's quality remains patchy, while China's national team is 81st in the world rankings. But Xi's ambitions for the country to one day host and win a World Cup have lifted expectations, government support and spending by clubs. "We are playing good football in China... it is getting stronger and all the great players who come here bring visibility," says Fernandinho. Argentina's Tevez is on a reported salary of \$38 million at Shanghai Shenhua, making him the world's best-paid player, while other South American stars include Ramires at Jiangsu Suning and Alexandre Pato at Shanghai SIPG.

STEAKS AND PLAYSTATION

Despite living in China for nearly two years, Fernandinho still has a long way to go before he makes a full adjustment to his new life. Aside from "nihao" (hello) and "xiexie" (thank you), he has no Chinese, and very little English. When he trains, goes to the bank, competes or deals with the country's bureaucracy, the club provides a Chinese interpreter who speaks Portuguese. But Fernandinho is not alone in his new home: the assistant coaches of the Chongqing club are also Brazilian. And he stays in daily contact with friends and family via mobile apps. He is still not used to Chinese cuisine, however. He remains a fervent fan of churrasco, the Brazilian barbecue that he enjoys regularly with compatriots living in Chongqing. "At the club, they know my habits, and they prepare what I like: rice, omelettes, sometimes chicken, steaks. And at home I eat Brazilian food," he says.

Sometimes he has lunch at the Blue Frog, a trendy Western burger restaurant and sports bar that broadcasts football matches. He buys clothes from internationally known chains. Fernandinho says he spends much of his free time in his rented apartment. "I play on my PlayStation, I watch movies... Sometimes I also play pool, go bowling and travel elsewhere in China." He still has plenty of time to explore the country: his contract will expire only at the end of 2019. Does he want to settle permanently in China, or even marry a Chinese woman? "I want to play football for a while here," he says, bursting into laughter.—AFP



CHONGQING: Chongqing Dangdai Lifan's Fernandinho (center) takes part in a training session at the football club in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality.—AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Argentinean forward Javier Pastore reacts during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain vs Montpellier at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris.—AFP

CROATIA FOOTBALL 'BOSS' MAMIC
FACES MAJOR CORRUPTION TRIAL

ZAGREB: Controversial former Dinamo Zagreb boss Zdravko Mamic tomorrow faces a multi-million euro corruption trial, a crucial case for Croatian football which is already burdened with hooliganism and poor infrastructure. Mamic, considered the most powerful figure in the sport in the former Yugoslav republic, has been charged with abuse of power and bribery between 2008 to 2012. Croatia's anti-corruption office (USKOK) last year also indicted his brother and former Dinamo Zagreb coach, Zoran Mamic, former club director Damir Vrbancic, and a tax inspector. The alleged offences cost the Croatian champions nearly 116 million kunas (15.6 million euros, \$16.7 million) and the state budget 12 million kunas.

Most of the money-more than 12 million euros-was illegally acquired by the Mamic brothers, according to the indictment. The cash was allegedly embezzled through fictitious deals related to player transfers. Mamic resigned as executive president of the club in February last year, two months

before he was indicted. According to local media, two international stars-Real Madrid midfielder Luka Modric and defender Dejan Lovren of Liverpool-will appear as witnesses during the trial. The process is seen as crucial for Croatian football, which is known for the successes of its national squad but also for its hooligans, who are considered to be among Europe's most notorious.

'PUBLIC TRUST LOST'

"Croatian football is heavily burdened with many things, from insufficient and outdated infrastructure through hooliganism to the indictments against Mamic and Vrbancic," former international defender Dario Simic said. Vrbancic is currently the executive president of the Croatian Football Federation (HNS). "The worst is that the trust of the whole society in football is lost," said Simic, Croatia's football union chief, who was part of the team that finished third at the 1998 World Cup in France.—AFP

SPURS WON'T STOP BELIEVING THEY CAN WIN THE EPL TITLE

LONDON: Hugo Lloris insists Tottenham still believe they can win the Premier League despite the shattering blow of their FA Cup semi-final defeat against title rivals Chelsea. Mauricio Pochettino's side left Wembley broken hearted on Saturday after dominating for long periods before conceding two late goals in a dramatic 4-2 loss. The psychological damage inflicted on Tottenham's players can't be underestimated and they have little time to recover as the title race heats up this week.

Second placed Tottenham are four points behind Chelsea, but the leaders can extend the gap to seven if they beat Southampton at Stamford Bridge before Pochettino's men travel to in-form Crystal Palace today. While Lloris acknowledged Chelsea now have renewed confidence they can hold off Tottenham's challenge in the final six games of the season, the France goalkeeper is convinced his club won't surrender without a fight. "We know Chelsea have an advantage but we need to believe until the end," Lloris said.

"We knew before that this game can have maybe an impact for the rest of the season. "But in football you need to believe because everything is possible and we don't know what will happen in the next few weeks. "They are human and that's the case for us. The only thing that we can do is keep working hard, keep believing and playing the same way that we play in the last few weeks." Losing at Wembley capped a miserable few days for Tottenham after the club was rocked by the sudden death of their Under-23 coach Ugo Ehiogu earlier in the week.

Harry Kane, who scored Tottenham's first equaliser on Saturday, revealed his team have dedicated their title chase to former England defender Ehiogu. "Of course the last couple of days have been tough," Kane said. "Ugo was a great character around the training ground, it was just shocking news to be honest. "Of course we'll do everything we can to win the league for him." To have a chance of honouring Ehiogu with the club's first title since 1961, Tottenham need to extend their current seven-game winning streak in the league.

FRUSTRATION

Kane knows the pressure is on and there was a hint of frustration in his voice as he tried to deliver a call to arms ahead of the

trip to Selhurst Park. "It's hard to say what effect it will have. Of course we wanted to win and keep our momentum going but it didn't happen," Kane said. "There's nothing we can do now. We can't control what Chelsea do, if it gives them more momentum, it gives them more momentum. We've just got to concentrate on our game. "We've got six very difficult games home and away so we'll do everything we can to get as high up the league as we can."

Deep in relegation trouble when Sam Allardyce took charge in December, Palace have climbed seven points clear of the bottom three thanks to a series of shock wins. After beating Chelsea and Arsenal, Sunday's 2-1 win at Liverpool was Palace's latest scalp, but Eagles boss Allardyce wants his team to keep their foot on the gas against Tottenham because he doesn't believe they are safe yet. "Thirty eight points has been the target to be safe for a long time but we're not mathematically safe yet," he said. "Five games to go, we need to pick up as many points as we can. "Then when we are safe we will have a little celebration." — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Middlesbrough v Sunderland 21:45

beIN SPORTS HD

Arsenal v Leicester City 21:45

beIN SPORTS HD 9

Crystal Palace v Tottenham 22:00

beIN SPORTS HD 2

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA

Barcelona v Osasuna 20:30

beIN SPORTS HD 3

Valencia v Real Sociedad 21:30

beIN SPORTS HD 1

Leganes v Las Palmas 21:30

beIN SPORTS HD

Deportivo La Coruna v Real Madrid 22:30

beIN SPORTS HD 3

FRENCH CUP

Paris Saint v Monaco 22:05

beIN SPORTS HD 6



NEWCASTLE: Preston North End's Paul Gallagher's free kick is blocked during the English Championship soccer match between Newcastle United and Preston at St James' Park on Monday April 24, 2017. — AP

4-GOAL NEWCASTLE ROMP BACK TO PREMIER LEAGUE

THE ONLY WAY IS UP AS NEWCASTLE FANS SALUTE BENITEZ

NEWCASTLE: Rafa Benitez has known much grander stages than the English Championship but the Spaniard has probably not heard noise like that at St James' Park on promotion night after masterminding Newcastle United's return to the Premier League on Monday. Few English grounds rock like United's ground when things are going well and, for once, the fans had much to sing about. Benitez's delight was clear as he strolled confidently to the middle of the pitch, applauding the supporters and punching the air after watching the 4-1 demolition of Preston North End. The cheers have not always rung out this season as Newcastle wobbled when in sight of the title but, despite two defeats and a draw in three games before Monday, belief was never allowed to ebb from the fans who know how to back their team.

Given the turmoil of the past few years, when the Toon Army supporters were often in open conflict with the club's owner Mike Ashley and many of Benitez's predecessors, the 57-year-old Spaniard deserves great credit for keeping everyone onside. Since finishing fifth in the Premier League in 2012 under Alan Pardew, a downward spiral saw Newcastle twice narrowly avoid relegation before dropping into the second tier last season after bitter rivals Sunderland won at Everton. After flirting with relegation themselves for the past few years, basement side Sunderland now look doomed to the drop along with second-bottom Middlesbrough, which would leave

Newcastle as the north-east's top team. "From the final day of last season, when we beat Tottenham 5-1, I wanted to show my loyalty and rebuild the team," said a delighted Benitez. "I am really pleased for the team, the fans, for every-



Rafael Benitez

one." Any doubts that the man who steered Liverpool to Champions League success in 2005 would cope with the rough and tumble of the Championship have been disproved this season.

NEW RECRUITS

Crucial to the former Real Madrid and Inter Milan manager's success was convincing Ashley

that what goes down seldom comes back up quickly—Norwich City and Aston Villa, who were also relegated, are eighth and 12th in the standings respectively. The need for new recruits was obvious and over the summer Benitez was handed 55 million pounds (\$70.33 million) to spend on 12 new players, most of whom have proved shrewd signings.

The attack has been spearheaded by Dwight Gayle, who has scored 22 goals but missed Monday's game through injury. Just behind him, Matt Ritchie knew exactly what was required having previously been promoted with Bournemouth, while Ciaran Clarke has shored up a perennially leaky defense. Benitez also scored wins off the pitch, mounting a charm offensive with the supporters and the local press, who had felt shut out by an increasingly inward-looking club frustrated by years of under-achievement.

The result is now promotion, which was always the minimum return on Ashley's investment. But there has sometimes been conflict and in January he refused Benitez's request to re-sign England winger Andros Townsend from Crystal Palace. Immediately after Monday's game, Benitez gave a broad hint that he will expect Ashley to strengthen a squad who currently look short of top-flight standard. "I think we have to analyse a lot of things and do what we need to be stronger," he said, marking out a battle for another day as cheers echoed around him. For now, going up is enough.—Reuters

LEICESTER DON'T WANT TO BE A 'SELLING CLUB'

LEICESTER: Leicester City should be able to hold on to its key players as they prepare for the upcoming season without European football, rather than just selling them off, manager Craig Shakespeare has said. Reigning Premier League champions Leicester were knocked out of the Champions League quarter-finals by Atletico Madrid last week and are currently 15th in the Premier League ahead of Wednesday's trip to seventh-placed Arsenal.

With striker Jamie Vardy and winger Riyadh Mahrez, midfielder Danny Drinkwater and goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel tied down with long-term contracts, Shakespeare believes he has no reason to worry about key players leaving at the end of the campaign. "We have said before we don't want to be a selling club," Shakespeare told reporters on Monday. "All the players are happy here. They are a very

unique group. We have created something here which is quite special, so they have said they are quite happy. "I have no problems with players being ambitious, but they are at a good club here and get looked after well."

Shakespeare, who took charge from Claudio Ranieri in February for the rest of the season, said a decision is yet to be made on his future but the board has involved him in its pre-season and recruitment plans for the next campaign. "I am in charge of pre-season. I have had one meeting about recruitment, which I really enjoyed," he added. "We need to make sure we get enough points to stay in the league first, and the time will come to sit down." Shakespeare has led Leicester to five league victories in their last seven games, moving the club six points clear of the relegation zone.— Reuters

KOSCIELNY SUPPORTS NEW-LOOK GUNNERS

LONDON: Laurent Koscielny believes Arsenal's defensive rethink can help drive Arsene Wenger's side to a top-four finish in the Premier League. The Gunners will face reigning champions Leicester City at the Emirates Stadium today buoyed by their FA Cup semi-final success against Manchester City that set up a Wembley final with Chelsea. Sunday's last-four victory followed Arsenal's win the previous week at Middlesbrough when the under fire Wenger responded to his side's alarming dip in form by changing to a three-man backline.

Now, having registered back to back victories with his new line-up, Wenger is likely to stick with the formation for the visit of Craig Shakespeare's revived Leicester side. A third successive win will move Arsenal to within four points of fourth-placed City, currently in possession of the final Champions League place on offer to Premier League clubs, and three points behind Manchester United in fifth, 24 hours before the Manchester derby.

Koscielny, the Arsenal centre-back, had no doubt that Wenger's decision to change things around has helped increase the chances of the club ending a difficult season on a high. "There was a tactical turnaround, but we've been working on it for 15 days," the France international said. "In that system, there are players who are good. It's good for the collective. "I think we also found confidence in this system with three defenders. We are more solid behind." Intense speculation surrounds the future of Wenger, with the 67-year-old Frenchman yet to reveal if he will sign a new Arsenal contract when his current deal expires at the end of the season.

'DARK PERIOD'

That debate looks set to continue, but Wenger will be increasingly confident he can re-frame the discussion by maintaining his record of never having missed out on a

place in the Champions League in a full season with Arsenal since he took charge over 20 years ago. Koscielny added: "Before this (Manchester City) game, we were in a fairly dark period. We have lost confidence. This victory allows us to regain confidence, and serenity, even if everything has not been perfect. "The future of Wenger, I don't know if it weighs on recent results. We'll never know. But, we are professionals. Each week we go to the pitch to give the best of yourself and win the most matches. "The bad results are also due to us."

Leicester enter the game in London potentially just one victory away from safety after five wins from seven games under manager Shakespeare took them to 37 points. But Shakespeare, who took charge after the Foxes' Thai owners sacked title-winning manager Claudio Ranieri following an alarming dip in form that left the Midlands club on the brink of the relegation zone earlier this season, was not taking anything for granted against an Arsenal side whose inconsistent league form has angered many of their own supporters.

"Seeing the Arsenal match (against Manchester City) it didn't look like turmoil to me, there were players fighting and they thoroughly deserved to win in the end, even though it was a close game," Shakespeare said. "I'm not sure how many points it will take (to stay up) and the weekend proved that... We have to make sure we look after our own club. You are not sure what's around the corner." Leicester captain Wes Morgan (hamstring) and striker Islam Slimani (groin) have both been ruled out of the Arsenal match. "Unfortunately, Wes won't make it," said Shakespeare. "He has just overstretched his hamstring. It hasn't gone into a full blown pull, but we have to be mindful. "So as a precaution he is out and then we will look towards Saturday at West Brom." — AFP

WENGER PLANS AHEAD, WON'T REVEAL FUTURE

LONDON: Arsene Wenger insists he is working on Arsenal's future even though he still won't reveal whether he plans to remain in charge after this season. Wenger is out of contract at the end of the current campaign and has yet to sign a new deal amid calls for his resignation from Arsenal fans frustrated at their team's disappointing form in recent years. Asked if there was any news on his future, the Frenchman told reporters: "No, no", and repeated the response when pressed on whether he had any idea when an announcement would be made.

And as for whether any decision would be based around how Arsenal perform over the final few weeks of the season, the answer once again was "no". The 67-year-old gave himself a little breathing space by leading Arsenal to the FA Cup final against Chelsea thanks to Sunday's 2-1 semi-final win over Manchester City at Wembley. But, with Arsenal struggling to qualify for the Champions League via a top-four finish in the Premier League, Wenger knows it would only take a loss against Leicester on Wednesday to spark renewed criticism of his reign.

Even so, reports suggest he is leaning towards staying and he seemed to validate those suggestions when he talked about looking at transfer targets for next season. "I work until the last day of the season for the future," he said. "Transfer targets are

important for the future of the club. That (my future) is secondary, the future of the club is important."

Wenger's side host Leicester knowing a victory would move them back up to sixth, three points behind Manchester United and four behind Manchester City, who play each other tomorrow. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain could be involved against the Foxes despite leaving Wembley on crutches. The England midfielder took a kick to his foot against City and will be assessed before Wenger names his squad. "It was precautionary. It is not a bad injury and we will test him today (Tuesday). Nobody was really injured after the game," Wenger said.

"Overall that win will give us a bit more confidence, I think it will convince everybody that with the right energy level, the right fighting spirit and the right togetherness we can beat everybody. "For morale, yes for sure, for confidence as well. Big games give you the confidence that you can win and that is the most important thing in our job." Wenger admits Arsenal are likely to have to win all of their remaining games to stand a chance of breaking back into the top four. "It looks like we will, that has to be the target and to achieve that we have to win the next one," he said. "We have to take the energy level we showed on Sunday into the Premier League." — AFP



Arsenal team manager Arsene Wenger

BOXING

UNBEATEN WILDER TARGETS JOSHUA-KLITSCHKO WINNER

WASHINGTON: Unbeaten heavyweight Deontay Wilder will have a ringside view of rival champions Anthony Joshua and Wladimir Klitschko in their Wembley Stadium unification showdown on Saturday with hopes to fight the winner by December. The 31-year-old American, who owns the World Boxing Council crown, will serve as a television analyst when Britain's unbeaten Joshua defends his International Boxing Federation crown and vies for the vacant World Boxing Association title against Klitschko before a sellout crowd of more than 90,000. "I'm excited to be going to England," Wilder said. "I'm looking forward to getting my own bird's eye view of both fighters for a future fight. I'm definitely going over there to scout. I'm looking for a fighting partner."

When it comes to picking a winner, Wilder is torn, saying, "My heart goes to Joshua but my mind says Klitschko." Wilder, 38-0 with 37 knockouts, has owned the WBC crown for two years and wants a July fight with New Zealand's unbeaten Joseph Parker, the World Boxing Organization champion, with that winner to meet the Joshua-Klitschko victor. "Whoever unifies is going to bring another era to the heavyweight division one name, one champion, once and for all. Undisputed. It's going to be better for boxing. You'll see a different atmosphere," Wilder said.

"I'm confident I'm the best in the division. I will unify the division. I'm just being patient and waiting for my time to come." Parker, 22-0 with 18 knockouts, had a planned May fight against Britain's Hughie Fury called off on Saturday. "I want Parker in July," Wilder said. "Why not? He don't have any opponent now. Let's unify. Let's make it happen. It makes so much sense. "What would be better than me fighting Parker and then at the end of the year fighting for one undisputed title? I'm looking forward to unifying this division and bringing it back to America."

'JOSHUA HAS FLAWS'

Wilder took some verbal swipes at Joshua and Klitschko, citing the Englishman's past foes as lackluster and the ex-champion as possibly too far past his prime. "There's a lot of flaws Joshua has," Wilder said. "He's still young in the game. He's going off the physique and the height. If you deep down soul search and look at his resume, you'll get your answer. "He has got the power. At any given time he can get you out of there. He's definitely going to have to move and take angles with Klitschko... but I think he has a great chance." Klitschko, who used Wilder as a sparring partner in more than 50 rounds, is 41 and lost his title to Tyson Fury in his most recent fight 17 months ago because, Wilder says, "he didn't throw no damn punches."

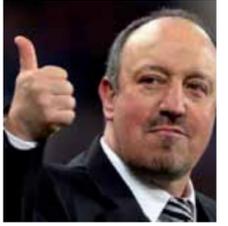
"I hope Klitschko brings Klitschko. I think he's ready. He's going to show a lot of things. He's going to teach Joshua a lot of things in the ring as well. Sometimes you have to let them know I'm still the beast, I'm still the monster." —AFP

Sports

Arsenal's Wenger plans ahead, won't reveal his future



4-goal Newcastle romp back to the Premier League



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2017

CUBS KEEP ROLLING, CRUSH PIRATES 14-3

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PORTLAND: Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors is guarded by Damian Lillard #0 of the Portland Trail Blazers during Game Four of the Western Conference Quarterfinals of the 2017 NBA Playoffs at Moda Center. — AFP

WARRIORS COME OUT SWINGING, COMPLETE SWEEP

RAPTORS SEIZE CONTROL WITH WIN OVER BUCKS

LOS ANGELES: The Golden State Warriors swept into the second round of the NBA playoffs on Monday with a crushing 128-103 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers. Stephen Curry scored 37 points with eight assists and seven rebounds as the Warriors completed a four-game sweep of the best-of-seven Western Conference first-round series against the Blazers.

Curry sat out the entire fourth quarter of a game the Warriors dominated from opening tip. Their 45 first-quarter points matched an NBA playoff record for points in an opening quarter, and they were up by 24 at halftime. "We

came out on a mission," Curry said. "It was a great way to put our foot on the gas pedal and get a win." Draymond Green added 21 points for the Warriors. Kevin Durant, who missed the last two games with a left calf injury, scored 10 points in just 20 minutes on the floor.

Six Warriors players scored in double figures as Golden state connected on 53.5 percent of their shots from the field, including 17 of 29 from three-point range. Damian Lillard scored 34 points and Al-Farouq Aminu chipped in 25 for Portland, but the Trail Blazers never really threatened. The Warriors

scored the first six points of the third quarter to stretch their lead to 30 points. Curry's three-pointer with seven minutes to play in the third made it 91-58, and Portland wouldn't get closer than 23 points the rest of the way. The Warriors now await either the Los Angeles Clippers or Utah Jazz, whose series was tied at two games apiece.

POWELL SPARKS RAPTORS

In Eastern Conference action, the Raptors forged a 3-2 series lead with a 118-93 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks in Toronto. Norman Powell, making his second start of the series, pro-

duced 25 points to help the Raptors move within one win of reaching the second round, with game six in Milwaukee. "(Powell) is a sparkplug," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. "He's the X-factor." Kyle Lowry added 16 points and 10 assists for the Raptors while Serge Ibaka contributed 19 points, DeMar DeRozan had 18, DeMarre Carroll added 12 and Cory Joseph scored 10 off the bench.

But Bucks coach Jason Kidd said Powell's energy had added another dimension for the Raptors. "He's playing extremely hard and he's knocking down shots, but he's in there to play

defense and he's playing at a very high level for those guys right now. ... He's picked them up here in the last couple of games just with his energy and spirit." The winners of the series will face the reigning NBA champion Cleveland Cavaliers, who swept the Indiana Pacers in four games. The Cavs beat the Raptors in the Eastern Conference finals last season. The Atlanta Hawks defeated the Washington Wizards 111-101 to knot their Eastern Conference series at two games each.

Dennis Schroder shook off early foul trouble and a scoreless first half to finish with 18 points for the Hawks. Paul

Millsap led the Hawks with 19 points and Dwight Howard delivered his best performance of the series with 16 points and 15 rebounds. Atlanta outscored Washington 31-15 in the second quarter and led 59-50 at halftime. The Wizards responded with a 10-2 scoring run to open the third quarter and they were tied 77-77 going into the fourth. The Hawks gained control with a 14-5 scoring run in the final period. Schroder made two three-pointers, a jump shot and a driving layup in the final four minutes. Bradley Beal scored 32 points to lead the Wizards, who host game five today. — AFP

TENNIS

ALL EYES ON STUTTGART AS SHARAPOVA RETURNS

SHARAPOVA RAGS-TO-RICHES JOURNEY RESUMES

STUTTGART: From the shadow of Chernobyl's nuclear wasteland to international super-stardom and from penniless arrival in the United States, without a word of English, to a fortune of \$200 million. It may sound like the stuff of Hollywood dreams, but the story of Maria Sharapova is a testament to the power of one individual to make it, whatever the odds, whatever the controversy, whatever people think. Today in Stuttgart, the 30-year-old will return from a 15-month doping suspension to open the next chapter. When she takes to the court to face Roberta Vinci, it will be to the consternation of many opponents and the relief, albeit privately, of a women's tour left flagging by the absence of Serena Williams, probably Sharapova's only serious rival in the arena-filling business. Sharapova shot to international fame as a giggly 17-year-old Wimbledon winner in 2004 — the third youngest player to conquer the All England Club's famous grass courts. She would go on to win the Australian and US Opens while claiming two titles at the French Open, despite famously likening her movement on Roland Garros' crushed red brick to a "cow on ice".

Siberia-born Sharapova first picked up a racquet at the age of four in Sochi, where her Belarus-born parents had settled after escaping the deadly clutches of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. Spotted by Martina Navratilova, she was encouraged to move to Nick Bollettieri's Florida academy, the proving ground of Andre Agassi and Monica Seles. Father Yuri and the seven-year-old Maria left for the US in 1994 with just

\$700 (644 euros) to their names. Yuri took odd jobs like dishwashing to finance his daughter's dreams although visa restrictions meant mother Yelena was back in Russia, separated from her daughter for two years. When Sharapova was nine, the mighty IMG group spotted her talent and funded the \$35,000 fees required for the Bollettieri school.

WIMBLEDON CELEBRITY

She made her professional debut at 14 in 2001 and by 2003 reached the world top 50. She won her first tour titles in Japan and Quebec. Then in 2004, her Wimbledon final triumph over Williams made her an overnight international celebrity. One year later, she became the first Russian woman to be ranked number one in the world while, in 2006, she won her second major at the US Open. But in 2007 and 2008, she began her long, on-off battle with shoulder trouble. She still had time to win the 2008 Australian Open before a second shoulder injury kept her off tour for the second half of the season, including missing the US Open and Beijing Olympics.

A 10-month absence from the sport, as she recuperated from surgery, saw her ranking slip to 126, but she was back in 2012, capturing the French Open to become the 10th woman to complete a career Grand Slam and adding Olympic silver to her resume that year. Her 2014 French Open title was another high after a dispiriting injury low. More injury troubles followed before the bombshell announcement of her positive test for meldonium at the 2016 Australian

Open—where she fell in the quarter-finals to Williams, her last match before her suspension.

SERENA RIVALRY

With Williams, she has endured her most testing rivalry—on and off the court. The two famously exchanged personal insults over their love lives when Sharapova began a two-year romance with Bulgarian player Grigor Dimitrov, a rumored previous suitor of the American. Sharapova had previously been engaged to former Los Angeles Laker star Sasha Vujacic. She may have been unlucky in love, but Sharapova hit the jackpot in her commercial affairs. She made almost \$30 million in 2015, according to Forbes, with \$23 million of that coming from endorsements and once signed a contract extension with Nike worth a reported \$70 million. "Beauty sells. I have to realize that's a part of why people want me. I'm not going to make myself ugly," she said.

She owns luxury homes—one in Florida, one in California—and is making a lucrative career as an entrepreneur. In 2012, she launched her own line of candy, "Sugarpova", and during her suspension, signed up for a Harvard Business School course. But she insists that retirement was never an option despite her absence meaning her world ranking has disappeared, leaving her at the mercy of wildcards into tournaments. Those free-passes have irked many of her contemporaries already suspicious of the Russian's aloofness. "I know I am respected," says an unconcerned Sharapova.—AFP



Maria Sharapova



OIL EDGES UP, BREAKING 6-DAY STRETCH OF LOSSES



BERLIN: (From left) Ivanka Trump, daughter and adviser of US President Donald Trump, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, moderator Miriam Meckel and Dutch Queen Maxima attend a panel at the W20 Summit in Berlin yesterday. The conference aims at building support for investment in women's economic empowerment programs. — AP (See Page 7)

KFH REPORTS KD 38.6M NET PROFIT FOR Q1 2017
EARNINGS PER SHARE 6.79 FILS, AN INCREASE OF 13%: AL-MARZOUQ

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said that "KFH has, by the grace of Allah, realized a KD 38.6 million net profit for the first quarter of 2017 for KFH shareholders compared to KD 34.1 million for the same period last year i.e. an increase of 13.1 percent.

Net finance revenues for Q1 this year reached KD 100.1 Million i.e. a growth of 3.1 percent compared to the same period last year. Total operating income for the first quarter of the year reached KD 168.6 million, i.e. a growth increase by 22.6 percent and net operating revenues reached KD 98.7 million, i.e. a growth of 55.6 percent compared to the same period last year.

Total operating expenses for the period decreased by KD 4.2 million, i.e. a decrease of 5.7 percent over the same period last year. Earnings per share for the first quarter of 2017 reached 6.79 fils, compared to 6.01 fils for the same period last year i.e. an increase of 13 percent.

Finance portfolio reached KD 8.461 billion i.e. an increase of KD 285 million or 3.5 percent compared to end of year 2016. Total deposits reached KD 10.914 billion i.e. an increase of KD 252 million or 2.4 percent compared to end of year 2016. Total assets reached KD 16.445 billion and Shareholders' equity reached KD 1.751 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2017. In addition, KFH's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) reached 17.96 percent, higher than the required limit of 15 percent, thus reiterating the strength of KFH financial position.

Al-Marzouq added that the balanced performance is attributed to the efficient execution of the bank's strategy by focusing on the core banking business while achieving stable and sustainable growth across the Group banks in various countries including Turkey, Bahrain, Malaysia, Germany, and others. This remarkable performance has been achieved through a set of successful strategic initiatives which were the cornerstone in reinforcing and

supporting banking services at the group level.

Islamic financial services

KFH, the pioneer in the industry of Islamic financial services, has attained a remarkable and well balanced performance through its prudent and flexible business model and efficient risk management methods, not to mention the business diversification and the ability to soundly deal with the economic challenges and regulatory requirements. KFH managed to structure its investment portfolio and improve its asset quality while continued its prudent policy in setting aside provisions in light of the economic uncertainty. This leads to improving the Capital Adequacy Ratio while strengthening the bank's position.

He illustrated that the economic challenges the Kuwaiti banking sector faces lie in the difficulty of expanding domestically due to the relatively small geographical area and the limitation of the local market. He pointed out that there are many options available to KFH to grow; through the global markets where the group operates or by penetrating new markets that add value to the Bank's operations. KFH continued its efforts in providing efficient solutions to the liquidity management through its various products. KFH-Group has realized total Sukuk trading volume amounting \$11.4 billion. KFH has become a primary dealer and a global Sukuk market maker.

Sukuk arranger

KFH, through its investment arm KFH Capital, played an important role in arranging EQUATE Sukuk of \$500 million offering under the \$2 billion issuance program. KFH participated in arranging \$250 million Sukuk for Warba bank. This reiterates KFH's keenness to support the national economy. KFH arranged Sukuk issuance for Dubai Islamic Bank DIB and Hong Kong totaling \$2 billion.

Al-Marzouq affirmed KFH commitment

towards supporting the country's development plan, while contributing in bridging the budget deficit, indicating the Kuwaiti banking sector enjoys high levels of liquidity that allows it to finance the deficit in case it lasted for several years.

He affirmed the continuing efforts of KFH in the wholesale banking, stressing the importance of strengthening ties with customers and improving the level of services. Accordingly, KFH has focused on banking services for SME sector in Kuwait. This sector is considered as one of the promising sectors comprising 24,000 companies.

Al-Marzouq welcomed the Central Bank of Kuwait CBK's instructions and regulations regarding the role of Sharia Supervisory Boards in Islamic banks, including the latest instructions on sharia supervisory governance for Kuwaiti Islamic Banks. Islamic Banks would be given until end 2017 to fulfill the requirements. This is in line with KFH's keenness to comply with regulations, and applying the sharia practices in all transactions in efforts to guarantee the glimmering reputation of the industry of Islamic financial services.

Al-Marzouq stressed the importance of technology and innovation at KFH, noting that KFH has developed and upgraded its IT infrastructure, expanded banking solutions by using modern technology, introduced new digital banking services to customers along with other direct services provided through the extensive branch network covering over 65 branches in Kuwait, in addition to other service centers.

KFH group has implemented several initiatives such as the relaunch of its website (kfh.com) which comprises several modifications and characteristics to appear in a new modern format.

KFH introduced a multi-currency ATM machine at the airport branch. KFH started operating the largest network of ATM systems



Hamad Al-Marzouq

provided specially for the blind. KFH Innovation Center has also participated in reinforcing innovation and development at the group level. Launching new and innovative products and services is instrumental in increasing the market share, facing competition and achieving outstanding performance. KFH launched innovation competition for employees on the level of the Group. It developed new products in the field of car financing including operational and finance leasing products that are available at KFH car showrooms spread in Kuwait. The bank offers a wide range of deposits and investment plans that suit different customer segments with good returns and flexible tenures of distribution. He added that KFH Group is successfully achieving its goals based on the markets in which it operates. Every Group bank in Turkey, Malaysia, Bahrain and Germany is working in a way consistent with the nature of those markets, in line with the strategy of KFH. This adds more resilience to the Group banks that has extensive branch network covering 480

branches. In addition to around 1000 ATMs network spread worldwide. Also, this qualifies the Group banks to tap opportunities and utilize any positive development. He explained that KFH is looking forward to further growth in the operations of its units in the upcoming period, indicating that markets diversification is an advantage and a source of strength.

Banking awards

KFH group received highly distinguished banking awards in different fields. The bank won 4 prestigious awards from Islamic Finance News Magazine (IFN), which are Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait, Syndicated Deal of the Year, Kuwait Deal of the Year, and US Deal of the Year. EmeaFinance Magazine awarded KFH Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait, Best local Bank and Best product launch awards. KFH won Institutional Excellence, and Best Social Awareness awards from Kuwait Public Relations Association. Also, KFH won two awards from the Organizational Learning Conference which are "Best Employer for Job Seekers" and "Best Job Stability Award". Such awards recognize KFH efforts in attracting national manpower, and honing the skills of its human resources that are the most important asset at the bank.

He reiterated KFH's commitments towards moving forward in shouldering the social responsibility through supporting the activities of the youth and the participation in the health, education, environment and social activities.

Al-Marzouq expressed his thanks and appreciation to all shareholders and clients for their support and confidence. He extended his thanks to the regulatory authorities. He hailed the efforts of KFH's executive management and employees for their outstanding performance that yielded positive results that reflect the prestigious status of KFH; the world leading Islamic financial institution.

ALITALIA'S FUTURE IN DOUBT AS STAFF GROUNDS RESCUE PLAN

ROME: The future of Italian airline Alitalia was in doubt yesterday after staff rejected a last-ditch restructuring deal, blocking a recapitalization and sparking fears that the carrier may be grounded for good.

The government had warned that there was no alternative to the plan which called for 1,700 job losses and an eight-percent salary cut. The company's coffers are empty.

But unions said more than two-thirds of voting employees threw out the proposal, which had earlier this month been approved by both management and unions, after almost 90 percent of the airline's 12,500 employees participated in Monday's ballot. Italian government ministers expressed "surprise and regret" at the outcome in a joint statement, saying it put the company's recapitalization efforts at risk.

Capital increase shelved

"At this stage, as we await the decisions of Alitalia's current shareholders, the government's aim is to keep the cost to Italian citizens and passengers to a minimum", they

said. Meanwhile, Alitalia's board of directors met yesterday, a public holiday in Italy, "to evaluate the negative outcome of the referendum". After the meeting, the directors said they were now faced with the "impossibility" of proceeding with plans for a 2-billion-euro capital increase, including 900 million of fresh money, to keep the company afloat. The board decided "to initiate proceedings provided for by the law", without giving details, and convened a shareholder meeting tomorrow.

Unions had earlier called on shareholders and the government "to avoid any traumatising and irreversible decisions". But Italian press reports said the airline's directors may quickly ask the state to call in special administrators to prepare a possible takeover or liquidation.

The company is de facto controlled by Etihad Airways, which acquired a 49-percent stake when it saved Alitalia from bankruptcy in 2014.

The Emirati airline entered the partnership declaring its intention to transform

Alitalia into a leaner operation with industry-leading service standards - both goals that it has failed to deliver upon, according to industry analysts.



Lufthansa to the rescue?

The pressure to find a solution has been intense, with Alitalia's cash expected to run out this month, leaving its fleet grounded,

unless the carrier finds emergency funding. Etihad and Italian banks Intesa Sanpaolo and UniCredit have said they would only inject new funds if the unions agree to the new collective labour agreement and cuts.

Italian daily La Stampa said yesterday that Etihad may try to sell its Alitalia stake to German flagship carrier Lufthansa, but cited no sources. The Italian government, which acted as a mediator in negotiations, warned on April 18 that a "no" victory would not only be costly but potentially fatal for the company. Alitalia has been hit hard by competition from low-cost companies and has been accumulating losses for years.

The company had previously targeted a return to the black in 2017 but its losses amounted to 460 million euros last year and are forecast to be on a similar scale this year.

Achieving profitability by 2019 would mean six new long-haul aircraft joining its fleet between 2019 and 2021. The airline is planning to launch ten new long-haul routes between 2017 and 2021 and to recruit up to 500 new crew members by 2019, it said. — AFP

NORWAY DOUBLES BARENTS SEA OIL, ALARMS GREEN LOBBY

OSLO: Norway's portion of the Barents Sea could contain twice as much undiscovered oil and gas as previously thought when a newly mapped area bordering Russia is included, raising the prospect of drilling in environmentally sensitive ice-covered waters. Norwegian governments have often said they will only drill in ice-free areas in the Arctic, both because companies lack technology to clean up oil spills onto ice and because icebergs can damage drilling installations.

The Norwegian Barents Sea could hold 2.8 billion standard cubic meters (scm) oil equivalent (17.6 billion barrels), including 1.4 billion scm to the south-east of the Svalbard archipelago, the country's oil

regulator said yesterday. While the area to the east of Svalbard evaluated by the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD) is covered by ice for much of the year, according to satellite data, the extent of sea ice is retreating northwards because of global warming.

Norway's oil lobby welcomed the prospect of potential activity in the future, although the newly assessed areas will require parliamentary approval for drilling there, something which has long been questioned by environmentalists. They doubt whether drilling in environmentally sensitive northern areas, which include important fish stocks, should ever be allowed or be profitable due to high Arctic exploration costs. "This would be like

burning money," Nils Harley Boisen of conservation group WWF said.

Challenges

No decision would be made until after parliamentary elections in September, but discussions could start during the next parliament's four-year term, Norway's Oil Minister Terje Søviknes told Reuters. "The question is how far north you should go and what challenges you get in this part of the shelf," he said. Greenpeace said the NPD's decision to publish estimates for the areas further to the north undermined a long-standing political agreement not to drill in ice-covered waters and put pressure on Oslo to open the area to oil companies.

"This is a clear pressure from the oil industry to open new exploration areas to keep employment, ignoring concerns about environment and profitability," Truls Gulowsen, head of Greenpeace Norway, told Reuters.

The Norwegian Oil and Gas association, an industry lobby, however, said the new estimates increased confidence about future activity in the Arctic, which could benefit local communities and add jobs. While exploration has taken place in some parts of the Barents Sea for more than 30 years, only the Goliat oilfield and the Snoehvit natural gas field have so far begun production. The NPD said separately it expected a record number of exploration wells to be drilled in the Barents Sea this year. — Reuters

OIL EDGES UP, BREAKING 6-DAY STRETCH OF LOSSES

JPMORGAN: OIL SUPPLIES NEED TO BE CUT LONGER, DEEPER

LONDON: Oil prices nudged higher yesterday, breaking a six-day streak of price falls, but doubts about OPEC's ability to reduce global crude inventories capped gains. Brent crude was up 8 cents at \$51.68 a barrel by 1145 GMT, while US crude futures were up 4 cents at \$49.27 a barrel.

Brent is down 10 percent since late 2016, despite efforts led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and Russia to cut output by 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) in the first half of 2017. With oil supplies still around record highs, Stephen Schork of the Schork report said yesterday that "OPEC has failed miserably in its endeavor to balance the oil market."

JPMorgan said in a market note "it is evident that ... crude markets are still struggling to clear

(oversupply)." The bank said it was closing its "August Brent long position at a loss." To reduce the supply overhang, JPMorgan said OPEC "will be forced to renew, and possibly deepen the agreement if they wish to keep prices much above \$50 per barrel."

Russia said at the weekend its oil output could climb to the highest rate in 30 years if OPEC and non-OPEC producers do not extend their supply reduction deal beyond June 30. Extreme weakness in physical crude, where prices in the North Sea market have fallen to their lowest this year, is also acting as a drag on futures. But one analyst said crude demand could pick up and the long-awaited draw in global inventories could start to show with refin-

ery maintenance around Europe and Russia set to peak in May at an estimated 1.5 million bpd.

"If you look at the last six weeks, when you include the US, Europe, Singapore and floating storage, (inventories) have been going down on average by 8 million barrels a week," SEB commodities strategist Bjarne Schieldrop said. If that pace continued, he said it would equate to a draw down of 250 million to 300 million barrels by the end of 2017.

"With refineries out, you have a lot of crude oil sloshing around, creating weakness in the spot price," he said. "We still have the OPEC meeting ahead of us on May 25 and it's always uncertain. But it doesn't make sense to sell down to \$45 ahead of that." — Reuters

BULGARIA MAY SEEK MORE TIME TO REPLY TO GAZPROM CONCESSIONS

SOFIA: Bulgaria may need more time to respond to concessions proposed by Russian gas giant Gazprom in an EU antitrust case, its energy minister said on Monday, adding that while Sofia saw the concessions as positive it would like to see them expanded. A provisional agreement announced last month would see Gazprom avoid a fine of up to 10 percent of its global turnover over EU charges it abused its dominant market position and overcharged clients in eight eastern European nations.

The deal is subject to feedback from EU states and market players that should be sent by May 4 and could still be amended or even abandoned. Bulgaria, which is almost completely reliant on Russian natural gas supplies, needs more clarity on the concessions and will send questions to Brussels later on Monday, interim energy minister Nikolai Pavlov told reporters.

"We see the proposals as positive but we want them to be expanded," Pavlov said after a meeting with politicians from the election winning GERB party which is expected to form a coalition government in early May. "There are quite a few ambiguities on the proposed commitments ... If we do not get answers on time we will ask for the deadline to be extended, because the information is not sufficient," he said without elaborating. Gazprom's

offer would see it scrap contract terms that bar clients from exporting its gas to other countries and tie deals to investments in pipelines. The company would also link its prices to benchmarks such as European gas market hub prices, rather than oil, and allow clients to renegotiate prices every two years. Pavlov said he expected the Bulgarian position to be agreed after a debate in parliament by the end of the week.

He said current contracts with Gazprom allowed Bulgaria to export Russian gas and that Gazprom's proposal not to seek damages from Bulgarian partners over the cancelled South Stream gas pipeline project had been arranged back in 2012.

A source, familiar with the matter said Bulgaria would need more details on the exact future benchmark for gas prices and would also seek guarantees it would be a natural gas transit country. Currently, Russia transports about 14-15 billion cubic metres of gas per year to Greece and Turkey through Bulgaria. "It is important to uphold the position of Bulgaria as a transit gas centre and defend the interests of the country through the possibility for following talks with Gazprom to renegotiate much better conditions and much better prices for gas supplies," said GERB party official and former energy minister Temenuzhka Petkova. — Reuters



BEIJING: A security guard uses a smartphone in the window of a shopping mall in Beijing yesterday.—AFP

GAZPROM CEO SEES SHARE OF EU GAS MARKET RISING

LONDON: A new pipeline from Russia's Arctic fields to Germany will boost Moscow's share of the European gas market despite competition from Qatar and the United States, and will also mean much less fuel goes via Ukraine, Russian gas monopoly Gazprom said. Chief Executive Alexei Miller told Reuters supplies via Ukraine would fall after 2020, but not stop entirely as Moscow has previously threatened, when the world's largest gas firm opens a pipeline under the Baltic Sea.

Gazprom's Western partners agreed on Monday to provide half the financing for the 9.5 billion euro (\$10.32 billion) Nord Stream 2 pipeline, removing a big hurdle for a Russian plan to pump more gas to Europe from 2019. Gazprom now supplies a third of Europe's gas needs, with its share rising from a quarter in the past two decades. It believes it could ship more despite the EU's fears that the bloc is becoming too reliant on Russian energy.

"Today, in 2017, we are beating our 2016 record highs by around 10 percent. So we can expect new records this year and Gazprom's European market share is poised to rise," said Miller, one of the closest and longest serving allies of President Vladimir Putin, speaking in a telephone interview.

Gazprom sold a record 179 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas to Europe in 2016, helped by a collapse in oil prices on which gas is priced and cold weather on the continent.

Customers are requesting more gas this year and Gazprom believes in the next 15 years it can provide the bulk of an additional 100 bcm a year for Europe, which the continent needs by 2035 as domestic output falls. "A decrease in the North Sea gas production, as well as in other EU countries, is becoming a very important factor ...

Given that, Russia's market share will be rising," Miller said.

The European Union has sought to reduce reliance on Russia after a decade of gas disputes between Moscow and Ukraine over pricing, which led to several supply disruptions during harsh winters.

Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea and its incursion in east Ukraine have made Europe more reluctant to rely on Russia for energy, which critics say the Kremlin uses for intimidation or blackmail. Moscow has dismissed the accusations.

"I don't think it is fair to talk about dependence," said Miller. "Our dependence is mutual: when we invest in developing fields and building pipelines, Gazprom relies on future demand and de facto depends on the European market as much as Europe depends on Russian gas."

Europe "could get its gas from anywhere" given its investment in liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, but pipeline gas remained cheaper, he said. "Pipeline gas is winning against LNG and is set to continue doing so in the future."

Big Ukrainian cut

Gazprom supplies Europe via three main routes: the Ukrainian pipelines, the Yamal-Europe route via Belarus and Poland, and the new Nord Stream link under the Baltic Sea to the German town of Greifswald. Gazprom wants to double capacity of Nord Stream. On Monday, it signed a deal to co-fund the link with European companies Uniper, Wintershall, Shell, OMV and Engie.

Eastern European and Baltic countries say the new pipeline carrying Russian gas across the Baltic will make the EU a hostage to Moscow. Other north European states, especially the main beneficiary Germany, back it for its economic benefits.—Reuters

INDIAN FARMERS SHOULD PAY TAX: GOVT ADVISER

NEW DELHI: A senior adviser to the Indian government proposed yesterday that farmers pay tax, in remarks that challenged government policy in a country of 1.3 billion people where there are only 37 million income tax payers. Economist Bibek Debroy, a member of the Policy Commission that serves as the government's own think-tank, told a news conference that farmers should pay income tax in line with urban dwellers.

They should be liable to tax on their incomes at the same thresholds, he also said, taking into account typical fluctuations in incomes experienced by farmers over a three-year period.

India's public finances are notoriously precarious, with the International Monetary Fund estimating that tax revenues are equivalent to just 17.7 percent of gross domestic product - low by comparison with other emerging markets. Still,

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has ruled out taxing farmers, telling parliament last month: "Income from agriculture will not be taxed." Prime Minister Narendra Modi has, meanwhile, promised to double farmers' incomes by 2022.

The finance ministry declined to comment. Debroy's remarks overshadowed a news conference held by the policy Commission to mark the end of India's 12th, and last, five-year plan - a legacy of the Soviet-style command economy set up by independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru. The Policy Commission, set up by Modi to replace Nehru's Planning Commission, is now circulating a draft three-year "Action Agenda", to be followed by a seven-year "Strategy" and a 15-year "Vision" for India's development.

Debroy's boss, Policy Commission Vice Chairman Arvind Panagariya, parried further questions on whether to tax India's 220 million rural

households. Although most farmers are poor, the tax loophole they enjoy has been exploited by rich politicians and even Bollywood movie stars to generate "black" cash from illicit sources.

"We support the proposal ... to tax agricultural income provided the government takes steps to improve the income level of the majority of farmers," said Dharmendra Malik, spokesman of a farmers' union that is allied to Modi's ruling party. Income tax in India starts at 5 percent when earnings exceed 250,000 rupees (\$3,900), climbing to a top rate of 30 percent on incomes upward of 1 million rupees.

The government plans to launch a nationwide goods and services tax (GST) in July that would broaden the tax base. But, critics say, by focusing on indirect taxation India risks burdening the poor who spend a greater share of their income on daily needs than the better off. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.772
Indian Rupees	4.730
Pakistani Rupees	2.908
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.004
Nepali Rupees	2.964
Singapore Dollar	219.690
Hongkong Dollar	39.243
Bangladesh Taka	3.716
Philippine Peso	6.128
Thai Baht	8.891

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

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.150
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.777
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.226
Tunisian Dinar	133.540
Jordanian Dinar	430.030
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.034
Syrian Lira	2.176
Morocco Dirham	30.823

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	305.150
Euro	332.310
Sterling Pound	391.510
Canadian dollar	227.130
Turkish lira	85.240

Swiss Franc	308.230
Australian Dollar	232.220
US Dollar Buying	303.950

GOLD	
20 Gram	260.990
10 Gram	133.410
5 Gram	67.550

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.800
Canadian Dolla	226.525
Sterling Pound	392.135
Euro	328.485
Swiss Frank	305.110
Bahrain Dinar	808.430
UAE Dirhams	83.380
Qatari Riyals	84.605
Saudi Riyals	82.175
Jordanian Dinar	429.815
Egyptian Pound	16.978
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.005
Indian Rupees	4.728
Pakistani Rupees	2.907
Bangladesh Taka	3.742
Philippines Peso	6.121
Cyprus pound	168.208
Japanese Yen	3.795
Syrian Pound	2.420
Nepalese Rupees	3.950
Malaysian Ringgit	70.185

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.745
Thai Baht	9.860
Turkish Lira	84.130

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.383340	0.393340
Czech Korune	0.004321	0.016321
Danish Krone	0.040485	0.045485
Euro	0.325889	0.334889
Norwegian Krone	0.031665	0.036865
Romanian Leu	0.073011	0.073011
Slovakia	0.009130	0.019130
Swedish Krona	0.030477	0.035477
Swiss Franc	0.299342	0.310342
Turkish Lira	0.078977	0.089277
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.222210	0.234210
New Zealand Dollar	0.208110	0.217610
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.220906	0.229905
Georgina Lari	0.137777	0.137777
US Dollars	0.300950	0.305350
US Dollars Mint	0.301450	0.305350
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003419	0.004003
Chinese Yuan	0.042801	0.046301
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037132	0.039882
Indian Rupee	0.004272	0.004960

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002682	0.002862
Kenyan Shilling	0.002945	0.002945
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065645	0.071645
Nepalese Rupee	0.003014	0.003184
Pakistan Rupee	0.002692	0.002982
Philippine Peso	0.006009	0.006309
Sierra Leone	0.000038	0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.213235	0.223235
South African Rand	0.017413	0.025913
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001636	0.002216
Taiwan	0.009958	0.010138
Thai Baht	0.008510	0.009060
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.802580	0.811080
Egyptian Pound	0.014043	0.019951
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000195	0.000255
Jordanian Dinar	0.4248948	0.433894
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020378	0.044378
Nigerian Naira	0.000396	0.001031
Omani Riyal	0.785917	0.791597
Qatar Riyal	0.082978	0.084428
Saudi Riyal	0.080260	0.081580
Syrian Pound	0.001293	0.001513
Tunisian Dinar	0.124511	0.132511
Turkish Lira	0.078977	0.089277
UAE Dirhams	0.081629	0.083329
Yemeni Riyal	0.000992	0.001072

BOURSA KUWAIT: A YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENTS

BOURSE WILL HELP KUWAIT TRANSFORM INTO A KEY REGIONAL TRADING HUB: AL-KHALED

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait successfully concluded its first year since it assumed responsibility of Kuwait's stock market, marking the start of a new era for the Kuwaiti exchange.

During this time, Boursa Kuwait put forward a series of achievements in record time, solidifying its position in the market and restoring the faith of investors. The main achievements include the launch of new investment tools, for which Boursa Kuwait has established a system and rulebook for each independent trading activity.

Only several months after taking on the operations of the exchange and emphasizing the element of transparency in all its deliverables, Boursa Kuwait launched the Company Information Portal (CIP), a tool designed internally, which provides a credible and updated information platform for all listed companies, and is used as a reference site by all stakeholders. A workshop was held in this regards for listed companies to introduce the system, its benefits and how to use it.

Further building on the system, Boursa Kuwait embarked on a partnership with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), to offer the latest Electronic Signature feature. The new feature acts as an authentication system for the information provided by listed companies on the CIP.

Commenting on this, Boursa Kuwait Vice Chairman and CEO, Khaled Abdulrazzaq Al-Khaled said: "The CIP helped to create a more transparent and efficient exchange. The Boursa Kuwait website acts as the main reference for information for all stakeholders and it is our duty to ensure that our News Capturing and Dissemination Process is as developed as possible and that the information disclosed on the site is credible and valid. This falls in line with our aim to progressively transition the stock exchange and deploy basic tools, systems and products that lead to the improvement of the standards of our operations."

The Boursa Kuwait website is the main source of exchange related news, and as a means of providing updates to all stakeholders and ensuring maximum reach, Boursa Kuwait has developed a bilingual RSS Feed. Boursa Kuwait's website has also been fully revamped to reflect a modern layout that better serves traders and other stakeholders, and is available in both the Arabic and English language.

Boursa Kuwait went on to enrich the type of information disclosed to its stakeholders, through an affiliation with Thomson Reuters. Boursa Kuwait now offers upgraded Financial Data Services on its website, with a new range of the most up to date financial information in relation to all listed companies, including charts and comparability abilities.

Defined objectives

"Boursa Kuwait is a mission-driven company that aims to progressively transition the Kuwait Stock Exchange to operate at world class standards. Through an on-going partnership with experts, Boursa Kuwait will secure excellence in the services and products it provides to its stakeholders, on all levels" Al-Khaled stated.

Trading rules

Al-Khaled recognized the extreme efforts made in this regards, and affirmed that it is only the beginning to a more advanced phase for the Kuwait market as a whole. He stated: "One of the main achievements Boursa Kuwait boasts is the preparation and development of IPTM1, which includes key improvements such as, change of price limits and tick size movements and randomized closing auction; a matching mechanism which will be set at a

randomized time on a daily basis, in order to minimize price manipulation during the closing auction. The launch of the IPTM2 draft is also a major highlight, as it is the first of its kind in Kuwait. It was refined after a market wide consultation was issued by Boursa Kuwait, and will be officially launched upon final approval from the CMA."



Al-Khaled affirmed that the launch of the rulebook falls directly in line with the company's transparent approach, which will ultimately support the progressive development of the exchange while ensuring alignment with all concerned stakeholders.

The rulebook features the new layout for listed companies, whereby Boursa Kuwait has proposed a segmentation system, which is basically an approach to divide the market in a meaningful manner to ensure that listed companies receive the most effective level of service for their size and activity. "The consultation exercise allowed us to assess the suitability of

the draft in relation to market needs, and more importantly, provides with a clear market view when finalizing the rulebook." He added Al-Khaled emphasized on the importance of transparency in the short and long terms plans and solutions which the company presents.

A positive change

Al-Khaled: "Boursa Kuwait was established to progressively transition the stock market operations to a regionally competitive exchange, operating to world class standards, while driving transparency, efficiency and accessibility."

Special trades

In line with its aim to cater to market needs and increase liquidity, Boursa Kuwait launched Special Trades, in collaboration with the CMA. This tool has facilitated the trading process among investors and revived the overall market condition. Accordingly, Boursa Kuwait held an awareness workshop targeted for listed companies and other concerned stakeholders, to provide a complete understanding of the trade mechanism.

Al-Khaled confirmed that several Special Trade transactions have already been executed, in line with the approved trading rules, and have positively improved the overall market liquidity.

This is only one of a series of trading products and solutions Boursa Kuwait intends launch into the Kuwait market, all in favor of supporting stakeholders to manage investments more efficiently and uplift the overall market status. Al-Khaled added: "The achievements recorded by Boursa Kuwait during this year encompassed several strategic developments which are anticipated to have a major positive impact."

Boursa Kuwait sought to embark on partnerships that would benefit the overall objectives of the company. One of the main partnerships it recently finalized is that with the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA). The partnership came in an effort to promote effective communication among listed companies, the capital markets and regulators, in addition to supporting the latest Corporate Governance Code published by the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) of Kuwait, which states that each company [incorporated/listed] in Kuwait is expected to integrate an investor affairs unit or investor relations function within its organization.

Training programs

Further reinforcing the importance of Investor Relations, Boursa Kuwait hosted a special training program for listed companies and



Khaled Abdulrazzaq Al-Khaled

brokerage firms. This is one of a series of training sessions to take place in support of the IR function and overall agreement with MEIRA.

Al-Khaled said: "Developing the exchange scene in Kuwait requires extensive work on many different levels. One is primarily engaging with our stakeholders while maintaining the same level of transparency we have embraced since the start. This has allowed us to establish positive relations with them and that in turn has and will continue to support the overall Boursa Kuwait operations and their evolution."

Market maker

Boursa Kuwait also succeeded in launching the Market Maker rulebook, in collaboration with the CMA and in line with its efforts to establish a transparent approach aligned with international best practices and all market related developments. Boursa Kuwait once again set out to collate stakeholders' opinions and thoughts with regards to the draft Market Maker rulebook.

Al-Khaled said: "The launch of the Market Maker rulebook has a positive effect on the improvement of the overall performance of the market through the active participation of stakeholders." Market Maker is a significant means to specifically increasing market liquidity, improving market efficiency and activating overall trading tools.

Al-Khaled affirmed that market making is a crucial part of stock exchange operations across the world. He also stated that it serves as an important tool to boost liquidity of shares by creating specific markets, thereby helping improve the efficiency of the overall market and overall economic growth. Applying market making principals through Boursa Kuwait is a major milestone towards develop-

ing the Kuwaiti capital market and transforming it into a major regional trading hub, which will benefit Boursa Kuwait and the Kuwaiti economy in general.

Over the counter

One trading tool Boursa Kuwait is keen to officially launch into the market upon CMA approval is Over the Counter (OTC) trading. Al-Khaled commented in this regards saying: "Boursa Kuwait is keen to cater to all existing companies through a set of defined rules and regulations, whether they are unlisted, legally withdrawn or eliminated from the stock market."

"OTC is an important tool that is offered across the modern exchange markets, which Boursa Kuwait is keen to develop and execute." Boursa Kuwait will be launching the official OTC rulebook upon receiving approval from the CMA.

Partnerships and affiliations

In light of the aforementioned substantial achievements, Boursa Kuwait was also able to join the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) initiative. SSE is a peer-to-peer learning platform for exploring how exchanges, in collaboration with investors, regulators, and companies, can enhance corporate transparency - and ultimately performance - on ESG (environmental, social and corporate governance) issues and encourage sustainable investment.

It was also recently granted membership in the International Capital Market Association (ICMA). This is a major step for Boursa Kuwait as it puts it on the international map as contributors to the capital market as a whole and as active participants in shaping the future of the Kuwaiti market through dialogues on international best practices."

Boursa Kuwait is keen to keep up with market developments, and continuously seeks to offer training and educational courses to employees and traders, and more importantly, to provide a stimulating environment, while equipping today's generations with the skills required to successfully take on administrative functions. Raising awareness of Boursa Kuwait and its objectives will continue to be one of the company's main focuses, while further promoting the privatization concept among governmental institutions through ongoing educational sessions.

"We have successfully solidified our position within the first year and we will continue to achieve great success by continuing to deploy our strategy that will support the ongoing success of our operations for many more years to come," Al-Khaled concluded.

BOEING NEAR DECISION TO LAUNCH 737-10 JET

WASHINGTON: Boeing is nearing a decision to launch a larger version of its 737 workhorse jet within two months to counter strong sales of the Airbus (AIR.PA) A321neo, after a breakthrough on the design for one of its parts, industry sources said.

The 737 MAX 10 will narrow the gap between the 178-220 seat 737-9, which first flew this month, and the 185-240 seat A321neo, which dominates the top end of a market for narrowbody jets worth \$2 trillion over 20 years. Boeing has been studying how to solve a tricky problem with the design of the plane's landing gear, without adding cost or delaying a 2020 target for first deliveries.

The sources said a two-part technical solution is being tested and that Boeing is negotiating with airlines with the aim of launching the 737-10 at the Paris Airshow in June. Boeing is said to anticipate a total market of 1,000 of the planes. "Boeing is actively engaged in discussions with customers about the 737 MAX 10X," a spokesman said.

"No decision has been made on the

airplane and any discussion on timing of a possible launch would be speculative." Reuters reported last year that the 737-10 marks a tactical response to the A321neo, while Boeing works on strategic plans for a 220-260-seat twin-aisle, mid-market jet. But it has produced a puzzle so tricky that Boeing has asked for help from its combat jet experts to design a space-saving gear for the 737-10.

A solution is needed because the 737-10 will be longer than the 737-9 to make room for about 12 extra seats. The landing gear must become taller too or the tail could scrape the runway.

Anxious to avoid costly changes to the rest of the plane and stay on schedule, Boeing aims to make the gear longer only when needed, but small enough to fit in the 737's existing wheel bay.

It has not made final decisions but is testing an advanced proposal to allow the 737 to effectively sit back on its heels as it leaves the runway. This is what aerospace engineers call a "semi-levered" design and is a nod to two bigger jets: the 777 and 787-10. —Reuters

US CONSUMER CONFIDENCE SLIPS; NEW HOME SALES UP

WASHINGTON: US consumer confidence fell from a more than 16-year high in April, but a surge in new home sales to an eight-month high last month suggested underlying strength in the economy despite an apparent sharp slowdown in growth in the first quarter.

The economy's healthy fundamentals were also underscored by other data yesterday showing the biggest year-on-year increase in house prices in 2-1/2 years in February. The Conference Board said its consumer confidence index fell to 120.3 this month from 124.9 in March, which was the highest reading since December 2000. Still, the index remained at a very high level even though consumers' assessments of current business and labor market conditions were less favorable than in March.

The dip in confidence is likely related to last month's failed attempt by Republicans in the House of Representatives to pass legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the 2010 health-care restructuring popularly known as Obamacare. That failure stirred concerns in financial markets about the difficulties the Trump administration might have in implementing other policies, including its plan to cut taxes.

In a separate report, the Commerce Department said new home sales jumped 5.8 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 621,000 units last month, the highest level since July 2016. February's sales pace was revised down to 587,000 units from the previously reported 592,000 units.

New home sales were up 15.6 percent compared to March 2016. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast new home sales, which account for about 9.8 percent of overall home sales, slipping 0.8 percent to a pace of 583,000 units last month. The US dollar hit a two-week high against the yen after the data. US stocks were trading sharply higher while prices of US government debt fell.

Strong housing market

New home sales have now increased for three straight months. A tightening labor market, marked by a 4.5 percent unemployment rate, is boosting employment opportunities for young Americans and helping to support the housing market. In addition, mortgage rates are low by historic standards. The 30-year fixed mortgage rate is currently averaging around a five-month low of 3.97 percent. New home sales are benefiting from a shortage of properties in the market for previously owned homes.

A report last Friday showed sales of existing homes surging 4.4 percent to a 10-year high in March. Housing market strength suggests that signs of a sharp moderation in economic growth in the first quarter are an aberration. The Atlanta Federal Reserve is forecasting gross domestic product rising at a 0.5 percent annualized rate in the first quarter after increasing at a 2.1 percent pace in the final three months of 2016. The government will publish its advance first-quarter GDP estimate on Friday.



LAS VEGAS: In this Nov 23, 2012 file photo, a cashier rings up a cash sale at a Sears store, in Las Vegas. According to information released yesterday, by the Conference Board, a business research group, US consumer confidence slipped in April but remains at high levels. —AP

Last month, new single-family homes sales soared 25.8 percent in the Northeast region, reversing the prior month's 24.4 percent plunge. Sales jumped 16.7 percent in the West to their highest level since July 2007. They increased 1.6 percent in the South, but fell 4.5 percent in the

Midwest. The inventory of new homes on the market increased 1.1 percent to 268,000 units last month, the highest level since July 2009. Still, new housing stock remains less than half of what it was at its peak during the housing boom in 2006.

FRENCH RELIEF SETS UP ECB FOR CHANGE OF TACK IN JUNE

FRANKFURT: European Central Bank policymakers are breathing a sigh of relief after the first round of France's presidential vote put a pro-euro centrist in pole position, but they are not likely to change their policy stance until June. Three sources on and close to the bank's Governing Council told Reuters that with the threat of a run-off between two euro-sceptic candidates in France averted, and with the economy on its best run in years, many rate-setters see scope for sending a small signal in June towards reducing monetary stimulus.

There is, however, little appetite to change at this Thursday's meeting the pledge to buy bonds at least until the end of the year and to keep rates at rock bottom until well after that.

A move in June, however, might mean changing the wording of the ECB's opening statement to reflect improved prospects for the economy. Some or all the references to prevailing downside risks to the outlook, to the possibility of further rate cuts or to larger asset purchases may be taken out, the sources said. "The discussion will be on removing

some of the easing biases," one of the sources said. "I can't say how quickly it will happen because that depends on the data." The ECB declined to comment.

The euro extended gains against the dollar and yields on eurozone government bonds rose broadly on the sources' comments.

"(The article) reaffirmed the relationship between the reduction of geopolitical risk versus what the ECB may do going forward," Sireen Harajli, a foreign exchange strategist at Mizuho in New York. "It's ... adding more confidence in the euro."

Emmanuel Macron, a pro-European centrist, is widely expected to beat euro-sceptic candidate Marine Le Pen to become France's next president on May 7 after winning the first round of voting on Sunday. More importantly for the ECB, his victory has allayed the threat of a run-off between Le Pen and anti-euro far-left, euro-sceptic candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon, allowing the ECB to focus more on the improving economic outlook and less on political risks outside of its control. — Reuters



This April 24, 2017 photo shows a McDonald's restaurant in downtown Pittsburgh. — AP

MCDONALD'S REPORTS HIGHER EARNINGS ON SOLID US, CHINA

NEW YORK: McDonald's reported higher first-quarter earnings yesterday on better performance in key regions, including the United States and China. The solid results reflected greater emphasis on boosting traffic in the United States at the home of the "Big Mac," as well as other markets, such as Japan, where growth was also strong. "There's a sense of urgency across the business as we take actions to retain existing customers, regain lapsed customers and convert casual customers to committed customers," said chief executive Steve Easterbrook.

Net income for the quarter ending March 31 was \$1.2 billion, up eight percent from

the year-ago period. Revenues came in at \$5.7 billion, down 3.9 percent, reflecting McDonald's sale of restaurants to franchise companies. Easterbrook has focused heavily on the United States after a lengthy slump, emphasizing the need of good nuts-and-bolts service and simplifying the menu to allow for greater speed. The company has launched the popular "all-day breakfast" option and is introducing more sophisticated online and curbside pickup options. Comparable sales rose 1.7 percent in the US market. Net income translated to \$1.47 per share, 14 cents above analyst expectations.

Shares rose 2.5 percent to \$137.60 in pre-market trading. — AFP

WORLD STOCKS RISE ON FRENCH VOTE RELIEF

LONDON: World stocks hit record highs yesterday, with investors' relief at centrist Emmanuel Macron's victory in the first round of the French presidential election supported by speculation about US tax reform. Wall Street looked set to join the party, with index futures indicating US stock markets would open higher.

Safe-haven assets such as gold and the Japanese yen retreated as opinion polls suggested Macron would easily beat far-right, anti-EU candidate Marine Le Pen in a May 7 run-off vote for the French presidency. The yield gap between French and German short-term government bonds, a closely watched measure of political risk in the euro zone, hit its lowest in

almost three months. "It's risk-on. The French presidential election was an obvious risk, and it now looks like, barring a shock, Macron will gallop ahead and the market will have its candidate in place, and that's another hurdle overcome this year," said BNY Mellon currency strategist Neil Mellor, in London.

European shares measured by the STOXX 600 index rose by 0.4 percent, after adding 2.1 percent on Monday. French shares were up 0.4 percent, having risen 4.1 percent on Monday in their biggest daily gain since August 2012. European bank shares edged higher after big gains on Monday. The European Central Bank said in a quarterly survey of lenders that while

banks would tighten access to credit for companies in the second quarter, lending volumes were still expected to rise.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.6 percent, hovering near its highest level since June 2015 hit earlier in the session, on its fourth straight day of gains.

Japan's Nikkei rose more than 1 percent to a three-week high. South Korea's KOSPI also advanced 0.7 percent to its highest level since April 2015. These gains helped push MSCI's world stocks index, comprising shares from 46 countries to a fresh all-time high of 454.55 points. It last traded just shy of that level, up a quarter percent on the day.

The euro added to Monday's gains against the dollar, rising 0.1 percent to \$1.0876, albeit off Monday's high of \$1.0940. The yen, however, pulled back 0.7 percent to 110.48 per dollar. Sterling rose 0.3 percent to \$1.2824 and 0.1 percent to 84.80 pence per euro.

The Canadian dollar fell 0.5 percent to C\$1.3561 per US dollar after the United States announced new duties averaging 20 percent on Canadian softwood lumber imports. French and German 10-year government bond yields both rose. The gap between them at one point hit its lowest since early November. The two-year yield spread was its narrowest since late January. "Markets turn the page on Le Pen risks already," Commerzbank strategist Rainer Guntermann, said in a note titled "Au revoir Marine".

markets seen less acute, markets were also looking ahead to other factors, including US President Donald Trump's promise to announce on Wednesday "a big tax reform and tax reduction."

The Wall Street Journal reported Trump wanted to cut the corporate tax rate to 15 percent. The White House budget director told Fox News on Monday Trump's announcement would focus on principles, ideas and rates. "I'm becoming a little concerned over the president's big announcements, especially since we haven't seen any major legislative achievement so far and he will be marking his 100th day in the White House this Saturday," FXFM chief market strategist Hussein Sayed said in a note.

Gold, sought as a shelter for wealth in turbulent times, fell 0.4 percent to just under \$1,270 an ounce.

Copper reversed falls in Asia and headed higher, last trading 0.4 percent higher at \$5,682 a ton. — Reuters

Trump tax plan

With one of the year's major risks to

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Tuesday 25 April 2017

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
Price index	▼ -0.22	6,830.85	6,831.07	6,895.64	6,817.43
Weighted Index	▼ -1.52	405.05	406.57	409.00	403.98
KSX 15	▼ -4.64	912.11	916.75	921.05	907.84



Volume	169,171,880
Value (KWD)	17,493,873
Number of Trades	3,943

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
MARIN	60	60	100000	6,000	2	60 ▲ 0.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400 ▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	1,620	1,540	63,465	101,985	40	1,600 ▲ 80.0
ENERGYH	44.0	43.0	10,290	443	2	44.0 ▲ 1.0
GPI	46.0	44.0	5,564,150	252,772	94	45.0 ▲ 0.0
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90 ▲ 0.0
Oil & Gas			5,737,905	361,200	138	1101.29 ▲ 25.75

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290 ▲ 0.0
BPCC	580	570	500,000	285,002	14	570 ▼ -10.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700 ▲ 0.0
ALQURAIN	335	330	115,936	38,759	18	330 ▼ -0.0
Basic Materials			615,936	323,761	32	1288.75 ▼ -11.56
KCEM	490	490	828	406	1	490 ▼ -30.0
CABLE	440	435	54,809	23,828	12	435 ▼ -15.0
SHIP	232	228	10,020	2,285	2	228 ▲ 2.0
PCEM	960	960	1,500	1,440	1	960 ▲ 10.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350 ▲ 0.0
MRC	76	71	23,705	1,752	4	76 ▲ 0.0
ACICO	280	280	28,805	8,065	3	280 ▲ 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208 ▲ 0.0
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	156 ▲ 0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	214 ▲ 0.0
EQUIPMENT	59	56	4,783,824	276,592	105	58 ▲ 2.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90 ▲ 0.0
GYPSSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95 ▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	67	64	276,831	17,914	22	67 ▲ 3.0
AGLTY	630	610	650,372	403,011	30	620 ▲ 10.0
EDU	335	290	235,867	74,121	57	295 ▼ -15.0
CLEANING	49.5	49.0	683,810	33,572	12	49.5 ▼ -0.5
KGL	61	60	53,700	3,252	7	61 ▲ 1.0
KPCPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	174 ▲ 0.0
HUMANSOFT	3,880	3,880	396,875	1,539,875	35	3,880 ▲ 100.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150 ▲ 0.0
GFC	63	60	51,020	3,064	8	63 ▲ 1.0
MAYADEEN	29.5	28.5	730,092	21,014	23	29.0 ▲ 0.0
CGC	570	550	378,063	208,491	31	550 ▼ -10.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56 ▲ 0.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	690 ▲ 0.0
ALAFAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250 ▲ 0.0
MUBARRAD	79	77	15,105	1,163	2	79 ▲ 1.0
LOGISTICS	68	66	107,000	7,159	9	67 ▲ 1.0
SCEM	91	88	290,000	25,960	5	90 ▲ 0.0
GCEM	81	79	288,710	23,069	11	81 ▼ -2.0
QIC	85	85	49,400	4,199	2	85 ▲ 0.0
FCEM	93	89	77,200	6,926	8	90 ▲ 0.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	98 ▲ 0.0
SPEC	89	86	100,489	8,644	3	89 ▲ 1.0
Industrials			9,287,825	2,695,803	393	1797.32 ▲ 10.62

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	188 ▲ 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	40.0 ▲ 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	104 ▲ 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204 ▲ 0.0
DANAH	90	87	26,000	2,303	6	88 ▼ -1.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,460 ▲ 0.0
Consumer Goods			26,000	2,303	6	1113.72 ▼ -3.34

MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310 ▲ 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100 ▲ 0.0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	216 ▲ 0.0
Health Care			0	0	0	1356.91 ▲ 0.00

KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,400 ▲ 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250 ▲ 0.0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67 ▲ 0.0
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	22.5 ▲ 0.0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400 ▲ 0.0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192 ▲ 0.0
OULAFUEL	124	124	49,453	6,132	17	124 ▲ 0.0
MUNTAZAHAT	80	79	100,010	7,901	2	80 ▲ 2.0
JOZEERA	570	550	207,530	115,092	25	560 ▼ -10.0
SOOR	124	124	16,494	2,045	15	124 ▲ 0.0
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	124 ▲ 0.0
ALRAI	176	172	198,069	34,458	15	174 ▼ -2.0
ZIMAH	59	56	217,110	12,392	15	57 ▲ 1.0
Mezzan	1,000	990	187,256	186,066	17	990 ▼ -10.0
Consumer Services			975,922	364,086	106	924.81 ▲ 0.66

ZAIN	450	440	2,188,380	974,299	61	445 ▼ -5.0
QOOREDOO	1,280	1,220	33,974	42,936	10	1,220 ▲ 40.0
HITSTELEC	46.5	44.5	4,840,225	221,680	136	44.5 ▼ -1.0
VIVA	860	840	22,737	19,253	35	840 ▼ -10.0
Telecommunications			7,085,316	1,258,167	242	625.44 ▼ -3.49

NBK	680	670	1,154,020	780,145	45	670 ▼ -10.0
GBK	250	248	48,469	12,040	5	248 ▲ 0.0
CBK	370	370	3,422	1,266	1	370 ▼ -15.0
ABK	310	310	5	2	1	310 ▲ 0.0
ALMUTAHED	430	420	29,430	12,511	11	425 ▲ 10.0
KIB	250	246	1,396,005	347,235	23	248 ▲ 0.0
BURG	310	310	200,571	62,177	8	310 ▲ 0.0
KFIN	510	495	3,833,216	1,917,160	121	500 ▲ 0.0
BOUBYAN	410	405	203,852	83,077	22	405 ▲ 0.0
AUB	220	214	6,216,945	1,344,513	114	216 ▼ -2.0
ITHMR	49.0	48.0	3,904,218	188,690	94	49.0 ▲ 1.0
WARBANK	250	244	765,182	189,379	82	246 ▲ 2.0
Banks			17,755,335	4,938,194	527	931.97 ▼ -1.30

KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	248 ▲ 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	550 ▲ 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	480 ▲ 0.0
WINS	87	87	226	20	1	87 ▼ -5.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	194 ▲ 0.0
FTI	58	58	4,911	285	2	58 ▲ 1.0
WETHAQ	51	51	30,800	1,571	2	51 ▼ -4.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355 ▲ 0.0
Insurance			35,937	1,875	5	1038.37 ▼ -19.04

Security	Trades					
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
SOKOUK	51	49.0	494,925	246,658	103	50 ▲ 0.5
KRE	63	58	50,502,219	2,976,574	411	58 ▼ -5.0
URC	95	95	30	3	1	95 ▲ 0.0
NRE	102	100	257,681	25,769	10	102 ▲ 0.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	375 ▲ 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	425 ▲ 0.0
AREEC	162	162	5,080	823	2	162 ▼ -8.0
MASSALEH	54	50	1,095,233	55,965	65	50 ▼ -4.0
ARABREC	37.0	36.0	1,231,420	44,830	36	36.0 ▲ 0.0
ERESCO	44.0	41.5	1,848,401	78,784	80	41.5 ▼ -1.0
MABANEE	820	810	720,818	584,941	34	820 ▲ 0.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	93 ▲ 0.0
INVESTORS	27.0	25.5	6,181,831	161,084	77	26.0 ▲ 0.0
IRC	36.0	35.0	1,408,846	50,339	33	36.0 ▲ 1.0
ALTIJARIA	77	76	352,392	26,846	23	76 ▼ -2.0
SNAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	55 ▲ 0.0
AAYANRE	86	85	186,527	16,034	11	86 ▲ 0.0
AOAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82 ▲ 0.0
ALAQARIA	43.0	42.0	1,269,080	54,028	35	42.5 ▲ 0.5
MAZAYA	120	116	1,564,254	184,581	32	120 ▲ 4.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0 ▲ 0.0
THEMAR	90					

THE 2017 LINCOLN MKZ LAUNCHED IN MIDDLE EAST

NEW MKZ FEATURES A NEW DISTINCTIVE DESIGN, BLENDS PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY

KUWAIT: The new 2017 Lincoln MKZ is designed to appeal to those who are looking for something different in the luxury market. From the placement of technology features such as the push-button gear shift to reimagined interior spaces including the floating centre console, drivers can relish in discovering an unexpected experience based on intelligent function and beautiful form that offers, above all, an enjoyable ride.

The Lincoln Experience is brought to life through the available Lincoln-exclusive 3.0-litre GTDI V6 engine, as well as intangible elements like the quiet cabin provided by the Active Noise Control system.

Features that make the new Lincoln MKZ a haven of refined comfort include curated spaces for storage, the availability of different interior packages, available fully retractable panoramic glass roof, and concert-quality Revel audio with specially designed doors for optimal positioning of the speakers.

"Lincoln, from its origins, has always been focused on bespoke cabins built for its passengers," said Alex Schaeffer, Director, Lincoln Middle East. "This heritage affords us some great inspiration, and allows us to lean into what the customer wants, always remembering that the journey itself is meant to be as rewarding as the destination."

Distinctive design

The new face of Lincoln is highlighted by available adaptive LED headlamps that help deliver cleaner, clearer lighting for drivers, complemented by the all-new one-piece Lincoln signature grille.

Inside, engineers paid particular attention to the sound and feel of new switches and dials that replace slider adjustments for easier control of ventilation and audio functions for new Lincoln MKZ customers. Commonly used buttons and USB ports are now even easier to access, while Lincoln MKZ's available fully retractable panoramic glass roof offers the largest open-air roof among sedans.

"Our customers are looking for three attributes in a luxury midsize sedan - technologies that ease their everyday experience, a beautiful design that is crafted with attention to detail, and a vehicle with impressive power that makes it a pleasure to drive," said Kumar Galhotra, president of the Lincoln Motor Company. "The new Lincoln MKZ elevates all of these attributes - and many more - to create a compelling entry in this highly competitive portion of the luxury market."

Intuitive technology

The new Lincoln MKZ is designed to make the drive easier and more enjoyable. Available



adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go functionality automatically can slow the car, resuming higher speeds when traffic clears. The system activates the brakes automatically to bring the car to a complete stop if the driver fails to apply the brakes in time.

An auto hold feature keeps the car at a complete stop without the driver having to press and hold the brake pedal - making stop-and-go driving more relaxing for MKZ owners. Available enhanced park assist uses ultrasonic sensors to help Lincoln MKZ seamlessly steer itself into a parallel or perpendicular parking spot. The car can assist with park-out as needed.

The new 2017 Lincoln MKZ has also earned the highest safety award issued by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety - due in part to its front crash prevention system.

To earn the agency's Top Safety Pick+ award, a vehicle must have superior ratings in its small overlap front, moderate overlap front, side, and roof strength and head restraint tests. It also must have an available front crash prevention system that earns an advanced or superior rating. Lincoln MKZ is available with an optional front crash prevention system that earns a superior rating.

Also helping Lincoln MKZ earn a Top Safety

Pick+ are modifications to its front-end structure that boost the vehicle's small overlap front rating and front crash prevention system. The small overlap front test represents a frontal crash in which only a small portion of the vehicle's front end is involved.

In Insurance Institute for Highway Safety track tests, MKZ avoided collisions at 20 km/h and 40 km/h. The car also has a forward collision warning component that meets National Highway Traffic Safety Administration criteria.

The 2017 Lincoln MKZ also is available with a suite of intuitive, driver-assist technologies. Its Pre-Collision Assist with Pedestrian Detection uses camera and radar technology to monitor the vehicle's proximity to other vehicles and pedestrians. If a potential collision is detected, the system can alert the driver with visible and audible warnings and, if needed, pre-charge the brakes and increase brake sensitivity to help provide full responsiveness.

The lane-keeping system uses a forward-facing camera to detect lane markings. It can apply steering wheel torque and alert the driver with a steering wheel vibration should sensors detect drifting.

Finally, BLIS(r) (Blind Spot Information System) with cross-traffic alert uses radar sen-

sors to alert drivers with lights in their side-view mirrors if another vehicle is detected in Lincoln MKZ's blind spots. When drivers are backing up, the system can detect a vehicle approaching from either side, notifying drivers with a warning light and an audible tone.

Effortless performance

An all-new, Lincoln-exclusive 3.0-litre twin turbo V6 leads available engine choices for the new Lincoln MKZ. When paired with an intelligent all-wheel-drive system, the twin-turbocharged engine produces 370PS and 570 Nm of torque for effortless performance and refinement.

Dynamic Torque Vectoring, part of an available Driver's Package for MKZ with the 3.0-litre twin turbo engine, enhances cornering agility without compromising ride comfort, helping drivers enjoy a smooth, seamless experience.

Also available is Lincoln's 2.0-litre turbo inline four-cylinder engine, boasting 253PS and 389 Nm of torque. Available Lincoln Drive Control allows drivers to adjust among three drive modes - comfort, normal and sport. The system includes continuously controlled damping, and electric power-assisted steering to provide comfortable, confident handling.

ZAIN OFFERS THE ALL-NEW GALAXY S8 AND GALAXY S8+

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the offering of Galaxy S8 and Galaxy S8+, Samsung's latest flagship devices, on its most advanced network in Kuwait.

Zain offers the new generation of Samsung's flagship devices knowing the passion customers have for the latest and most advanced products in the world of technology. The all-new Galaxy devices feature Infinity Display, a state-of-the-art screen that dominates almost the whole front of the device with curved edges on both sides, making it one of the best smartphone screens ever.

Zain's postpaid customers can now get the new Galaxy S8 device with a variety of new plans starting at KD 35, including 100 GBs of 4G LTE Internet and 2500 local minutes. The company is keen on offering the most flexible and competitive plans to suit customers' unique personal and professional needs.

The new Galaxy S8 and S8+ devices offer a number of state-of-the-art features, making them among the best and most advanced smartphones in the market. New features include the fastest ever Qualcomm 835 processor, end-to-end Infinity Display, a 12 MP camera and 8MP front facing camera, as well as the all-new Bixby AI assistant.

Samsung's new devices also pack strong security features, including a fingerprint scanner and the all-new Iris scanning technology that recognizes the user's unique Iris quickly and easily as soon as the phone is held in an upright position.

This offering comes in line with Zain's aim to provide its customers with a superior telecommunications experience, and springs from its core understanding of their needs. The company aims at providing its customers with a superior experience on Zain's most advanced net-

work. Zain emphasized its commitment to the needs of the largest customer base in Kuwait, and will continuously look into expanding its horizons to introduce the latest and most advanced solutions in the market to meet its customers unique needs and aspirations.



HOW 2 ANALYSTS BECAME SEC WHISTLEBLOWERS

WASHINGTON: Four years ago, two analysts who liked to swap notes on numbers they thought looked odd took a fateful step and tipped off US regulators about a company that one of them had watched for months. Orthofix International NV (OFIX.O) caught one of the analysts' attention in 2012. The Texas-based medical device maker kept hitting ambitious earnings targets and many analysts had "buy" recommendations for the stock.

But the analyst thought something was off. Its earnings reports showed it was taking longer than usual for the company to get paid by wholesale customers, invoices were piling up and executives struggled to offer a convincing explanation, saying logistical problems at foreign offices were partly to blame.

He spent months tracking quarterly reports and earning calls, and using algorithms to compare Orthofix's ratios and patterns of sales and inventory turnover with financial data of its peers stored in databases such as Compustat. "I am always on the lookout for something unusual, either just unusually good and underappreciated, or unusually bad," the analyst told Reuters. "This one showed up as a company that looked like it had the potential to be unusually bad."

In the spring of 2013, he e-mailed his spreadsheets to a fellow analyst and a friend of more than a decade, with whom he regularly chatted about companies and sectors.

"The way we work together is one person makes a suggestion and the other person challenges it," that friend told Reuters. "It is like a war game." Now both men stand to win as much as \$2.5 million after Orthofix reached a \$8.25 million settlement in January with the Securities and Exchange Commission and several former executives collectively paid \$120,000 in penalties to resolve accounting fraud charges.

The award might even be bigger, if the SEC also credits the analysts' tip for leading to a second civil settlement concerning foreign corrupt practices charges.

The pair declined to be publicly identified, citing concerns that it might jeopardize their current professional relations. Referring to its January settlement with the SEC, Orthofix spokeswoman Denise Landry said the company had self-reported to the regulator and fully cooperated with the government during the investigation.

"We are pleased these matters are behind us," she said, declining to comment further. By entering the SEC whistleblower program the duo showed how outsiders with analytical skills and tools and time to spare can accomplish what is typically done by those with inside access to confidential information.

The program, established in 2011 under the Dodd-Frank financial reform law, aimed to bolster the SEC's enforcement program by encour-

aging insiders to report potential fraud. However, since its inception through Sept. 30, 2016, just over a third of the more than \$111 million awarded to whistleblowers went to outsiders such as analysts or short-sellers, according to the SEC.

"Sometimes outsiders have a particular expertise and they are able to independently piece things together that might not be as obvious to those close to the matter," said Jane Norberg, the head of the SEC's Office of the Whistleblower.

"Channel stuffing"

In Orthofix's case, what the two analysts pieced together suggested that Orthofix was going its earnings by "channel stuffing."

If not disclosed to investors, the practice of flooding distributors with more products than they can use or pay for is illegal. It lets the company smooth earnings by prematurely recognizing revenue, and pushing shortfalls into the future. As the SEC settlement later showed, Orthofix was sending various implants from its spine division to distributors in Brazil that either lacked regulatory approval, or lacked medical instruments needed to use the implants. It then was recording products that could not be resold as revenue, and also treating some of the price discounts as expenses instead of a revenue reduction, the SEC said. — Reuters

TRUMP'S TAX PLAN FACES A BUDGET DEFICIT CHALLENGE

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump plans to stick with his campaign pledge to slash the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 15 percent, but the dramatic cut raises a problematic question for the White House: How can the president deliver the "massive" tax cut he promised without also blowing a massive hole in the budget?

A senior administration official confirmed the planned reduction to corporate rates, speaking on condition of anonymity in order to discuss details of the plan the president is expected to unveil today. Most outside economic analyses say the type of tax cuts being promoted by Trump would likely fuel even larger deficits for a federal government already projected to see its debt steadily rise. The lowered tax rates are also unlikely to generate Trump's ambitious promised growth rate of 3 percent a year, roughly double the 1.6 percent growth achieved last year. These two factors are related because the Trump administration is counting on faster economic growth to produce additional tax revenues that could then close the deficit. The concept was popularized as "trickle-down" economics during the Reagan years.

The problem is that the economy can't grow quickly enough to cover the likely hole in the deficit. "There's no pure tax cut that pays for itself," said Alan Cole, an economist at the right-leaning Tax Foundation. Trump has promised to release the outlines of his tax plan Wednesday and has said the plan would give Americans a tax cut bigger than "any tax cut ever." During the campaign, he backed cutting the corporate tax rate - and the personal income tax rate to 33 percent from a top marginal rate of 39.6 percent.

Although he did not disclose details, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Monday the lower tax rates would generate so much economic growth that it would hold the deficit in check.

"The tax reform will pay for itself with economic growth," Mnuchin said at the White House news briefing, adding that the overhaul would ideally let someone file taxes on a "large postcard."

By running the risk of higher deficits, the Trump plan could damage the credibility of Republican lawmakers who spent years railing against the rising national debt under former President Barack Obama. Trump could also make it harder to pass lasting tax reform, since any policy that increases the debt above its baseline either requires Democratic support or - if passed by a slim majority of Republicans in the Senate - would expire in a decade. The House Republican tax blueprint tried to offset the lower rates by introducing a new tax system that applies to imports.

Mnuchin and White House economic adviser Gary Cohn were scheduled to

meet with congressional leaders yesterday evening to talk about the president's tax plan. They are expected to meet with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky, House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady, R-Texas.

Hatch and Brady will be key players in Congress as lawmakers try to tackle a tax overhaul.

Shock move

Trump's announcement Friday that he would unveil a tax plan this week caught lawmakers by surprise, despite regular conversations among Mnuchin, Cohn and congressional leaders, said a congressional aide. The aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity, was not authorized to speak publicly about the issue. Without a proposal on the table, the White House has been vague about the president's support for ideas circulating in Congress.

It's unclear whether the president favors the House Republican blueprint's border adjustment tax system, which would lower corporate rates to 20 percent by essentially taxing imports and excluding US exports.

Trump told Fox Business News that he prefers a "reciprocal" tax in which any tariffs, duties or taxes would match what trading partners charge. Most economists say it's unlikely that tax cuts can generate enough gains to avoid swelling the government's red-ink problem - estimated to total \$559 billion this year. They also have recent real-world examples to make their case: Tax cuts in Kansas made by Gov. Sam Brownback failed to deliver the expected boost, forcing the state into years of grueling budget battles and harsh spending cuts to make up the gap.

The benefits of the tax cuts could also be limited by economic forces beyond Trump's immediate control. The Federal Reserve could raise short-term interest rates, investors might charge the government higher borrowing costs and a stronger dollar could temper growth through exports, said Mark Doms, a senior economist at the bank Nomura.

"Doing some kind of tax cut might boost growth a bit, but there are forces that would counteract the tax cut," Doms said. Tax reform would likely have a modest effect on growth, almost surely not enough to match the administration's 3 percent growth target, said Mark Mazur, director of the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center and a former assistant treasury secretary for tax policy in the Obama administration. Major tax cuts might also provide a short-term boost, but they would likely produce additional debt that would dampen growth in the future. "The laws of arithmetic kind of catch up to you," Mazur said. —AP

FUN-FILLED SUMMER DESTINATIONS AWAIT YOU

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways, the first private airline in Kuwait and the Middle East, invites everyone to book early with its seasonal travel fares available until 13 May 2017. Covering some of the most popular destinations from Kuwait to Alexandria, Amman, Beirut, Jeddah, Dubai and Istanbul, customers can now enjoy the opportunity to visit their favorite cities at highly attractive prices and increased frequency of flights.

With a series of summer special prices, Jazeera Airways hopes to inspire more travelers to book in advance for their well-deserved break and discover prominent destinations famed for its summer escapades. Jazeera Airways have increased their frequencies to ensure sufficient capacity at reasonable prices to all its loyal customers.

On the Kuwait to Alexandria route, Award-winning Jazeera Airways will operate 7 weekly flights wherein Kuwait to Amman will be 14 flights, Kuwait to Jeddah at 9 flights, Kuwait to Beirut will operate

at 7 flights, with 25 flights from Kuwait to Dubai, while Kuwait to Istanbul will operate at 6 flights on a weekly basis.

"Ensuring a seamless travel experience with increased frequencies this season, the best fares have been set to meet growing travel demand. With the provision of our exceptional fares, giving our customers increased route options at lower prices, reflects our commitment to always accommodating all passengers through an enhanced travel experience with more comfort and more choice for our customers," said Rafik Boghdady, Vice President - Sales at Jazeera Airways.

Jazeera Airways currently serves 15 destinations across the Middle East and operate a modern fleet of Airbus A320 aircraft all fitted with signature leather seats and a two-class cabin.

Jazeera Airways' Economy Class amenities include 40 kilograms in free baggage allowance for every passenger, and a complimentary selection of



on board meals that change every month. Business Class travelers get both an upgraded experience and exclusivity, starting with exclusive check-in lines and business lounge access, up to 60 kilograms in free baggage allowance, an exclusive on-board cabin, in addition to special meals.

Established in 2005, Jazeera Airways is a Kuwait Stock Exchange-listed company serving popular destinations in the Middle East.

The airline operates a fleet of Airbus A320 aircrafts with two class cabins comprising a Business Class and an Economy Class.

Business Class travelers get both an upgraded experience and exclusivity, starting with exclusive check-in lines, business lounge access, up to 60 kilograms in free baggage allowance, and an exclusive on-board cabin. The airline's Economy Class offers travelers free baggage allowance of 40 kilograms and free on-board meals with a changing menu every month.

VIVA LAUNCHES THE ALL-NEW SAMSUNG GALAXY S8 AND S8+

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launches the all new Samsung Galaxy S8 and S8+, with postpaid commitments.

Postpaid customers are now eligible to own those two devices upon signing two years commitments with one of VIVA's postpaid packages: KD 20, KD 30, KD 40



and KD 55, and enjoy local and international calls and 4G LTE internet.

The revolutionary design of the Galaxy S8 and S8+ begins from the inside out. Every part of the phone's layout has been rethought to break through the confines of the smartphone screen. It's the biggest, most immersive screen on a Galaxy smart-

phone of this size. And it's easy to hold in one hand. The Infinity Display has an incredible end-to-end screen that spills over the phone's sides, forming a completely smooth, continuous surface with no bumps or angles. It's pure, pristine, uninterrupted glass. And it takes up the entire front of the phone, flowing seamlessly into the aluminum shell. The result is a beautifully curved, perfectly symmetrical, singular object. The Galaxy S8 and S8+ are designed to be more than just smartphones. They're designed to change how you capture and view your life, whether it's in 360 degrees or in virtual reality.

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things possible for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established an unrivalled position in the market through its customer-centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation (4G LTE) network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.

WELLS FARGO GETS OK FOR BANKRUPTCY PLAN

WASHINGTON: Retail banking giant Wells Fargo has fixed problems in its 2015 bankruptcy plan and will now be allowed to open new international branches, US banking regulators said Monday.

The reprieve comes a day before a high-stakes shareholder meeting at which the bank's board is facing a no-confidence vote. Wells Fargo has struggled to right itself since September, when it reached a \$190 million settlement with federal authorities over its sham accounts scandal. The bank admitted to opening millions of accounts and moving money without customers' permission. A Treasury Department agency found this

month found the bank's board as early as 2005 had received "regular" reports that employee firings and internal ethics complaints were related to unethical sales practices. But the bank has denied its board was aware of the hundreds of whistleblower complaints brought to the attention of officials at Treasury's Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

Monday's announcement reversed an action taken by the Federal Reserve Board and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, which in December jointly found that Wells Fargo had failed to remedy problems in its 2015 bankruptcy plan. — AFP

WANT A CHANCE TO WIN KD 250,000 FROM AL-DANAH ACCOUNT?

KUWAIT: Only four days are left until the closing date for Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account's second quarterly draw for the prize of KD 250,000. The draw will be held on June 29, however, the last day to deposit and enter the draw is on Sunday, April 30.

Gulf Bank invites its Al-Danah account holders to deposit today to increase their chances of winning the draw. The Bank also invites both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis to open an Al-Danah account today and deposit in order to qualify for the next draw prize of KD 250,000.

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 the annual 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars 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;

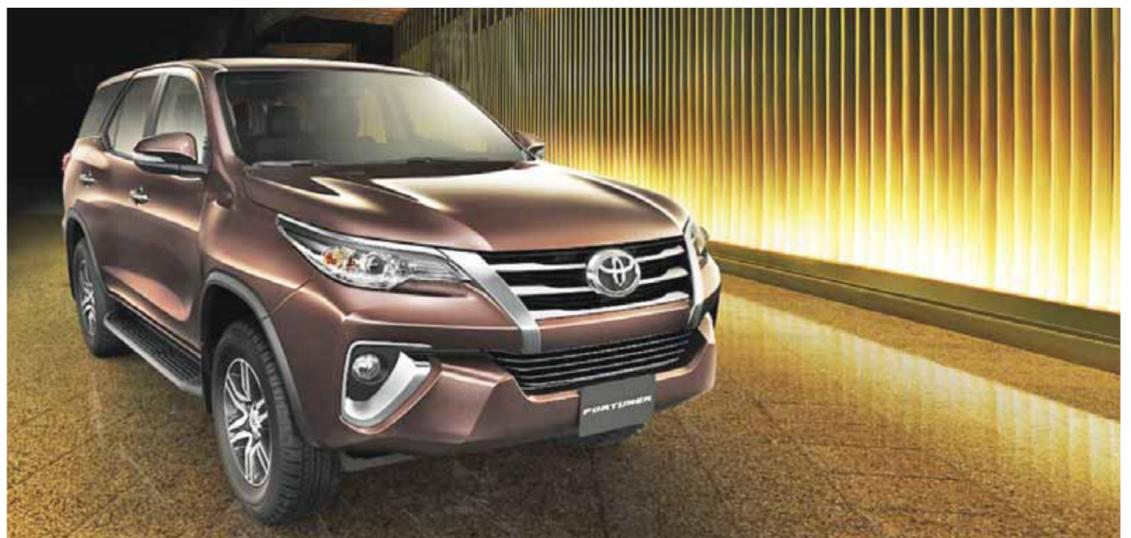
KD250,000 in the second quarter to take place on June 29; KD 500,000 in the third quarter, which will take place on September 28, followed by the largest yearly prize for KD1 million, which will take place on January 11, 2018. In fact, our annual prize of KD 1 mil-

lion set a Guinness World Records achievement as the 'largest prize linked to a bank account payout in the world'. Overall, Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is the best because:

- * Kuwait's single largest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million in the world, according to Guinness World Records.
- * Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD 500,000
- * Two winners of KD 1,000 every working day
- * Offers the most opportunities to win
- * Only account that transfers your chances to win from the previous year onto the following year.

Al-Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al-Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al-Danah winner.

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 for assistance and guidance.



TOYOTA CELEBRATES DOUBLE WIN AT 2017 ME CAR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

PRIUS WINS 'FUTURE OF MOTORING' AWARD, FORTUNER 'BEST MIDSIZE SUV'

KUWAIT: Toyota has once again achieved success in the 2017 Middle East Car of the Year (MECOTY) awards, the biggest and most prestigious awards program for the regional automotive sector. The Toyota Prius bagged the 'Future of Motoring' special category award, while the Toyota Fortuner was named the 'Best Midsize SUV'. The winners were chosen by a jury of 15 independent motoring journalists from leading automotive publications throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

Helping to mitigate the environmental effects of automobiles has long been a priority for Toyota. Based on the stance that environmentally-friendly vehicles can only truly have a significant positive impact if they are widely used, Toyota has encouraged the mass-market adop-



tion of hybrid vehicles across the globe. Toyota launched Prius, the world's first mass-produced hybrid passenger vehicle in December 1997. Since then, Toyota hybrid vehicles (HV) have received tremendous support from consumers around the world.

What makes the Prius particularly innovative is the presence of two power sources in the form of the sophisticated electric motor and petrol engine. Thanks to the harmonious blend of the twin power sources, the car moves off under full electric power right from the start, using no petrol at all, producing zero emissions and delivering exceptional performance. The owner does not even need to worry about charging the hybrid battery - the smart Prius will take care of it by charging it through the petrol engine or when braking and decelerating.



The Prius also offers an impressive fuel economy of 26.1 km/L, which means that when you have a full tank (capacity of 43 liters), you can easily drive over 1,000 km in ideal conditions, making the vehicle extremely fuel-efficient. As of January 31, 2017, Toyota estimated that the use of Toyota's HVs in lieu of conventional gasoline-powered vehicles of similar size and driving performance has resulted in approximately 77 million fewer tons of CO2 emissions and saved approximately 29 million kiloliters of gasoline.

Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative of Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said, "We are pleased and proud to have been honored with two awards at MECOTY 2017. Toyota Prius, which won the 'Future of Motoring' award, is an illustration of Toyota's belief that hybrids can make a difference to our future mobility and our planet's wellbeing. At the same time, Toyota Fortuner, winner of the 'Best Midsize SUV' title, has rewritten the rules in its class with its rugged and tough styling, abundant family-friendly features and superb off-road capabilities and the award further underscores the prominent position it enjoys in this segment in the region."

Yoshitsugu added, "Toyota's passion for automotive excellence is fueled by the support and loyalty of our customers. As we celebrate our success at MECOTY 2017, I express my sincere appreciation to our customers across the region for putting their faith in Toyota and continuously inspiring us to create 'ever-better cars'."

The second-generation Toyota Fortuner, a 7-seater SUV with full-fledged 4WD capability, launched in the Middle East last year, builds on its heritage of being a durable sport utility vehicle (SUV) with impressive off-road capabilities. With the latest Fortuner, Toyota has focused on creating a more distinctive, sleek and powerful design while improving performance and adding a wide variety of intelligent features that increase convenience and safety, and that not only make the drive highly enjoyable and comfortable, but also a more refined way to get out there and explore. The MECOTY awards integrate a unique nomination and scoring methodology and is the biggest and most prestigious awards program for the regional automotive sector, which is developed, tested and implemented by the most experienced 'motoring minds' of the industry.

AUB MAKES A CUSTOMERS' DREAM COME TRUE WITH KD 250,000 GRAND PRIZE

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading Sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 19th April. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car. On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 is Wadhwa Al-Ajmi
25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and



are as follows: Ahmad Radhi Al-Enezi, Sulaiman Fahad Sulaiman Al-Fahad, Nawal Habeeb, Abdullah Mohammad Abdullah, Milad Sami Bitar, Ghaida Ali Abdullah, Ali Salem Mohammad, Najeh Hammat Rasheed, Badreya Ali Haider, Yousef Khlaif, Abdulrahman Jamal Saad, Fayeze Mohammad Mnahi Al-Azmi, Mahmoud Khafaji Abdullah, Layla Mohd Hassan, Muneer Mahmoud Ahmad, Alison Elizabeth, Fayeze Al-Sayegh Mohammad SB, Tariq Al-Hussaini, Saeed Ahmed Ali, Hasan Ali Radh, Mohammed Saeed, Ebrahim

Khaliil Ebrahim, Abdulla Isa Abdulla, Nasser Abdulla Jabur.

There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year. Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw. For every KD 50 deposited in the account, customers are given one chance to enter the quarterly draw. They must have held the minimum deposit requirement for at least two weeks prior to the draw date. The more deposits made, the higher the chances of winning on a weekly basis.

Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions.

VIRTUAL REALITY, APPS ADD INTERACTIVITY TO MUSIC VIDEOS

NASHVILLE: More musicians are using new technology, including 360-degree cameras, virtual reality musical experiences and vertical videos, to reach the smartphone generation of music fans who are discovering new music on their phones and tablets. Pop singer Ingrid Michaelson made a music video using only Snapchat filters and the electronic band Gorillaz released a six-minute VR music video that was the most successful VR video debut on YouTube with over 3 million views in 48 hours.

"We're beginning to see not only the ability to take your music and your live concert streams and your VR and 360 experiences with you on mobile devices, but to merge together the two in really unique ways to provide really fantastic experiences for fans," said Vivien Lewitt, YouTube's global head of artist relations. Lewitt said more than 60 percent of YouTube watch time now happens on mobile and tablets.

Nineteen-year-old country singer Bailey Bryan is addicted to Instagram and loves Snapchat a little too much sometimes, so those mobile apps became the framework for her first music video for her song "Own It," which is meant to be watched vertically on a phone or tablet. The video, which introduces Bryan through the lens of her phone's various apps, is designed not for broadcast on CMT or MTV, where previous generations first experienced music in a visual form. Bryan said most people react with confusion when she shows them the video on a cellphone. "It starts with unlocking the phone screen ... and they will be like, 'Oh, hey, you got a Snapchat - wait, wait, what's happening?'" Bryan said. "And then they are like, 'Oh, this is the video!'"

Some bands are using VR technology via phones or headsets to add interactivity to a recorded performance. Rock band Young the Giant shot a live

performance at the YouTube Space in Los Angeles with 360 cameras above, below and throughout a crowd of neon-painted dancers for a music video for its song "Silvertongue".

Payam Doostzadeh, bassist for the band, said it's a challenge to recreate being at a real concert on a phone. "You're viewing it on a smaller screen, and maybe you don't have headphones on, so you're not hearing the full sound," he said. Fans of country star Eric Church can purchase a 360-degree video of his full 2016 Coachella Music festival performance, which they can watch through their iPhone or Android phone via Google Cardboard or Samsung Gear VR. The "Springsteen" singer said he's not much of a VR-technology geek, but liked that the cameras gave fans a different perspective on the live show.

"There was a camera between me and my drummer and you can kind of turn around and see the

drummer and turn back around and see me," Church said. "It's like you're in the middle of everything." Members of the rock band Saint Motel have VR headsets, and frontman AJ Jackson attends VR conventions. They have been creating hybrid music videos, which Jackson called a "virtualizer," that combine a lyric video, live performance video and graphics in a 360-degree video environment. "It's a lot of people's first VR experience," Jackson said. "You've got to take it slow and you've got to make sure everyone's first experience is great."

Jackson said he doesn't want to stop creating traditional music videos, but smartphones have opened up new avenues for visually creative bands to experiment and find new audiences. "Everyone has a smartphone, so everyone has an ability to see these 360 videos and they all have the ability to do VR," Jackson said. — AP

BETT MIDDLE EAST 2017 KICKS OFF IN ABU-DHABI

MICROSOFT SHOWCASES DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF LEARNING

By Ben Garcia

ABU-DHABI: The two-day 'BETT Middle East 2017 Expo' kicked off yesterday at Dusit Thani Hotel in the Emirati capital. BETT is the Middle East's leading global technology exhibition and congress series held in partnership with the leading platform and productivity company Microsoft and the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). The event brings together the region's education community of over 1,200 educators from 35 different countries as well as speakers from all over the world.

Eve Harper, Event Director of BETT Middle East, welcomed delegates at the opening ceremony held at the hotel ballroom. "BETT Middle East 2017 has us especially excited to be bringing a line-up of student speakers to the Learn Live program. From the young inventor showcase, where you can hear from the next generation of entrepreneurs to our happiness panel, where students will be sharing the initiatives they are taking to promote positivity in schools - this year allows attendees to hear from the people who matter most and get to know what inspires them," he said.

Anthony Salcito, Vice President Worldwide Education at Microsoft, focused his remarks on the digital transformation of education to empower student success. He said for several decades, Microsoft has worked with institutions and educators around the world, and gained a deep understanding of how technology in schools can transform the learning experience.

"We continue to bring our leading-edge products, services and programs to bear on this challenge, always taking into account that technology is not the lone agent in such transformations, and can even complicate or slow down the process if not implemented with due diligence. We recommend that education leaders take a curriculum-focused approach to technology adoption, keeping in mind their education goals and then integrate those technologies that facilitate tangible benefits for students and teachers," he added.

Philip Parham, British Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, also thanked the collaborative effort with Microsoft to bring about changes in the world of education. "BETT ME 2017 conference is celebrated all over the world, and it's all about creating a better future by transforming education. This is crucial to humanity as a whole," he said.

"The strength of the education system in the UK is spreading throughout the world and also here in the UAE. This is deep and positive with the thousands of Britons working here in the UAE. In fact, UAE is the fourth largest partner of the UK economically, outside Europe. These are very striking statistics, and our cooperation starts from prosperity to safety and education. This is one of the keys to our steady growing partnership with the UAE," he said.

"The British curriculum is a very strong brand here in the UAE - one in every four children in Abu Dhabi is involved in the UK curriculum. There are 12 British universities here and education is crucial to this part of the world, as crucial indeed to most of the countries around the world. Technology is the key enabler of this in today's high-tech world," he noted.

Dr Ali Rashid Al-Nuaimi, Director General of ADEC, congratulated the organizer for its second successful venture. "I would like to welcome all the delegates from all over the world - it is an honor and great privilege for me to be welcoming you and speak on behalf of Sheikh Hassa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the Vice Chair of ADEC," he said.



ABU DHABI: Dr Ali Rashid Al-Nuaimi, Director General of ADEC, addresses the BETT Middle East 2017 expo. — Photos by Ben Garcia



Philip Parham, British Ambassador to the UAE.



Anthony Salcito, Vice President, Worldwide Education at Microsoft.

"We are talking here on behalf of every country in the Middle East region - we are happy to see all the changes happening around. We are educators and we bear the responsibility for the changes within our society. The suffering that we witness in the region was because the governments did not spend or pay attention to education. When you compare the education we've got in the region to say, Singapore and South Korea, we are behind, while in fact 50 years ago, we were ahead of them. Because they spent money on educating their children and the next generations. They put proper resources and created an educational system that will eventually help the next generation," he said.

"Whatever we do now, the education system will have a huge impact on the generations to come. Education is not about the high-tech product - what we need is more than that. We need smart educators, smart students and smart systems. We cannot buy them anywhere.

Innovation now is a must - whatever we have now in our classrooms, in five years it will be obsolete. If we are not prepared, our schools/countries will be left behind. Education is the best investment, and we want to put proper resources now to have a future for the coming generations," he said.

Microsoft also released the findings from an education survey that revealed that 89 percent of educators believe their school leaders have a clearer vision of how to use technology for the enhancement of the classroom experience. In the same survey, 50 percent of educators reported that technology was used in their institution, and majority said, virtual collaboration, working with other remotely was a key skill required for students. The Microsoft collaboration with BETT Middle East 2017 introduced educators in the region and beyond to generational leaps in classroom-enhancing technologies and methodologies.

GOOGLE TARGETS 'FAKE NEWS,' OFFENSIVE SEARCH SUGGESTIONS

SAN FRANCISCO: Google has sprinkled some new ingredients into its search engine in an effort to prevent bogus information and offensive suggestions from souring its results. The changes have been in the works for four months, but Google hadn't publicly discussed most of them until now. The announcement in a blog post yesterday reflects Google's confidence in a new screening system designed to reduce the chances that its influential search engine will highlight untrue stories about people and events, a phenomenon commonly referred to as "fake news". "It's not a problem that is going to go all the way to zero, but we now think we can stay a step ahead of things," said Ben Gomes, Google's vice president of engineering for search.

Correcting Autocomplete

Besides taking steps to block fake news from appearing in its search results, Google also has reprogrammed a popular feature that automatically tries to predict what a person is looking for as a search request as being typed. The tool, called "autocomplete", has been overhauled to omit derogatory suggestions, such as "are women evil", or recommendations that promote violence.

Google also adding a feedback option that will enable users to complain about objectionable autocomplete suggestions so a human can review the wording. Facebook, where fake news stories and other hoaxes have widely circulated on its social network, also has been trying to stem the tide of misleading information by working with AP and other news organizations to review suspect stories and set the record straight when warranted. Facebook also has provided its nearly 2

billion users ways to identify posts believed to contain false information, something that Google is now allowing users of its search engine to do for some of the news snippets featured in its results.

Why Google Cares

Google began attacking fake news in late December after several embarrassing examples of misleading information appeared near the top of its search engine. Among other things, Google's search engine pointed to a website that incorrectly reported then President-elect Donald Trump had won the popular vote in the US election, that President Barack Obama was planning a coup and that the Holocaust never occurred during World War II. Only about 0.25 percent of Google's search results were being polluted with falsehoods, Gomes said. But that was still enough to threaten the integrity of a search engine that processes billions of search requests per day largely because it is widely regarded as the Internet's most authoritative source of information. "They have a lot riding on this, reputation wise," said Lucy Dalglish, who has been tracking the flow of false information as dean of the University of Maryland's journalism department. "If your whole business model is based turning up the best search results, but those results turn up stuff that is total crap, where does that get you?"

To address the problem, Google began revising the closely guarded algorithms that generate its search with the help of 10,000 people who rate the quality and reliability of the recommendations during tests. Google also rewrote its 140-page book of rating guidelines that help the quality-control evaluators make their assessments. — AP

WIKIPEDIA FOUNDER AIMS TO 'FIX NEWS'

LONDON: The founder of online encyclopedia Wikipedia has announced plans for a crowd-funded news website offering stories by journalists and volunteers working together, an initiative he hopes will counter the spread of fake news. Jimmy Wales said the new platform, Wikitribune, would be free to read and carry no advertising, instead relying on supporters to fund it, while the accuracy of its articles would be easily verifiable as source material would be published.

"The news is broken, but we've figured out how to fix it," he said in a promotional video posted on the website's homepage, which does not yet carry any news stories. The page indicates the platform will go live in 29 days. The initial goal is to raise sufficient funds to hire 10 professional journalists. The website is set up to encourage supporters to give \$10 a month, but the amount and frequency of gifts can easily be modified. The online proliferation of fake news, some of it generated for profit and some for political ends, became a major topic of angst and debate in many developed countries during last year's US presidential election.

Charlie Beckett, media professor at the London School of Economics, welcomed Wikitribune as an attempt to tackle a lack

of public trust in mainstream media, but questioned whether it would have the scale and reach to stem the flow of fake news. "The kind of people who will pay attention to Wikitribune and contribute to it are people who are already pretty media-literate," he told Reuters.

Wales argued in his video that because Internet users expected news to be free, news sites were reliant on advertising money, which incentivized them to produce "clickbait" rather than quality output. He also said social media networks, where an ever-increasing number of people get their news, were designed to show users what they wanted to see, confirming their biases.

The Wikitribune website said articles would be authored, fact-checked and verified by journalists and volunteers working together, while users would be able to flag up issues and submit fixes for review. Beckett said journalists could benefit from tapping into expertise or information held by readers, but said this was already being done by many mainstream media. He also said it was not a miracle remedy against inaccuracy. "There's nothing magical about being a citizen. As a citizen you have your own bias and prejudice and experience as well," he said. — Reuters



KUALA LUMPUR: Representative of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees Malaysia Richard Towle (left) and Executive Creative Director of Grey Malaysia Graham Drew pose with smartphones displaying the application "Finding Home" during a launch at the UNHCR headquarters yesterday. — AP

APP ALLOWS USER TO 'WALK A MILE' IN ROHINGYA SHOES

KUALA LUMPUR: A ping on Kathijah's phone. The Rohingya girl picks up the message, it is from her brother Ishak in Myanmar. "Kat, r u safe?" he writes. "It was a raid, they found us. Had to run," he said, before sending a video message of him running in a jungle that was abruptly cut off. It was a conversation between Kathijah, a fictional character, and her brother in Myanmar on a new smartphone app that gives users a glimpse into the daily struggles of Rohingya refugees who flee political persecution back home.

The "Finding Home" app effectively takes over one's phone by recreating the mobile operating system of Kathijah's handset, prompting users to answer phone calls, text messages or scroll through her photo gallery. Advertising agency Grey, which built the app in partnership with the UN refugee agency

UNHCR, said the "revolutionary" app aims to increase public empathy toward the plight of refugees. "We wanted to find a way of getting people to really empathize what these people go through, to feel it as if they were going through it," Graham Drew, Grey Malaysia executive creative director, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The app focuses not just on her life back home, but also on how the 16-year-old Kathijah is trying to build a new life in Malaysia. One conversation involves her talking to a friend about how she is taking classes in English and Malay. There are some 150,000 refugees in Malaysia, about a third of whom are Rohingya Muslims who have fled violence and apartheid-like conditions in western Rakhine state in Buddhist-majority Myanmar. Many are children who experience struggles similar to Kathijah's.

"The refugee story is often a deeply personal one, and difficult for people to understand," UNHCR Malaysia representative Richard Towle said in a statement on the launch of the app yesterday. "We hope that this application will allow a viewer to walk a mile in a refugee's shoes in order to understand what they go through every day in order to find safety."

The interactive conversations featured in the app were constructed based on interviews with refugees, according to Grey. The plight of the Rohingya hit international headlines again in recent months after Myanmar security forces were accused of carrying out mass killings and gang rapes during their campaign against Rohingya insurgents. It sparked international criticism but a senior Myanmar government official denied there was any ethnic cleansing against Rohingya Muslims. — Reuters

CRABS INVADE CUBA'S BAY OF PIGS

BAY OF PIGS: Cuba's Bay of Pigs has been invaded again, this time not by US-backed anti-Castro forces, but by millions of red, yellow and black landcrabs. Each year, after the first spring rains, the crabs march for days from the surrounding forests to the bay on Cuba's southern coast to spawn in the sea, wreaking havoc along the way. At dawn and dusk they emerge, scuttling sideways toward the sea, climbing up house walls and carpeting the coastal road that curves around the bay. The stench of crushed crab fills the air and their sharp shells puncture car tires.

"Thirty to 40 can enter without you even realiz-

ing it," said Edian Villazon, who runs a food hut opposite the sea, which does not serve up crab meat. Cubans believe this type is toxic. "We have to always keep the door shut." The Bay of Pigs, where in 1961 Cuban exiles landed in a failed attempt to end Fidel Castro's revolution, lies within a national park where 80 percent of Cuba's endemic birds, along with crocodiles and other wildlife, can be observed.

With its deep sinkholes, coral reefs and turquoise waters, the bay is known as one of Cuba's best spots for diving. Visitors have spiked in recent years, in tandem with the overall tourism boom since the US-Cuban detente. "It's very surprising and impres-

sive to see so many crabs in one go and to watch them crossing so quickly," said 36-year-old French tourist Emilie Lannegrand, adding it was "a little heartbreaking" to see so many crushed on the road.

As cars speed by, some swerving to avoid the 10-legged crustaceans, the cracks of carapaces zing through the air. That does not threaten the survival of the two prolific species, *Gecarcinus ruricola* and *lateralis*, which are not endemic to Cuba, said Jorge Luis Jimenez, a science ministry official who works in the park. Similar crab migrations occur in other parts of Cuba at the same time of the year, as well as in some other special ecosystems such as Australia's

Christmas Island. At the Bay of Pigs, the adult crabs return to their forest burrows after releasing clouds of eggs and are joined a couple of months later by the baby crabs which hatched at sea, said Jimenez. For locals, the crab invasion is good business. Ito Molina, 45, said tourists would happily pay \$10 for tire repair, a princely sum compared with the average state salary of around \$25 per month. For patches, he applies condoms, which get put to many uses in Cuba given how cheap and readily available they are. "All the cars pass along this road, and they all get punctures," he said. "So we stand there and repair the tires." — Reuters

BULLYING KEEPS YOUTH SUICIDES HIGH IN JAPAN

RATES OF SUICIDE - JAPAN RANKS 4TH

TOKYO: Schoolyard bullying has long bedeviled Japan where some students have taken their own lives after being harassed in person or online through emails, text messages and blogs. Bullying and suicide first entered Japanese national discourse in 1986, when a 13-year-old boy hanged himself in a shopping centre toilet after repeated bullying at school that included a mock funeral that teachers took part in. One of the latest cases involved a 13-year-old girl who jumped in front of a train after enduring more than a year of bullying by classmates, including being labeled a "pest" and repeatedly told to die.

Japan ranks fourth among Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries for rates of suicide, after Lithuania, South Korea and Hungary. Overall numbers have been falling. Suicides peaked in 2003 at 34,427 and fell to 21,897 in 2016, according to the National Police Agency. However, youth suicides have held relatively

steady since 2007, ranging from 300 to 350 a year. In 2016, 320 people under 18 took their lives, the agency said.

Four youth suicides are already being investigated this year for a connection to bullying, according to Japanese media reports. Bullying remains a serious issue despite the passage of anti-bullying legislation in 2013. "I don't think the law has been functioning effectively because there are still children who are choosing to die as a result of bullying," said Tomohiro Tsubota, the director of the student affairs division at the Ministry of Education. Some 224,540 reports of school bullying, or "ijime" in Japanese, emerged in 2015-2016, according to the ministry.

That was a 19 percent increase from the previous year - though officials say part of the rise was due to heightened awareness resulting from the 2013 law. Officials and experts say bullying is especially bad in Japan because of its homogeneity, and a deeply fixed mindset of conformi-

ty in which differences are often singled out for attack. Japanese bullying differs from that in other countries in that it is mostly carried out by groups as opposed to two or three people against one individual, experts say. Teachers have also been slow to take action, since many have long viewed bullying as part of normal quarrels among children.

However, some schools are fighting the problem by using the concept of conformity to their advantage. They encourage students to form their own "patrol team" which fosters a culture that shuns bullying. Kosuke Isogai, a sixth-grader and leader of a patrol team at his school in a Tokyo suburb, leads members through the school chanting slogans such as "let's prevent bullying together" and "we will not tolerate bullying". "I think bullying doesn't happen here because the act of bullying itself has become something that would make you 'different' from others," Isogai said. — Reuters



A humpback whale bears injuries and wounds consistent with vessel strikes. A new study in the journal Marine Mammal Science said whale ship strikes might be more common than previously suspected sighting almost 15 percent of humpback whales are injured by ships strikes. — AP

WHALE, BOAT COLLISIONS 'MAY BE MORE COMMON'

PORTLAND: A group of marine scientists says collisions of whales and boats off of the New England coast may be more common than previously thought. The scientists focused on the humpback whale population in the southern Gulf of Maine, a body of water off of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. They found that almost 15 percent of the whales, which come to New England to feed every spring, had injuries or scarring consistent with at least one vessel strike.

The researchers, who published their findings in the March issue of the journal *Marine Mammal Science*, said the work shows that the occurrence of such strikes is most likely underestimated. They also said their own figure is likely low because it does not account for whales that are killed in ship strikes. "Vessel strikes are a significant risk to both whales and to boaters," said Alex Hill, the lead author of the study, who is a scientist with conservation group Whale and Dolphin Conservation, in Plymouth, Massachusetts. "Long term studies can help us figure out if our outreach programs to boaters are effective, what kind of management actions are needed and help to assess the health of the population."

Other scientists have also studied whether ship strikes have the ability to negatively affect whale populations, and the subject is a source of some debate. A 2014 study of 171 blue whales in the eastern North Pacific that appeared in *PLOS ONE* stated that modifications to shipping lanes could "reduce the likeli-

hood of collisions with vessels." But a study that appeared in *Marine Mammal Science* that same year said mitigating ship strikes would have a minimal impact on the blue whales.

Off Alaska, 25 of 108 reported whale collisions that occurred between 1978 and 2011 resulted in the animal's death, according to a 2012 report in the *Journal of Marine Biology*. For the Gulf of Maine study, the authors reviewed more than 200,000 photos of 624 individual humpback whales over a nine-year period to evaluate them for injuries and trauma, the conservation group said. The group is recommending that marine managers develop a strategy for vessels that transit near whales to minimize collisions.

Dave Wiley, a research coordinator for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, said the paper could indeed inform regulations for federal managers. Wiley, who was not involved in the study, said it was "troublesome" to see the rate of strikes so high. Scott Kraus, chief scientist for marine mammals at the New England Aquarium, was slightly more skeptical. Kraus, who was also not involved in the study, said the level of ship strikes could be overestimated in the paper because of the way the authors interpret scars and markings on humpback whales. However, Kraus said the findings are still valid. "There are a lot of whales getting hit by small vessels, and there may very well need to be some management actions around high-density whale areas," he said. — AP



BEIJING: Workers prepare to load a refrigerator to a tricycle cart at a warehouse near China Huaneng Group's Beijing power plant which has converted to clean energy like thermal power from coal-powered in Beijing. China's conversion of coal into natural gas could prevent tens of thousands of premature deaths each year. — AP Photos

CHINA'S COAL CONVERSION COULD HELP SMOG - AT CLIMATE'S EXPENSE

BEIJING: China's conversion of coal into natural gas could prevent tens of thousands of premature deaths each year. But there's a catch: As the country shifts its use of vast coal reserves to send less smog-inducing chemicals into the air, the move threatens to undermine efforts to rein in greenhouse gas emissions, researchers said yesterday.

The environmental trade-off points to the difficult choices confronting leaders of the world's second largest economy as they struggle to balance public health and financial growth with international climate change commitments. Between 20,000 and 41,000 premature deaths annually could be prevented by converting low-quality coal in the country's western provinces into synthetic natural gas for residential use, according to the findings of researchers from the United States and China published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

If the gas were used for industrial purposes, fewer deaths would be averted and they would carry a steeper price - a dramatic increase in carbon dioxide emissions, according to the researchers and a separate report released yesterday by Greenpeace. China's immediate drive to clean up local air quality could be addressed by using coal-produced synthetic gas, said study co-author Denise Mauzerall, a professor of environmental engineering and international affairs at Princeton University.

Doing so, however, "would have an effect of increased carbon emissions, which would affect the world," Mauzerall said. Natural gas produces far fewer of the tiny particles of pollution that pour out of coal-fired power plants and the small coal burners that many Chinese use for

heating and cooking. That smog, with particles a mere 2.5 microns in diameter, frequently blankets Beijing and major urban areas in China's densely populated eastern provinces. It endangers public health when the particles lodge in peoples' lungs and could be most effectively dealt with by reducing coal use in households, according to Mauzerall.

Public outrage over smog and a desire to meet climate goals prompted Chinese officials to close down coal power plants around Beijing in recent years and suspend plans to construct new plants across the country. Technology to turn coal into other fuels dates to Germany's Nazi regime, which used it to bolster diesel supplies during World War II. South Africa used it to thwart sanctions against oil imports during the apartheid era. Since then, the method has seldom been used because of its high cost.

China's pursuit of synthetic gas reflects in part the inability of its domestic oil and gas reserves to meet its national security and economic needs, said Ranning Song, a climate expert with the World Resources Institute. That's despite the fact that China has the third largest coal deposits in the world, an estimated 126 billion tons, behind only the US and Russia. Compared to burning coal directly for power, converting it into gas and then using that gas to produce electricity can produce up to twice as much carbon dioxide, considered the prime culprit in climate change, Song said. Synthetic natural gas produces carbon dioxide first during the processing stage and again when the fuel is burned.

The coal-to-gas plants in China combined could emit as much as 158 million tons (143 million metric



A passenger airliner flies past steam and white smoke emitted from China Huaneng Group's Beijing power plant that was the last coal-fired plant to shut down as the Chinese capital convert to clean energy like thermal power. Researchers say that China's conversion of coal into natural gas could prevent tens of thousands of premature deaths annually. But there's a catch: It also could undermine efforts to rein in greenhouse gas emissions.

tons) of additional carbon dioxide annually, according to Mauzerall and her colleagues. Greenpeace forecasts even more - up to 451 million tons (409 million metric tons) of extra carbon dioxide annually by 2020. That's about 4 percent of China's 2016 total emissions, making it more difficult to achieve the government's planned greenhouse gas reduction goals, said Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner Gan Yiwei.

The environmental group's tally includes projected emissions from the coal-to-gas fleet plus several dozen more plants that would turn coal into oil and various chemicals. Gan said China instead should invest more in wind and solar plants, which produce neither carbon nor smog. With the coal-to-gas plants, China's goal to stabilize its world-leading carbon emissions of about

10 billion tons (9.1 billion metric tons) annually by 2030 would remain achievable but more difficult, Song said. A driving factor will be whether the country can transform its economy away from energy-intensive manufacturing to more service-based industries, he said.

Not all proposed coal-to-gas plants will be put into operation by their original completion dates. Competition from imported fuel transported by ship and pipeline from central Asia has squeezed the market, delaying plants proposed or under construction, said Zhouwei Diao, a coal and gas industry analyst with IHS Markit in Beijing. Liquefied natural gas delivered to China's coast is cheaper than producing the fuel from coal, a further disincentive for the new plants unless global gas prices increase, she said. — AP

SEX, LIES, PHYSICS: 'GENIUS' DRAMA IS EINSTEIN TELL-ALL

LOS ANGELES: The unparalleled brilliance and puckish wit? Check. The trademark wild mop of hair? Check. The marital infidelity and free-wheeling sex? Yes, check again for Albert Einstein, who in National Geographic's miniseries "Genius" comes across as a full-blooded, hot-blooded figure who lived by his own rules, both scientific and domestic. The 10-part series, starring Oscar-winning Geoffrey Rush ("Shine") as the mature physicist and Johnny Flynn ("Lovesick") as the budding one, also places Einstein firmly in a 20th-century world engulfed by political chaos and war.

"Genius" (debuting 9 pm EDT Tuesday) is both entertaining and intelligent, as befits a drama that's based on Walter Isaacson's acclaimed 2007 biography, "Einstein: His Life and Universe," and is the Nat Geo channel's first scripted series. Also credit Ron Howard, who brought another complex scientist to the screen in "A Beautiful Mind," the 2001 Academy Award-winning film about troubled mathematician John Nash. There are some "Mind"-type cinematic flourishes in "Genius," restrained special effects that provide a visual sense of Einstein's thinking and the universe as he sees it and helpful for the science challenged.

But the series opens with Rush's Einstein and a young woman in the throes of passion (intercut, unnervingly, with an assassination that foretells of the upheaval ahead for him and the world). It was a deliberate choice, said Howard, who directed episode one and is among the series' executive producers that include Brian Grazer, his longtime creative partner, and Gigi Pritzker. Noah Pink and Ken Biller are the screenwriters. "Not only did it (the scene) appeal to us dramatically, but it also fulfilled the desire to announce to audiences right away that we weren't approaching it in an entirely straightforward, traditional and academic way," Howard said.

"We were looking for the drama in the story and willing to deal with Einstein, warts and all." "Genius" hopscoatches through time as it follows Einstein flail-

ing as an unconventional student; a young lover and imperfect husband and parent; a Jew clashing with the German scientific establishment; and as the conflicted father of the atomic age. Rush said he was more familiar with aspects of Einstein's world-changing theory of relativity than with the man himself, a distant figure often reduced to a beaming, wild-haired figure with brains.

"We all know the look of Einstein - it should be an emoji," Rush said by phone from Australia. As he delved further into Einstein's life, Rush was struck by his many sides and the fame he achieved for work unknowable by many. "He experienced a level of global celebrity equal to that of his contemporary, Charlie Chaplin," Rush said. But while Chaplin's Little Tramp film character had an everyman appeal, Einstein "managed that by coming up with theories that 99.9 percent of the world had no idea what he was talking about."

Not all were fans. Einstein was seen as a threat by, among others, fellow German scientists who derided his work as a sign of foreign influence and "devoid" of reality in the changing political order destined to be ruled by Adolf Hitler. There are parallels with today's clashes over climate change and other science, Howard said. "This sort of tactic of trying to galvanize support around a particular agenda by narrowing your focus, as opposed to broadening it, by doubting innovation and trying to rigidly hang on to accepted ideas. There's nothing new in that," he said.

Howard wants viewers to appreciate the courage it took the trailblazing Einstein to pursue his ideas against fierce opposition and, despite his own sometimes "less than noble" personal behavior, become a voice for shared humanity. "There's a kind of courage required for Einstein to have given us everything he gave us, in addition to the transformative work in physics. The role that he ultimately took on as a philosopher and political force," Howard said, "that was not something he welcomed at all. — AP

TRUMP'S HARDBALL TACTIC ON HEALTH CARE COULD BACKFIRE

WASHINGTON: Going into this week's federal budget battle, the White House toyed with a hardball tactic to force congressional Democrats to negotiate on President Donald Trump's priorities. They just might eliminate billions of dollars in disputed "Obamacare" subsidies. But a study out yesterday from a nonpartisan group suggests that could backfire. Stopping the Affordable Care Act payments at issue may actually wind up costing the federal government billions more than it would save.

The Kaiser Family Foundation found that taxpayers would end up paying 23 percent more than the potential savings from eliminating the health law's "cost-sharing" subsidies, which help low-income people with insurance deductibles and copayments. It adds up to an estimated \$2.3 billion more in 2018, or an additional \$31 billion over 10 years. How's that possible? The short answer is that insurers would still be free to raise premiums, driving federal spending even higher on a separate subsidy provided under the program. "You end up with a counter-intuitive result," said Larry Levitt, one of the study's authors.

Former Congressional Budget Office director Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a Republican economist, reviewed the Kaiser study for The Associated Press and concurred. "I think this may even be a conservative estimate," he said. "It says what's at stake: double-digit premium increases and more money out of the Treasury, not less." A separate study from Covered California, the health insurance marketplace in the nation's most populous state, earlier reached similar conclusions.

The cost-sharing subsidies amount to about \$7 billion this year. Provided to low-income customers who buy a silver-level plan, the assistance can reduce

deductibles of several thousand dollars to just a couple of hundred. About 3 in 5 consumers on HealthCare.gov and state marketplaces qualify. The cost-sharing help is provided directly by insurers, who are reimbursed by the government. But the money is under a legal cloud after a federal judge's ruling in a lawsuit by House Republicans against the Obama administration. The judge agreed with GOP lawmakers that the health law lacked a specific congressional appropriation for the subsidies, making it unconstitutional for the government to spend the money. All parties have agreed to put the ruling on hold.

Congress could clear up the issue by appropriating the money in the pending budget bill to keep the government running. Or the Trump administration could appeal the district judge's ruling, as the Obama administration had planned. But with no resolution, the situation has only compounded uncertainty over the ultimate fate of "Obamacare." Trump has suggested the cost-sharing subsidies could be a bargaining chip to bring Democrats to the table on health care. And White House budget director Mick Mulvaney has suggested the health care payments could be tied to Democratic support for financing the president's wall on the Mexican border.

On top of that, Trump and GOP lawmakers still say they want to repeal Obama's health law, which provides coverage for some 20 million people through subsidized private coverage and expanded Medicaid. Insurers, doctors, hospitals, consumer groups and the US Chamber of Commerce have urged lawmakers to preserve the cost-sharing subsidies, warning that insurance markets could unravel without the money, jeopardizing coverage for millions.

UNEP CHIEF CONFIDENT US WILL NOT DITCH PARIS CLIMATE DEAL

MAN-MADE EXTREME WEATHER ROCKS THE WORLD

UNITED NATIONS: The UN's environment chief is confident that the United States will not pull out of the Paris climate deal and expects a decision from Washington next month. Erik Solheim said in an interview on Monday that even if the United States withdraws, China and the European Union will step in and take the lead to implement the global agreement on reducing

greenhouse gas emissions. "I am confident... I think we will see the United States on board," said Solheim, who spoke at UN headquarters in New York following meetings last week at the US State Department, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Washington.

The executive director of the UN Environment Program said a decision is expect-

ed from President Donald Trump's administration before the G7 meeting in Italy at the end of May. Despite the uncertainty from Washington, US businesses are already making the shift to the green economy, investing massively in solar technology and other forms of clean energy, Solheim said. "Whatever happens with American policies, the United States will be able to fulfill the Paris commitments simply because of the surge of the private sector," he said. "This is what defines reality. Reality is not just political decisions, it's technology and business."

The Paris climate agreement was signed last year by 175 countries including the world's top polluters China and the United States and went into force in November, just days before Trump won the presidential election. During his campaign, Trump vowed to "cancel" the Paris accord but he has not taken a position since taking office. His advisers are reportedly divided on whether to withdraw, with his daughter Ivanka said to be making the case for the administration to stick with the deal. "We need American leadership," said Solheim, who served as environment minister and international development minister in Norway. He took the helm of the Nairobi-based UN agency last year.

"But if there is no American leadership, China will lead, the European Union will lead," he said. "France in all likelihood will elect (Emmanuel) Macron as president and he is for sure committed to the climate agenda, with the Germans." "China is ready to step forward to provide global leadership and they have the ability to do it," he said. Under the agreement, signatories undertake to limit global warming to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-Industrial Revolution levels, and to strive for 1.5 C. Countries are submitting voluntary, non-binding carbon-cutting goals towards this goal.



HIDALGO STATE: A thick layer of mud coats the earth around an irrigation canal where high flow in rainy season creates a 30-foot-high spray, near the Endho reservoir, Hidalgo state, Mexico. In brochures promoting the new wastewater treatment plant, the National Water Commission called the use of untreated sewage for farming "a public health problem" and a source of environmental pollution. —AP

HUMANS THREATENING 'FOSSIL' GROUNDWATER

VIENNA: Human activity risks contaminating pristine water stockpiled deep underground since the age of the mammoths, said a study yesterday that warns of a looming threat to a critical life source. So-called "fossil" groundwater—more than 12,000 years old—trickled into sub-surface aquifers long before it could be tarnished by pollution from farming and factory chemicals.

Generally stored at depths of more than 250 meters under the Earth's surface, the ancient resource had been assumed to be shielded from pollution by humans who rely on it more and more as shallower sources dry up. Now, researchers have found traces of modern-era rainwater in wells that bring "fossil" groundwater to the surface—pointing to a contamination risk. "It's a bit like going to an old folks' home and suddenly realizing there are also little kids running around. That's great, except if the little kids have the flu," said study co-author James Kirchner of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich.

The fear, he explained, is that younger water may pollute the ancient aquifers with fertilizers, pesticides or industrial runoff from Earth's surface though they have not found any evidence for this yet. Groundwater is rain or melted ice that filters through Earth's rocky layers to pool in aquifers—a process that can take thousands, even millions, of years. It is the largest store of unfrozen

fresh water on Earth. Groundwater is pumped to the surface with wells for drinking and irrigation, and supplies about a third of human water needs.

Thinking long-term

For the latest study, presented at a European Geosciences Union meeting in Vienna, a research team set out to determine how old Earth's groundwater really is. They used radiocarbon and tritium content to distinguish old from young groundwater and determine their relative abundance.

New groundwater has more tritium, a short-lived isotope of hydrogen, as it was more recently exposed to Earth's atmosphere and surface, tainted by nuclear tests since about the 1950s. Radiocarbon, on the other hand, takes almost 6,000 years to decay. It is therefore much less abundant in fossil water. The data showed that "most of the groundwater under our feet is surprisingly old," said Kirchner. Roughly half-potentially more-dates from 12,000 years ago or more.

"The assumption would be if your groundwater comes from a time when mammoths were roaming the Earth, that those mammoths did not have chlorinated hydrocarbons," Kirchner explained. "If your water dates from a... pre-industrial era, the assumption would be it can't be carrying industrial-era contaminants down underground." — AFP



Penguins are pictured in Antarctica. Scientists yesterday urged more protections in the pristine Antarctic wilderness to help halt species decline, with climate change and overfishing taking its toll. — AFP

Extreme weather

Most people on Earth have already felt extreme and record heat, drought or downpours goosed by man-made global warming, new research finds. In a first-of-its-kind study, scientists analyzed weather stations worldwide and calculated that in 85 percent of the cases, the record for hottest day of the year had the fingerprints of climate change. Heat-trapping gases from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas made those records more likely or more intense. "The world is not quite at the point where every hot temperature record has a human fingerprint, but it's getting close to that," said lead author and Stanford University climate scientist Noah Diffenbaugh.

Climate change's influence was spotted 57 percent of the time in records for lowest rainfall in a year and 41 percent of the time in records for most rain in a 5-day period, according to the study in Monday's Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. For the last several years, researchers have come up with a generally accepted scientific technique to determine whether an individual weather extreme event was made more likely or stronger because of climate change. It usually involves past weather data and extensive computer models that simulate how often an event would happen with no warming from greenhouse gases and compare that to how often it does happen.

Outside scientists said what makes Diffenbaugh's study different and useful is that he doesn't look at an individual event such as California's five-year drought. Instead, he applies the technique to weather stations as a whole across the world, said Columbia University climate scientist Adam Sobel, who wasn't part of new work. "This is a step forward in that it allows general statements about what fraction of events of the given types selected have a statistically significant human influence," Sobel said in an email. — Agencies

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248 33 199

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GUST HOLDS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP TO IMPROVE COURSE CREATION, DELIVERY

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) announced that it held a five-day workshop in early April to help its faculty improve the creation and delivery of courses. The workshops were conducted by Dr Andy Goodman, Associate Provost for Professional Development and Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of Missouri - St Louis (UMSL), and Keeta Holmes, Director of Faculty Development at CTL at UMSL. Participants who successfully complete all requirements of the workshops will be awarded a Certificate in Course Design.

The workshop, is the first in a series to be delivered to a total of 50 faculty-members, with a target to support GUST in creating a sustainable faculty development model, and to impart teaching and learning ideas, as well as research results between GUST and UMSL. Another goal for the workshops is to improve the way courses are delivered to students by understanding them holistically in terms of their needs and backgrounds.

Dean of the College of Business Administration, Dr Antonis Simintiras, said, "At GUST we have an advantage of having such an experienced and supporting partner in UMSL. Their role has been

instrumental in helping us achieve much of what we have been able to accomplish, not least the ranking of being the number one private university in Kuwait. I am sure that by the time the workshops are delivered, and our faculty begin implementing what they have learned, we will be able to achieve even more."

Last year, GUST became the only private university in Kuwait to rank among the top 100 universities in the Arab region by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), making it the top-ranked private educational institution in Kuwait. Their methodology for ranking has been developed with the aim of reflecting specific challenges and priorities for institutions in the region, drawing on nine indicators including Academic Reputation and Papers per Faculty.

Associate Provost for Professional Development and Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of Missouri St Louis (UMSL), Dr Andy Goodman, said, "It has been a pleasure working with GUST faculty. They are dedicated, intelligent, and caring people who want the very best for their students. They deeply delve into the components of course design to ensure their students can be engaged in coursework, motivated to succeed, and intentional in the processes

used to ensure their graduates are of the highest caliber."

Director of Faculty Development at CTL, Keeta Holmes, added, "I very much have enjoyed meeting and working with the dedicated and talented faculty at GUST. The faculty are not just experts in their field. They care deeply about student learning and preparing GUST students to be thought leaders in the future. It was exciting and an honor to collaborate on meaningful ways to engage and creatively assess students. GUST students are indeed lucky to have such devoted faculty so eager to help them be successful now and in the future."

This series of workshops is evidence that GUST, despite its young age, continues to take concrete steps to establish itself as the university of choice for students. Recently, GUST received its 5th academic accreditation, this time for its Mass Communication and Media Department from the American Communication Association. GUST also won the prestigious Gulf Programming Contest this year, which saw its teams go up against close to 50 others from around the region to solve complex programming problems, cementing its Computer Science Program, which is also accredited by ABET, as among the best in the Middle East.



ACK ORGANIZES LINKEDIN 'ROCK YOUR PROFILE' WORKSHOP

The Alumni and Career Placement Center at the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), hosted a LinkedIn Workshop at ACK campus, Mishref. The event started with a workshop by Staff of LinkedIn on the theme 'How to Rock your Profile'; this was followed by lunch and LinkedIn Expert Advice sessions in the Lab. The workshop attracted a large number of ACK students, alumni, faculty, and staff as well as many executives from industry. The event ended with a Raffle Draw with many valuable prizes, including round trip tickets to Dubai offered by the Emirates Airline.

The Manager of the Alumni and Career Placement Center at ACK, Dr Zeina Nehme, commented: "We are very privileged to have LinkedIn at our campus. The tips and advice they provided were extremely helpful and beneficial to our students, graduates and staff, in the knowledge that LinkedIn now plays a key role in online recruiting and professional networking." Dr Nehme also thanked LinkedIn for choosing ACK to conduct this event and expressed appreciation to Emirates Airline, Biosphere Spa, Ansan Tower, and Regency Hotel for their generous sponsorship."

SAFIR HOTEL AND RESIDENCES KUWAIT HOLDS BASIC SKILLS TRAINING IN FIRST AID

Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait - Fintas held first aid training to their associates on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 18th and 19th of April 2017 through inviting one of the best first aid teams in the state of Kuwait. Associates from all Departments were nominated to attend the training. The first aid team brought CPR manikins with them to show the employees how to take each step correctly,

and many videos were played to show many emergency situations and injuries that need urgent and rapid disposal until the arrival of the medical staff or the transfer of the injured to the hospital.

During the sessions, all attendees learned how to understand the emergency situations and the possibility of intervention to help or not. How to act in emergency situations and

accidents of various kinds; cardiac arrest and breathing - suffocation - disorder or change the degree of awareness - to deal with cases of burns, fractures and wounds and bleeding - to act in the case of snakes, insects, or animal bites... and other injuries. In addition to the readiness and preparedness for emergencies and contribute to make the difference, whether at the workplace or in the scope of everyday life.



KUWAIT'S BEST B-BOYS OWN THE STAGE THIS WEEKEND RED BULL TV TO AIR THE WORLD FINAL OF RED BULL BC ONE CYPHER

Red Bull BC One is just around the corner. This weekend, on Friday, April 28, ARGAN Square will provide the stage for Kuwait's best B-Boys to battle it out one-on-one again at the 7th local qualifier of Red Bull BC One Cypher in Kuwait, in partnership with ARGAN Square, Rock House Sliders, Athlete's Foot and City Pages magazine.

Every year, thousands of dancers across the globe vie for a chance to represent their countries at the World Final. In Kuwait sixteen B-Boys earn the right to enter into an all-out

battle on the Red Bull BC One stage, but only one will be crowned the champion and will earn the opportunity to showcase his talent during the world final in Amsterdam in November. The judging jury will supervise and judge the qualifier and final of Red Bull BC One Cypher Kuwait, consists of Boy Menno (Netherlands), B-Boy Poe One (USA) and former three-time winner of Kuwait's cypher B-Boy C-Sick (Kuwait). The qualifying round, held on Thursday, April 27 at Promenade Culture Center located in Hawalli, will see

the judges host stirring workshops before the qualifier kicks off at the same location at 6:30 pm.

The final will start on Friday, April 28 at 6:30 pm at ARGAN Square in the heart of Salmiya and will be open to the public. Through its location, design, and accessibility, ARGAN Square enjoys many attributes that will be a factor in driving the project to becoming one of the main destinations in Salmiya. Located in a popular shopping and residential district, the project is located between Salmiya's Salem Al-

Mubarak Street and the Arabian Gulf Road, across from the American University of Kuwait (AUK). ARGAN Square offers a convenient, trendy and easily accessible lifestyle center, and aims to be the destination of choice with its unique restaurants and cafes, lively activities schedule, and community enhancing initiatives. After the amazing routines displayed in Japan, 2017 Red Bull BC One promises to be the best yet with the planet's most talented B-Boys feeding off the passionate Dutch crowd to discover the next champion.





The IWG delegation members pose for a group photo in front of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.



The IWG delegation members walk inside the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.



The IWG delegation members walk in a street in the old city of Jerusalem.

IWG DELEGATION VISITS PALESTINE

A delegation from the International Women's Group (IWG) - Kuwait conducted a historic visit to the State of Palestine recently, in which they visited several landmark sites.

The delegation, which included a number of ambassadors, their wives, as well as other IWG members, visited Jerusalem where they stopped by Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. They also visited the Church of the Holy

Sepulchre, the Church of Agony, and the historic Al-Khaldia Library which documents the holy city's history.

The delegation also visited Bethlehem where they stopped by the Church of the Nativity, the Apartheid Wall and Battir village that was recently named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Furthermore, the delegation visited the Ibrahimi Mosque (Cave of the Patriarchs) in Hebron, as well as the

tomb of the late president Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Darweesh's museum in Ramallah. In addition, the delegation visited Nablus, Sebastia, and Jericho, one of the oldest cities in the world.

The trip was organized by Reem Al-Khaldi, the wife of the Palestinian ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub. The IWG delegation also met Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during his recent visit to Kuwait.



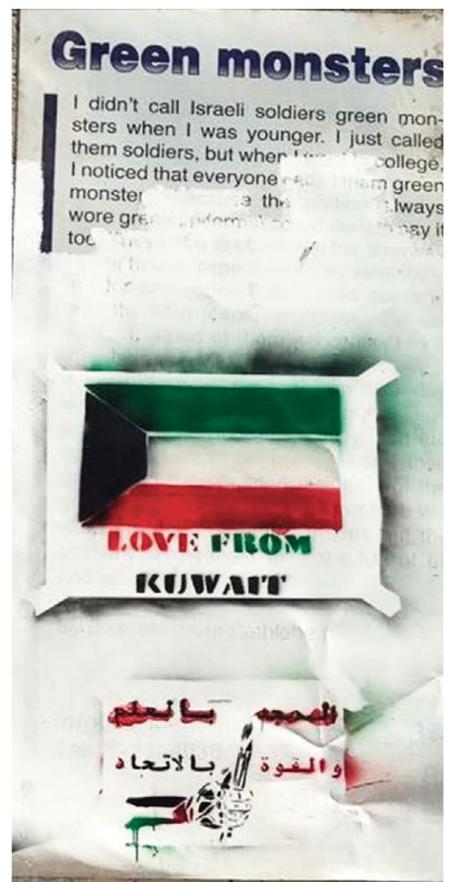
The IWG delegation members visit the Apartheid Wall.



The IWG delegation members visit the tomb of the late president Yasser Arafat.



The IWG delegation members pose for a group photo in front of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.



A message of love from Kuwait painted on the Apartheid Wall.



21:50 You Have Been Warned
22:40 Deadliest Job Interview
23:30 Fast N' Loud



00:05 Snake Sheila
00:45 Bondi Vet
01:40 Pit Bulls & Parolees
02:35 Wildlife SOS
03:25 Wildest Islands
04:15 Gator Boys
05:02 Snake Sheila
05:27 Snake Sheila
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
09:10 Wildest Islands
10:05 Wildlife SOS
11:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
11:55 Bondi Vet
13:45 Gator Boys
14:40 Wildest Islands
15:35 Wildlife SOS
16:30 Snake Sheila
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 Snake Sheila



00:00 It Takes A Killer
01:00 The Jersey Slaysings
02:00 Crime Stories
03:00 It Takes A Detective
04:00 It Takes A Killer
05:00 The Jersey Slaysings
06:00 My Crazy Ex
08:00 Evil Up Close
09:00 It Takes A Killer
10:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
11:00 The First 48
13:00 My Crazy Ex
14:00 Evil Up Close
15:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
16:00 It Takes A Killer
17:00 The First 48
19:00 Evil Up Close
20:00 Gangs Of Britain With Gary And Martin Kemp
21:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
22:00 My Crazy Ex
23:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera



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 Ultimate Wheels
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
11:50 Billion Dollar Wreck
12:40 Swamp People
13:30 Ax Men
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
16:00 Ultimate Wheels
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Fifth Gear
18:30 Swamp People
19:20 Mountain Men - Closest Calls
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



00:30 Redesign My Brain
01:20 React To That
02:10 World's Funniest Fails
03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
03:50 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud
04:40 How It's Made
05:30 Dirty Jobs
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Doki
07:25 Kids vs Film
07:50 Bad Dog
08:40 How It's Made
09:30 Redesign My Brain
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Bad Dog
12:00 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud
12:50 How It's Made
13:40 Dirty Jobs
14:30 Doki



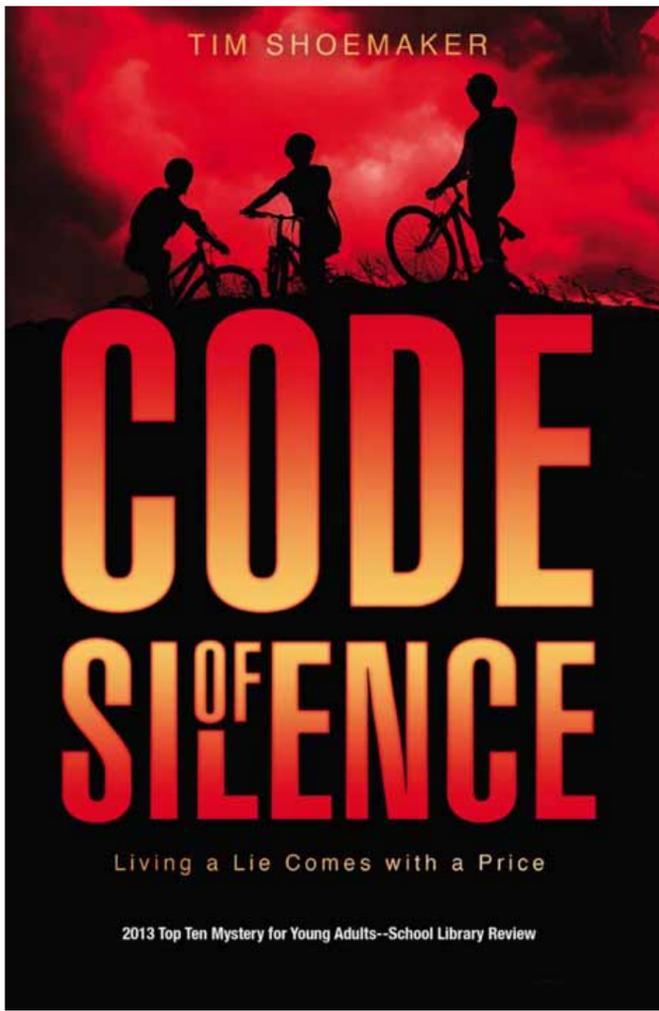
00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Man Finds Food
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Finds Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
07:00 The Kitchen
08:00 The Pioneer Woman



00:00 Binny And The Ghost
00:25 Hank Zipzer
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:55 Binny And The Ghost
03:50 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:25 Hank Zipzer
05:45 The Hive
05:50 The 7D
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Jessie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 The Zhuzhus
07:20 Elena Of Avalor
07:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Stuck In The Middle
08:35 Bizaardvark
09:00 Shake It Up
09:50 That's So Raven
10:15 That's So Raven
10:40 Sonny With A Chance
11:30 Good Luck Charlie
11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:00 Welcome To The Ronks
12:15 Gravity Falls
12:40 Hank Zipzer
13:05 Star Darlings
13:10 Austin & Ally
13:35 Jessie
14:00 Bunk'd
14:25 Kirby Buckets
14:50 Sunny Bunnies
14:55 The Zhuzhus
15:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
15:45 Elena Of Avalor
16:10 Liv And Maddie
16:35 Descendants Wicked World
16:40 Girl Meets World
17:05 Stuck In The Middle
17:30 Bunk'd
17:55 Bizaardvark
18:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:25 Alex & Co.
18:50 Jessie
19:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
19:20 Backstage
19:45 Austin & Ally
20:10 The Next Step
20:35 Cracked
20:40 Disney The Lodge
21:05 Girl Meets World
21:30 That's So Raven
21:55 Star Darlings
22:00 Good Luck Charlie
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



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



CODE OF SILENCE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

23:35 The Hive
23:45 Loopdidoo



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: Bionic Island
09:50 Future-Worm!
10:15 Two More Eggs
10:20 Pair Of Kings
11:10 Danger Mouse
11:35 Supa Strikas
12:00 Supa Strikas
12:30 Gravity Falls



00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 Guess This House
03:25 The Moorside
04:25 Doctor Thorne
05:15 Come Date With Me Australia
06:10 The Chase
07:05 Guess This House
08:00 The Moorside
09:00 Doctor Thorne
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
14:15 The Chase
15:10 Guess This House
16:00 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



00:20 Asia's Deadliest Snakes
01:10 Animals Gone Wild
02:00 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
02:50 Wild 24
03:45 Africa's Deadliest
04:40 Natural Born Monsters
05:35 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
06:30 Wild 24
07:25 Africa's Deadliest
08:20 Natural Born Monsters
09:15 Night Stalkers
10:10 Wild Case Files
11:05 Africa's Deadliest
12:00 Shark Men
12:55 Big Cat Odyssey
13:50 Wild 24
14:45 America's National Parks
15:40 Natural Born Monsters
16:35 Night Stalkers
17:30 Wild Case Files
18:25 David Attenborough's Rise Of Animals
19:20 America's National Parks
20:10 Natural Born Monsters
21:00 Night Stalkers
21:50 Wild Case Files
22:40 David Attenborough's Rise Of Animals



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 Genius
19:25 Brain Games
20:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware
20:50 Parched
21:40 Genius
22:50 Brain Games
23:20 Situation Critical



01:45 Age Of Ice
03:45 Tracers
06:00 Metro
08:00 Jurassic Hunters
10:00 Code Of Silence
12:00 Tracers
14:00 Beverly Hills Cop 3
15:45 Bad Company
17:45 Rise Of The Legend
20:00 Insuper
22:00 Dead Drop



00:00 Agent X
01:00 Quantic
02:00 Supergirl
03:00 Better Call Saul
04:00 Pitch
05:00 Good Morning America
07:00 The Chew
08:00 The View
09:00 Notorious
10:00 Pitch
11:00 24: Legacy
12:00 The Chew
13:00 The View
14:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 Notorious
17:00 Pitch
18:00 The Voice
19:00 Prison Break - Event Series
20:00 The Flash
21:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
22:00 Shut Eye
23:00 Sleepy Hollow



00:00 The Parole Officer
02:00 Outside Bet
04:00 The Butcher's Wife
06:00 Perfect Match
08:00 Outside Bet
10:00 The Butcher's Wife
12:00 Perfect Match
14:00 The Golden Child
16:00 You Again
18:00 Father Of The Bride
20:00 Vacation
22:00 Hot Tub Time Machine 2



00:30 Two And A Half Men
01:00 Two And A Half Men
01:30 Family Guy
02:00 Bordertown
03:00 Better Things
03:30 Scrubs
04:00 Gary Unmarried
04:30 Breaking In
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 New Girl
06:00 Tilt Death
06:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers
07:30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
08:00 Breaking In
08:30 Scrubs
09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
10:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 Tilt Death
12:30 Breaking In
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00 Gary Unmarried
14:30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
15:00 New Girl
15:30 Two And A Half Men
16:00 Two And A Half Men
16:30 Tilt Death
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 Gary Unmarried
18:30 Gary Unmarried
19:00 The Good Place
19:30 George Lopez
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Two And A Half Men
21:30 Two And A Half Men
22:00 Divorce
22:30 Divorce
23:00 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia



00:15 Go For Sisters
02:30 Rio, I Love You
04:15 5 Flights Up
05:45 Jappeloup
08:00 Ordinary People
10:15 Fast Girls
12:00 5 Flights Up
13:45 Boychoir
15:30 Batkid Begins
17:15 The Help
19:45 Selma
22:00 Barry Lyndon



00:00 There's Something About Mary
02:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
03:45 The Chronicles Of Narnia: Voyage Of The Dawn...
05:45 10 Things I Hate About You
07:30 Skyfall
10:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
11:45 Barely Lethal
13:30 While You Were Sleeping
15:30 The Ladykillers
17:15 When A Man Loves A Woman
19:30 Jurassic World
21:45 Faster
23:45 Hustle And Flow



01:00 The Nutcracker Sweet
02:30 Cher Ami
04:15 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
06:00 Rugrats In Paris: The Movie
07:45 Moomins And The Comet Chase
09:15 Marco Macaco
11:00 The Nutcracker Sweet
12:45 Cher Ami
14:30 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
16:00 Marco Macaco
18:00 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
20:00 Virus Attack The First Antivirus
21:45 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
23:15 Moomins And The Comet Chase



00:20 Extraordinary Pregnancies
01:10 Monsters Inside Me
02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
02:50 Love, Lust Or Run
03:15 Cake Boss
03:35 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
04:20 Little People, Big World
04:45 Little People, Big World
05:10 Toddlers & Taras
06:00 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
06:50 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
07:40 Iyanla: Fix My Life
08:30 Little People, Big World
08:55 Little People, Big World
09:20 Sister Wives
10:10 Love, Lust Or Run
10:35 Cake Boss
11:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life



01:00 K-9 Adventures: Legend Of The Lost Gold
03:00 Hocus Pocus
05:00 Little People, Big World
07:00 Atlantis: The Lost Empire
09:00 Turner & Hooch
11:00 Eight Below
13:00 Atlantis: Milo's Return
15:00 Chicken Little
17:00 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
19:00 Black Beauty
21:00 Race To Witch Mountain
23:00 Chicken Little



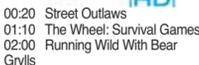
SKYFALL ON OSN MOVIES HD

14:55 Kids vs Film
15:20 Mythbusters
16:10 Redesign My Brain
17:00 Zoltan The Wolfman
17:50 Finding Bigfoot
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters
21:10 Zoltan The Wolfman
22:00 Finding Bigfoot
22:50 Destroyed In Seconds

08:30 The Pioneer Woman
09:00 Cooking For Real
10:00 Siba's Table
11:00 The Kitchen
12:00 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Cooking For Real
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Chopped Junior
20:00 Chopped
21:00 The Great Food Truck Race
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Guy's Grocery Games

04:45 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Zou
06:15 Calimero
06:30 Loopdidoo
06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
07:25 Sofia The First
07:50 The Lion Guard
08:15 PJ Masks
08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:05 Goldie & Bear
09:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
09:35 The Lion Guard
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Doc McStuffins
10:55 Miles From Tomorrow
11:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
11:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
12:15 Gummi Bears
12:40 Miles From Tomorrow
13:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
14:30 The Lion Guard
15:00 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
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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

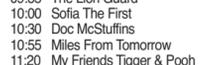
12:55 Annedroids
13:20 Atomic Puppet
13:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Mighty Med
14:40 Disney Cookabout
15:05 Lab Rats
15:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
15:55 Right Now Kapow
16:25 K.C. Undercover
16:50 Walk The Prank
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Milo Murphy's Law
18:05 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 Mech-X4
20:45 Mighty Med
21:10 Walk The Prank
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
22:35 Booster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 The Wheel: Survival Games
02:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
02:50 Running Wild With Bear Grylls And President...
03:40 Fast N' Loud
04:30 Storage Hunters
05:00 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?
10:35 The Wheel: Survival Games
11:25 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
12:15 Running Wild With Bear Grylls And President...
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 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?
19:20 Marooned With Ed Stafford
20:10 Storage Hunters
20:35 Storage Hunters
21:00 World's Top 5



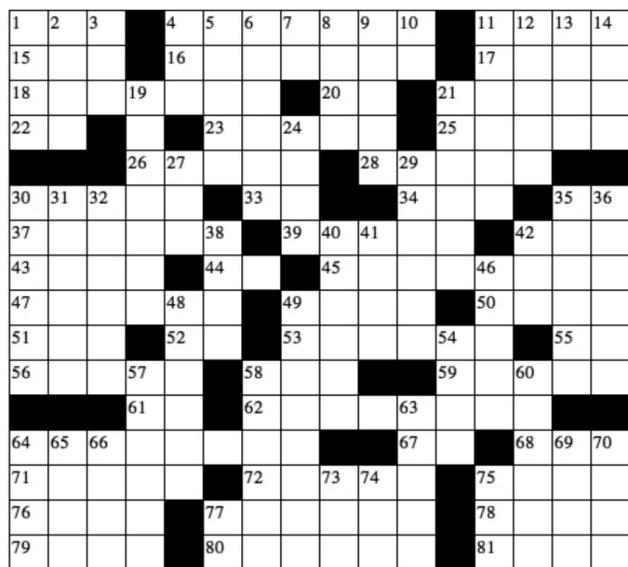
00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Sport Science
02:10 Invisible Worlds
03:00 Nextworld
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How Do They Do It?
05:00 Food Factory
05:24 Sport Science
06:12 Invisible Worlds
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 Nextworld
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 Invisible Worlds
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory
10:38 Sport Science
11:26 Nextworld
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How Do They Do It?
13:26 Food Factory
13:50 Invisible Worlds
14:38 Nextworld
15:26 Sport Science
16:14 Mythbusters
17:02 Invisible Worlds
17:50 Nextworld
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 Strip The Cosmos



00:30 Blood Relatives
01:20 The Darkest Of Nights: People Magazine...
02:10 March To Justice
03:00 A Crime To Remember
03:48 I Almost Got Away With It
04:36 Bad Blood
05:01 Bad Blood
05:24 A Crime To Remember
06:12 Evil Online
07:00 I'd Kill For You
07:50 I Almost Got Away With It

Morgan Freeman and Diane Keaton movie advertisement for '5 flights up'. Includes text: 'Academy Award® Winner Morgan Freeman', 'Academy Award® Winner Diane Keaton', 'A thoroughly warm, whimsical, watchable onscreen couple.', 'The best moves in life are the ones you make together.', '5 flights up from director Richard Loncraine'.

CROSSWORD 1590



ACROSS

1. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
4. An ancient board game resembling backgammon.
11. A native or inhabitant of Scotland.
15. An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.
16. Marked with stria or striations.
17. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
18. An Indic language.
20. A state in New England.
22. Before noon.
23. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
25. Any plant of the genus Erica.
26. Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.
28. An award for winning a championship or commemorating some other event.
30. Shaped and dried dough made from flour and water and sometimes egg.
33. A public promotion of some product or service.
34. A long projecting or anterior elongation of an animal's head.
37. Lacking a sense of security or affording no ease or reassurance.
39. A cordial disposition.
43. Any of various small biting flies.
44. A Russian river.
45. The animal order including amoebas.
47. A city in northwestern Germany and an important Baltic port.
50. A small stream.
51. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
52. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
53. The 11th letter of the Greek alphabet.
55. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
56. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
59. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
61. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
62. (botany) Of or relating to the development of an embryo in the absence of fertilization.
64. The branch of mechanics concerned with the forces that cause motions of bodies.
67. Unknown god.
68. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
71. At or near the beginning of a period of time or course of events or before the usual or expected time.
72. Botswana statesman who was the first president of Botswana (1921-1980).
76. (Norse mythology) Goddess of old age who defeated Thor in a wrestling match.
78. The basic unit of money on Malta.
79. Having nine hinged bands of bony plates.
80. Wool of the alpaca.
81. With no effort to conceal.

DOWN

1. God of love and erotic desire.
2. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
3. The month following March and preceding May.
4. Standard time in the 8th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 120th meridian west.
5. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
6. A Ukrainian peninsula between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.
7. An expression of greeting.
8. A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
9. Water at boiling temperature diffused in the atmosphere v 1.
10. That is to say.
11. Scarabaeid beetle considered divine by ancient Egyptians.
12. Raise trivial objections.
13. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
14. A three-tone Chadic language.
19. A salt or ester of acetic acid.
21. A night flight from which the passengers emerge with eyes red from lack of sleep.
24. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
27. An associate degree in applied science.
29. Place in a grave or tomb.
31. Occurring or payable every year.
32. A cylindrical drawstring bag used by sailors to hold their clothing and other gear.
35. A state of extreme confusion and disorder.
36. North American bluebirds.
38. Fabric comprising a fitted part at the top of a garment.
40. The capital and largest city of Equatorial Guinea on the island of Bioko in the Gulf of Guinea.
41. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
42. Being two more than fifty.
46. (Norse mythology) God of poetry and music.
48. Of the color of cream.
49. A store that sells cheap ready-made clothing.
54. Fallow deer.
57. A port city in southwestern Turkey on the Gulf of Antalya.
58. Old World nocturnal canine mammal closely related to the dog.
60. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus Acacia.
63. Jordan's port.
65. A university in Connecticut.
66. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
69. A young woman.
70. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
73. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
74. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
75. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
77. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are much more rational in your decision making as well as in your dealings or communications with others than ever before. This is a time for imagination and creativity. This, coupled with the ability to put your thoughts into words, allows you to gain the attention you need for your ideas. You have insight into your emotions and drive and you can talk about your ideas with great insight. On the home scene, you should be able to push forward with the family plans to eat a light meal and become involved with games and fun interaction with one another. If there are children present, plenty of teaching games give you the opportunity to join in fun quiz games. If there are no children, you will still find the social gathering delightful.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

There is a lot going on in the emotional sector today. This is a new birth year time for you and it is not a time to look backward. It is better to look forward and to bring your goals forward and set tentative dates for developing your goals so you can adjust as you move forward and progress. It is not what other people think of your progress; it is your own personal progress from your own eyes that matters. If there is something left undone on your life-list, now is a good time to review and add some new ones. Perhaps you can move forward to something new. Steer clear of putting yourself in a position of negativity and use that beautiful imagination and inspiration to enjoy and share your talents. Share your smile, it is most contagious! Happy birthday!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. A mystery evolves today and you may find the answer to some office problems of late. Secrets, conspiracies and the hidden links that unite all things take on a greater importance in your life. Digging into the past for hints about the present and future uncovers a lot of answers to the questions that do not seem to go away. Ultimate answers come from far away. Your psychic abilities are strong at this time; you may receive confirmation on your hunches. Do your best not to be unnecessarily enthusiastic about expenditures. You could teach through the example you set. Someone will please you with an act of kindness this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your financial forecast may begin to pick up soon. You could find it to be your best advantage to save and be more organized in your personal as well as business finances. Do not pick out that new car today; you may be tempted to overlook some very important details. You may want to use this time to plan and plot your way to your goals' successes. This afternoon is a good time for surrounding yourself with friends and young people and for having a good time with the flow. You appreciate your particular situation and enjoy support from those around you. Hobbies are a wonderful way to get rid of frustration. If you are in an apartment, container gardens can be quite successful. Herbs and vegetable choices can be useful commodities.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are at your most practical when it comes to dealing and working with others. Winning the hearts of others can be a challenge you are eager to accept. You can talk most any customer into most any product on the sales floor. A little sense of humor is your winning attraction. Ideas spur quite a lot of conversation. You may be very eloquent in communicating the positive viewpoint of most subjects to people who will listen. Marriage may be in the forecast for you or for someone close to you. Think before you leap because if love is real, it will last. Choose someone who wants some of the same things from life that you want. Discuss in detail your aims, goals and objectives. If already married, this is the time to start enjoying married life.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You will naturally have a flair for the innovative, new and different. Ideas are flowing and could come with ease. You have a real instinct for what people want now, and this can lead to outstanding success if you capitalize on it. You may have some ideas for advertising and whether you are an artist or not, you may want to go to the art department and demonstrate your ideas. If there is no art department, give a description on paper and enjoy the response. You would be wise to keep a running notebook on your ideas. Later, these ideas in your notebook could be expanded and developed with little effort; you could find yourself selling your ideas and reaping some monetary rewards. Ultimate answers are available. Romance is strong.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You could be feeling intellectually and physically competitive today. You might need a quiet area in which to think through some difficult project. Consider temporary use of an empty office or perhaps the conference room or a library. Your concentration and efforts will reap rewards and satisfaction. If you remember your priorities, this can be a very productive day. This is a good time to think seriously about your career or work. Take a few notes on where you think you might want to go in your professional life; planning is everything. Additionally, you may find it favorable this evening to voice new ideas to family members. Winning the hearts of others can be a challenge you accept eagerly. Your efforts are worthwhile.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

There could be new opportunities for you to alter the types of things you do on a job. Teaching, coaching and lecturing are just some of the many avenues opening for you now. You may be moved to involve yourself with new job identification. Some past goals come to the forefront of your thoughts and become more obtainable. A new supervisor or manager may enter your life, acting as a catalyst to help you gain your goals. Be completely supportive of yourself by finding three things each week that will help you reach your goals. There is balance in your friendships and you enjoy the communication that comes while visiting over the backyard fence this afternoon. Dinner is fun this evening as you decide to cook up a mean meal.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

Someone in authority may have very different values from yours. You may have a decision to make in the next few days as you tolerate a difficult authority figure or find a different job. You might decide to stick it out for a few weeks and then transfer. In another department there may be a way to make some personal progress. This is one of your best days for money and for romance. You have a natural sense of what the public wants at this time. You go the extra mile to keep your client happy. Later this afternoon you may have an opportunity to help out in some situation. This may mean a person in a wheelchair or an animal that is lost. There is a lot of activity around social contacts and they may have a way of outlining new directions at this time.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You prepare for future successes, consult with advisors and work on achieving rewards. Clear decisions are not difficult to find; a mentor will help you. You could find yourself other-oriented, with many thoughts and ideas for partnership, rather than doing things alone. You promise yourself that you will begin doing some serious research to find some sort of professional group or an organization with which to become involved that shares your views. Later today you may find yourself making phone calls back and forth between friends to get some sort of team sports competition lined up for early evening with or without the kids. You are open to new shared opportunities for now, you and your friends may be inspired to plan and list future events.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

The focus for today seems to be on research. Perhaps you are becoming caught up on world affairs, class work or technical information. The work today is more information oriented, and you may find yourself in conferences, meetings or lectures learning about new technology. You will be exercising your intellectual curiosity today. This is not a good time to make decisions about business deals so if you can delay, do so. Suggestions to hold decisions, especially if you are voting or deciding as a group, may be a good move. Do not hesitate to engage in new ideas or undertake original projects, just as long as all the facts are known. There is good luck surrounding a financial situation this afternoon. Pace yourself; a new relationship is near.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Careful; this is your time for professional changes, seek advice in professional places. Being practical and conscientious will take on special importance. Sort through the important things in your life and prioritize as well as simplify. Sorting things out and getting them organized will keep you quite busy. Broadening your intellectual and spiritual horizons takes on a high priority. You are intent on seeing the big picture as well as getting to the point. Travel and further education help bring goals to completion. Being in touch with ideas and people on a grand scale keeps your mind busy. Family, home and relatives take up a big percentage of your time, particularly this evening. It would be best to give plenty of time to life-changing decisions. Horoscopes april 2017

Wordsearch Puzzle

1950's Songs

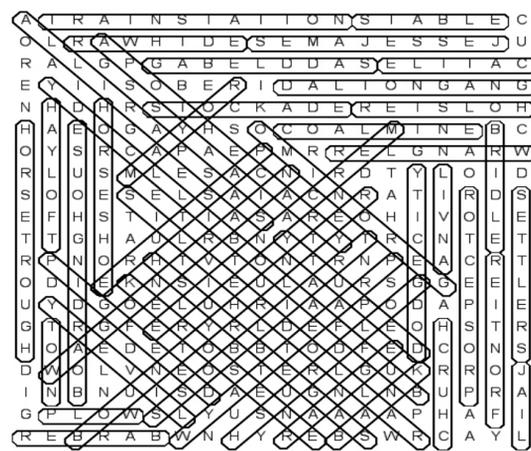
Find and circle all of the 1950's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional 1950's song.



- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| BLUEBERRY HILL | HOUND DOG | MONA LISA | SEARCHIN' |
| BO DIDDLEY | JAILHOUSE ROCK | MOVE IT | SHOUT |
| BYE BYE LOVE | KANSAS CITY | MYSTERY TRAIN | SIXTEEN TONS |
| CRAZY ARMS | LA BAMBOLA | NIGHT TRAIN | SPEEDO |
| DIANGO | LONG TALL SALLY | ONLY YOU | SUZIE Q |
| DONNA | LONG TALL SALLY | PEGGY SUE | TAKE FIVE |
| EVERYDAY | MACK THE KNIFE | RAVE ON | TEQUILA |
| FEVER | MANNISH BOY | RED HOT | TUTTI FRUTTI |
| HEARTBREAK HOTEL | MAYBELLENE | RIP IT UP | YAKETY YAK |
| HONKY TONK | MISTY | RUMBLE | YOU SEND ME |

Yesterday's Solution

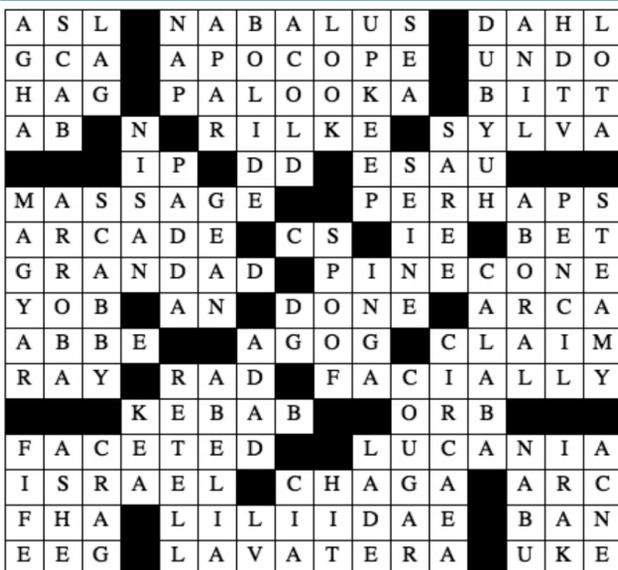
Old West 3



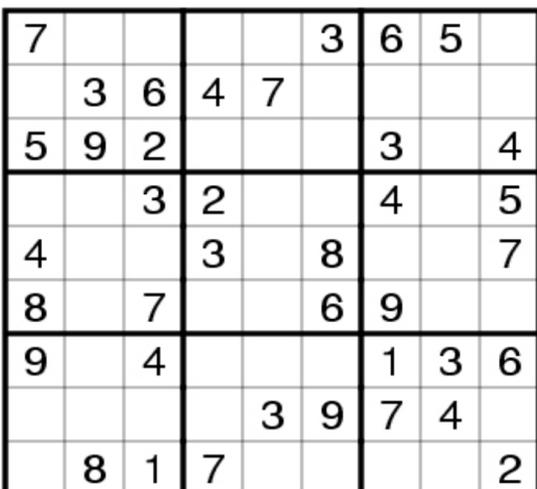
- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| ANVIL | DEPUTY | LIVERY | SETTLERS |
| APOTHECARY | DOUGE CITY | MAYOR | SILVER DOLLAR |
| BANK | FRONTIER | MERCANTILE | STABLE |
| BARBER | GERONIMO | PASTURE | STOCKADE |
| BOARDING HOUSE | GOLD RUSH | PIG FEED | TOWN |
| BOUNTY HUNTER | HAYFLOW | PLOW | TRAIL BOSS |
| BRIDLE | HOLSTER | PROSPECTOR | TRAIN STATION |
| BUFFALO BILL CODY | HORSE TROUGH | RANGE | WAGON TRAIN |
| CATTLE | HORSESHOE | RAWHIDE | WRANGLER |
| CHURCH | JAIL | SADDLEBAG | WYATT EARP |
| COAL MINE | JESSE JAMES | SAGEBRUSH | |
| DALTON GANG | KEROSENE | SASPARILLA | |

The hidden message is: COURAGE IS BEING SCARED TO DEATH AND SADDLING UP ANYWAY

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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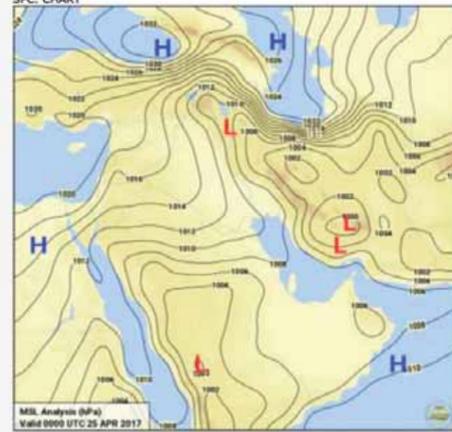
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 25/04/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 30 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy with moderate to fresh north westerly to northerly wind, with speed of 20 - 45 km/h causing raising dust over open areas with a chance for scattered light rain
By Night : Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Expected Weather	clouds to decrease gradually	partly cloudy + scattered rain	partly cloudy + scattered rain	partly cloudy + scattered rain that might be thunders at times
Min Temp °C	23	24	24	26
Max Temp °C	32	34	35	36
Wind Direction	north westerly	north westerly to northerly	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly	south easterly
Wind Speed km/h	15 - 40	12 - 32	10 - 32	15 - 40

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	26		29	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	25		30	
ABDALLY	25		33	
BUBYAN	25		30	
JAHRA	26		33	
FAILAKA ISLAND	24		30	
SALMIYAH	26		28	
AHMADI	27		28	
JAL ALIYAH	24		33	
QAROH ISLAND	24		27	
UMM AL-MARADEM	23		26	
NUWAISIB	24		29	
WAFRA	23		33	
SALMY	23		31	
MUTRIBA	24		34	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	37
Min Temp (°C)	21
Max Rel Hum (%)	39
Min Rel Hum (%)	12
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	46 E
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm
Sunrise	05:10
Sunset	18:20

Prayer Times

Fajr	03:47
Sunrise	05:10
Zuhr	11:46
Asr	15:21
Sunset	18:20
Isha	19:42

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	2455050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	2455050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrah	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	2455050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

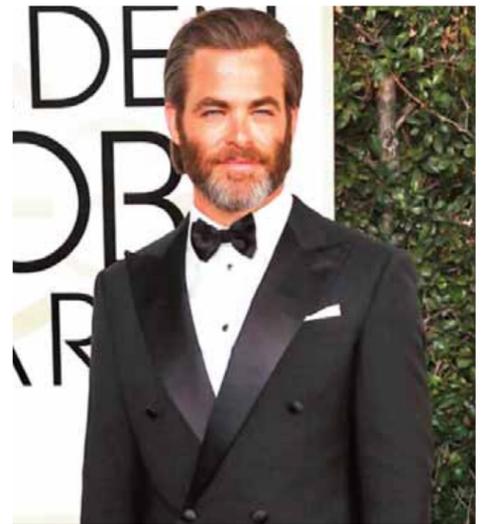
GOSSIP

Chris Pine to star as Robert the Bruce in Outlaw King

Chris Pine and David Mackenzie are set to reunite for 'Outlaw King'. The 50-year-old film director is bringing back the cast of 'Hell Or High Water', which landed him four Oscar nominations, for the new film based on the real-life story of the Scottish King Robert the Bruce, according to Deadline. The royal figure has already appeared in numerous films including 'Braveheart' - in which Mel Gibson portrayed William Wallace - but the upcoming project will see 36-year-old hunk take on the lead role. And it is rumored Ben Foster, 36, is also in talks

to star alongside the dark-haired actor in the film. Mackenzie has also penned the script and it has been reported he is planning to write a gripping plot in a bid to boost the king's reputation, which is believed to see him win Scotland's freedom from England in a brutal fight against the British troops as well as the Catholic Church. It has also been reported the project will not only depict brutal battle scenes, but will also include a major love story between the king and his queen Elizabeth de Burgh - the daughter of an England-friendly Irish noble - who helps King Robert

to eradicate the British from his land. The filmmaker will be working with production company Anonymous Content's Richard Brown, as well as Steve Golin and Gillian Berrie from Sigma Film on the production. Although other details about the movie have remained under wraps, it is believed Netflix is planning to back the period drama. And it is rumored Mackenzie is hoping to start filming 'Outlaw King' in August this year, which will see him and the full cast shoot scenes in Scotland.



Miley Cyrus voices robot in Guardians of the Galaxy sequel

Miley Cyrus was asked to voice a character in 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2'. The fantasy film's director James Gunn has admitted he reached out to the American pop star in the hope she would accept his offer to be included in the film adaptation of the Marvel comic and provide the voice over in one of the five post-credit sequences, with the potential for her to go on to "bigger things" with the franchise in the future. Speaking at the London premiere on Monday Gunn said: "It's not a rumor. I've substantiated it. I called her up and asked her if she would do it and it could be a potential bigger part in the future. I did it that way. She knows that there's a chance that her character may go on and become a bigger thing. That's a possibility." The 24-year-old singer caught the attention of Gunn after her appearance on the talent contest 'The Voice', which made him cast Miley as alien warrior Mainframe. Gunn

said: "I was watching 'The Voice' and I thought she's so likable and her voice is awesome, she's got the best voice." And then I asked Kevin Feige what do you think about casting Miley Cyrus as the voice of Mainframe? "He was like well if you think we can get her... and I got her to do it." However, Gunn has revealed Miley's character in the franchise will be different from the comics because it was not as well known, which leaves him more scope to develop the figure. He said: "Mainframe is barely a character in the comic. My concept of who Mainframe could be is actually pretty far out. I didn't know Mainframe from the comic, so I knew Miley Cyrus wouldn't." Gunn has confirmed he is set to return to write and direct 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3' in the future, although he has kept more details of the 'Wrecking Ball' hitmaker's role in the upcoming film.

Gillan mistaken for a man after Galaxy haircut

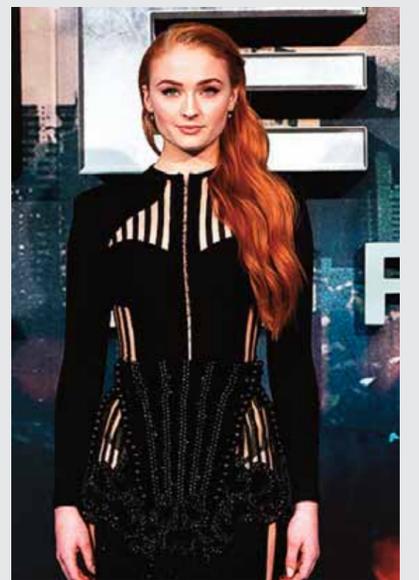
Karen Gillan got mistaken for a man after shaving off her hair for the first 'Guardians of the Galaxy' film. The 29-year-old actress stars as blue-skinned alien Nebula in the Marvel franchise and had to shear all of her long, flame-coloured locks off for the 2014 film, something she was prepared to do to land the role. Karen was ready to take the clippers to her hair once again for the sequel but director James Gunn and the crew told her she only needed to lose some strands from the back of her head this time, something she was very grateful for as she didn't want to be called "sir" again. The former 'Doctor Who' star said: "I just shave the back section of my hair this time. But having no hair was an amazing experience. I'm glad I did it. People did keep calling me sir, though. One time I was laying on a hotel room bed in the dark during the day. A man came in to do the turndown service and said, 'Oh I'm sorry, sir.' I was tired and didn't want to have to explain that I as a woman so I just put on this deep voice and went, 'No problem.' It was one of the weirdest moments in

my life." Revealing it takes her four hours in makeup to become Nebula, she added: "I find blue bits in my ears a week later. It takes about four hours to get ready each morning. Going to the bathroom on set is a whole thing." Karen has a bigger role in 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2' with fans getting to learn a lot more about Nebula's complicated relationship with her sister Gamora (Zoe Saldana) and her adoptive supervillain father, mutant eternal Thanos, something she is very grateful for. The Scottish beauty said: "I was over the moon to read the script and find I had all this stuff to do. Nebula is bitter and twisted. Her backstory isn't just hinted at, we really get into it in the new film." Karen was in London on Monday night to attend the European premiere of 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2'. She was joined on the special blue carpet by her co-stars Chris Pratt, Dave Bautista, Kurt Russell and Saldana and director James Gunn.



Turner to reprise Grey role in X-Men: Dark Phoenix

Sophie Turner is to reprise her role as Jean Grey in the upcoming 'X-Men: Dark Phoenix'. The 'Game of Thrones' actress first starred as the psychic superhero in 'X-Men: Apocalypse' last year and she is now set to have her own standalone movie based on the Marvel Comics character's alter-ego Dark Phoenix. 'X-Men: Dark Phoenix' will be one of three 'X-Men' films released in 2018 including 'Deadpool 2' and teen-orientated 'The New Mutants'. The film, originally titled 'X-Men: Supernova', can be seen as a potential reboot of the 2006 'X-Men: The Last Stand' which was the end of the original trilogy. Fans of the comic book version of the 'Dark Phoenix' saga would have noticed a difference in the story compared to the film adaptation in 2006. One of the reasons why 'The Last Stand' is not favorably among fans is because director Bryan Singer left the franchise to make 'Superman Returns'. At the moment Singer isn't confirmed to direct 'Dark Phoenix' but longtime 'X-Men' screenwriter Simon Kinberg is rumored to be up for the job according to GQ. Last year, Fox released a video of Kinberg answering fan questions and said: "I never I wanted to tell the 'Dark Phoenix' stories a little different than the way they're being told. So we really didn't get to dig into those characters and they're such huge, iconic characters in the franchise and we didn't do it in 'Days of Future Past' for obvious reasons until the end." The film is scheduled to be released in November 2018 and it will give the telekinetic powered Jean, who embodies the Phoenix Force, her own story and background. Speaking to Entertainment Weekly last year, Turner, 21, said: "The seeds of Phoenix definitely are planted in 'Apocalypse'. She can't control her powers unless she either fully stops them or lets them all loose and that's kind of Phoenix. I think in future movies to come we'll definitely see a bit more of that."



ZOE SALDANA REVEALS TITLE OF FOURTH AVENGERS MOVIE?



Zoe Saldana has suggested the fourth 'Avengers' movie will be titled 'Avengers: Infinity Gauntlet'. The 38-year-old actress plays Gamora in the Marvel movies and Zoe has seemingly let slip the name of the much-anticipated 'Avengers' movie, which will follow 2018's 'Avengers: Infinity War'. Speaking during the promotional campaign for 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2', Zoe told the BBC: "I think that the Guardians just shot their part when it comes to 'Infinity War's, like, the first part. And we all have to go back for 'Gauntlet' later this year." By contrast, Kevin Feige - who is the president of the Marvel Universe - recently insisted he won't reveal the full title of the fourth 'Avengers' movie because it would serve as a spoiler for the upcoming third film. Asked if revealing the title for 'Avengers 4' - which was previously known as 'Avengers: Infinity War Part 2' - would be a spoiler, he replied: "Yeah, for sure." Kevin also teased the

future of the Marvel movies, revealing the franchise will move in a noticeably different direction after the fourth 'Avengers' film. He explained: "We've had people under contract for certain films, then we've had new ideas and new directions like 'Captain America: Civil War' like we wanted to do and we've been lucky enough to make new contracts. "Or 'Spider-Man: Homecoming', the cast has been awesome in their enthusiasm for the direction and the storylines that we've been telling. "Certainly as we get to 'Infinity War' there is a sense of climax if not a conclusion to, but the time we're at untitled 'Avengers 4' the 22 movies that have encompassed the first three phases of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. "And what happens after that will be very different. I don't know if it's Phase 4, it might be a new thing."

Ray Davies has never voted in a General Election

Sir Ray Davies is to vote for the first time ever in the forthcoming General Election on June 8. The Kinks legend has confessed he has always dodged voting for the British Prime Minister because he's always been on the road touring, be he feels now with Brexit it is a "very important" time to make a difference as he feels leaving the European Union is going to "turn the world upside down". He told BBC Radio 2: "I've always been on tour. I managed to work it that way. Now I think I will. It's a very important time in our history. I think it's going to be a time that we look back on as being a momentous occasion. "We're doing something that's turning the world upside down." Meanwhile, it was recently reported that there is a Kinks biopic in the works. The movie will tell the story of how the 72-year-old frontman, his brother and guitarist Dave, bassist Pete Quaiife and drummer Mick Avory formed the group and rose to success, and examines how the singer coped with the "mayhem of fame". The currently untitled film will be based on the popular musical 'Sunny Afternoon', which was based on the rise of the group and features a lot of their songs. According to the Daily Mail newspaper's Baz Bamigboye, Joe Penhall, who wrote the play, is to write the script for the movie, while 'Sunshine On Leith' filmmaker Dexter Fletcher has been approached to direct. Francois Ivernel, Charles de Rosen and Sonia Friedman are producing the film and are currently working on securing the story and music rights. No one has been cast in the film yet, and it is not a foregone

conclusion that John Dagleish and George Maguire, who have won awards for their portrayal of the Davies brothers in 'Sunny Afternoon' will reprise their roles on the big screen. Ray and Dave founded the band in 1963 and split in 1996. However, the brothers performed together for the first time in almost 20 years in 2015, when Ray joined Dave on stage in London for a performance of 'You Really Got Me'. The band has had a number of different line-ups over the years but the siblings have featured in each one. The Kinks' classic line-up featured Mick on drums and the late Pete on bass. Pete was replaced by John Dalton in 1969 while Bob Henrit took over as sticksman in 1984.



DJ Khaled's album features Rihanna and Nicki Minaj

Rihanna and Nicki Minaj are featured on DJ Khaled's forthcoming album 'Grateful'. The 41-year-old hip-hop star confirmed that the R&B superstar and 'Anaconda' rapper will both appear on the already star-studded record - the follow-up to 2016's 'Major Key' - which also features the new single 'I'm The One' - a collaboration between Khaled, Lil Wayne, Justin Bieber, Quavo and Chance the Rapper. Teasing the guest features, also including Nas, he simply told Los Angeles' Power 106 radio: "Be ready." The 'Do You Mind' hitmaker also took to Instagram to unveil his collaborations with Nicki and the 'Work' singer. Sharing a clip from the interview on the app, he wrote: "THEY SAYING I CANT GET @badgirlriri on #GRATEFUL !!! Tell THEY BE READY !!! #GRATEFUL THE ALBUM IS COMING ! @wethebestmusic @epicrecords @rocnation ME AND @asahkhaled we so focused ! FAN LUV I GOT US !!! (sic)"



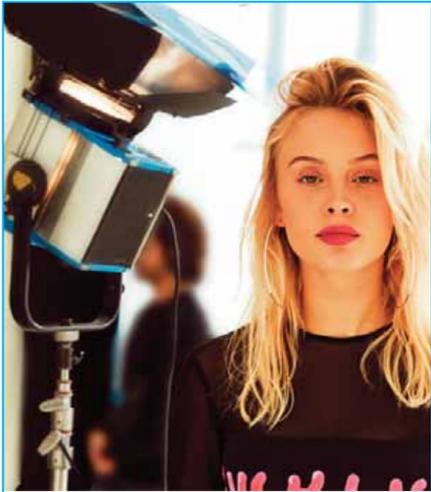
And teasing the 34-year-old bootylicious babe's duet, he wrote: "AYO JUAN! Turn @nickiminaj vocals up ! #GRATEFUL THE ALBUM ITS COMING ! @wethebestmusic @epicrecords @rocnation please keep EveryTING Top Secret! FAN LUV #GRATEFUL ITS COMING (sic)" Previously released songs on the record include 'Shining' with Beyonce and Jay Z. On the uptempo track, Beyonce takes the lead and she adopts a boastful tone, singing: "All of this winning/I've been losing my mind." There is also a track with 'One Dance' rapper Drake. Khaled previously revealed his six-month-old son Asahd - whom he has with his fiancée Nicole Tuck - has had a big influence on his 10th album. He previously said: "The poops and the throw-ups, believe it or not, are blessings, so those [songs] are actually the real good ones. He actually threw up on me while I was mixing and working on 'Shining', and when he threw up on me, that's a blessing."

GOSSIP

Perry drops hint of new single called Bon Appetit

Katy Perry has hinted that 'Bon AppEtit' is her next single. The 32-year-old pop beauty took to Instagram and Twitter yesterday to share with her 97.3m followers potential lyrics from the track. She wrote on the micro-blogging site: "Bake me a pie and you may get a surprise (sic)" And added the wink face and cherry emojis. Katy then decided to send her fans a newsletter with the recipe for the "World's Best Cherry Pie" and followed this with a picture of a rocket pie. She captioned the graphic: "Open and swipe up (sic)" Fans proceeded to bake Cherry Pies and tweet the singer with their photos. When one fan simply asked the star to reveal the surprise, she teased: "There's no tell but if you do (bake) there's gift in the mail.(sic)" And eagle-eyed fans spotted that hidden in the recipe and method appears to be lyrics for the new track, which read: "This pie is gonna hit that sweet tooth, boy / Calm those hungry eyes / Bon appEtit, baby!" The brunette beauty first teased the single last month when she shared a video of her jamming out to the song on her Instagram

story. The track, which will be the follow-up to her number one smash 'Chained to the Rhythm', is expected to feature Ariana Grande. Katy recently said she will have an album on the way, but she wants to release a few songs before giving her fans - known as KatyCats - the "full meal" as she tells music listeners can only manage small chunks at a time. She explained: "I've got something swirling, but, you know, I think I want to put out some songs first before I give them the full meal. I think we are digesting things in bite-size these days and that's what we can handle. It's not shade at all anything like that-you'll know when it's shade. "But when someone has a 17 or 19-track album, you're like, 'Oh my God, I have to take a trip to Mars to listen to your record in full!' I mean I love you, you're my favorite dope artist, but like we want bite size. We, like, only read headlines. We don't even read the whole story!"



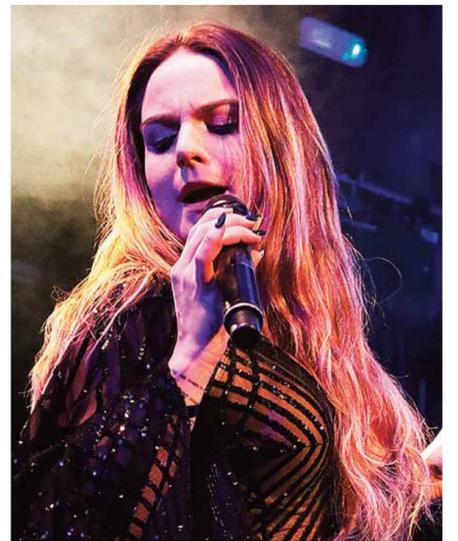
Christensen wears a face mask 'all day' to get youthful looking skin

Helena Christensen wears a face mask "all day" to get youthful looking skin. The 48-year-old Danish fashion model has revealed the key to her flawless complexion is to get "enough" sleep, drink water, and to wear numerous hydrating skin mask as often as possible, and the star will happily apply the beauty product at home or on the plane when she is travelling. Speaking about her beauty hacks to Hello! magazine, the brunette beauty said: "Get enough sleep - that is the number one. It's a cliché, but it's true. And I don't drink enough water, so I am always trying to force myself. What else can you do? "Masks - I love masks. I will wear them all day, go from one to another and let them hydrate my skin if I am at home working, but especially if I am on a plane. I do not even know what happens to your skin up there. When you are about to land and your water bottle is crunched up, I mean that is literally what is happening to your intestines - horrible." And the style icon - who has starred in campaigns for luxury designer brands including Sonia Rykiel, Versace, Lanvin and Revlon - has admitted she carried out an intense beauty routine because she loves nothing more than having "glowing skin". She explained: "I love glowing skin and long, beachy hair." Meanwhile, Helena - who has 17-year-old son Mingus, 16, with her former partner Norman Reedus - has revealed as soon as the sun comes out she is instantly in a 1950s swim suit and in the water. She said: "A 1950s-cut bathing suit. As soon as it is warm enough, I would be in the water all day if I could. I prefer a one-piece to a bikini."



JoJo blames record label for removing music from Spotify

JoJo has slammed her former record label for removing her music from Spotify. Fans of the 'Leave (Get Out)' hitmaker - real name Joanna Levesque - won't find her self-titled debut album on the music streaming site, and after one fan asked why, the star blamed her "former label" for removing the music, claiming she has "no control" over what they do with her tracks. One fan wrote on Twitter: "Why did you remove your timeless music from Spotify? Do you hate us-aka your fans? @iamjojo (sic)" To which JoJo responded: "My former label removed my music. I unfortunately have absolutely no control over what they do or don't do." And her response triggered an onslaught of questions from other fans in regards to the album, with one fan asking if the 26-year-old singer thinks she'll ever get the rights to her music back. The fan asked: "do u think u could somehow get the rights to ur music and then put it up on Spotify? they cant keep it locked up forever (sic)" JoJo then replied: "Somehow? Probably. Is that my focus right now? No. I want to let bygones be bygones. I pray one day they put my music back up." The debut album from the 'Save My Soul' singer - which was released in 2004 when JoJo was just 14 years old - also isn't available to buy on iTunes according to Billboard.com, although it can be streamed via Apple Music. And it isn't the first time JoJo has slammed her former record label either, as she said last year she was told to "lose weight fast" or risk not having her album released. She said: "Here's something that I agreed to do that ended up messing with me psychologically. I was under a lot of pressure with a company I was at previously and they wanted me to lose weight fast. "So they got me with a nutritionist and had me, like, on all these supplements, and I was injecting myself - this is a common thing 'the girls' do all the way - it makes your body only need certain calories, so I ate 500 calories a day. It was the most unhealthy thing I've ever done. I felt like, 'If I don't do this, my album won't come out.' Which it didn't! So it's not like it even worked!"



Larsson's HM clothing line 'reflects my personality'

Zara Larsson's new clothing range with H&M was designed to "reflects my personality". The 19-year-old singer joined forces with the fashion house to launch her own capsule in February this year, which will be available to buy from May 18, and the blonde beauty is "really excited" to unveil the line because it is strongly influenced by her own style. Speaking about her latest venture and the inspiration behind it, the 'Ain't My Fault' hitmaker said: "I am really excited to finally share my collection with H&M. I have had so much fun working with them to design pieces and create a campaign that reflects my personality." And the powerhouse is eager to see customers adorn the pieces from her collection and wear it to suit their own style. She explained: "I can't wait to see how girls everywhere wear the pieces to add to their own personal style." Zara's range titled Zara Larsson >> H&M will include "strong graphics and edgy streetwear pieces" such as hoodies, t-shirts, and dresses, as well as denim jackets with fuchsia pink detail on, and accessories including caps, rucksacks and waist bags. The other garments are made from an array of fabrics including velour, denim, mesh material, as well as cotton, and the products mainly come in silver, black and bright pink color. The Swedish star is an "inspiration" to those who are interested in fashion and music worldwide, which made her the perfect candidate for the retailer to partner with. The Head of Design and Creative Director at H&M, Pernilla Wohlfahrt, said: "Zara is such an inspiration to fashion and music lovers all around the world. Her energy is so positive and sincere, which together with her was easy to translate into the designs. We also looked a lot at what Zara wears on and off the stage, making sure to incorporate her show-meets-street style."

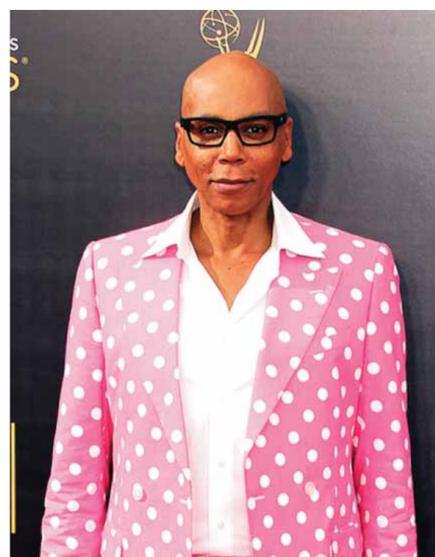
Sevigny opens up about the fashion industry



Chloe Sevigny has "a lot of issues with fashion". The 42-year-old former model - who landed her first fashion campaign at the age of 17 in Sassy magazine - has admitted despite appearing in commercials for luxury brands including Miu Miu, JW Anderson and Jimmy Choo she doesn't "love" the fashion and beauty industry, although she does have an interest in style. Speaking about her thoughts on the business to Net-A-Porter's the Edit magazine, the blonde beauty said: "I don't love fashion. I have a lot of issues with the fashion industry and its beauty ideals. But I love style. "If Rihanna was in my outfit, the tabloids would love it. They have a hard time understanding me." However, the 'American Horror Story' actress has admitted she is still interested in designer labels and what they represent, especially Prada. She said: "I love what Mrs Prada stands for - you can tell she is a real intellectual and a lover of the arts." But Chloe hasn't always adorned expensive garments from luxury labels, as she has admitted she used to sift through her mother Janine's "treasure chest" of clothes from the sixties and even wore a dress from her parents collection to her school prom. She explained: "I would go to dances in my thrift-store Laura Ashley dress. During high school, I had this whole treasure chest of my mom's clothes from the '60s. I wore her prom dress to my prom." And the American star is currently trying to get her hands on the "perfect kilt skirt" and a pair of classic jeans, because she thinks they are the wardrobe staple every woman needs. She said: "I'm always on the quest for the perfect kilt skirt and the perfect pair of jeans. I think every woman is."

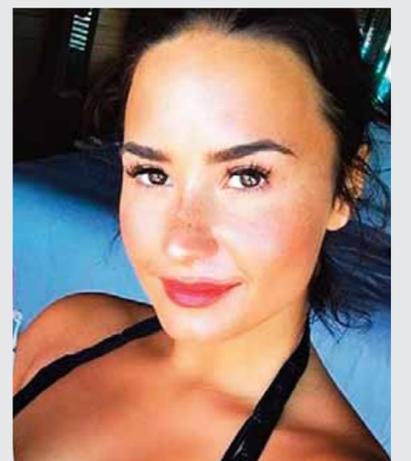
Campbell praises RuPaul for his ability to walk in high heels

Naomi Campbell has praised RuPaul for being the "only man" who can pull off walking in high heel shoes. The 46-year-old supermodel has admitted when she first met the 56-year-old actor and drag queen over 20 years ago she was instantly intrigued by him because he was "different", and Naomi not only admired his "perfect, precise" style and immaculate make-up, but his ability to look good in a wig and walk perfectly in stilettos. Speaking about the 'RuPaul's Drag Race' judge, who was announced as one of the most influential people in the world out of a list of 100 for Time magazine on Thursday the catwalk icon said: "I first met RuPaul in the '90s, when I was doing a shoot on 14th Street in New York City. As soon as I saw him, I wanted to know where he was going, because that was where I wanted to be. "Ru was different. Not just because he had perfect, precise clothes and make-up, or because he was the only man I knew who could look that good in a wig and heels. There were no rough edges to be found." The style muse has also likened the 'Cover girl' singer - whose full name is RuPaul Andre Charles - to an "encyclopaedia" because of his "wit and intelligence" She explained: "But as I got to know him better, I got to experience firsthand his wit and his intelligence - he's like an encyclopaedia. And his beauty is far beyond skin-deep." And Naomi feels "blessed" to be friends with the star. She told Times magazine: "I am blessed to know Ru. We all are." - Bang Showbiz



Lovato believes exercising has 'changed everything' for her

Demi Lovato believes exercising has "changed everything" for her. The 24-year-old singer has vowed to make 2017 about "self love" and taking care of her body because she has noticed her fitness regime, alongside her 30 day detox challenge, has made a positive impact on her already. The brunette beauty shared a picture on social media of her looking fresh-faced as she sported a black v-plunge bikini. She captioned the Instagram post: "This year is all about #selflove truly taking care of myself and exercising has changed everything for me. @teamblend has #sponsored my 30 day detox challenge to help get rid of toxins and my bloating for summer. I'm on Day 7 right now & it's so easy! I just drink their tea every single day in my favorite purple tumbler. I love taking it to shoots and the studio with me. If you are ready to be your best YOU this summer (sic)." However, this is not the first time the 'Cool For The Summer' has flaunted her toned torso in swimwear on the photo-sharing site. An image of the 'Camp Rock' actress sunbathing as she adorned a monochrome bikini saw her urge her followers to "love" their body in its natural form. She captioned a previous post: "No filter no edit, love your body the way it is (sic)." Meanwhile, Demi has recently celebrated five years of sobriety and feels her life only really started when she finished her stint in rehab and battled her demons. Speaking previously about how she has changed, she said: "It means so much to me because I feel like the day that I got sober was the day that I actually started living and so I like to call myself five years old. "I've decided to be open about my story and share everything that I've been through because it helps others."





Radiohead

MUSIC & MOVIES

ARTISTS URGE RADIOHEAD TO SCRAP ISRAEL SHOW

Dozens of artists including Roger Waters called Monday on Radiohead to cancel a concert in Israel, saying the band known for its left-wing politics should join Palestinian activists' boycott calls. The English experimental rock icons are scheduled to play in Tel Aviv on July 19, closing a tour that includes premier festivals Coachella and Glastonbury. Radiohead has played benefits for Tibetans' rights and Amnesty International and the battle against climate change. "Since Radiohead campaigns for freedom for the Tibetans, we're wondering why you'd turn down a request to stand up for another people under foreign occupation," the letter said. "In asking you not to perform in Israel, Palestinians have appealed to you to take one

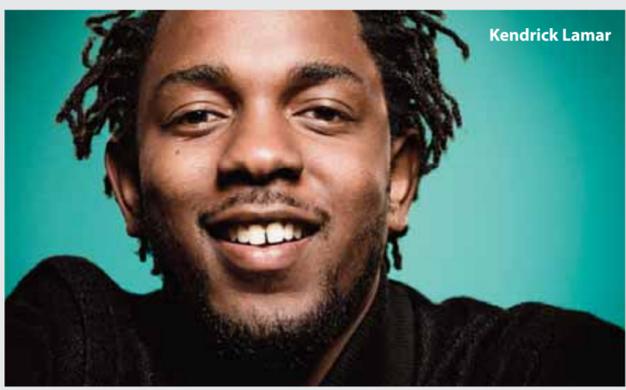
small step to help pressure Israel to end its violation of basic rights and international law. "Surely if making a stand against the politics of division, of discrimination and of hate means anything at all, it means standing against it everywhere-and that has to include what happens to Palestinians every day," it said. Waters, the former Pink Floyd member and creative force of "The Wall," has long been outspoken on Israel. Other signatories included novelists Alice Walker and Hari Kunzru, Thurston Moore of US alternative rock pioneers Sonic Youth and Nick Seymour of Australian rockers Crowded House. Retired bishop and Nobel Prize-winning anti-apartheid campaigner Desmond Tutu also signed the letter. A cultural boycott campaign against Israel has had mixed success. Stevie

Wonder, Carlos Santana and Lauryn Hill have scrapped shows in Israel but plenty of major names including Paul McCartney, the Rolling Stones, Elton John and Bon Jovi have performed in recent years. Israel's defenders have denounced the boycott campaign as hypocritical, saying the democratic country has been singled out when some prominent musicians are willing to play in dictatorships. Radiohead has not played Israel since 2000. That concert was part of a now-legendary Mediterranean swing where Radiohead previewed songs from "Kid A," often called the band's masterpiece, which were swapped online before the album's release. — AFP

Lamar's 'Damn.' scores biggest debut of the year on Billboard chart

Rapper Kendrick Lamar scored the biggest debut album of the year on Monday as his latest album "Damn." sold more than 600,000 copies, eclipsing Drake's "More Life." "Damn.", the third album from Grammy-winning Lamar to top the Billboard 200 chart, sold a total of 603,000 album units that comprised 340 million streams, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan. The Billboard 200 album chart tallies units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album). Lamar's "Damn." outpaced Canadian rapper Drake's "More Life," which debuted on the Billboard 200 chart in March with 505,000 album units sold in its first week.

At No. 2 this week is singer-songwriter John Mayer's latest album "Search For Everything," which sold 132,000 album units, while Drake's "More Life" dropped one spot to No. 3 with 87,000 units sold. The soundtrack to Universal Pictures' blockbuster action film "Fate of the Furious" was the only other new entry in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart this week, entering at No. 10 with 37,000 copies sold. On the Digital Songs chart, which measures online single sales, electro-pop DJ Zedd and singer Alessia Cara's dance track "Stay" jumped from No. 10 to No. 1, selling 91,000 copies. — Reuters



Kendrick Lamar

TOM HANKS JOKES TWITTER CEO INSPIRED HIS CHARACTER IN 'THE CIRCLE'

Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks, who plays a Silicon Valley tycoon in the new film "The Circle" about a powerful social media company, teased Twitter Inc Chief Executive Officer Jack Dorsey on Monday that he may have been inspiration for the part. Hanks appeared alongside Dorsey on Periscope, Twitter's service for live broadcasts, to promote the film that premieres today at New York's Tribeca Film Festival. "I played you," Hanks said, as co-stars including Emma Watson laughed. "I'm not in as good a shape. I didn't exercise or eat as well as you did, but I played you." Dorsey, laughing along, held up a hand and said, "Not me." Earlier, while telling the bearded, T-shirt-wearing Dorsey about the executive he portrays in the film, Hanks deadpanned: "You know that he's a diabolical genius because he's got a beard. Do you find that to be the case, Jack?" The film, which opens widely in the United States on Friday, is based on a Dave Eggers novel. The book sparked

debate about the rise of social media when it was published in 2013. The fictional company at the center of the film and the book is obsessed with getting people to share their daily activities publicly. Reviewers have made comparisons to Alphabet Inc's Google, Facebook Inc and Twitter. The film's cast members said they were conflicted about technology that encourages people to share online, torn between its ability to shine a light on injustice and its threat to privacy in everyday affairs. "The world that we live in now, with the level of transparency that we're seeing, you get everything - every unkind word, every criticism," Watson said. Patton Oswalt, who plays a tech executive in the film, asked whether people would become burned out over the next 10 years and start a mass retreat from social media. "It's the opposite of Andy Warhol's thing. In the future, everyone will be allowed to be anonymous for 15 minutes," Oswalt said. — Reuters



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Charlize Theron, left, and Vin Diesel in 'The Fate of the Furious'. — AP

BOX OFFICE TOP 20: 'FAST 8' RACES TO NO. 1 AGAIN

"The Fate of the Furious" topped the box office for the second week in a row with \$38.4 million, bringing the total North American take for the film to \$163.3 million. With international grosses, the film is expected to cross \$1 billion this week. Holdovers crushed a slew of underwhelming newcomers, including Disney Nature's "Born in China," which opened in sixth place with \$4.8 million; the steamy thriller "Unforgettable" that debuted in seventh with \$4.8 million; and the costly historical epic "The Promise," which launched in ninth place with only \$4.1 million. The top films looked much the same as the past few weeks, with "The Boss Baby" in second with \$12.7 million and "Beauty and the Beast" in third with \$9.7 million. The top 20 movies at US and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by comScore:

- "The Fate Of The Furious," Universal, \$38,408,415, 4,329 locations, \$8,872 average, \$163,304,635, 2 weeks.
- "The Boss Baby," 20th Century Fox, \$12,712,144, 3,697 locations, \$3,439 average, \$136,954,014, 4 weeks.
- "Beauty and the Beast," Disney, \$9,662,645, 3,315 locations, \$2,915 average, \$470,787,029, 6 weeks.
- "Going in Style," Warner Bros., \$4,910,895, 3,038 locations, \$1,616 average, \$31,671,738, 3 weeks.
- "Smurfs: The Lost Village," Sony, \$4,880,377, 2,737 locations, \$1,783 average, \$33,418,362, 3 weeks.
- "Born In China," Disney, \$4,790,367, 1,508 locations, \$3,177 average, \$4,790,367, 1 week.
- "Unforgettable," Warner Bros., \$4,785,431, 2,417 locations, \$1,980 average, \$4,785,431, 1 week.

- "Gifted," Fox Searchlight, \$4,558,508, 1,986 locations, \$2,295 average, \$10,773,300, 3 weeks.
- "The Promise," Open Road, \$4,095,718, 2,251 locations, \$1,820 average, \$4,095,718, 1 week.
- "The Lost City of Z," Bleecker Street, \$2,121,540, 614 locations, \$3,455 average, \$2,270,953, 2 weeks.
- "Phoenix Forgotten," Entertainment Studios MP, \$1,816,499, 1,633 locations, \$1,112 average, \$1,816,499, 1 week.
- "Get Out," Universal, \$1,668,555, 965 locations, \$1,729 average, \$170,306,700, 9 weeks.
- "The Case For Christ," Pure Flix, \$1,584,587, 1,247 locations, \$1,271 average, \$11,361,296, 3 weeks.
- "Kong: Skull Island," Warner Bros., \$1,491,445, 1,203 locations, \$1,240 average, \$163,915,391, 7 weeks.
- "The Zookeeper's Wife," Focus Features, \$1,398,325, 1,033 locations, \$1,354 average, \$13,162,475, 4 weeks.
- "Power Rangers," Lionsgate, \$1,365,550, 1,292 locations, \$1,057 average, \$83,052,602, 5 weeks.
- "Free Fire," A24, \$994,430, 1,070 locations, \$929 average, \$994,430, 1 week.
- "Logan," 20th Century Fox, \$972,143, 754 locations, \$1,289 average, \$223,400,405, 8 weeks.
- "Ghost in the Shell," Paramount, \$883,253, 913 locations, \$967 average, \$39,114,757, 4 weeks.
- "Colossal," Neon Rated, \$579,389, 224 locations, \$2,587 average, \$1,352,493, 3 weeks. — AP



Elton John

Elton John caught 'potentially deadly' infection on tour

British pop icon Elton John contracted a "potentially deadly" infection while on tour which saw him spend two nights in intensive care and has forced shows to be cancelled. The musician became "violently ill" during a flight from the Chilean capital Santiago, where his Latin America tour ended April 10, his public relations representatives Murray Chalmers said in a statement. On landing in Britain he was immediately admitted to hospital where he underwent treatment for "a harmful and unusual bacterial infection," the company said on Monday. "After spending two nights in intensive care followed by an extended stay in hospital, Elton was released from hospital on Saturday, April 22 and is now comfortably resting at home, per doctors advice. "Infections of this nature are rare and potentially deadly," Murray Chalmers said. The 70-year-old star is expected to make a full recovery after catching the infection during a six-date tour which also took him to Brazil and Argentina. His upcoming US dates in Las Vegas and Bakersfield have been cancelled, though he is due to be back on stage June 3 in London. "I am so fortunate to have the most incredible and loyal fans and apologise for disappointing them. I am extremely grateful to the medical team for their excellence in looking after me so well," he said. The musician and singer's career has spanned five decades and seen him pick up numerous accolades, perform more than 3,500 concerts and sell more than 250 million records worldwide. He has also been an active campaigner, setting up the Elton John AIDS Foundation after his close friend and Queen frontman Freddie Mercury died of AIDS in 1991. — AFP



Trump-era 'Handmaid's Tale' presages totalitarian future

Decades after the release of "The Handmaid's Tale," Margaret Atwood's dystopian sci-fi novel and foundational feminist text arrives on television-with critics noting its enduring resonance in Donald Trump's America. The first three episodes are released by streaming platform Hulu on Wednesday, with excitement piqued among the landmark novel's fans by a marketing campaign featuring appearances in public across America of the story's iconic scarlet-clad "handmaids." Published in 1985, Atwood's best-seller is required reading in many schools and often mentioned in the same breath as George Orwell's "1984," Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" and other dystopian works of speculative fiction. Over the years it has spawned a movie, a graphic novel, an opera and a ballet. The TV series stars Golden Globe-winner Elisabeth Moss ("Mad Men") in a near-future in which New England has been dismantled in a theocratic coup and replaced with Gilead, a tyrannical regime where men mete out brutal punishments and rape is mandated by the state. Moss plays Offred, one of the few remaining fertile women who work as "handmaids," forced into sexual servitude in a desperate attempt to repopulate the climate-ravaged world. American critics have remarked how Atwood's nightmarish vision has never felt more relevant in an age of religiously-inspired massacres, campus sex attacks and a proposed assault on reproductive health care that has driven women to march in the thousands.

is a logical conclusion of the uglier realities of Trump's America-not least what she describes as the "gaping pit of contempt for women" revealed by last year's US election. Sales of the novel have surged since November's vote, according to US media, and it is currently third on Amazon's fiction bestseller list. Both "1984" and "Brave New World" have seen similar boosts. "I hate to say the story is newly relevant, as if it weren't for three decades," said James Poniewozik of the New York Times. "But face it: when you have a president who talks about women as if they were squeeze toys, who implied a tough female journalist was on her period, whose administration gathered a room full of male politicians to discuss women's health coverage-well, the viral marketing takes care of itself." Not resting on its laurels, Hulu has been building buzz by sending women dressed in the iconic handmaid's uniform of crimson dress and white bonnet to public events from San Diego Comic-Con and South by Southwest in Austin to the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books.

'Leftist propaganda'
A group of "handmaids" even showed up at the Texas Senate in March to protest over a series of bills that would tighten abortion laws. The first full trailer dropped in March, featuring a chilling monologue from Moss in which she declared: "When they slaughtered Congress, we didn't wake up. When they blamed terrorists and suspended the Constitution, we didn't wake up either. Now I'm awake." The teaser sparked cries of "leftist propaganda" from Trump supporters on YouTube. "I'm done with this, it feels like I can't trust women to even believe that all men aren't evil. Feminism needs to die now," whined one critic. It's not just right-wingers the show has managed to annoy. Members of the cast angered fans of the novel by downplaying its feminist angle during a preview of the first episode at New York's Tribeca Film Festival on Friday. Madeline Brewer complained that any story about powerful women was "automatically deemed feminist" while Moss declared: "For me, it's not a feminist story. It's a human story because women's rights are human rights." The comments, which fly in the face of academic thinking about the novel, sparked an immediate backlash on social media from fans of the book baffled that the actresses would disavow its obvious feminist message. Moss's quote was put to Atwood on Twitter, prompting the Canadian writer and environmental activist to reply that "they needed an 'only,' an 'also' and a human rights definition of the F-word, imho." — AFP



Actor Joseph Fiennes and actress Maria Dolores Dieguez attend the Premiere of 'A Handmaid's Tale' during the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival at SVA Theater in New York City. — AFP



This photo shows a general view of the Masikryong ski resort, near North Korea's east coast port city of Wonsan. — AFP photos



North Korean visitors at the Masikryong ski resort, near North Korea's east coast port city of Wonsan.



This photo shows members of a "ski camp" at the Masikryong ski resort, near North Korea's east coast port city of Wonsan.

Snow business: Empty slopes at N Korea's ski resort

Outside a large stone tablet acclaims "the work of Dear Leader Kim Jong-Un who devoted hard work and heart and soul to make our people the happiest and most civilized people". On the ski fields of Mount Taehwa, groomed pistes snake down wooded hillsides to a luxurious hotel and a giant screen showing a North Korean army choir. But the runs are empty. Work began on Masikryong ski resort, the only one in the North and the brainchild of Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un, after Pyeongchang in the neighboring South was awarded the 2018 winter Olympics. The impoverished, nuclear-armed nation has ramshackle infrastructure and around 40 percent of its people are undernourished, according to the Global Hunger Index.

But the luxurious resort boasts a wood-paneled reception and statues of winter sports athletes. Outside a large stone tablet acclaims "the work of Dear Leader Kim Jong-Un who devoted hard work and heart and soul to make our people the happiest and most civilized people". At a visitor center packed with pictures of Kim - including one of him using a chairlift, although without skis - guides credit him with giving on-the-spot guidance no fewer than 144 times over the course of construction. The resort is a three-hour drive from Pyongyang, down a potholed concrete road that passes through unlit tunnels and which civilian work crews clear of snow and ice by hand after fresh falls. The warm comforts inside are a world away from the scenes outside the entrance checkpoint, where peasant farmers drag sleds loaded with firewood across frozen lakes, and ox-drawn carts are used for transport. And - aside from the nursery slopes - it is deserted.

Happy lives

A second-hand Doppelmayr bubble lift, the ski boxes still stencilled with 'Ischgl', its original Austrian home, takes visitors to the top of Mt Taehwa, where a handful of curious Westerners enjoy the thrill of having almost an entire resort to themselves. With a 700-metre vertical drop, the skiing compares favorably to other destinations in neighboring China or South Korea. At one point on a weekend afternoon in peak season, Swede Patrik Hultberg was the only skier on the slopes, he said. "That's really cool. I wish I could experience it more, hitting new pistes and there's nobody there." Norwegian software developer Lars Eidnes has previously snowboarded in Iran and Kyrgyzstan. "If you want to escalate from there, then you come to DPRK," he said.

Day passes for foreigners cost almost \$100, while for citizens of



A general view of the Masikryong ski resort, near North Korea's east coast port city of Wonsan.



A general view of the lobby of the Masikryong ski resort, near North Korea's east coast port city of Wonsan.

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - around 100 of whom were on the single nursery slope - they are priced at the equivalent of about \$30 at free-market rates. By some estimates that approaches an ordinary worker's monthly salary. But most will go on group trips organized by their work unit, school or organization, at zero or minimal cost. After trying skiing for the first time, ship's captain Kwak Jong-Song said he found it "refreshing".

"I would like to thank our Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un who is giving his whole devotion to our people's happy lives," he said. Ordinary North Koreans normally only ever express officially-sanctioned views when speaking to foreigners.

White elephant?

Resort executives say it sees 70,000 visitors a year. Such figures are hard to square with the uncrowded vistas, but hotel director An Song-Ryol insists it is profitable. "We do not mind the cost if it

is for the improvement of the welfare of our people," he said. "We do not calculate." Pyongyang has a "byungjin" policy of "simultaneous development", meaning pursuing both GDP growth and nuclear weapons at the same time, even though it is subject to multiple sets of UN sanctions over its atomic and missile programs - among them a ban on luxuries, including snowmobiles and "recreational sports equipment".

At a parade this month for the 105th birth anniversary of founder Kim Il-Sung it displayed an arsenal of devices, including a suspected new intercontinental ballistic missile, as well as floats showing mock-ups of prestige property projects. Masikryong was part of a regional development plan and driven by authorities' view that a prosperous country should have a ski resort, said Nick Bonner, director of specialist North Korea travel agency Koryo Tours, which offers it among its destinations. "So they built it."

"It's not busy, it's never been busy," he told AFP. "But it's not

quite a white elephant either. It's going to take time." But Andrei Lankov, director of website NK News and professor at Kookmin University in Seoul, said Pyongyang's tourism expectations have been "absolutely unfounded" and "nearly comical". Kim Jong-Un went to school in Switzerland, he pointed out. "He just decided to emulate what he saw there," he said. "He saw wonderful mountains in Korea, which are indeed beautiful, and he said why not make our country into a tourist destination like Switzerland so we can make a lot of money like Switzerland does." The incongruity of the situation is not lost on some Masikryong visitors. Norwegian Eidnes, 29, said he had been treated "like a king" at Masikryong. "It's very opulent, things are very nice," he added. "That's a sharp contrast to normal life for everyone. It's been on our minds." — AFP



LOCAL BULLDOG NAMED DRAKE UNIVERSITY'S BEAUTIFUL BULLDOG

The blue tutu and diamond necklace that Prudence was wearing helped win over the judges at this year's Beautiful Bulldog contest at Drake University. The 2 1/2-year-old bulldog owned by Angela and Tom Miller of Des Moines won the contest on Sunday. The tongue-in-cheek contest is the opening event of the Drake Relays, a prestigious track and field meet to be held at Drake Stadium.

Drake athletic director Sandy Hatfield, who served as a judge, says Prudence is "just gorgeous." Student body President Thalia Anguiana was another judge. She says there's just something about Prudence's face that made her beautiful. More than 1,000 people watched the contest as 38 bulldogs competed. Another 4,000 watched live online. — AP

Max, owned by Katrina Shain, of Sullivan, Ill, waits to be judged during the 38th annual Drake Relays Beautiful Bulldog Contest, Sunday in Des Moines, Iowa. — AP photos



Clyde, owned by Stephanie Prescott, of Ankeny, Iowa, waits to be judged.



This Friday, April 21, 2017, shows a 600-year-old white oak tree on the grounds of Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church in Bernards, NJ. — AP photos

Beloved 600-year-old white oak tree takes final bow

BERNARDS: A white oak tree that has watched over a New Jersey community and a church for hundreds of years began its final bow Monday as crews began its removal and residents fondly remembered the go-to spot for formal photos, landmark for driving directions and the remarkable piece of natural history. Crews at the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church in Bernards began taking down the 600-year-old tree that was declared dead after it began showing rot and weakness during the last couple of years. They were due to return to the church Tuesday - weather permitting - to continue the process, which is expected to be completed today.

"Over the past few years (the tree's) health has declined quite dramatically. Our folks did everything possible to help its health be restored, but it was just the end of its life and it was not meant to be," the Rev Dennis Jones, the church's pastor, said as the work got underway. The removal work drew lots of attention from residents of a bedroom community about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of New York and other tree fans who saw it as a chance to bid a final farewell to their close friend. Hundreds of people came by during the day to watch the work, many appearing somber as they watched workers use chain saws to cut down limbs and branches.

The tree pieces were loaded onto a log truck and taken to an undisclosed site where they will be evaluated and inventoried. Officials still are deciding what to do with the wood and what will be put on the site where the tree stood. The tree has been an important part of the community since the town's inception in the 1700s. Officials say it was the site of a picnic Gen. George Washington held with the Marquis de Lafayette, and the Rev. George Whitefield, a noted evangelist, preached to more than 3,000 people beneath the tree in 1740.

"It's just always been there, it's always been a part of my town and now it's time to just say goodbye," Amanda Hughes said Monday. "It's dead, it's lived a good life and it's time for it to come down, and we will remember it in different ways now." Arborists say the tree had stood for nearly 300 years before the church was built in 1717. It stands about 100 feet tall, has a trunk circumference of 18 feet and has a branch spread of roughly 150 feet. Its death was likely due to its age. But there is a silver lining for tree fans: Another white oak cultivated from the old tree's acorns was recently planted at the church, so its legacy will continue at the church. — AP



This handout picture taken by John B Weller and released by the Pew Charitable Trusts yesterday shows penguins seen in Antarctica. Scientists yesterday urged more protections in the pristine Antarctic wilderness to help halt species decline, with climate change and overfishing taking its toll. The call, coinciding with World Penguin Day, created to promote the iconic waddling seabirds' health and conservation, builds on a landmark agreement reached in Australia last October to create the world's largest marine reserve. — AFP

Pei, creator of Louvre pyramid, reaches his century

The modernist architect I. M. Pei, who was once pilloried for plonking a glass pyramid into the courtyard of the Louvre, turns 100 today with his controversial creation now an icon of the French capital. The Chinese-American designer endured a roasting from critics before the giant glass structure opened in 1989, with up to 90 percent of Parisians said to be against the project at one point. "I received many angry glances in the streets of Paris," Pei later said, confessing that "after the Louvre I thought no project would be too difficult."

Yet in the end even that stern critic of modernist "caruncles", Britain's Prince Charles, pronounced it "marvelous". And the French daily Le Figaro, which had led the campaign against the "atrocious" design, celebrated its genius with a supplement on the 10th anniversary of its opening. Pei's masterstroke was to link the three wings of the world's most visited museum with vast underground galleries bathed in light from his glass and steel pyramid. It also served as the museum's main entrance, making its subterranean concourse bright even on the most overcast of days.

Pei, who grew up in Hong Kong and Shanghai before studying at Harvard with the Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius, was not the most obvious choice for the job, having never worked on a historic building before. But the then French president Francois Mitterrand was so impressed with his modernist extension to the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC that he insisted he was the man for the Louvre.

'Tact and humor'

The Socialist leader was in the midst of attempting to transform Paris with a series of architectural "grands projets" that included the Bastille Opera and the Grand Arch of La Defense. Already in his mid-60s and an established star in the United States for his elegant John F. Kennedy Library and Dallas City Hall, nothing had prepared Pei for the hos-

tility of the reception his radical plans would receive. He needed all his tact and dry sense of humor to survive a series of encounters with planning officials and historians.

One meeting with the French historic monuments commission in January 1984 ended in uproar, with Pei unable even to present his ideas. "You are not in Dallas now!" one of the experts shouted at him during what he recalled was a "terrible session", where he felt the target of anti-Chinese racism. Not even Pei's winning of the Pritzker Prize, the "Nobel of architecture" in 1983, seemed to assuage his detractors.

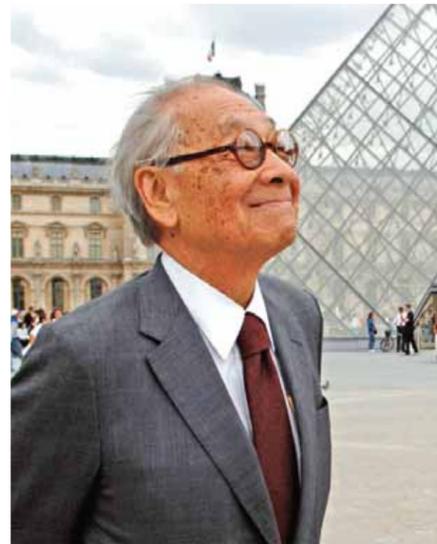
Violent reaction

Jack Lang, who was French culture minister at the time, told AFP he is still "surprised by the violence of the opposition" to Pei's ideas. "The pyramid is right at the center of a monument central to the history of France (the Louvre is the former palace of the country's kings.)" "The project also came at a time of fierce ideological clashes" between the left and right, he added.

The Louvre's then director, Andre Chabaud, resigned in 1983 in protest at the "architectural risks" Pei's vision posed. The present incumbent, however, is in no doubt that the pyramid is a masterpiece that helped turn the museum around. Jean-Luc Martinez is all the more convinced of the fact having worked with Pei over the last few years to adapt his plans to cope with the museum's growing popularity. Pei's original design was for up to two million visitors a year. Last year the Louvre welcomed nearly nine million.

For Martinez the pyramid is "the modern symbol of the museum", he said, "an icon on the same level" as the Louvre's most revered artworks "the Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo and the Winged Victory of Samothrace". Pei is not alone in being savaged for changing the cherished landscape of Paris. In 1887, a group of intellectuals that included Emile Zola and

Guy de Maupassant published a letter in the newspaper Le Temps to protest at the building of the "useless and monstrous Eiffel Tower", an "odious column of sheet metal with bolts." — AFP



This file photo taken on June 22, 2006 in the Napoleon courtyard of the Louvre museum in Paris shows US-Chinese architect of the Louvre Pyramid Ieoh Ming Pei posing for photographers.



This file photo taken on June 22, 2006 in the Napoleon courtyard of the Louvre museum in Paris shows US-Chinese architect of the Louvre Pyramid Ieoh Ming Pei (left) and the French Culture Minister Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres posing for photographers.



This file photo taken on March 29, 1989 in Paris shows China-born US architect Ieoh Ming Pei (right) shaking hands with then French president Francois Mitterrand on the opening day of the Louvre museum pyramid.—AFP photos

Bizarre News

Police officer finds escaped goats

A police officer rescued two miniature goats and had the best day ever driving the goats around. Louis and Mowgli escaped from their home in Belfast and started wandering the streets when Sergeant Daniel Fitzpatrick tracked them down and put them in his police car. He then drove around in an attempt to find their owners and took pictures of the two goats in the back of his car. Daniel said the goats were good company and were returned back to their owner who saw the pictures he took on Facebook.

Drive-thru marijuana store opens in Colorado

The first drive-thru marijuana store has been opened in Colorado. The Tumbleweed Express officially opened its doors on Thursday and is a new development for the state which legalized the drug in 2012. The process works like any other drive-thru experience, with customers selecting what they want from a menu and ordering it from the car park outside, before driving to pick it up from a counter in a disused car wash. Speaking to ABC News, the store's CEO Mark Smith said: "Almost like ordering sushi, we're going to have paper menus where people can fill out exactly what they want and then give them to the security out there. "That will be communicated into here, so they can prepare their order in advance. So really the drive-thru is hopefully just going to be a pick up point." The store even offers three separate entrances for people to pick up their orders, including one designed for discretion which Mark says allows people to "drive up and get out without anyone seeing them." Whilst marijuana is now legal in selected states throughout the US, it is still firmly illegal in the UK.

New device mutes loud office workers

A new device has been created to stop loudmouth office workers disturbing others. The new phone gadget, The Hushme, uses technology which cancels out their end of the conversation so only the person on the other end can hear. According to The Times newspaper, the kit was showcased at the CES tech show in Las Vegas, and resembles a pair of oversized headphones and instead of going over the ears it covers their gobble mouth. Those irritated by their colleagues can simply connect it through their phone using Bluetooth.

A pizzeria launches a menu suitable for dogs

A pizzeria has launched a menu suitable for dogs. The Wet Dog Pizza company in Newquay has decided to tailor their menu to cater for peckish pooches, which has led them to create a seven-inch doughy treat with a variety of toppings available including crunchy peanut butter, coconut oil and dried fish, according to the Express.co.uk. And the fun doesn't end there as furry four-legged animals can wash down their feast with a meat-flavored Snuffle dog beer, which has been a huge success with customers. Speaking about the cuisine, store owner Jake Buiskool said: "So far so good. We've had lots of customers bringing their pets in with them. All the ingredients are healthy for dogs and the beer is beef or chicken flavored."

Houses at number 13 almost £9,000 cheaper

Property buyers have been offered three percent off of their buying price if they choose door number 13, according to housing website Zoopla. The search portal calculated homes with the supposedly unlucky number are almost £10,000 cheaper than the average UK accommodation. The calculations come after a survey was released, on Friday (13.01.17), which proved almost a third of home owners let superstition take hold of them and they would be less inclined to buy a home with the digits on their humble abode. Lawrence Hall, spokesman for Zoopla, said: "While superstitions might weigh heavily on the minds of some, in a year with not one but two Friday 13ths - the second of which will be in October - there could be a real opportunity for those not suffering from triskaidekaphobia to secure a property bargain." The survey also concluded a quarter of buyers are also less likely to buy, exchange or move into a property on Friday 13th, with some believing the superstitious date could bring bad luck.