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MP Fadhil talks about key issues in Kuwait



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TRUMP SONS OPEN GOLF CLUB IN GLITZY DUBAI

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WASHINGTON PUSHES ALLIANCE OF ISRAEL, ARABS AGAINST IRAN

WASHINGTON: With a new leader in the White House bent on disrupting the status quo, could it also be time for a fresh approach to Middle East peace? The United States last week encouraged a "regional" solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, backing a proposal for the Jewish state to unite with Arab powers against Iran, their common foe. The first meeting at the White House between President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took place on Wednesday, with the proceedings dominated by the US leader backing away from longstanding American policy of calling for a "two-state" solution.

Trump's aides contributed to the confusion by stating that Washington remained committed to the two-state solution that remains a staple of Mideast diplomacy, but added that the administration was also open to alternative solutions. Netanyahu was more specific in proposing a regional alliance to help attain peace in the Middle East - a proposal that Trump called "a terrific thing" during their joint news conference Wednesday.

"We think the larger issue today is how do we create the broader conditions for broad peace in the Middle East between Israel and the Arab countries," Netanyahu said Thursday on MSNBC.

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DUBAI: (From left) Banke International Director Niraj Masand, Eric Trump, Banke International Director Porush Jhunhunwala, Donald Trump Jr and DAMAC Properties Chairman Hussain Sajwani are seen during festivities marking the formal opening of the Trump International Golf Club yesterday. —AP

DUBAI: The American president's businessman sons opened the Trump International Golf Club yesterday as Dubai hosted the first foreign launch of a venue bearing Donald Trump's name since he took office. The Trump International Golf Club, developed in the glitzy Gulf city state by luxury real estate firm DAMAC Properties, was inaugurated by the billionaire's sons Eric and Donald Jr. The event marks the Trump Organization's first public overseas launch since the president's Jan 20 inauguration.

Fireworks crackled above the golf course late yesterday, as inside the club the Trump brothers posed for selfies with guests. Trump's sons then left, as they had arrived, in a fleet of four-wheel-drives and diplomatic vehicles under police escort. The venue was carpeted in red for the opening, with a maquette of the sprawling green, spa and club facilities at the entrance. "We have brought Beverly Hills right to your doorstep," said a promotional video.

Though bars at the club eventually will serve alcohol, only soft drinks were dispensed at the windy gala yesterday night. A string octet played classical music on the edge of the course. A pro shop inside the clubhouse sold Trump International Golf Club baseball caps for 150 dirhams (\$40) and Trump-branded golf balls for (\$5.50). Absent were the red "Make America Great Again" caps made famous by Trump's campaign. Both sons gave brief remarks at the opening, neither touching on their father's new job. Donald Jr instead applauded Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. "It's truly awe inspiring," he said. "In Dubai, if you can envision it, you can build it."

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MUNICH: Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with Airbus CEO Dirke Hoke and Guillaume Fairy, the company's chief for helicopters' manufacturing. — KUNA



Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with President of Iraq's Kurdistan Masoud Barzani.

KUWAIT EYES AIRBUS HELICOPTERS DEAL

BARZANI ASSURES COMMITMENT TO BORDER AGREEMENTS

MUNICH: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah yesterday discussed with Airbus CEO Dirke Hoke and Guillaume Fairy, the company's chief for copters' manufacturing, cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the global conglomerate. Speaking on sidelines of Munich Security Conference, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah said the talks dealt with mutual cooperation namely the signed deal to sell helicopters to Kuwait in addition to joint efforts for training Kuwaiti airmen as well as schedule of delivering the multi-winged aircraft to the country.

Khor Abdullah

In other news, President of Iraq's Kurdistan Masoud Barzani said yesterday that the autonomous region strictly adheres to border agreements between Kuwait and Iraq, particularly, ones dealing with Khor Abdullah, an inlet situated along the Kuwaiti-Iraqi maritime border. Barzani made the remarks in a meeting with Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference (MSC). The Kuwaiti Interior Minister said that talks with the Iraqi Kurdish President centered on the historic

ties shared between Kuwait and the northern Iraqi region. Moreover, both officials underscored their collective desire for increased security cooperation between Kuwait and Iraq's Kurdistan, especially, in the fight against terrorism.

Effective role

Meanwhile, an American official praised Kuwait's effective role in combating global terrorism. The official, Brett McGurk, the US president's envoy at the international coalition for combating the so-called Islamic State, expressed admiration for the Kuwaiti efforts during a meeting with Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah. The minister indicated that he exchanged views with the US officials on means to fight the terrorist organization, adding that McGurk briefed him about military operations targeting the group and future plans to confront this peril. McGurk called for boosting cooperation with Kuwait at this level. The talks were held on margins of Munich Security Conference.

Transnational crime

Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah had called on peace-seeking countries to be aware of the significance of joint cooperation and

coordination in the fight against transnational organized crime. Speaking on the sidelines of his participation in Munich Security Conference (MSC), which kicked off in Germany's southern city of Munich on Friday, the minister said transnational organized crime is a major challenge to all world countries. He listed the evils of transnational organized crime as mainly growing terrorist organizations and relevant sophisticated finance sources, which make it difficult for countries to fight terrorism effectively.

He emphasized that these terrorist organizations and groups have nothing to do whatsoever with religions, and that it is totally unfair to link them to the tolerant religion of Islam. Therefore, he maintained, concerted international efforts should be exerted in order to fight terrorist organizations and their deviant ideologies on the basis that they have neither religion nor homeland.

The Kuwaiti minister also called for making use of technological advancement in developing a fresh system to protect cybersecurity. He boasted that the State of Kuwait attaches much attention to the exchange of information in a safe manner, and to the protection of

cybersecurity from cyberattacks by means of adopting the best international practices and developing legal partnerships against these crimes. He stressed that his country is ready to provide immediate support to the global security system in various domains.

Major challenges

More than 500 decision-makers from across the globe, including more than 25 heads of state and government, 80 foreign and defense ministers, and strong delegations from the new US administration and from Congress, came together in Munich for discussions on major international security challenges.

Over the past five decades, the Munich Security Conference (MSC) has become a key annual gathering for the international "strategic community." Since its foundation in 1963 as "Internationale Wehrkunde-Begegnung," the MSC has been an independent forum dedicated to promoting peaceful conflict resolution and international cooperation and dialogue. In addition to the annual flagship conference in February, the MSC regularly convenes other high-profile events in capitals around the world. — KUNA

In my view

WHO IS TO BLAME?

By Talal Al-Ghannam



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Good morning dear and honorable readers and I welcome you again after almost a six-month-long hiatus. In this article, I would like to talk about an issue that has been a hot topic of discussion in Kuwait as of late, which is the idea of cutting down the number of expatriates in the country.

First of all, we must ask state authorities and sponsors of domestic helpers this question: Why did you bring those workers from outside in the first place if you will later complain about their huge numbers in the country? We all must understand that there are so many jobs that Kuwaitis would never do, whereas expatriates are fit for those jobs. Such professions include the jobs of construction workers, domestic helpers, security guards, cleaners and many others. And since the country is in dire need for such jobs, why are so many people complaining now about the huge numbers of 'marginal labor forces'?

There are so many companies that import unwanted staff members for money, and the workers would eventually end up being left on the streets without a job. In the end, they are often blamed for causing congestions in hospitals, streets, companies and elsewhere. State authorities must differentiate between the true workers and those who have come here through paying large amounts of money to some companies, and eventually end up roaming the streets; sometimes resorting to stealing because they have no other source of income.

Therefore, do not blame those low-wage and desperate workers who have left everything in their own countries and probably sold everything there in order to come here and make a decent living. Instead, they end up being chased by police and other state authorities for failing to find appropriate jobs because of those company owners who brought them in and left them without decent jobs as promised. In this case, sponsors must fear Allah and try to offer any sort of help to those desperate people, which is their religious duty in order to depict the beautiful image of Islam and teachings of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), who taught Muslims to treat workers properly and consider them our brothers and sisters. Remember that those workers came here depending on Allah and then on you. Till the next article insha Allah.

KUWAIT VOICES RESERVATIONS OVER EP'S DEATH PENALTY DECISION

BRUSSELS: Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium Jassem Al-Budaiwi expressed reservations over the European Parliament's (EP) criticism of execution of murderers in Kuwait. Integrity and transparency are characters of Kuwait's judiciary, and all defendants are provided with defense attorneys as guaranteed by Kuwaiti laws, Budaiwi said in a statement on Friday, reacting to EP's yesterday's decision which criticized the death penalties.



Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium Jassem Al-Budaiwi

Budaiwi said he understood the motives behind the EP's decision, but urged the European lawmakers to also understand the principles of Kuwait Criminal Law, which did not contradict with Kuwait's obligations vis-a-vis the international community. The EP also mentioned alleged human rights issues in Kuwait, and Al-Budaiwi said the decision was based on "inaccurate reports published by private organizations and media institutions."

The EP, he added, did not seek official authorities for information "which does not reflect the bright image of the State of Kuwait in terms of human rights, an image that is internationally appreciated." Kuwait's Mission to the European Union immediately contacted a number of EP members to explain the measures adopted that led to the execution through the legal steps in Kuwait law, he said.

"All judicial and government institutions in Kuwait are operating in a transparent manner, and the human rights watchdogs in the State of Kuwait have full access to information and sources they need," he said. Budaiwi played down impacts of EP's non-binding decision on the European-Kuwait ties, which he described as 'historic and distinguished.' Kuwait foreign ministry had recently affirmed that seven persons were executed for committing murders, and the death penalty's verdicts were based on criminal law. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah speaks during Kuwait's Fourth Investment Forum. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT DEDICATES ATTENTION TO ECONOMIC LEGISLATIONS: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait's leadership, in the development approach, dedicates much attention to enacting new economic legislations, says the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, also the Acting Minister of Information, says Kuwait gives priority to economic legislations that are compatible with His Highness the Amir's vision of transforming Kuwait into a regional-international business hub. He was speaking at inauguration of Kuwait's Fourth Investment Forum, dubbed 'Investment in Kuwait... available and wasted opportunities.'

The government, in coordination with the parliament, has drafted regulations for the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises. These laws regulate in particular tasks of the Industrial Bank for funding projects.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohammad Al-Zuhair, the fund's chairman, said the fund management has been seeking since May 2015 to improve the business environment, noting that 95 enterprises in Kuwait are enlisted as small. The fund seeks to employ more than a single Kuwait in each enterprise, Zuhair said, adding that 131 projects out of 199 ones have been endorsed - the total value of which is



Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (left) and Mohammad Al-Dallal, Chairman of the Legislative Committee at the parliament (center) tour an exhibition held on the sidelines of the forum.

in the range of KD 13 million.

Mohammad Al-Dallal, Chairman of the Legislative Committee at the parliament, said the parliament has recently approved a number of bills, one stipulating that the capital portfolio be increased to more than KD 150 million for financing small and medium enterprises for 20 years.

Hessa Al-Ayyar, in charge of the department of business pioneers, has indicated that her department helps in creating an adequate business environment, stimulating young investors and boosting their spirit for making initiatives. — KUNA

Abdulsamad explained that the committee found that the ministry's internal auditors are not enough in number and that the department is not directly subjected to the minister. The committee noted that the State Audit Bureau noticed sluggishness in collecting overdue revenues of KD 42 million. The committee also recommended studying various contracts before signing them to avoid extra financial burdens such as those resulting from losing cases, as around KD 4 million has been lost in this manner.

TWO DEAD IN SEVENTH RING ROAD ACCIDENT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A citizen and a child were killed and five others were injured in a traffic accident on the Seventh Ring Road. Paramedics and police had rushed to the scene in response to an emergency call reporting that a sports utility vehicle (SUV) had overturned following an accident. Paramedics pronounced one man dead on the scene, and rushed the rest to Adan Hospital, including the child who later succumbed to his injuries. The others - a woman, three children and a housemaid, remain in the hospital for treatment. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the accident.

Diamond necklace missing

A citizen reported that a diamond necklace worth KD 150,000 was missing from his house. Security sources said that the man accused a housemaid who had been working for him for four years of the theft. The maid strongly denied the charges during questioning. Further investigations are in progress.

Drug possession

Narcotics detectives arrested three citizens with drugs, said security sources, noting that detectives discovered that two of them are already wanted by authorities for financial claims worth KD 31,000 and KD 290,000 respectively. The sources added that the three suspects were arrested by chance, after a police patrol stopped the suspects' vehicle to ticket them for playing songs loudly.

Embezzlement

The chairman of a co-op society's board of directors accused an expat of embezzling KD 20,000, said security sources, noting that the suspect was arrested and is being held pending further investigations.

Slander

A female citizen and an Egyptian doctor exchanged accusations of slander. Security sources said the woman claimed that the doctor insulted her, while the doctor said it was she who barged into the examination room while he was examining another patient, and when he reprimanded her, she insulted him in front of other patients.

2016 statistics

Mubarak Al-Kabeer emergency team leader at Kuwait Municipality Nasser Al-Hajeri said according to 2016 statistics, his team filed 14 citations to peddlers, 41 for not having health certificates, 20 for expired health certificates, nine for opening stores without licenses, 21 for opening stores prior to municipality approval, 31 for expired ad licenses, 81 for unlicensed ads, 16 for expired foodstuff items, 10 for selling harmful foodstuff and 13 for not respecting timings of garbage disposal. Hajeri added a total of 15 stores were closed, 648 public property violations were removed and 11,342 ads were removed from the streets. He said 3,330 kg of inedible foodstuff and 4,205 pirated CDs were confiscated.

Food inspection

Capital municipality teams launched an inspection campaign that resulted in filing three citations for selling inedible food items, two for using public passages without municipality permission, selling food items and hiring workers with expired health certificates, Capital municipality's market control manager Nasser bin Lami said.

Demolition

Meanwhile, the municipality said in a statement that it is aware of the issue of the demolition of an unlicensed building near a Sulabiya mosque, and stressed that upon instructions from the Minister of Awqaf and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, the entire issue is being investigated.

DISABLED CHILDREN OF KUWAITI MOTHERS TO BE TREATED AS KUWAITIS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for the Disabled will start activating article 3 of law number 8/2010 pertaining with treating disabled children of Kuwaiti mothers as Kuwaitis for life, especially in terms of employment as per a Cabinet decision prioritizing the children of Kuwaiti women in recruitment, well-informed sources said. The sources also noted that the supreme disability council had initially approved a proposal to include disabled citizens older than 21 who receive

social security allowances to the beneficiaries of 'Afya' health insurance.

MPW budget

Minister of public works Abdul Rahman Al-Mutawa is scheduled to meet today with the Ministry of Public Works' (MPW) planning committee members to discuss the ministry's budget and priorities.

Residential projects

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) is currently following up the execution of 28 residential projects

with a total cost of over KD 645 million, including infrastructure and public facilities. According to the authority's reports, 7,798 units are being built in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Wafra and Abu Halifa, in addition to 369 units in Northwest Sulabikhat and 319 in Sabah Al-Ahmad City.

Overdue revenues

Chairman of the parliament's budgets and final statements committee Adnan Abdulsamad said the committee discussed the justice ministry's budget for

TROUBLEMAKERS WANT TO DISSOLVE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE: MP FADHL

YOUNG LAWMAKER TALKS DEMOGRAPHY, HEALTH SECTOR, FUEL PRICES, OTHERS

- We need to set the number of expats who can be replaced with citizens out of the total population
- Lower categories of jobs can be given to bedoons, instead of hiring expats from abroad
- Slogans of some politicians that we should get rid of all expats are not correct
- If we want to become like Dubai, we must spend in the same way
- Segregation at Jaber Hospital is completely wrong
- People noticed the hike in fuel prices while all other services remain bad
- Passing a new law is the first step in resolving the sports problem
- Around 88 percent of Kuwaiti manpower works in the public sector, and this is wrong

By Nawara Fattahova

"Being an MP is a really hard job, and a little cooperation with other MPs would make it a lot easier. Unfortunately, there are troublemakers who are busy damaging the parliament," Ahmad Al-Fadhil, a young member of parliament, told Kuwait Times in an interview that touched on various issues being discussed in parliament. Some excerpts:

Demographic problem

"Like the human body, some organs are replaceable and some are vital," he said. "There are certain categories of expatriate workers that cannot be replaced. We need to set the number of expats who can be replaced with citizens out of the total population. According to simple analyses and the available numbers, I found that there are two aspects that we can focus on - legal and procedural. The legal part is focused on marginal workers. We should issue new laws or amend existing ones to eliminate marginal workers, who use the infrastructure and all the services provided by the government. The procedural part consists of replacing current employees in the public sector.

"My suggestion is that lower categories of jobs, which Kuwaitis are not interested in, can be given to bedoons (stateless) who are eligible to get citizenship or to children of Kuwaiti mothers, instead of hiring expats from abroad. Especially that these people have been living here since their birth and will spend their salaries inside the country, while most expats have families abroad to whom they transfer their salary."

Other sectors

"The middle sector consists of special professions and supporting professions," he indicated. "The special professions include experts and consultants in various fields, and these can only be replaced with Kuwaiti employees of the same level of qualification. These include teachers, doctors, engineers and others. But we have the worst qualifications according to the Human Development Report, which compared Kuwait to other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and we rank among the worst in terms of education.

"The work environment in Kuwait is repulsive. So graduates from abroad prefer to go work in Dubai, Doha or Muscat. Only if the choices are limited do they come to Kuwait. I am not only talking in terms of salaries, but in general. We suffer from a lack of headhunting firms that are in charge of finding qualified staff. This category includes around 70,000 employees working in the public sector. This category can be replaced as these are not rare professions and we can have as many Kuwaitis in these professions on the same if not a better level.

"The slogans of some politicians that we should get rid of all expats are not correct. Also, we cannot force the private sector to replace expat employees with Kuwaitis, as it is the decision of the owner. The government can woo the private sector by giving certain benefits to an employer who employs a certain number of Kuwaitis, for instance. Around 6,000 job applications are filed annually. So if we replace 6,000 of the 70,000, we will reach our target of replacing expats within 12 years. But I do not prefer this solution. In my opinion, we should encourage Kuwaitis to start their own businesses.

"We have problems with the laws as well. Most legislations are old and need to be modified. Also, many people specialize in circumvent-

ing the law. As part of our responsibilities, we will evaluate these laws in the finance committee. Also, the criteria used in Kuwait are responsible for bringing such manpower, so we usually receive the worst quality. If we want to become like Dubai, we must spend in the same way."

Health sector

"Kuwait has the highest total hospital bed capacity compared to the population, but we

as he knows all the details. "We will meet with experts and the results will be included in the privatization law which will be presented in the parliament," he said. "We will open a new page in the sports issue built on a sports economy."

"Passing a new law is the first step in resolving the sports problem, as we will be in harmony with international Olympic rules, and the suspension of Kuwaiti teams will be over," he indicated. "If the International Olympic Committee still

ment to change the labor demography in Kuwait," Fadhil said. "Around 88 percent of Kuwaiti manpower works in the public sector, and this is wrong. It is the biggest risk factor in Kuwait since the establishment of the modern state, and shouldn't continue in any way. At least 40 percent of Kuwaitis should work for themselves in private businesses rather than being employed in any sector.

"We are preparing a group of legislation that



KUWAIT: MP Ahmad Al-Fadhil speaks to Kuwait Times. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

suffer from management problems," Fadhil indicated. "For instance, people use wasta to get a bed in a hospital, which means that a particular bed is not used so that it could be given to a privileged patient. With the Jaber Hospital, the bed capacity has become very high, but the segregation of this hospital is completely wrong. I agree that a citizen should be privileged in his country, but not in this way. I think it is stupid logistics wise.

"We can have separate queues for Kuwaitis and expats instead. And maybe have another line for elderly people. This discrimination based on nationality will cause jams, as Kuwaiti patients will come from different areas of Kuwait. We should always consider the geographic location of the hospital, especially for emergency cases. So if an expat has an accident 2 km from the hospital, it should not be that the hospital would not admit him because he is an expat."

Fuel prices

"There is no update yet on increasing the price of fuel," Fadhil proclaimed. "After Saudi Arabia increased the price of fuel there, Kuwait became the country with the cheapest petrol in the world. People are not angry because of the price - their anger is moral, as they noticed the hike in fuel prices while all other services remain bad. They see that the government is wasting funds in unnecessary expenses such as medical treatment abroad, which runs in the hundreds of millions of dinars. So if the government announces that it will, for instance, change the system of public hospitals to allow citizens to be shareholders in it and receive profits, and then announces that the price of petrol will increase, the reaction won't be the same."

Sports ban

"The new minister is very cooperative, according to Fadhil, who agreed on the new sports law

refuses and demands the approval for the chairpersons of sports clubs, then this will show that it is not serious. And of course, we will not take its approval for the chairpersons, as it is receiving a huge amount of money from the government and doesn't pay anything.

"In the past, our sports law was suitable and satisfactory to compete internationally. But other countries developed and issued laws pertaining to sports professionalism and privatization, which improved over time, while we stayed the same. The last sports club in Kuwait was established in 1973, and Kuwaitis at that time numbered less than 380,000. So, when this new law will be in force, the players will become professionals and not just amateurs holding another job as well as playing football as a hobby, which will improve their performance. I hope this law will be passed within a few weeks."

Grillings

"I do not understand the point of grilling a new government that has been in power for only two months," Fadhil argued. "What cooperation can we expect from a parliament that promised something and is doing the opposite? Also, there is a group of troublemakers who want to dissolve the parliament as soon as possible, as they do not like being in the minority. They spend all their time in grillings so we do not have time for legislation. The last grilling did not reveal their real number - in fact it is much less, around half of the figure announced. Also, any grilling is too soon for the new government. These lawmakers work on their own special agendas. We are working hard to counter these actions, but we hope the government doesn't listen to them."

Small enterprises fund

"During a committee meeting for improving the business environment, we discussed the small enterprises fund, which is an active instru-

will simplify the procedure of launching businesses. I am sure if any employee, whether in the public or private sector, is able to have their own business that is profitable, they will definitely resign from their job to concentrate on the business. Also, a business has much more growth than any job. We want to tell them their dreams won't come true by working for the government - although they will get a job and salary, their ambitions will be killed. Working in the public sector will only prove that what you studied at the university is of no use, and their creativity will be killed. This is the reason behind focusing on the small enterprises fund, and it should be realized very soon."



KUWAIT: This file photo shows the Jaber Hospital under construction. The hospital, one of the largest in the Middle East, will serve Kuwaiti citizens exclusively when it opens later this year. MP Ahmad Al-Fadhil believes this nationality-based segregation is wrong.



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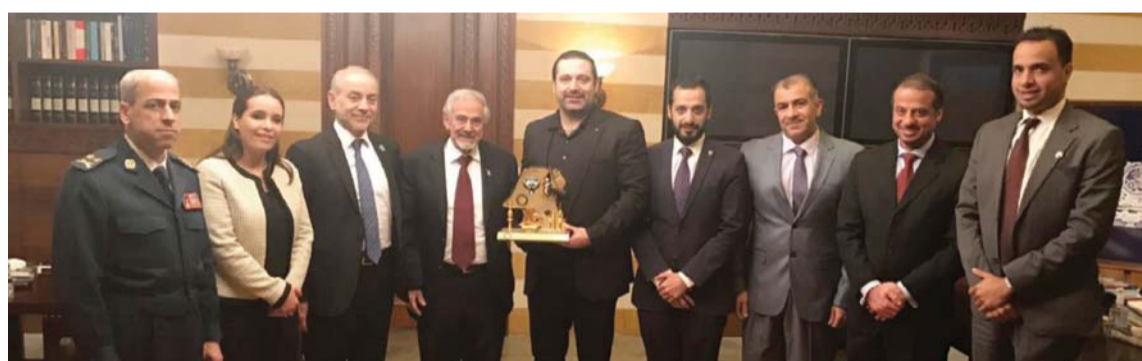
KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi participates in a walkathon organized by the Chest Diseases Hospital yesterday. — KUNA photos

KEEPING HEART DISEASE AT BAY TOP PRIORITY: HEALTH MINISTER CHEST DISEASES HOSPITAL ORGANIZES WALKATHON

KUWAIT: More than 60 percent of the Kuwaiti population lead a sedentary lifestyle, Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said yesterday, citing a survey conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). In a speech to open a walkathon organized by Kuwait's Chest Diseases Hospital, Al-Harbi said that the event aims to shine light on the importance of physical activity to stave off cardiovascular diseases.

Meanwhile, Director of the Chest Diseases Hospital Reem Al-Asousi said that cardiovascular ailments were widespread in the country, where some 1,625 heart surgeries were performed in 2016. She also pointed out that the walkathon elicited an impressive turnout, a testament to rising social awareness on health and wellbeing.

Moreover, Kuwait's Capital Governor retired Lieutenant General Thabet Al-Muahna said that the idea behind the walkathon is to espouse the merits of an active lifestyle. He also underscored that a sedentary lifestyle is often the culprit for failing health, which behooves the government to work closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to promote steps to a healthier lifestyle. The annual walkathon event comprises a slew of activities, including a health exhibition that brings together people of all ages.



BEIRUT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society's Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and other officials meet with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri. — KUNA



Kuwait Red Crescent Society officials pose with Lebanese Red Cross officials after delivering equipment for Syrian refugees with special needs in Lebanon.

KRCS CHIEF, LEBANESE PREMIER EXAMINE HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

BEIRUT: Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri on Saturday revised the society's philanthropic programs in the country namely those intended to relieve Syrian refugees. Dr Sayer said in a statement after the meeting that he examined with the premier the Kuwaiti humanitarian support for the refugees and aid for Lebanon to help it cope with hosting the large number of those who have fled their country for safety.

Hariri meanwhile, expressed gratitude during the meeting to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for supporting Lebanon. He also lauded the assistance provided by the Kuwaiti government and people for the Syrian refugees. Identical thoughts were expressed by the Lebanese Minister of State for Refugees Mu'in Al-Mer'ebi and Major General Mohammad Khair, secretary general of the local supreme relief authority, who attended the meeting with the premier. The meeting also included the deputy chief of the Kuwaiti diplomatic mission, Mohammad Al-

Wugayyan, and officials from the Kuwaiti and Lebanese relief societies.

Special needs

Earlier yesterday, KRCS announced that they had delivered a batch of equipment, consisting of 70 devices, to Syrian refugees with special needs in Lebanon. Dr Sayer said that the donation was made by Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

He expressed gratitude towards KCCI for contributing to this humanitarian mission. Sayer hailed the ongoing cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC), which made it easier for the KRCS to accomplish its goals and to maintain its humanitarian role in supporting the Syrian refugees.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of LRC George Kettaneh said that he appreciated KRCS role in the humanitarian field, pointing out that the success of the projects for the refugees here was a direct outcome of the collaboration between the two bodies. — KUNA

GULF BANK SPONSORS 'ORGANIZATION LEARNING CONFERENCE'

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank was a gold sponsor of the first Organization Learning Conference held under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs. The conference, organized by the Kuwaiti government's Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP), was conducted from Sunday, February 12, 2017 until Tuesday, February 14, 2017 at the Salwa Al-Sabah Hall in Kuwait.

During the opening ceremony of the conference, Gulf Bank was awarded 'Best Training Plan 2016' beating out numerous other private sector companies. This award recognizes the Bank's staff training and educational initiatives, as well as its efforts invested in support of Kuwait's youth. This includes the Bank's Ajjal Graduate Development Program, as well as its corporate social responsibility commitments to INJAZ-Kuwait and other initiatives.

The theme of the conference was 'Effective Training Methods in the Private Sector'. The conference is in line with the State of Kuwait's strategic direction of a sustainable national manpower development plan.

Panels and discussions addressed various issues on the role of the private sector in organizational learning and its impact on economic development, in addition to the strategy needed to encourage work environment and knowledge in institutions, technology and the future of learning to name a few. Top CEOs, MPs, professors, strategic thinking experts and academies' founders were brought together to share their wealth of experience in setting up a sound organizational learning philosophy.

The full day workshop alone comprised of practical ses-

sions that tackled key problems such as the role of organizational learning in preparing leaders in the private sector, and strategic thinking in building the foundation of organizational learning for today and tomorrow.

Major players in the local market were invited to share their success stories and a series of discussions and workshops were conducted with the aim to find creative solutions and fresh ideas for effective learning and development in organizations.



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KUWAIT: Kuwait Times' Deputy Director Adnan Saad (right) and members of the jury pose with paintings submitted for the 'Colours of Australia' competition.



KUWAIT TIMES TO AWARD WINNERS OF 'COLOURS OF AUSTRALIA' COMPETITION

CONTEST SPONSORED BY ACK, VIVA

KUWAIT: A special ceremony will be held on Tuesday, Feb 21, 2017 to award the winners and participants of the 'Colours of Australia' painting competition. The contest was organized by Kuwait Times in collaboration with the Australian Embassy in Kuwait from Dec 12, 2016 till Feb 7, 2017. It saw the participation of over 6,500 students from 105 public, private and special needs' schools,

said Kuwait Times' Deputy Director Adnan Saad. Saad said the competition was open to students of all age categories with the aim of allowing participants to express their feelings and knowledge about the beautiful nature, progress, heritage and traditions of Australia through their paintings. "The competition aims to boost intercultural dialogue through shared knowledge and

expertise, as well as help participants of various ages develop their artistic sense and appreciation," he said, noting that art, namely painting, is an international language understood worldwide even by those who cannot paint or draw.

Saad said the jury selected 10 top winners in each age category - 6-9, 10-13 and 14 plus - in addition to 10

other special awards for creativity, effort, style and topic. Saad noted that the award ceremony due to be held at Crowne Plaza Hotel (Thuraya City Club Lounge) will be sponsored by VIVA and the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), and will be attended by local media, parents, participating school directors, art teachers and supervisors.



LONDON: Kuwaiti designer Muntaha Al-Ajeel receives the award. — KUNA

FASHION AWARD PROPELS DESIGNER TO STARDOM

LONDON: A highly acclaimed Kuwaiti designer, honored for her outstanding work in the world of fashion, said that she was proud to depict a favorable image of Gulf women, who have long been known for their glamour.

Muntaha Al-Ajeel was feted in a lavish ceremony on Friday, where she claimed an award for elegance and leadership in a gala organized by the American Leadership Development Association (ALDA), in conjunction with 'The Leaders International' magazine.

She said that she was ecstatic to have won the prize in an event attended by a bevy of Gulf envoys and British parlia-

mentarians, noting that she would not rest on her laurels and strive to further her fashion brand. Moreover, Ajeel added that her fashion brand is now widespread in cities across the Gulf region, including Doha and Dubai.

The Kuwaiti 'fashionista' pointed out that her efforts to incorporate philanthropy into the world of fashion proved instrumental in her success, thanking His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the continued support. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ambassador to Britain Khaled Al-Duwaisan said that Ajeel has proven that Kuwaiti women are more than capable of rising to the occasion. — KUNA

KUWAIT REGIONAL MEDIA SCHOOL: OFFICIAL



Information Ministry's Undersecretary Tareq Al-Merzem.

KUWAIT: A senior official has likened Kuwait to a 'regional media school' due to its rich history in media and artistic activities and accomplishments. Tareq Eid Al-Merzem, the Information Ministry's Undersecretary, was speaking on the occasion of launching Al-Qurain channel, due on February 25th, coinciding with the national days. Merzem indicated that it was high time to launch a new television channel considering mounting competition in the audio broadcast realm. The new channel is called Al-Qurain, which is Kuwait's old name, because it will transmit programs about the country's culture, heritage and traditions. It will re-broadcast excerpts from Kuwait TV's archive.

Majid Al-Jazzaf, the assistant undersecretary for TV affairs, said TV stations in other GCC countries would supply the new channel, which will be on air 24 hours, with various programs. Talal Al-Haifi, the channel general supervisor, said the channel service is based on work value, heritage, history and entertainment. Al-Qurain TV will transmit via Nilesat (11055) and Arabsat (12523). — KUNA



COMING SOON

ARMY CHIEF TOUTS UAE DEFENSE EXPO

ABU DHABI: The 2017 International Defense Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) showcased the latest defense and security strategies that help prevent recurring lapses, the Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher said yesterday.

The conference comprised lectures given by a bevy of international military specialists, germane to dealing with prevalent security challenges, Khodher said. Moreover, he touted the expo as one of the biggest in the Middle East, where the most reliable defense ploys and maneuverings were put on display.

He also pointed out that Kuwait's participation in this expo is a testament to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's eagerness to build up defense capabilities. Kuwait's military delegation to the event also included Undersecretary of the National Guard Hashem Al-Refai, along with officials from the across the country's military spectrum. — KUNA



ABU DHABI: Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher (second from right) attends The 2017 International Defense Exhibition and Conference (IDEX). — KUNA

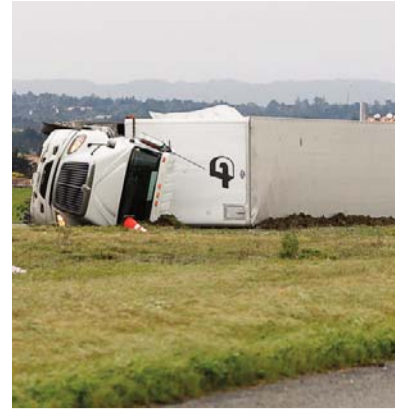
COMMANDER AFFIRMS KEENNESS ON COMFORTING KUWAITIS

ROME: Commander of Carabinieri in northern Italy Vincenzo Coppola has stressed keenness of security apparatuses on comforting and protecting Kuwaiti visitors and residents. Kuwait Consul General in Milan Abdunasser Bu Khadhour visited Coppola on Friday and discussed deep-rooted relations between Kuwait and Italy, said Kuwait Consulate in Milan in a statement.

The two sides also dealt with security situation, and means of promoting mutual cooperation and safeguarding Kuwaiti businessmen and tourists during their visit to Milan, the statement added. The Italian official also voiced his readiness and keenness on helping the consulate and its staff achieve their mission in Milan and northern Italy, it noted. — KUNA



ROME: Commander of Carabinieri in northern Italy Vincenzo Coppola meets with Kuwait's Consul General in Milan Abdunasser Bu Khadhour. — KUNA



Southern California hit by massive storm

INDIAN LEGISLATORS EXCHANGE BLOWS

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BASHIQA BRINGS BACK BOOZE, CLEARS IS HANGOVER

BASHIQA: Surrounded by the ruins of pastel-colored buildings still bearing slogans glorifying the Islamic State's "caliphate", Wissam Ghanem is having a slow day selling beer, vodka and whisky. Iraqi forces expelled the jihadists from his town of Bashiqa, about 20 kilometers northeast of Mosul, in December but it was badly damaged and few people have returned. "Only about 40 families have come back. There's still no electricity nor water and schools haven't reopened yet," Ghanem said in his little shop, wearing the traditional sherwal baggy trousers.

He is a member of the Yazidi minority, which was the dominant community in Bashiqa, before IS swept in two and half years ago. Known for its ethnic and religious diversity, Bashiqa was also considered an Iraqi alcohol capital of sorts, with its countless outlets and its now defunct distillery producing arak, an anise-flavored spirit. Yazidis, who are neither Arabs nor Muslims, are considered worse than heretics by the jihadists, who committed crimes against the minority which the United Nations has described as genocide. Ghanem and his family, who were displaced for more than a year and a half, did not hesitate to return to Bashiqa and reopen their shop when the Kurdish peshmerga fighters defeated IS and took control of the town.

His cousin Jalal Khalil was less fortunate. "Daesh torched my shop, ransacked my house and erased all the alcohol brands on the shopfronts in the name of Islamic values," he said, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "But when we returned we found recently opened beer cans and bottles of alcohol in our homes, opened packets of cigarettes... The jihadists smoked and drank," said Ghanem. A few hundred metres (yards) away, Bassam Abdel Mahmud runs a convenience store that stocks all basic

items. "Alcoholic beverages account for 50 percent of sales," he said.

Sexy posters

Mahmud stays open every day from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm despite the scarcity of customers and freezing temperatures conspiring to make his return to his destroyed hometown even tougher. "There were dozens of jihadist bodies on the streets. Daesh had booby-trapped our homes and blown up our places of worship. The town walls were covered in slogans to the glory of the Islamic State," said Jalal Khalil.

A significant proportion of the town was leveled by the air strikes a US-led coalition conducted to target IS militants and support peshmerga operations. Bashiqa's population fled when IS captured the town during on onslaught on northern Iraq in August 2014, allowing both sides to use weaponry that did not leave much standing. The rubble from demolished homes has been removed from the streets and stacked in tidy piles on the side but most of the vehicles are military or a tractor pulling a tank of water for sale. "We're from Bashiqa but we're still living in the neighboring village where we found shelter," said Murad Khairy, an architecture student.

"With a group of friends we come every Friday to look after our town," he said with a big smile as he enthusiastically rolled white paint over an IS wall inscription. At noon, the first clients started arriving at Ghanem's shop. Nazar Amer, who moved back to Bashiqa with his parents a week earlier, is only 15 but is purchasing six cans of beer to share with his friends. His eyes stray towards pictures pinned above the door from a 2011 promotional calendar by a major European beer brand showing models in bikinis or underwear striking racy poses. Ghanem chuckled. "Daesh made sure not to destroy those posters." —AFP



BASHIQA: Wissam Ghanem, an Iraqi man from the Yazidi community, sells alcohol at his shop in the town of Bashiqa, some 20 kilometers north east of Mosul yesterday. —AFP



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IRAQIS RISK ALL TO SPY ON ISLAMIC STATE IN MOSUL

INFORMANTS FACE GETTING CAUGHT UP IN REVENGE ATTACKS

MOSUL: The Iraqi intelligence agent knew something was wrong. An Islamic State group member working for him as an informant in the city of Mosul called him on his mobile, but he didn't identify himself by the code name they always used in their communications. Then the informant started talking to him about selling his car. The agent played along. Days later, the informant called back and explained: The militants had seen the number on his phone and, always on the hunt for spies, demanded he call it. So he did and pretended he was talking to the guy who sold him his car. Iraqi intelligence has some 300 people working as informants inside the city of Mosul, part of an enormous information-gathering operation unfolding on the sidelines of the intense urban fighting for Mosul, according to officials. They have pinpointed militants' posi-

Associated Press described their operations. They said trust of the security forces among Mosul's residents has been key to their efforts. However, reports of long, arbitrary detentions of men and boys suspected of IS-links risks undermining that trust.

During the Mosul operation, intelligence agencies have built a database of some 18,000 names of suspected IS fighters, according to two Iraqi intelligence officials in Baghdad who have access to the database. Male residents of retaken parts of the city are checked against the list, leading so far to the arrest of 900 people, they said. All the officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to talk to the press. They also refused to give details on the informants for fear of endangering them.

The informants have a variety of motives. Some do it for

money, since some agents pay for information. Others do it out of hatred of IS. One operative was an Iraqi IS member who was beaten because he was caught smoking - a crime under the militants' rule. "That was the first spark," said a Baghdad-based intelligence official in contact with the man. As time went on, the man grew disillusioned. So he started feeding information to intelligence officials.

Intelligence gathering

Another is a 70-year-old man who escaped the militants' suspicions because of his age, the official said. But then after his neighborhood was retaken by Iraqi forces, neigh-

Daesh base

On a recent day on the outskirts of Mosul, an Iraqi major involved in planning the western assault scrolled through messaging apps on his phone. The screen was filled with short texts, dropped pins and links to satellite maps. The messages read simply: "sniper position," "mortar team," and "Daesh base," using the Arabic acronym for the militant group. He and intelligence officials said they vet and cross-check information. Still, the process has been plagued with problems. A colonel in the intelligence services in Baghdad said dozens of trusted informants have turned out to be double agents for IS. He recounted one case of one who provided information for weeks about fighters and headquarters behind IS lines. Last month, he sent in a tip about a roadside bomb. The colonel vetted the tip and sent one of his men in Mosul to investigate. The soldier and the source were not heard from again. "We think the source handed him over to Daesh," he said.

Another intelligence official said he knew of some half dozen informants discovered and killed by IS and still more who stopped sending information, their fate unknown. Key to success has been the concerted effort by security forces to keep support of Mosul's Sunnis, who have resented domination by the Shiite-led government in Baghdad. They long complained of discrimination and of abuses by security forces, something that helped fuel the rise of the Islamic State group. During the Mosul offensive, troops have gone out of their way to help residents and prevent sectarian tensions.

On a recent operation in eastern Mosul, Lt Col Muhanad Al-Timimi and his men were greeted warmly by residents of the Andalus neighborhood. They went door to door asking about IS militants. One resident, Muhammed Ghanim, led the soldiers to a house with a pile of mortars in the garden. "This was where they had their base," he said.

Another, Amar Baroudi, gave the soldiers tea - and names of more than 20 Iraqis fighting for IS. "These people were ignorant and very cruel to us," he said of the militants. "Now I'm proud to help the security forces find them and punish them." That goodwill can be easily strained. Human Rights Watch says it has information indicating thousands have likely been arrested in the Mosul operation. The vast majority have not been allowed to access a lawyer or inform their families where they are, said Belkis Wille, the senior Iraq researcher for HRW. Wille said initially families from Mosul who had a loved one detained by Iraqi forces trusted they would quickly be screened and released, but as months dragged on with no news, that mood is changing. "They had this window to regain the trust," Wille said, "but they're losing that opportunity." — AP



TAL AFAR: Fighters of the Hashed Al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation) paramilitaries prepare defensive positions near the frontline village of Ayn Al-Hisan, on the outskirts of Tal Afar west of Mosul, where Iraqi forces are preparing for the offensive retake the western side of Mosul from Islamic State (IS). — AFP

tions and movements, warned of car bombs or hidden explosives and helped fill a list of names of IS supporters. The work is extremely dangerous. IS militants in Mosul are known to kill at the slightest suspicion of espionage.

Revenge attacks

People caught speaking on mobile phones have been shot by snipers or killed and hung from lampposts, according to accounts from the city. And when Iraqi forces recapture a neighborhood, informants face getting caught up in residents' revenge attacks against militants. More than half a dozen Iraqi intelligence officials interviewed by The

money, since some agents pay for information. Others do it out of hatred of IS. One operative was an Iraqi IS member who was beaten because he was caught smoking - a crime under the militants' rule. "That was the first spark," said a Baghdad-based intelligence official in contact with the man. As time went on, the man grew disillusioned. So he started feeding information to intelligence officials.

JAPAN'S HISTORY REVISIONISTS BOLDER UNDER ABE: ANALYSTS

TOKYO: Successful hotel chain operator Toshio Motoya doesn't mind if his denial of a notorious Japanese World War II military atrocity in China drives customers away. Motoya not only penned a book calling the 1937 Nanjing massacre a lie but proudly displays it in guest rooms of his nationwide chain of APA hotels. In protest, China and South Korea pulled their athletes from his inns for the Asian Winter Games that begin in northern Japan on Sunday.

China has also told its tour businesses to stop cooperating with APA, essentially calling for a boycott. Motoya has told supporters he "will never withdraw" the book under foreign pressure. Such an attitude, analysts say, shows how those who whitewash Japan's modern history are growing more emboldened by what they see as a tacit wink from hawkish Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Now in his fifth year in power, Abe makes no secret of his nationalist views. He says Japan must shake off past constraints, including altering its war-renouncing constitution imposed by American occupiers after World War II. Tamotsu Sugano, an expert on Japanese rightist groups, said hotelier Motoya has close ties with ultra-conservative lobby Nippon Kaigi, or Japan Conference, which has published a dossier calling the Nanjing massacre a "false accusation." And while Abe does not question the massacre, he and more than half his Cabinet ministers hold membership in a parliamentarians' league that supports the group.

"Since he was first elected to parliament, Abe has acted very closely with the core members" of Nippon Kaigi, said Sugano, who has written a book on the organization. Koichi Nakano, a professor of political science at Sophia University in Tokyo, says revisionism has been rising among politicians, the business sector and media since the late 1990s. "Abe has been careful after becoming prime minister, but his firm foothold is these people," Nakano said, calling him "their flag bearer". The prime minister, who once prevaricated over whether Japan's wartime aggression amounted to "invasion", has also appointed cabinet ministers with a revisionist bent.

Rewriting wartime history

And while Abe has stood by previous government apologies for the war, he said ahead of the 70th anniversary of its end in 2015 that future generations should not have to say sorry. China says 300,000 people died in a six-week spree of killing, rape and destruction by the Japanese military that began in December 1937. Some respected academics estimate a lower number of victims, but mainstream scholarship does not question that the incident, known as

the "Rape of Nanking," took place.

Motoya's book, dryly titled "The Real History of Japan: Theoretical Modern History II," uses the word "fabrication" to describe Nanjing. "Revisionists in Japan are seeking to rewrite Japan's shared wartime history in Asia and promoting an exonerating narrative that ignores what happened," Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at Temple University Japan, told AFP in an email. Motoya has also come under fire for anti-Semitic comments made in an in-house magazine placed in his Canada hotels, asserting that Jews "control" key sectors of the United States.

His history book has elicited no condemnation from the Japanese government and little from media or broader society. The nationalist Sankei Shimbun daily has rather applauded the government for "neither pressuring APA hotel nor urging self-restraint". The situation in Japan contrasts with Germany, where opinions expressing sympathy for Nazi rule are broadly considered unacceptable and displaying fascist symbols such as the swastika, or denying the Holocaust, are illegal. Last year, an 87-year-old woman was sentenced to prison for denying that Auschwitz was a death camp.

The lack of vocal criticism over revisionist ideas in Japan, however, does not mean nationalist views resonate widely. Indeed, voters have bet on Abe mainly for his promise to revitalize the economy. Polls show underwhelming support for his pet project of constitutional revision. "The rise of China is stoking anxieties and nationalism in Japan, but nationalism doesn't resonate powerfully among Japanese because they understand what can go wrong," said Temple University's Kingston. — AFP



TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie arrive at Haneda Airport in Tokyo. — AFP



BAGHDAD: Civilians gather near a crater caused by a car bomb at a used car dealer's parking lot in the southwestern al-Bayaa neighborhood, Baghdad, Iraq. The car bomb claimed by the Islamic State group killed scores of people. — AP

ISLAMIC STATE 'BUSINESS MODEL' NEARS COLLAPSE

BAGHDAD: The Islamic State group is hemorrhaging money with every piece of territory it loses, according to a new analysis that found that the group's "business model" is on the path to failure. The analysis released yesterday by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence and the accounting firm EY found that the self-proclaimed caliphate's financial resources have been drained substantially since the days beginning in mid-2014 when it captured banks, oil wells and entire warehouses of weapons as it amassed land.

The report found that Islamic State revenue has declined from up to \$1.9 billion in 2014 to at most \$870 million in 2016. "One of the mistakes that's been made in the past when we were talking about Islamic State was talking about it purely as a terrorist organization."

It is a terrorist organization but it is more than that. It holds territory," said Peter Neumann, director of the center at King's College London. "That also means it has a lot more expenses. It needs to fix roads. It needs to pay teachers. It needs to run health services. It needs to pay for these things that Al-Qaeda never had to." But less money may not make the group less dangerous, the report said.

"We know from the attacks in Paris and Brussels and Berlin that none of them was expensive," Neumann said. Most of the recent attacks in Europe and the US were self-financed by the people that carried them out, with little input or money from the IS leadership in the war zone of Syria and Iraq. Among the top sources of revenue for the Islamic State group were taxes and fees, oil, ransoms, and looting or other extortion. All of those, Neumann said, required newly captured territory to be sus-

tainable and to keep the group's promise of a caliphate. A federal lawsuit filed in December was a prime example of Islamic State's revenues from a combination of seized land, taxes and extortion. According to the court filing, the group received at least 20 percent of the proceeds of items excavated from archaeological sites under its control and taxed antiquities sold in its territories. At one point, a child was kidnapped to force an antiquities merchant to pay, said the lawsuit, which sought the recovery of four ancient artifacts believed to have been put up for sale by the group.

But that income only flows when Islamic State can exert absolute control. According to an update Friday from the global coalition against Islamic State, the group has lost 62 percent of the territory it controlled in Iraq at its height in August 2014 and 30 percent of its territory in Syria. "The business model was also to constantly expand and to plunder the areas that were becoming part of the caliphate. It was essentially a pyramid scheme which relied upon constant expansion," Neumann said.

A US defense official said IS still has enough money to pay its bills, despite the fact that it has lost sources of income and has reduced what it pays foot soldiers. The official said the US certainly has not seen IS' financial situation damaged to the point that it has degraded its ability to conduct external attacks. The official was not authorized to publicly discuss IS and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

Near-daily car bombings in Baghdad indicate that the group's ability to inflict carnage is undiminished in Iraq, even as it cedes ground it once controlled. But Neumann said the fall of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul could be a lethal blow in the long term. — AP

News

in brief

Moroccan politician Boucetta dies at 92

RABAT: The co-founder of Morocco's oldest political party Al-Istiqlal, which played a key role in the country's independence from France and Spain, has died aged 92, the party said yesterday. M'hamed Boucetta, three-time minister and Istiqlal party chief for more than two decades, passed away at his home in Rabat on Friday evening after a long illness, Istiqlal said on its website. He will be buried today in his birthplace, the southern city of Marrakesh, it said. Born in 1925, Boucetta became involved in politics as a student, when Morocco was still under French and Spanish rule. He studied law at France's Sorbonne University then set up his own law firm in Casablanca at the age of 25 before going into politics full time, the party's website said. Istiqlal, which means independence, played a major role in Morocco's fight for independence from French and Spanish rule. Involved in the party since its formation in the 1940s, Boucetta was elected secretary general in 1974.



Mohamed Boucetta, former Moroccan Foreign Minister and secretary general of the Istiqlal (nationalist party)

Roadside bomb kills 12 Afghans including kids

KABUL: The UN has condemned the killing of 12 Afghans, including eight children returning from school, by a roadside bomb in the country's volatile east, the latest in a growing number of civilian casualties. The blast occurred in Paktika province on Friday when their vehicle hit a pressure-plate improvised explosive device planted on a public road, the UN said, adding that four others were wounded. "Children are once again the main victims of these indiscriminate and illegal weapons," said Pernille Karde, the UN's deputy special representative in Afghanistan. "There is a simple message to the perpetrators: stop using these weapons if you are serious about safeguarding Afghanistan's civilians and the country's future generation," Karde said in a statement yesterday. There was no immediate reaction from officials in Paktika. The bombing comes just days after the UN voiced alarm over the killing of 25 civilians in the escalating conflict in southern Helmand province, most of them in US air strikes.

Sri Lanka soldiers arrested for abducting a journalist

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka police arrested an army officer and two soldiers over the abduction and assault on a prominent journalist nine years ago. The suspects were arrested yesterday morning and include a major and two soldiers. They are expected to appear before a judge, said police spokesman Priyantha Jayakody. Their alleged victim, Keith Noyahr, was an associate editor of the English-language weekly The Nation who wrote critical stories about the civil war with Tamil Tiger rebels and the security situation. He was abducted after leaving office in 2008. Following the attack, Noyahr fled the country with his family, saying he feared for his life. The abduction was one of the high profile attacks on journalists under former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, whose nine-year tenure saw dozens of reporters killed, abducted and tortured, forced to disappear or flee the country. Scores more were killed or disappeared in the civil war that ended in 2009 with the defeat of the rebels.

Iran to conduct military drills despite warnings

TEHRAN: Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard is to conduct military drills next week, a senior commander announced yesterday, despite warnings from the United States and fresh sanctions over a ballistic missile test. "The maneuvers called 'Grand Prophet 11' will start Monday and last three days," General Mohammad Pakpour, commander of the force's ground units, told a news conference. He said rockets would be used without specifying which kind. In early February, Iran conducted drills involving short-range missiles at a time of heightened tensions with the United States. The Islamic republic said the exercises were aimed at demonstrating Iran's "complete preparedness to deal with the threats" and "humiliating sanctions" from Washington. US President Donald Trump slapped fresh sanctions against Tehran's weapons procurement network following a ballistic missile test on January 29. "Iran would do well to look at the calendar and realize there's a new president in the Oval Office. And Iran would do well not to test the resolve of this new president," Vice President Mike Pence said earlier this month.

Mexicans form 'human wall' along US border in protest

CIUDAD JUAREZ: Thousands of Mexicans linked arms Friday to form a "human wall" on their country's border with the United States, protesting President Donald Trump's plan to build a massive barrier between the countries. The protest, organized by local authorities and Mexican advocacy groups, brought together people armed with flowers, including politicians, social leaders and crowds of students to the border town Ciudad Juarez—which already is separated by extensive fencing from its American neighbor city El Paso. Protestors hurled slogans at Trump, whose plans to build the wall to keep undocumented immigrants out of the US—and make Mexico foot the bill—has enraged many people here. "The wall is one of the worst ideas," said Carolina Solis, a 31-year-old student. "It won't stop anything—not drugs or migrants." "It's just a symbol of Donald Trump's hatred, the president's racism." Under the watchful eye of US Border Patrol officers, protestors—among them El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser—formed a human barrier of nearly 1.5 kilometers (0.9 miles). Many people on both sides of the border cross it daily, calling one country home while going to work in the other. "Ciudad Juarez and El Paso are one city—we will never be apart," said Leeser, who was born on the Mexican side of the border.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HIT BY MASSIVE STORM; 2 DEAD

HUGE STORM RAVAGES ROADS, OPENING SINKHOLES

LOS ANGELES: A huge Pacific storm parked itself over Southern California and unloaded, ravaging roads, opening sinkholes and leading to the deaths of at least two people. The storm feeding on an atmospheric river of moisture stretching far out into the ocean was at its most fierce late Friday afternoon, dropping over 8 inches of rain in one area, and was expected to last until yesterday afternoon.

The region appeared to dodge any major disasters, but in the desert town of Victorville, several cars were washed down a flooded street, and one man was found dead in a submerged vehicle after others were rescued, San Bernardino County fire spokesman Eric Sherwin said. And in the Sherman Oaks area of Los Angeles, a man was electrocuted when a tree falling in heavy rain downed power lines that hit his car.

Later in the same neighborhood, a sinkhole swallowed two cars, the second on live TV as viewers watched it teeter on the edge before plunging in. Firefighters rescued one person from the first car, and the driver got out of the second before it fell. No one was injured. Inland at the Cajon Pass, the shoulder of Interstate 15 crumbled and sent a parked firetruck spilling over the side, but no one was hurt.

There were several traffic deaths on slick and flooded roads also, but it was difficult to say which were a direct result of the storm. Other forms of travel were tough too. Amtrak canceled its rail trips for a long stretch of the state's southern and central coast, and more than 300 arriving and departing flights were delayed or canceled at Los Angeles International Airport. Winds gusting to 70 mph or more lashed parts of the region. Heavy rains turned creeks and rivers into brown torrents and released slews of mud from hillsides burned barren by wildfires.

"At one point the wind was so strong I'm surprised it didn't blow my windows out," retiree Phoenix Hocking said from Carpinteria. "I now have a pond in my patio. And my dog is starting to grow flippers so he can go out and do his business." Several stretches of freeways and highways were closed by flooding, including very busy arteries like Interstate 5 and Interstate



CALIFORNIA: A large eucalyptus tree toppled onto carport damaging vehicles in Goleta, Calif on Friday, Feb 17, 2017. —AP

10. "It's crazy," said Robin Johnson, an academic adviser at the University of California, Santa Barbara. "It's just pouring down rain. The wind is just going nuts."

In LA's Sun Valley, 10 cars were trapped in swift-moving water on a roadway and 15 people had to be rescued, the Fire Department reported. Using ropes and inflatable boats, firefighters rescued seven people and two dogs from the Sepulveda basin, a recreation and flood-control area along the Los Angeles River. One person was taken to a hospital with a non-life threatening injury. The storm took aim at Southern California but also spread precipitation north into the San Joaquin Valley and up to San Francisco. It was not expected to bring significant rain in the far north where damage to spill-

ways of the Lake Oroville dam forced evacuation of 188,000 people last weekend.

The National Weather Service said it could end up being the strongest storm to hit Southern California since January 1995. Hundreds of trees and dozens of power lines had toppled in the Los Angeles area and about 150,000 customers were without electricity across the region. Another tree smashed a carport and vehicles in the Santa Barbara suburb of Goleta. By evening, Ventura County and northern Los Angeles County had seen 24-hour rain totals of up to 7 1/2 inches, with the San Marcos mountain pass in Santa Barbara County receiving nearly 8 1/2 inches. The city of Duarte, in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains east of Los Angeles, ordered evacuation of 180 homes below a burn scar. — AP



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump hands the pen he used to sign HJ Res 38 to Kevin Hughes, General Manager, Murray Energy Corporation (second from right) in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington. The president is surrounded by coal miners and members of congress including Sen Shelley Moore Capito, R-WVa (right); Rep Bill Johnson, R-Ohio (left) and Rep Jim Renacci, R-Ohio (third from left). —AP

TRUMP CALLS MEDIA 'ENEMY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump ratcheted up his attacks on the media Friday, blasting the press as "the enemy of the American people!" Shortly after landing at his holiday home in Mar-a-Lago, Florida—where he is spending a third consecutive weekend—the president lashed out in 140 characters. "The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!" Trump wrote on Twitter. Trump had tweeted an earlier post which targeted the New York Times, CNN, NBC "and many more" media—and ended with the exclamation "SICK!" But he swiftly deleted that mis- sive before reposting the definitive version adding two more "enemies" to his blacklist.

The 70-year-old Trump built his campaign on criticizing the press as biased. In addition to regularly accusing the media of overstating his setbacks, he has also accused journalists of failing to show sufficient respect for his accomplishments. On Thursday, he launched a long diatribe at a grievance-filled news conference, in which he blamed the media for his one-month-old administration's problems. In four weeks, Trump has seen his national security advisor ousted, a cabinet nominee withdraw, a centerpiece immigration policy fail in the courts and a tidal wave of damaging leaks.

Many US presidents have criticized the press, but Trump's language has more closely echoed remarks leveled by authoritarian leaders around the world. His comments had some observers declaring that the Republican was veering dangerously close to infringing on the constitutionally protected freedom of the press. "I love that part of the 1st Amendment that declares the press the enemy of the American people," conservative commentator SE Cupps wrote on Twitter, adding the hashtag "TrumpAmerica."

Ben Rhodes, a top advisor to former

president Barack Obama, called Trump's criticism of the media "a gift to authoritarians everywhere—will discredit any US efforts to support freedom of the press globally." Many reporters were taken aback by Thursday's press conference, described by some as bizarre, but Trump echoed the words of praise he got from one rightwing commentator and insisted the outing had been a bravura performance. "One of the most effective press conferences I've ever seen!" says Rush Limbaugh. Many agree. Yet FAKE MEDIA calls it differently! Dishonest," Trump wrote on Twitter about an hour after the earlier tweet.

Trump declared during the news conference: "Much of the media in Washington, DC—along with New York, Los Angeles, in particular—speaks not for the people but for the special interests and for those profiting off a very, very obviously broken system. "The press has become so dishonest that if we don't talk about, we are doing a tremendous disservice to the American people. Tremendous disservice. We have to talk to find out what's going on, because the press honestly is out of control. The level of dishonesty is out of control."

Trump's campaign website and the Republican Party on Thursday posted a "Mainstream Media Accountability Survey," asking respondents questions such as: "On which issues does the mainstream media do the worst job of representing Republicans?" It also asks whether the GOP should spend "more time and resources" holding the media accountable. It's not known what it will take—or if it's even possible—for Trump to plug the leaks in his administration, but an ally on Capitol Hill stepped in Friday to help. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes has asked the FBI to investigate the leaks, Politico reported, citing three sources familiar with his request. — AFP

UNDOCUMENTED MOM SEEKS SANCTUARY IN US CHURCH

DENVER: Jeanette Vizguerra fled to the United States from Mexico with her family after her husband was kidnapped three times, once with a gun to his head. Now, nearly 20 years later, she is seeking refuge again, this time in a church to avoid being deported as part of President Trump's crackdown on immigrants living in the country illegally. Vizguerra, 47, and her three young children, who are US citizens, are living in the basement of Denver's First Unitarian Society Church, where she sought sanctuary late Tuesday, rightly suspecting that a stay of her deportation order would not be extended by a judge the following day.

It is uncommon for US authorities to enter places of worship, schools and hospitals to deport undocumented immigrants. Vizguerra, who also has an older daughter, said she was prepared to stay in a makeshift bedroom at the church for as long as it takes—even four years under Trump's presidency—so as not to be separated from her children. "People on the outside think it's hard, they say 'how could you sacrifice so much,'" she said. "But then when I look at my children, they're healthy, they're happy."

"I'm able to be here safely and hug them and they're here alongside me. I'm willing to do whatever it takes. I'm willing to sacrifice what is necessary in order to be with my children." She and her kids live in a small room crowded with their belongings and two beds. The living space includes a kitchen and a playroom for her children, aged 12, 10 and six.

Last week, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested some 680 people across the United States as part of a crackdown by the new administration on the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States. Officials insist the raids

targeted known criminals but rights advocates say people with no serious criminal records were also detained. In Arizona, Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos—an undocumented mother of two American-born children—was deported last week to her native Mexico after checking in with ICE, just like Vizguerra was supposed to do on Wednesday.

'Never lose hope'

Vizguerra worked as a janitor and a union organizer after moving to the US, and is known in the Denver area as an immigration advocate. In 2009, following a routine traffic stop, she was convicted of using a fake social security number she says she needed to continue working. She was also convicted in 2013 on a second misdemeanor charge for illegally entering the country after she traveled to Mexico to see her ailing mother. Although a deportation order was issued in 2011, her lawyer, Hans Meyer, has managed to help Vizguerra get approval to stay in the US. Until now.

On Wednesday, after she failed to show up for her scheduled appointment to check in with ICE, a federal judge denied Vizguerra's request for another stay of her deportation. The mother-of-four said she hopes her case will help galvanize public opinion and spotlight the plight of undocumented people like her who have established roots in the country. "It's time for us to come together and look for solutions," she told AFP through a translator. "We have had to confront these things in the past. "We've overcome harmful laws and policies that harmed us and it's time for us to come together and resist." Vizguerra said she wants all immigrants who may be faced with the same situation to know there are always options and resources. "They should never lose hope," she said. "There is always a reason to fight." — AFP



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TANZANIA THREATENS TO PUBLISH 'LIST OF GAY PEOPLE'

DAR ES SALAAM: Tanzania yesterday announced plans to publish a list of gay people allegedly selling sex online—just days after shutting dozens of AIDS clinics accused of promoting homosexuality. The country's deputy health minister Hamisi Kigwangalla said on Twitter that the government was investigating "the homosexuality syndicate" and would arrest and prosecute those involved in the gay sex business.

"I will publish a list of gay people selling their bodies online. Those who think this campaign is a joke are wrong. The government has long arms and it will arrest all those involved quietly," he wrote. "Once arrested they will help us find others." Gay

male sex is punishable by anything from 30 years to life imprisonment under Tanzanian law, but there is no such ban on lesbian relations.

However politicians have largely ignored the gay community—which was not subject to levels of discrimination seen in other countries such as neighboring Uganda—until a recent spike in anti-gay rhetoric by the government. In July last year, the regional commissioner for the port city of Dar es Salaam, Paul Makonda, announced a crackdown against gays, followed by arrests in clubs.

Some people who have been openly gay on the internet stopped posting after Makonda threatened that police would arrest those who follow them on

social media. Dozens of men suspected of being gay have been detained and taken to hospital for anal exams to confirm their homosexuality.

Also in July last year the government banned the import and sales of sexual lubricants, which Health Minister Umy Mwalimu said encouraged homosexuality which led to the spread of HIV/AIDS. On Thursday government announced it was stopping many privately run health centers from providing AIDS-related services after they were accused of providing services to homosexuals.

"We have suspended the provision of HIV and AIDS services at less than 40 drop-in centers for key

populations operated by NGOs countrywide after it was established that the centers were promoting homosexuality, which is against Tanzania's laws," Mwalimu told a press conference.

Last year she said it was estimated that 23 percent of men who have sex with men in Tanzania were living with HIV/AIDS.

Homosexuality is illegal in 38 of 54 countries in Africa, and is punishable by death in Mauritania, Sudan and Somalia, according to Amnesty International.

Uganda in 2014 tried to impose the death penalty on those found guilty of being homosexual, however the controversial law was later repealed. —AFP



BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (center) speaks during a meeting of the counter-Islamic State Coalition at NATO headquarters in Brussels. — AP

'EXPECT MORE FAKE NEWS' FROM RUSSIA, TOP NATO GENERAL SAYS

RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION GAINING PACE

MUNICH: Russia was behind a false report of a rape by German soldiers in Lithuania that was intended to undermine support for NATO's new eastern force, a senior NATO general said yesterday, warning Europe to expect more such "fake news". Petr Pavel, who heads NATO's military committee, said he also hoped to hold the first telephone call in more than two years with Russia's military chiefs in coming weeks. There he will outline why NATO believes its biggest military build-up since the end of the Cold War is not a threat to the Kremlin.

Pavel, a Czech army general, said a claim that German-speaking men raped a 15-year-old girl last week in a Lithuanian town close to a German army barracks "was not based on real events". An email making the claim was sent to the speaker of Lithuania's parliament on Tuesday. "It is clearly fake news and I believe we should expect more of this," Pavel said in an interview, citing conversations with the German and Lithuanian defense ministers. "Russia is not pleased by the deployment of NATO troops closer to its border so it will likely use legal means, such as propaganda and they will try to influence public opinion against the deployments," Pavel said. "It will get stronger ... but we will be transparent, consistent."

Russia has not responded to NATO's assertion that it was behind the email to the Lithuanian

parliament, as evidence for which Pavel cited NATO intelligence work that monitors suspicious activity and disinformation. European intelligence agencies have said Moscow is also seeking to destabilize governments and influence elections with cyber attacks and fake news. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday she would like to discuss the issue with Russia, but it was questionable whether the problem could be successfully addressed before European elections this year. Last week Russia denied meddling in campaigning for April and May's presidential election in France.

'Potential spillover'

Worried since Russia's 2014 seizure of Ukraine's Crimea that Moscow could invade Poland or the Baltic states, NATO is bolstering its eastern flank with troops, war games and warehouse US equipment ready for a rapid response force of up to 40,000 personnel. The first German troops have arrived in Lithuania, where Berlin is leading a battalion of some 1,000 troops. From around April, Britain will head the deterrent force in Estonia, while Canada is deploying in Latvia and US troops are arriving in Poland and across the Baltics.

Russia says the alliance build-up threatens the stability of central Europe. It has some

330,000 troops amassed in its Western military district around Moscow, NATO believes. Pavel said the Western military alliance NATO has ways, known in military parlance as strategic communication, to counter Russian disinformation and he did not expect Moscow to be able to generate popular protests against the deployments. "The population in these countries are rightly afraid of a continuation of these events, a potential spillover into their countries. They have been asking for years for some kind of visible reassurance," Pavel said, referring to Crimea.

NATO will also reassure Moscow directly that the eastern deterrent is a measured response to Crimea and what NATO says is Russia's direct support for rebels in eastern Ukraine. Pavel said contact between NATO's top commanders and their Russian counterparts could restart in the next few weeks with a telephone call with the chief of the Russian General Staff Valery Gerasimov. Pavel said that could follow with a face-to-face meeting. US General Joseph Dunford, the top US military officer, met Gerasimov in Azerbaijan this week. US Vice President Mike Pence sought on Saturday to assure Europe that Washington would back NATO, but told allies they must pay their fair share to support the alliance. — Reuters

PENCE SAYS, US WILL STAND FIRM WITH EUROPE, NATO

EUROPEAN ALLIES SKEPTICAL, SEE MIXED MESSAGE

MUNICH: US Vice President Mike Pence yesterday brought a message of support for Europe from Donald Trump but failed to wholly reassure allies worried about the new president's stance on Russia and the European Union. In Pence's first major foreign policy address for the Trump administration, the vice president told European leaders and ministers that he spoke for Trump when he promised "unwavering" commitment to the NATO military alliance.

"Today, on behalf of President Trump, I bring you this assurance: the United States of America strongly supports NATO and will be unwavering in our commitment to this transatlantic alliance," Pence told the Munich Security Conference. While Poland's defense minister praised Pence, many others, including France's foreign minister and US lawmakers in Munich, remained skeptical that he had convinced allies that Trump, a former reality TV star, would stand by Europe.

Trump's contradictory remarks on the value of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, skepticism of the 2015 deal to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions and an apparent disregard for the future of the European Union have left Europe fearful for the seven-decade-old US guardianship of the West. French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault on Twitter expressed his disappointment that Pence's speech contained "Not a word on the European Union", although the vice president will take his message to EU headquarters in Brussels tomorrow.

US Senator Chris Murphy, a member of the opposition Democrats, said he saw two rival governments emerging from the Trump administration. Pence, Trump's defense secretary Jim Mattis and his foreign minister Rex Tillerson all delivered messages of reassurance on their debut trip to Europe. But events in Washington, including a free-wheeling news conference Trump gave in which he branded accredited White House reporters "dishonest people", sowed more confusion.

"Looks like we have two governments," Murphy wrote on Twitter from Munich. The vice president "just gave speech about shared values between US and Europe as (the US president) openly wages war on those values." The resignation of Trump's security adviser Michael Flynn over his contacts with Russia on the eve of the US charm offensive in Europe also tarnished the message Pence, Mattis and Tillerson were seeking to send, officials said. US Republican Senator John McCain, a Trump critic, told the conference on Friday that the new president's team was "in disarray," breaking with the American front.

The United States is Europe's biggest trading partner, the biggest foreign investor in the continent and the European Union's partner in almost all foreign policy, as well as the main promoter of European unity for more than sixty years. Pence, citing a trip to Cold War-era West Berlin in his youth, said the new US government would uphold the post-World War Two order. "This is President Trump's promise: we will stand with Europe today and every day, because we are bound together by the same noble ideals - freedom, democracy, justice and the rule of law," Pence said.

Muted applause

While the audience listened intently, Pence received little applause beyond the warm reception he received when he declared his support for NATO. Ayrault, in a speech defending Franco-German leadership in Europe, lauded the virtues of multilateralism at a time of rising nationalism. Trump has promise "America First." "In these difficult conditions, many are attempting to look inward, but this isolationism makes us more vulnerable. We need the opposite," Ayrault said. Pence warned allies they must pay their fair share to support NATO, noting many lack "a clear or credible path" to do so. He employed a tougher tone than Mattis, who delivered a similar but more nuanced message to NATO allies in Brussels this week, diplomats said. — Reuters



BRUSSELS: Saudi Arabia's Deputy Defense Minister Mohammed Alayeeh (center) speaks with US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis (right) during a meeting of the counter-Islamic State Coalition at NATO headquarters in Brussels. — AP

TRUMP'S TEAM IN DISARRAY, US SENATOR MCCAIN TELLS EUROPE

MUNICH: Republican Senator John McCain broke with the reassuring message that US officials visiting Germany have sought to convey on their debut trip to Europe, saying on Friday that the administration of President Donald Trump was in "disarray". McCain, a known Trump critic, told the Munich Security Conference that the resignation of the new president's security adviser Michael Flynn over his contacts with Russia reflected deep problems in Washington. "I think that the Flynn issue obviously is something that shows that in many respects this administration is in disarray and they've got a

lot of work to do," said McCain, even as he praised Trump's defense secretary.

"The president, I think, makes statements (and) on other occasions contradicts himself. So we've learned to watch what the president does as opposed to what he says," he said. European governments have been unsettled by the signals sent by Trump on a range of foreign policy issues ranging from NATO and Russia to Iran, Israel and European integration. The debut trip to Europe of Trump's Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, to a meeting of G20 counterparts in Bonn, went some way to

assuaging concerns as they both took a more traditional US position.

But Trump is wrestling with a growing controversy at home about potential ties between his aides and Russia, which he dismissed on Thursday as a "ruse" and "scam" perpetrated by a hostile news media. Mattis made clear to allies, both at NATO in Brussels and in Munich, that the United States would not retreat from leadership as the European continent grapples with an assertive Russia, wars in eastern and southern Mediterranean countries and attacks by Islamist militants. US Vice President Mike Pence will address the Munich conference on Saturday with a similar message of reassurance. Pence will say that Europe is an "indispensable partner" for the United States, a senior White House foreign policy adviser told reporters.

Mattis told a crowd that included heads of state and more than 70 defense ministers that Trump backed NATO. "President Trump came into office and has thrown now his full support to NATO. He too espouses NATO's need to adapt to today's strategic situation for it to remain credible, capable and relevant," Mattis said.

Mattis said the United States and its European allies had a shared understanding of the challenges ahead. Trump has alarmed allies by expressing admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin. Mattis, however, has spoken out strongly against Russia while in Europe. After talks with NATO allies in Brussels on Thursday, he said that he did not believe it would be possible to collaborate militarily with Moscow, at least for now. The Europeans may need more convincing that Washington stands with it on a range of security issues. "There is still a lot of uncertainty," Sebastian Kurz, Austria's foreign minister, told reporters. "The big topic in Munich is looking to the USA to see which developments to expect next." — Reuters



MUNICH: US Senator John McCain (left) and Polish President Andrzej Duda attend a panel discussion 'The Future of the West: Downfall or Comeback?' during the Munich Security Conference in Munich, southern Germany. — AP

10 YEARS IN JAIL AND STILL NO TRIAL FOR A MURDER SUSPECT

DOTHAN: Kharon Davis has spent nearly 10 years in jail. He's had four sets of attorneys, with two judges on the bench. His co-defendants' cases have wrapped up. Davis has appeared in court for several hearings, and new prosecutors are assigned. But Davis has had no trial. There's been no jury, no verdict, no conviction. Police say he killed a man in a drug deal gone wrong, but he hasn't had his day in court. He's charged with capital murder and could face the death penalty. Trial dates have come and gone, and it's now scheduled for September. By then, 10 years and three months will have passed since the crime.

The Constitution guarantees suspects "the right to a speedy trial." Capital cases often take a year or longer to get to trial, but 10 years is rare - experts call it shocking and say it could be unconstitutional. Prisoner advocates and court-watchers say such delays take an exhaustive toll on suspects stuck behind bars and on victims' families, who are robbed of closure that can come from trials. Davis' mother says her son is innocent but hasn't had the chance to prove it in court, and his health is suffering because of the long stretch in jail. "It's like they snatched up my child, put him in a cage and threw away the key," Chrycynthia Ward Davis said.

Police say Davis, then 22, shot 29-year-old Pete Reeves inside his apartment June 9, 2007. Davis and two friends had gone to the apartment complex to buy marijuana

from someone else, prosecutors say in court records.

But that person wasn't home, so the group went into Reeves' apartment, with an open door, and tried to rob him of money and drugs - that's when Davis shot him, the records say. Davis and his friends, Kevin McCloud and Lorenzo Stacey, were all charged with capital murder.

Held without bond

Stacey went to trial in 2009 and was acquitted; his lawyer suggested Davis pulled the trigger while Stacey was outside, according to local media reports at the time. Two years later, McCloud pleaded guilty to a lesser murder charge, avoiding the death penalty and receiving a 99-year prison sentence. That leaves Davis. He's held without bond - typical in capital cases. As Davis waits, so does the family of Pete Reeves. "I want justice for my parents, for my family," his brother Alvin Reeves said. "Every time it gets set back, it's taken a big toll on them."

A capital case generally takes a year or two from arrest to sentence, said Steve Bright from the Southern Center for Human Rights - and 10 years is the longest wait he's ever heard of. Richard Jaffe, a defense lawyer and author of "Quest for Justice: Defending the Damned," called the delay shocking. "If this were a wealthy person, there's no way it would've taken 10 years to get to trial," he said. —Reuters

SCARED JUNGLE CHILDREN STARVE IN COLOMBIA'S 'PEACE'

PIE DE PATO: The cries of hungry babies pierce the quiet of dawn in the green jungles of northwestern Colombia. For thousands of indigenous families displaced by war, recent peace efforts have brought no relief. Sordid fighting over drugs and land continues. Terrified locals are starving to death. "There is no food here," says John Hamilton Sagugara, a school teacher in Tasi, one of a grouping of local indigenous communities. "Many people have diarrhea, vomiting and fever." With the youngest of her seven children clinging to her breast, Mariluz Dari confirms it. Her baby has been sick for the past three weeks. Naked children with bellies swollen by hunger roam the mud streets between the wooden houses. Local authorities say two children died here last year from gastric and respiratory conditions caused by malnutrition.

Nothing but bananas

Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos won the Nobel Peace Prize last year for reaching an accord with the leftist FARC rebels to end five decades of conflict. His government has also launched peace talks with the country's last remaining rebel group, the leftist National Liberation Army (ELN). But local



PIE DE PATO, Colombia: A Colombian police officer guards the streets of the town of Pie de Pato, department of Choco, western Colombia. — AFP

officials here say that the ELN is still fighting against right-wing paramilitary groups—remnants of a long, many-sided conflict. "There is a really strong presence of ELN here," says Dayro Palacios, an

administrator in Pie de Pato, municipal capital of the surrounding district. "They are seeking control of the drug-trafficking and that means they are constantly fighting for territory."

Fleeing from home

The violence forced hundreds of people to abandon their homes near the Upper Baudo river in 2014 and resettled in other nearby communities. One of them, Tasi community leader Jeison Mecha of the indigenous Embera people, says he eats once a day on average: "nothing but bananas." Despite the peace efforts, "we are still suffering," he says in broken Spanish. The locals used to grow corn, plantains and rice. They used to rear pigs and hens. They have had to abandon it all for the jungle. "We ran in fear," says Sagugara, the school teacher, his golden tooth glinting in the midday sun.

Death threats

Upriver in the village of Puesto Indio, resettled families live crammed in overcrowded huts perched on piles. On January 9, armed guerrillas burst into a meeting of local leaders and threatened to kill them. "They accused us of collaborating with the paramilitaries," said one leader, who has not been named to protect him from reprisals. "We were very, very afraid." The Red Cross has mediated to help calm the conflict in the region

and aid civilians. But for fear of being attacked, locals stay in their settlements, guarded by indigenous strongmen with wooden staves. Stuck there without access to their crops, they are slowly starving. "When people are hungry, there is no peace," Jaime Valderama, a senior official in the Upper Baudo district government.

Caught in crossfire

As well as extortion and reprisals by the fighting sides, locals fear being caught in the crossfire. They say they are also at risk from bombardments by government forces targeting drug-traffickers and illegal mines. The United Nations warned last year that the local Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations needed "urgent" protection. Authorities say there are 6,000 people displaced and 7,000 confined to their homes in the surrounding Choco region for fear of violence. "We cannot guarantee that the peace process will end the violence," says Luis Carlos Arce, governor of Alto Tumando, another settlement of displaced people. "The violence of hunger, its impact on education and health—that is not going to end." — AFP



HYDERABAD: A man arrives holding a chair to join other college students and job-seekers who are studying in an open ground outside the City Central Library in Hyderabad, India. — AP

LIBRARY GROUNDS IN SOUTHERN INDIA TURN INTO A STUDY AREA

HYDERABAD: Nowhere is the search for jobs more desperate than in India, where around 13 million young people enter the job market every year. High levels of unemployment, even among the educated, create immense pressure on young people to find work, and more so for a secure government job.

In the congested southern city of Hyderabad, the open grounds outside the City Central Library turn into a giant outdoor classroom every day when hundreds of young college students and job-seekers, armed with books and other study materials, sit and prepare for examinations till late at night. Many of them bring their own chairs, which they chain overnight to the outer metal grill of the building.

P Venkateshwarlu, a 27-year-old preparing for a government accountant's job, said he found the quiet ambience of the library grounds more conducive for studying. "My room is small and noisy. The serenity of the

library premises helps," Venkateshwarlu said as he set up his chair with a wooden board that would serve as a desk for the next few hours. Several international companies have their India headquarters in Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states. Every year, millions of young people from small towns and villages head to the city in search of education and jobs.

Scores of colleges and cram schools have come up near the library, preparing aspirants in their search for admission to university or a secure job. Among the crowds of students sitting and studying are many young women who find the library a safe place to study. "I find this a calm place to prepare for my examinations," said V Chandrika, a 19-year-old college student who lives in a hostel nearby. "I feel inspired to work hard just by watching everybody else here working till late in the evening." — AP

INDIA LEGISLATORS EXCHANGE BLOWS

NEW CHIEF MINISTER WINS BITTER CONFIDENCE VOTE

CHENNAI: The new Chief Minister of India's Tamil Nadu state won a confidence vote in the regional assembly yesterday, hours after legislators came to blows over a bitterly fought leadership contest. Shouting slogans, legislators disrupted the assembly ahead of the vote, ripping out microphones and breaking chairs as Edappadi Palanisamy, who was recently sworn in as Tamil Nadu's chief minister, sought a majority for his government in a bid to cement his position.

The death of Palanisamy's predecessor Jayalalitha Jayaram triggered a weeks-long battle over succession, with her close aide Sasikala hauled off to prison for graft just as she was on the verge of becoming chief minister of the southern state, clearing the way for Palanisamy to take the reins on Thursday. The 63-year-old secured his majority by winning 122 votes in the 234-member state assembly yesterday, hours after the speaker, who was whisked away to safety by marshals, evicted close to 90 opposition politicians for disrupting proceedings.

Members of the opposition ripped papers, toppled tables and threw microphones to demand a secret ballot that would potentially allow legislators from the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) party to switch sides, according to media reports. Television footage showed legislators storming the well of the house and manhandling each other, injuring at least one member who was carried out on a stretcher.

After he won the vote Palanisamy, along with scores of his supporters, paid an emotional tribute at Jayalalitha's memorial, where he reportedly broke down in tears. The vote was expected to draw a line under the long tussle for power, but a rival AIADMK politician, O Panneerselvam and his supporters vowed to ramp up their fight to form the government. "We may have lost the battle today but the war has begun," Ma Foi K



CHENNAI: All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) party leader Edappadi Palanisamy (center) gestures as he pays his respects at the memorial for former state Chief Minister Jayalalitha Jayaram after being sworn in as the Chief Minister of the state of Tamil Nadu in Chennai. — AFP

Pandiarajan, the state's former education minister, told reporters, without elaborating. Tamil Nadu, one of India's most prosperous states, was plunged into political crisis following Jayalalitha's sudden death in December.

Her close aide Sasikala—a one-time video cassette seller who has never held political office or stood for election—emerged as the heir apparent until she was convicted Tuesday of amassing illegal assets worth \$10 million, barring her from holding office for a decade.

The corruption case dates back to the late 1990s, when Jayalalitha and Sasikala were accused of profiting from the chief minister's office and acquiring wealth beyond their income.

They were jointly accused of illegally amassing bungalows, luxury cars, tea estates and vast quantities of gold. Sasikala had earlier kept several dozen legislators in a resort outside Chennai over fears her opponents' camp might try to poach them in the battle for succession. — AFP



SPIJKENISSE: Supporters of Dutch far-right politician and leader of the Partij Voor De Vrijheid (PVV or Freedom Party) Geert Wilders hold leaflets bearing his image and a slogan which translates as 'Make Netherlands ours again', as he officially launches his parliamentary election campaign in Spijkenisse yesterday. — AFP

WILDERS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN BID TO DE-ISLAMIZE THE NETHERLANDS

ANTI-MUSLIM, ANTI-EU FREEDOM PARTY AHEAD IN POLLS

AMSTERDAM: Geert Wilders kicks off his election campaign yesterday, promising to ban Muslim immigration and close all the mosques in the Netherlands, hoping a global upsurge in populism will propel him to power. Security will be tight at the launch as the politician—who has lived in hiding since the 2004 murder by an Islamist of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh—will make a rare public walkabout. "I want us in government," Wilders said earlier this week, promising to "de-Islamize" the Netherlands with policies that echo, and go further than,

those of US President Donald Trump. His Freedom Party leads in polls with 17 percent, but the pro-business liberals of Prime Minister Mark Rutte are barely a percentage point behind, having closed the gap on Wilders by matching some of his anti-immigration rhetoric and getting an electoral boost from a surging economy. But even if he does win, Wilders would struggle to form a government since most major parties have ruled out joining a coalition with him. The next Dutch parliament is unlikely to support policies such as

quitting the European Union. The launch of the campaign for the March 15 parliamentary election, is in Spijkenisse, a suburb of the Freedom Party stronghold of Rotterdam, the port city that is the Netherlands' most ethnically diverse area, with a large Muslim population.

A victory for Wilders would boost French ally Marine Le Pen and the right-wing Alternative for Germany, both anti-EU right-wing parties that hope to transform European politics in national elections this year. — Reuters

AFTER DRUG WAR CONTRACTING BOOM, MEXICO SECURITY PRISONS STAND IDLE

PAPANTLA: Guards at one of Mexico's high security prisons have to worry much more about criminals breaking in than busting out. Despite a price tag of more than 2 billion pesos (\$98 million), the Papantla prison built for about 2,000 men in the eastern state of Veracruz does not have a single inmate, and only a handful of staff look after the site. So it was not surprising that last year, construction materials were stolen from inside the prison perimeter. "In reality, it's a white elephant," Galidino Diego Perez, the legal representative for Papantla's municipal government, said of the enormous white and gray complex outside of town.

The Papantla facility is the most egregious example of wasted taxpayer money under a 2008 prison-building plan that aimed to solve chronic overcrowding in Mexico's prisons and house an influx of new inmates as security forces cracked down on drug cartels. Under the plan, then-President Felipe Calderon's conservative government gave out some 176 billion pesos (\$8.65 billion) of no-bid contracts to open 15 facilities. But years later, four of them stand only partially built or are still not open.

Public policy experts say the idle prisons reflect inadequate planning by Calderon's government, though the facilities that were opened did help reduce overcrowding in the penal system. People involved in executing Calderon's plan blame current President Enrique Pena Nieto's administration for the delays. Most agree, however, that Mexican taxpayers lost out. More than 2.5 billion pesos of public money has been spent on two of the four idle prisons—Papantla and another in Monclova in the northern state of Coahuila, according to public records. The others are several years

behind schedule and contractors were promised higher future payments under a new plan of partial privatization.

The long delays and wasted money highlight broader problems plaguing government infrastructure programs in Mexico: Congress provides weak oversight of budgets and incoming presidents typically seek to promote their own projects. "The appetite to build is always what ends up motivating them," said Manuel Molano, an economist at the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness, a think tank in Mexico City. "It's badly thought out. It's a chain of stupidities, complications and errors from the legislative power to the executive." Pena Nieto's office declined to comment. The prison agency, OADPRS, declined to respond to questions for this story.

White elephant

The enormous complex at Papantla towers over an impoverished indigenous community, where residents live without drainage and cultivate corn under a hot sun. "How many billions of pesos invested in this project... with so much need, so much poverty that there is," said Jose Simbron, a local farmer. "It's our money. Everyone's taxes are there." The prison was almost completed when Pena Nieto took office in late 2012, said Patricio Patino, who was prisons minister under Calderon.

Now the federal prison authority, which has had five different leaders since Pena Nieto took office, has to decide whether to finish off construction of the Papantla prison and open it or scrap the project. The decaying facility is an added headache for an agency marred by corruption and mismanagement, underscored by the escape from prison of drug lord

Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman in July 2015. In the steel town of Monclova, a facility with space for hundreds of inmates closed just a few years after its inauguration. The ill-fated prison, which cost more than 500 million pesos, will not reopen and is instead slated to be turned into a training center for prison agency staff.

Privatization

Of Calderon's 15 facilities, seven were regular construction contracts but the other eight were part of Mexico's first experiment in privatizing prisons. Under the model, the contractors do not manage security or health care. Instead they had to find land, raise money, build the prisons and then provide key services like food, laundry and toiletries—but not security or medical care—for 20 years.

Two of those are still not open. Major security issues have plagued the prison built by Mexican construction firm Prodemex in Buenavista Tomatlan, Michoacan, an area ravaged by drug gang violence.

A former worker said an architect turned up dead during construction, and local news site La Silla Rota reported that a drug cartel at one point took over the site. Across the country, another prison faced very different problems. In Ramos Arizpe, Coahuila, financial and union troubles weighed on contractor Grupo Tradeco.

A government-mandated location change and decision to turn it into a prison for men instead of for women also held up work. Tradeco's Chairman Federico Martinez said in an interview. Patino, the former minister, said Tradeco was a "disaster" in Coahuila and it had been an error to give the company the contract as it could not meet construction deadlines. — Reuters

PRIVILEGE AND PERIL FOR N KOREA'S FIRST FAMILY

SEOUL: Membership of North Korea's ruling dynasty brings enormous privilege, but for anyone who falls foul of the power games there is a potentially fatal price to pay. The assassination of leader Kim Jong-Un's elder half-brother Jong-Nam in Malaysia is likely to leave other estranged and exiled relatives casting some increasingly anxious glances over their shoulders. Chief among them is the murdered man's son Han-Sol, who lived in exile with his parents in the Chinese territory of Macau, and who with his impeccable bloodlines could be seen as a rival figurehead in a state roiled by bloody purges.

"As Kim Jong-Un's reign of terror continues, some elites in Pyongyang have started to think about possible alternatives," said Koh Young-Hwan, a former North Korean diplomat who is now a Seoul-based commentator on North Korea affairs. "So Kim Jong-Un must have concerns about such figures. Now Jong-Nam is dead, you can say his son is also in great danger." Han-Sol, 21, is believed to have graduated from his studies at the Science Po University in France but his current whereabouts are unknown.

Some analysts believe China was keeping the family under its wing in case it needed a friendly figure to serve as replacement leader in the event of upheaval in the North. "China has been protecting Jong-Nam and his family. Therefore, he was detested all the more by the North's leader," said Kim Sung-Min, a high-profile defector who operates an anti-Pyongyang propaganda radio station in Seoul. Back in 2012, when at school in Bosnia, Han-Sol labeled his uncle Kim Jong-Un a "dictator" in an interview in which he appeared bright and articulate and hinted at a future role in his homeland.

"I have always dreamed one day I will go back and make things better, make it easier for all the people there," he said. "My dad was not really interested in politics," Kim said when asked why his father was passed over for the dynastic succession in favor of his younger brother. Ahn Chan-Il, a former North Korean military official and the head of the World Institute for North Korean Studies in Seoul, said that after the death of Jong-Nam, his son now had a target on his back. "He has remained quiet for a couple of years after criticizing the North once. But now that his father has

been poisoned to death, he will start speaking out again some day to criticize the regime," he said.

Overkill

The Kim family tree is littered with figures who met violent deaths or were forced into exile after being marked out by a regime which has never loosened its grip on power in three generations. Jong-Nam's death evoked the fate of Jang Seong-Taek, a one-time number-two and uncle of the young ruler, who was executed in Pyongyang in 2013 for treason and corruption in a brutal display of who was now in charge. Jang is known to have served as Jong-Nam's protector and provider, bankrolling the playboy's profligate life style. The Malaysian assassination may be straight out of the pages of a spy novel, but North Korea has a long history of spectacular targeted killings including a 1968 commando attack on South Korea's presidential Blue House.

Yi Han-Yong, Kim Jong-Nam's cousin, was shot dead by two assassins in 1997 outside his home near Seoul after he defected in 1982 and published a memoir revealing details of the Kims' private

lives. Others have been sent packing despite posing no apparent challenge. Kim Jong-Un's uncle, 62-year-old Kim Pyong-Il, has been living in quasi-exile for the past three decades, mostly in Eastern Europe. Currently serving as ambassador to the Czech Republic, he was once tipped as the North's next leader. "It's long been a taboo to talk about him and any official who tries to befriend Pyong-Il is subject to punishment," said the defector Kim.

Jong-Un's brother Jong-Chul, 35, is also known to be living in near-exile, travelling abroad and keeping a discreet distance from politics. He was spotted watching British rockstar Eric Clapton perform in London in 2015. South Korea's spy chief said last year that Jong-Chul was living "in internal exile under tight surveillance" and was abusing alcohol and suffering from poor mental health. "Although Jong-Chul is older than Jong-Un, it is highly unlikely that he will play any significant role in the North," said Thae Yong-Ho, former North Korean deputy ambassador to London who defected to the South last year. "Had he been born to an ordinary family, he might have become a good guitarist," he quipped. — AFP



MANILA: Thousands of Roman Catholics march around Manila's Rizal Park to oppose the revival of the death penalty by the Philippine Congress as well as the killings of drug users and drug pushers in the so-called war on drugs by President Rodrigo Duterte at dawn yesterday in Manila, Philippines. — AP

PHILIPPINE CATHOLICS PROTEST DRUG KILLINGS, DEATH PENALTY

CHURCH IN 'SHOW OF FORCE' VS DRUG KILLINGS

MANILA: Thousands of Catholics joined a march with church leaders in Manila yesterday in one of the largest shows of opposition against President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly crackdown against illegal drugs and attempts to revive the death penalty. Police estimated that at least 10,000 people joined the "Walk for Life" march and rally starting at dawn at Rizal Park, carrying placards that read "Choose life" and "No to death penalty." Organizers gave a larger estimate of the crowd. It's the latest sign of the Roman Catholic Church's increasing activism against a government crackdown that has left thousands of drug suspects dead and efforts by pro-Duterte legislators to reimpose capital punishment as early as next month.

Catholic bishops expressed their deep concern over the drug killings in a recent statement read in churches across the country. Archbishop Socrates Villegas, who heads the country's bishops, said no civilized country should allow such illegal actions to continue unabated. "They ought to be judged by the court of law and never by the extrajudicial means," Villegas said in a

statement, where he also hit at efforts by legislators to reimpose the death penalty.

Duterte, a longtime city mayor before being elected to the presidency in May on an anti-crime platform, has asked Congress to revive the death penalty, preferably by public hanging. That, along with his pro-birth control stance and threats to kill criminals, has put him on a collision course with the church in Asia's largest Catholic nation.

"Execution is murder," Villegas said. "We cannot teach that killing is wrong by killing those who kill." Duterte has been antagonistic to the influential church, once calling it "the most hypocritical institution" and lashing out at some local bishops he accused of corruption and sexual abuse. The foul-mouthed president shocked Roman Catholics two years ago when he fired off an expletive while expressing his disgust over a monstrous traffic jam that trapped him while Pope Francis was visiting Manila.

He later apologized after Filipino bishops expressed shock and outrage. Sen Leila de Lima, one of the most vocal critics of Duterte's

bloody anti-drug campaign, joined yesterday's rally. State prosecutors charged her in court Friday for allegedly receiving bribes from detained drug lords, an allegation she has staunchly denied. The prosecutors alleged that de Lima, while she was justice secretary under President Benigno Aquino, received huge bribes from detained drug lords to finance her senatorial campaign last year.

The bribes were allegedly solicited by her former driver and lover, who was also charged. If judges, who would handle the three separate complaints, assess that there are strong evidence against her, they may decide to issue a warrant for her arrest. When she was a top human rights official, de Lima tried unsuccessfully to have Duterte prosecuted when he was still a city mayor for unlawful deaths occurring during his deadly anti-drug crackdown. De Lima told reporters at the rally that the criminal charges were meant to intimidate her, but said Duterte's administration would fail. "I will continue to fight. They cannot silence me," she said. — AP

NORTH KOREA AND MALAYSIA IN BITTER BATTLE OVER KIM'S BODY

KUALA LUMPUR: A battle between North Korea and Malaysia for the body of Kim Jong-Un's murdered brother intensified yesterday, as foreign police said one of the suspected killers believed she was taking part in a reality TV prank. The body of Kim Jong-Nam has been held in a Kuala Lumpur morgue since he was assassinated in a Cold War-style killing at the capital's international airport on Monday.

Pyongyang accused Malaysia of conspiring with its enemies and said it would reject any results of a post-mortem examination carried out by local police, after Malaysia rejected demands to return the remains. "The Malaysian side forced the post-mortem without our permission and witnessing. We will categorically reject the result of the post-mortem conducted unilaterally excluding our attendance," the North Korean ambassador told reporters gathered outside the morgue shortly before midnight on Friday.

The comments were the first official remarks from the country since the killing, but ambassador Kang Chol stopped short of identifying Jong-Nam or touching on his cause of death. North Korean state media has remained silent on the murder, which Seoul says was carried out by poison-wielding female agents working for Pyongyang. The ambassador earlier met with Malaysian police, demanding the release of the body without success, according to an English transcript of the envoy's comments distributed by an aide.

"They are colluding with the hostile forces towards us who are desperate to harm us of malice," the transcript said, suggesting South Korea was trying to defame the North in a bid to distract from a corrup-

tion scandal at home. Yesterday Malaysia's police chief said Pyongyang would have to wait for the investigation to be completed, which would include a family member sending a DNA sample to identify the body. "While in Malaysia, everyone has to obey and follow our rules and regulations... that includes North Korea," Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar told national news agency Bernama.

A 'TV show prank'

Detectives in Kuala Lumpur have arrested a 25-year-old Indonesian woman named Siti Aishah and her Malaysian boyfriend, along with a woman carrying a Vietnamese passport that identified her as Doan Thi Huong, 28. Indonesian Police Chief Tito Karnavian said he had information from Malaysia that Aishah was tricked into thinking she was simply taking part in pranks for a TV show like "Just For Laughs". "Probably she was just used-she did not realize it was an assassination attempt," he was quoted as saying in local media.

He said Aishah was persuaded to carry out similar pranks-spraying a substance into someone's eyes-with another woman on three or four previous occasions in exchange for money. But on the final occasion, it involved an attack on Kim Jong-Nam with "hazardous materials," he said. Aishah's family in Jakarta expressed shock over her arrest, with her former father-in-law saying there was "no way such a nice person would do that." "I could not believe it because she was a good person," said Tija Liang Kiong, 56. Vietnam have said they are co-operating with Malaysian authorities. The drama erupted on Monday morning as Jong-Nam prepared to board a plane to Macau. — AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: A man arranges the newspaper to the rack inside a mini mart in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia yesterday. North Korea said it will reject the results of an autopsy on its leader's estranged half brother, the victim of an apparent assassination this week at an airport in Malaysia. Pyongyang's ambassador said Malaysian officials may be "trying to conceal something" and "colluding with hostile forces." — AP

MALAYSIA ARRESTS NORTH KOREAN IN KIM'S KILLING

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian police said yesterday they had arrested a North Korean man over the assassination of Kim Jong-Un's brother, as relations between Pyongyang and Kuala Lumpur nosedived in a battle for his body. A 46-year-old was arrested on Friday evening with documents that identified him as North Korean citizen Ri Jong Chol, a police statement said, making him the first person from the North to be detained over the case. Kim Jong-Nam died after an unidentified liquid was sprayed in his face at Kuala Lumpur international airport on Monday, in an attack Seoul says was carried out by female agents on the orders of Pyongyang.

Local officers have already arrested a woman with a Vietnamese passport and a Malaysian man, as well as an Indonesian woman who foreign police said could have got involved in the murder thinking it was a reality TV prank. Jong-Nam's body has been held in a Kuala Lumpur morgue since an autopsy on Wednesday, the results of which could take up to two weeks to come through, Malaysia's health minister said. After Malaysia ignored demands to return the remains, Pyongyang accused Kuala Lumpur of conspiring with its enemies and said it would reject whatever results came from the post-mortem.

"The Malaysian side forced the post-mortem without our permission and witnessing. We will categorically reject the result of the post-mortem conducted unilaterally excluding our attendance," the North Korean ambassador told reporters gathered outside the morgue on Friday. Ambassador Kang Chol's comments were the first official remarks from the country since the killing, while North Korean state media has remained silent on the murder. The ambassador said he had met Malaysian police, demanding the release of the body without success, according to an English-language transcript of his speech.

"They are colluding with the hostile forces towards us who are desperate to harm us of malice," the transcript said, suggesting South Korea was trying to defame the North in a bid to distract from a corruption scandal at home. Malaysia's top health official said yesterday that the government was "not bothered" by the complaint and that Pyongyang would have to wait as long as it took for the autopsy report to be published. "Normally it will take about two weeks to find out what was the cause of death...Until we find something conclusive we will not be able to release the report," S. Subramaniam said. — AFP

WAS IT BROTHER? LOVER? OR CRIME GANG? N KOREAN RUMORS ABOUND

SEOUL: As Malaysian police continue their inquiry into the death of Kim Jong Nam, the out-cast half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, there's plenty of speculation surrounding what seems one of the stranger killings the world has recently seen. North Korea killed Kim Jong Nam because he planned to create an exile government around defectors, says one rumor. Kim Jong Un was furious after learning about secret Chinese plans to throne his estranged sibling in Pyongyang if something happens to him, says another.

Or maybe Pyongyang wasn't involved at all. Perhaps, Kim Jong Nam, known for his carefree lifestyle and gambling habits, angered crime organizations over money problems and that got him killed, say some online arguments. Some theories are more bizarre. South Korean newspapers have reported on rumors making rounds on the Chinese internet that impeached South Korean President Park Geun-hye, who faces a court ruling on whether she should permanently step down over a corruption scandal or be reinstated, plotted Kim's death to create a distraction.

South Korea's spy agency, which has consistently described Kim Jong Un as an irrational and unstable dictator, argues that he killed a non-threatening sibling out of "paranoia." The fuming North Korean ambassador to Kuala Lumpur says the country will reject the autopsy results on Kim Jong Nam because Malaysian officials may be "trying to conceal something" and "colluding with hostile forces."

While imaginations run freely, most South Korean experts think there's a straightforward explanation behind the alleged assassination of Kim, who appears to have been killed by two women at a Kuala Lumpur airport tomorrow in what has been suspected as a poison attack. Kim Jong Un, who has executed or purged a slew of high-level officials since taking power in 2011, most likely made another move to remove a potential challenger to his power, the experts say. Kim Jong Nam had been the only member of

the Kim clan who regularly talked to foreign journalists and sometimes went so far as to openly criticize the country's hereditary power transfer. North Korea has been seen as tightening control on its high-profile individuals overseas since the defection of Thae Yong Ho, a senior North Korean diplomat in London who arrived in South Korea last year. There's also a possibility that Kim Jong Nam, who continued to stay in Macau and the Chinese mainland, was taken out because he disobeyed orders to return home, according to some experts. — AP



PANMUNJOM: North Korean soldiers look on as US soldiers (front) stand guard at the joint security area during a visit of Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop at the truce village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized zone (DMZ) dividing the two Koreas. — AFP

TRUMP SONS OPEN GOLF CLUB IN GLITZY DUBAI

Continued from Page 1

Earlier yesterday, Eric and Donald Jr attended a private luncheon at DAMAC chairman Hussain Sajwani's mansion on Dubai's man-made Palm Jumeirah archipelago, speaking underneath an ornamental clock whose face spelled "SAJWANI VILLA". "It's rare in the world where you can be such great friends with a partner and that's what we have right here," Eric Trump said. "Hussain, he is an amazing person and DAMAC is an amazing company." The two Trump brothers met with the over 80 people gathered at the event, attendee Niraj Masand told AP. They were "expressing their gratitude to Mr Sajwani, who is the chairman of DAMAC, and sort of expressing their happiness to meet with all the partners," said Masand, a director of the real estate firm Banke International.

Guests wearing traditional dress, including white gandouras and black abayas, mingled with others in suits and fur wraps. While the deal predates Trump's 2016 election, the golf club's opening coincides with controversy over the policies and politics of the tycoon president, and potential conflicts of interest. The correlation between wealth and politics is nothing new, and American presidents are not required by law to give up their investments or businesses.

Critics have raised questions over the ethics and constitutionality of Trump's ties to governments and business executives. Trump says he has transferred control of the Trump Organization to his two eldest sons, and the business empire has said it will not pursue new deals outside the United States. But despite calls by ethics watchdogs, the president has resisted complete divestment from his businesses.

Watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) on Jan 23 filed a lawsuit citing payments from guests at his hotels - and golf courses - as well as leases with foreign governments as forms of cash and favors. The suit, which does not seek monetary damages, cites the emoluments clause, a scantily noticed passage in the US constitution. The clause originally took aim at then-ambassador Benjamin Franklin, later a founding father of the United States, after he accepted a customary bejewelled snuffbox from French monarch Louis XVI. It holds that "no Person holding any Office... shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present" from any foreign state.

At a press conference in January, Trump, at the time still president-elect, said he had rejected a new \$2-billion deal in Dubai with DAMAC - as a personal and not official move. "I didn't have to turn it down," he said. "But I have a no-conflict-of-interest provision as president." The Dubai golf course, however, has raised concerns not only over a potential conflict of interest but also Trump's policies on Muslim-majority countries.

Trump's ties to Sajwani, whose \$3.2-billion net worth last year landed him on Forbes' list of world billionaires,

first sparked controversy during the Republican outsider's presidential campaign. Trump's 2015 call for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims" entering the US led major regional retailer "Lifestyle" to pull Trump-branded home decor items from its shelves out of respect for its customers. DAMAC Properties, which declined to comment on Trump's remarks, said at the time that the golf club development would remain unaffected.

And it has resulted in an 18-hole golf course designed by Gil Hanse, the architect behind the Rio 2016 Olympics course. A 2014 video posted on YouTube channel "Arabian Golf TV" shows Trump in his trademark red tie swinging a club in slow motion before flashing two thumbs up, flanked by Sajwani and a smiling Ivanka Trump, his daughter. On Nov 25, two weeks after Trump's against-the-odds electoral triumph, Sajwani posted on his Instagram a shot of the three on the golfing green apparently taken the same day.

Sajwani, an Emirati whom Forbes has called "the Donald of Dubai", himself received a warm shout-out at Trump's New Year's Eve bash. "Hussain and the whole family, the most beautiful people, are here from Dubai tonight and they're seeing it and they love it," Trump said from the stage at his Mar-a-Lago club in sunny Florida. The United Arab Emirates was not among the seven mostly Muslim countries named on Trump's now-suspended travel ban.

Trips abroad by Trump's two sons are expected to continue. Before Trump's inauguration, his son Eric visited the Trump Tower Punta del Este in Uruguay to check on the tower's progress and personally greet buyers. A Trump hotel in Vancouver, British Columbia, is also expected to soon host Trump's sons.

Separately, Trump's defense secretary arrived in the UAE yesterday for talks with one of Washington's closest allies in the Middle East. Jim Mattis, on his debut trip to the region as Pentagon chief, was expected to meet Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahayan and US embassy representatives. US officials have not disclosed details about his agenda.

In late January, Trump and the crown prince spoke by telephone and the White House said they had discussed a proposal for safe zones for Syrian refugees displaced by the conflict. Mattis, a retired Marine general who is reviewing US war plans against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, is a familiar figure to Gulf Arab rulers. A former leader of Central Command, which oversees US military operations in the region, Mattis said in his Senate confirmation hearings that Iran was "the biggest destabilizing force in the Middle East and its policies are contrary to our interests."

Such views play well with Gulf Arabs, who hope Trump's administration will check what they see as a surge of Iranian support for paramilitary allies in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon and for fellow Shiites in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia's oil-producing Eastern Province. The UAE is also a key US ally in the fight against Al-Qaeda in Yemen.— Agencies

'BLIND SHEIKH' OMAR ABDEL RAHMAN DIES IN US PRISON

WASHINGTON: "Blind sheikh" Omar Abdel Rahman, the Egyptian-born cleric linked to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, died yesterday of natural causes in a US prison facility, the Justice Department said. He was 78 years old. Abdel Rahman was serving a life sentence on several terrorism-related charges at a Federal Medical Center in Butner, North Carolina. His death came after a long battle with diabetes and coronary artery disease, the Bureau of Prisons said.

The sheikh was seen as a jihadist spiritual leader even after his conviction in 1995 for conspiring to bomb New York landmarks, including the United Nations, and assassinate the former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Abdel Rahman, who sported a long gray beard and signature sunglasses, led the militant Al-Gamaa al-Islamiya group in

Egypt before emigrating to the United States. Born in 1938, he preached a radical brand of Islam and was seen as having inspired the 1993 bombing of New York's World Trade Center, which left six people dead and injured around 1,000 more. His son Mohamed Omar was informed of the death and told AFP the family had contacted the American and Egyptian authorities to repatriate the late cleric's body.

Abdel Rahman had been imprisoned in North Carolina since 2007. He was hospitalized in late 2006 in the state of Missouri after he began to spit blood and was given a blood transfusion. In 2012, Egyptian Islamist President Mohamed Morsi called for Abdel Rahman's transfer to Egypt for "humanitarian reasons," asking for a "prisoner exchange" with the United States.— AFP

WASHINGTON PUSHES ALLIANCE OF ISRAEL...

Continued from Page 1

"That's something that may have a new opportunity because of the fact that many of the Arab countries now see Israel not as their enemy but as their ally in confronting the large threat of Iran and (the Islamic State group) - that is, the twin Islamic forces that threaten all of us. That is bringing us closer together and may also help pave avenues for peace."

Trump affirmed that the United States would work "very, very diligently" on a "great peace deal" - with his son-in-law Jared Kushner, who is Jewish, expected to lead the American effort. The US president said Netanyahu's proposal for a regional alliance was something that "hasn't been discussed before," noting it would take in "many, many countries and it would cover a very large territory."

More specifically, Trump's pick for US ambassador to Israel, lawyer David Friedman, has pushed for cooperation between Israel and Sunni Arab nations in opposing Shiite Iran. "The Gulf states, the Egyptians, the Jordanians and the Israelis are all united, perhaps inadvertently so, but they're all united in a common concern about Iran. Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism," Friedman said during his Senate confirmation hearing, during which he was grilled on his rightwing views.

US experts said the alignment of interests between Israel and Sunni Arab countries against the Iranian regime should be supported by the Trump administration, which has already broken from the policies of predecessor Barack Obama who had signed the landmark deal giving Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear ambitions. "Trump has the potential to pull off a major diplomatic coup between Israel and the Gulf states in countering Iran's threat," Jonathan

Schanzer, vice president of research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told AFP.

So sensitive is the issue that Israeli authorities rarely - if ever - specifically name Arab countries when speaking publicly on the subject, with the exception of Egypt and Jordan which have peace deals with Israel and maintain diplomatic relations. Gulf states like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar do not have diplomatic relations with Israel - although that does not prevent them from sharing informal links.

Retired Saudi general Anwar Eshki met Israel's then-foreign ministry director general Dore Gold in Jerusalem last July. The pair shared a stage a year earlier at a Washington think tank. At the time, they spoke of the peace process, stalled since 2014, and pledged to reinvigorate the Arab Peace Initiative. Also known as the "Saudi initiative", the 2002 plan called for normalization of relations between Israel and Arab states in exchange for a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. The initiative was revived in July 2013 by then-US secretary of state John Kerry, prior to his mediating Israeli-Palestinian talks nine months later.

But now the Trump administration has an opportunity to push for the proposed US-Israeli-Sunni Arab alliance, said Robert Satloff, executive director of conservative think tank the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Israel's real strategic need from Washington goes far beyond the bilateral relationship. What Israel - along with other longstanding US allies in the region - really needs is a reassertion of American leadership after a period of perceived indifference by the Obama administration," he said. Israeli Minister Ayoub Kara, in a tweet, welcomed "the expected regional peace summit of Arab leaders in Washington... This is the new Trump-Netanyahu Middle East". — AFP

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Focus

TRUMP STUMBLES INTO A MIDDLE EAST MINIFIELD

As he stood on the podium next to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, US President Donald Trump said he was open to new ideas that would bring Middle East peace. With that, he opened the door to a whole new maze of complexity and risk. By uttering the phrase "one-state" - rather than a two-state solution to the conflict, the bedrock of international diplomacy for two decades - he went where past presidents and most leaders feared to tread, knowing the loaded implications.

The creation of a binational or single state that encompasses both Israel and Palestinian territories is not a viable option for most Israelis and Palestinians for religious, political and demographic reasons. "So I'm looking at two-state and one-state, and I like the one that both parties like," Trump said with an almost off-hand air, emphasizing that for him the main aim was "to see a deal." "I'm very happy with the one that both parties like. I can live with either one."

The problem is the parties - Israelis and Palestinians - may find it just as hard, if not harder, to live with a one-state solution as two states side-by-side, depending on how it is defined and what ideals underpin it. While not the taboo it was a few years ago - Israel's president is an advocate and many younger Palestinians discuss the concept - the idea of one state is freighted with questions of identity, ethnicity, religion and democracy that cut to the essence of the conflict.

Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian chief negotiator, suggested the overriding risk was that Israel ended up holding the upper hand, creating one state with two separate systems - one for Jews and one for Arabs - mirroring South Africa's apartheid.

One secular state?

With efforts to forge a two-state solution having largely gone nowhere in the last 20 years, despite exhaustive international effort, it is natural that leaders and diplomats begin to examine other possibilities. In that respect, one state can seem a simpler, cleaner and more elegant solution. But at the heart of Israel's identity, from before its creation nearly 70 years ago, is the idea that it is a nation for the Jewish people. One of Netanyahu's core and unwavering demands is that Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

If one state is created from the estimated 16 million people now living in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, it would be extremely difficult for it to remain both Jewish and democratic - nearly half the population is Muslim or Christian, and the Palestinian birthrate is rising more rapidly than the Israeli one. Academics and free-thinkers on the left and the right often circulate proposals for a single, binational state, or some similar formulation, but in opponents' minds that quickly raises questions about the primacy of law and language, and whether the Palestinians, who have so long lived without a state, would have equal billing within a binational structure.

Beyond the many profound issues of identity lie simple-sounding but thorny questions: What would the single state be called? Could it be secular and Jewish? Would Muslims from other states be free to visit? Which legal system would apply? Would Arab or Muslim countries recognize the new entity?

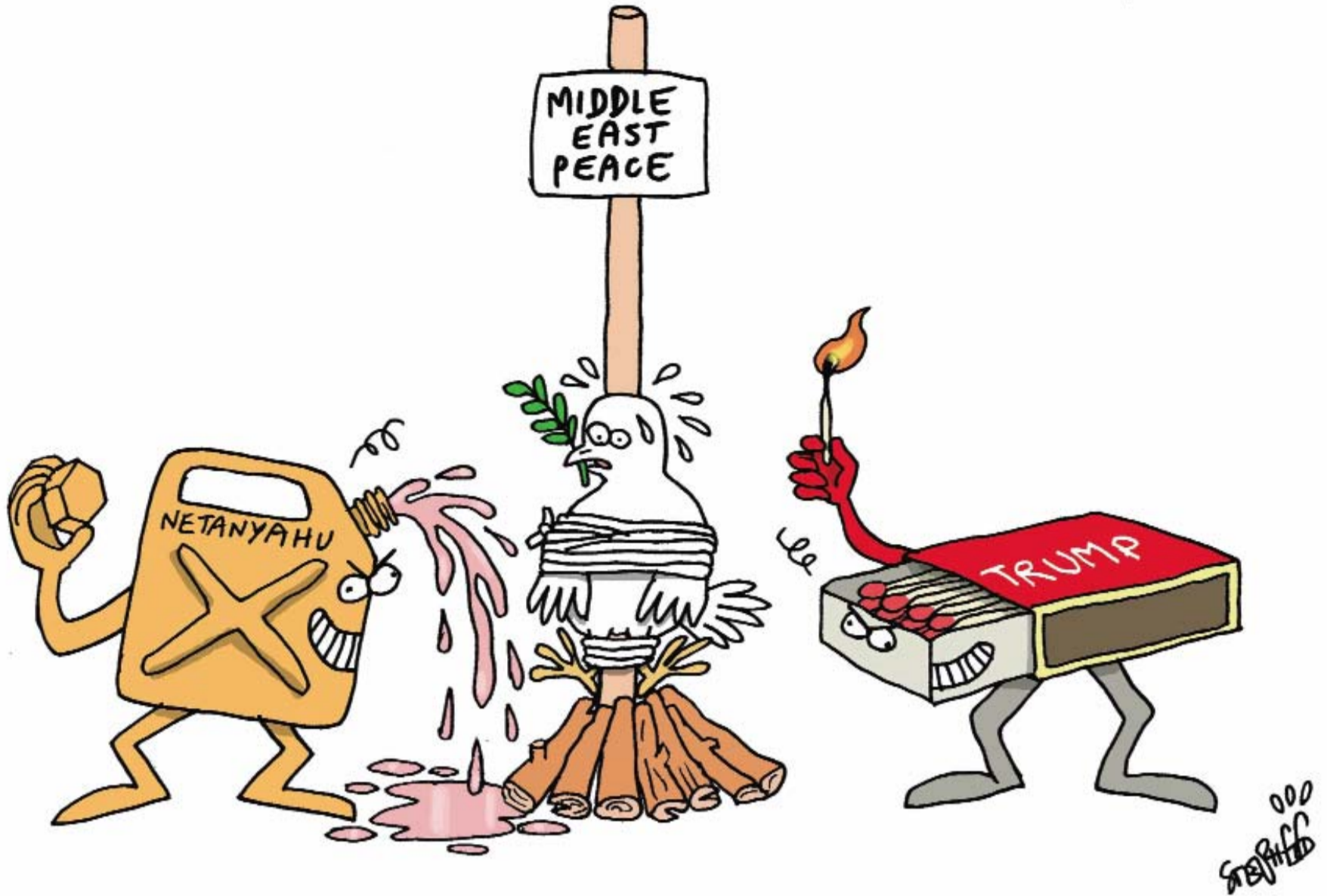
Different meanings

To many settlers on Israel's right, the term "one state" can mean Israeli sovereignty over the entire West Bank, while to some on the left in Europe and the United States, it can be a euphemism for a binational state with no Israel, said David Makovsky, director of the Project on the Middle East Peace Process at the Washington Institute. "Whoever uses this term needs to be very careful in how it is used since it means opposite approaches," he said. "Polls show only a minority of Israelis and Palestinians favor either definition of one state."

A poll on Thursday showed exactly that. The survey of 2,400 Israelis and Palestinians conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center at Tel Aviv University and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah showed 55 percent of Israelis and 44 percent of Palestinians favor a two-state solution. The survey showed far lower support for a one-state outcome.

That is perhaps one reason why Netanyahu was careful not to reference a one-state solution at the news conference. He knows that buried behind the one-state label are concepts that could undermine the essence of an independent Jewish state, while not being attractive to the Palestinians either. — Reuters

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Washington Watch

AN EXERCISE IN FAWNING, FANTASY, INCITEMENT

By Dr James J Zogby

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with US President Donald Trump was overshadowed by dramatic and unsettling events that preceded and followed their perfectly bizarre press conference.

The week began with the forced resignation of White House National Security Adviser Michael Flynn and revelations of extensive communications between Trump campaign aides and Russian intelligence - revealing a White House in disarray, operating under a dark cloud of suspicion. The day after the Trump/Netanyahu joint press event was dominated by reactions to Trump's solo press conference - an unprecedented incoherent and, at times, paranoid affair that left many commentators questioning the president's stability.

As a result of growing concerns with Trump's Russian connections and his out-of-control behavior when challenged by reporters or other American institutions (intelligence services, judiciary, or political opponents), the Netanyahu visit became a one-day news story and the content of the Trump/Netanyahu press event escaped needed scrutiny.

Their press conference was, as expected, a love fest. During Netanyahu's time as prime minister, he has had to deal with Democratic Presidents (Clinton and Obama) who have pressed him (albeit, ever so gently) to make concessions in order to advance peace with the Palestinians. Now he has a Republican president who he has every reason to believe sees eye to eye with him on most issues. For his part, Trump, who made opposition to what he characterized as Obama's "weak" policies toward Israel, Iran, and Islam major issues in his campaign's foreign policy agenda, sees Netanyahu as a "soul mate".

Shameless

The press event featured an excess of embarrassing fawning. US leaders often heap praise on Israel, committing themselves to an "unbreakable", "unshakable" bond. Trump upped the ante referring to Israel as: "a cherished ally", "an open democracy" that has "advanced the causes of human freedom, dignity, and peace" and claimed that the US and Israel are "two nations that cherish the value of human life".

Netanyahu repaid the unwarranted compliments with undeserved tributes. He praised Trump's dealing with "Islamic extremism" saying "you've shown great clarity and courage in confronting this challenge head on". And, in response to a question about the extent to which Trump's presidential campaign was supported by and gave a platform to anti-Semitic elements, Netanyahu absolved the US President saying that "there is no greater supporter of the Jewish people and the Jewish State than President Donald Trump".

After this shameless exercise in "log-rolling", the two settled down to presenting their views of the future of peace in the region - a discussion that included equal doses of hallucination, fantasy, and anti-Palestinian incitement.

Trump insisted that he wants to make a "great deal" that will bring peace to the region. He was initially vague about what that would entail, but after being coaxed by Netanyahu it became clear that both leaders believe that they can convert the Arab World's concern with Iran and ISIS into an alliance that would create a regional peace agreement. Both suggested that some Arab States are already working covertly with Israel to confront both threats. This being the case, they posited that this shared interest can be transformed into an open alliance that would make peace with Israel, on Israel's terms.

This is sheer fantasy. While it is true that Arabs are concerned with both threats - hatred or fear of Iran or IS does not translate into an overt alliance with Israel over the backs of the Palestinian people. Such an arrangement has long been an Israeli dream, but it ignores, as former Secretary of State John Kerry has noted, deeply felt Arab attachment to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Antipathy

As my polling clearly demonstrates, Israeli behavior toward the Palestinians has not only increased Arab antipathy toward Israel, it has also significantly eroded the Arab people's support for the Arab Peace Initiative. Given this, it is more likely that Arab cooperation with Israel, that is perceived to undercut Palestinian rights, would more likely play into the hands of Iran and extremist movements who would use it to inflame passions against such an arrangement.

Much was made of President Trump's statement that he didn't care whether peace involved two-states or one state, not enough attention was given to why it was said and what it would ultimately mean. Netanyahu has no interest in seeing the creation of an independent Palestinian state. He has ambitions for a Greater Israel - but wants to proceed gradually by taking more land, building more settlements, and discrediting and weakening moderate Palestinian leadership in order to make annexation an eventual "fact". While he has succeeded, to some extent, in these efforts, the Palestinian people's aspirations for justice, freedom, and self-determination have not been extinguished. Nor has Arab support for the Palestinians been diminished.

Netanyahu has so empowered the Israeli right, that he has become its captive. As much as he resented Obama's pressure, he was able to use it to tame the more extreme impulses of his far right coalition partners. With the election of Trump, Israel's right feels that the pressure is off.

Calls for immediate annexation are now heard. And the Knesset recently passed a bill "legalizing" the theft of Palestinian owned land. Before leaving to the US, Netanyahu's coalition partners warned him that should he publicly commit to two states he would face rebellion at home. In ducking the two state formula, Trump was saving Netanyahu from his domestic foes.

Fiction

For his part, Netanyahu maintained the fiction that he could accept two states but on two conditions: That Palestinians accept Israel as a "Jewish State" and that would give Israel permanent security control of the land to the west of the Jordan River. The first of these two conditions would permanently disenfranchise Palestinians inside Israel. The second would leave Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem living under Israeli military rule with no freedom or access and egress to the outside world. Both are obviously non-starters. This is not a two-state solution, rather it is an outcome that would merely formalize the apartheid system that currently exists.

To justify his intransigence, Netanyahu used his time at the podium to accuse the Palestinians of incitement and violence using language that was, itself, a shameless act of incitement. However, because this narrative has become so accepted in the US, no questions were raised about whether the charges are true or how whatever the Palestinians say or do compares with Israel's incitement against Palestinians, documented instances of Israeli violence against innocent Palestinians, and the daily humiliation, brutality, and violence of the occupation.

With all of the questions that should have been raised, it was disturbing that the only real discussion that followed the visit focused on warnings that a one state solution would produce a state with an Arab majority compromising Israel's Jewish character - with no attention paid to the issues of justice or the rights of the Palestinian people.

In any case, at the trip's end, Netanyahu returned home to new revelations of corruption charges being leveled against him and new challenges from his far right "partners". Back in Washington, Trump faced challenges of his own: more signs of a White House in disarray and more self-inflicted wounds of an out of control President. As a result, whatever expectations might have been created by the visit were left unmet. This exercise in fawning, fantasy, and incitement was for naught. Peace was not advanced, nor was the understanding of what real peace would require and how what Trump and Netanyahu would contribute to that goal.

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

A MONTH OF TWEETS, TURMOIL FOR TRUMP

One month after the inauguration, the stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of Donald Trump's White House still is a hard-hat zone. Skeletal remains of the inaugural reviewing stands poke skyward. Random piles of plywood and cables are heaped on the ground inside crooked lines of metal fencing.

The disarray outside the president's front door, though not his fault, serves as a metaphor for the tumult still unfolding inside. Four weeks in, the man who says he inherited "a mess" at home and abroad is presiding over a White House that is widely described as itself being a mess. At a stunning pace, Trump has riled world leaders and frustrated allies. He was dealt a bruising legal blow on one of his signature policies. He lost his national security adviser and his pick for labor secretary to scandal. He's seen forces within his government push back against his policies and leak confidential information. All of this has played out amid a steady drip of revelations about an FBI investigation into his campaign's contacts with Russian intelligence officials.

Trump says his administration is running like a "fine-tuned machine." He points to the rising stock market and the devotion of his still-loyal supporters as evidence that all is well, although his job approval rating is much lower than that for prior presidents in their first weeks in office.

Stung by the unrelenting criticism coming his way, Trump dismisses much of it as "fake news" delivered by "the enemy of the people" - aka the press. Daily denunciations of the media are just one of the new White House fixtures Americans are adjusting to. Most days start (and end) with

presidential tweets riffing off of whatever's on TV talk shows or teasing coming events or hurling insults at the media. At some point in the day, count on Trump to cast back to the marvels of his upset of Democrat Hillary Clinton in the November election and quite possibly overstate his margins of support. Expect more denunciations of the "dishonest" press and its "fake news".

From there, things can veer in unexpected directions as Trump offers up policy pronouncements or offhand remarks that leave even White House aides struggling to interpret them. The long-standing U.S. policy of seeking a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Trump this past week offered this cryptic pronouncement: "I'm looking at two-state and one-state, and I like the one that both parties like. I can live with either one." His UN ambassador, Nikki Haley, the next day insisted, "We absolutely support a two-state solution."

Trump's days are busy. Outside groups troop in for "listening sessions". Foreign leaders call or come to visit. (Or, in the case of Mexico's president, cancel out in pique over Trump's talk about the planned border wall.)

After the president signed two dozen executive actions, the White House was awaiting a rush order of more of the gold-plated Cross pens that Trump prefers to the chrome-plated ones used by his predecessor.

Trump hands them out as souvenirs at the signing ceremonies that he points to as evidence of his ambitious pace.

"This last month has represented an unprecedented degree of action on behalf of the great citizens of our country," Trump said at a Thursday news conference. "Again,

I say it. There has never been a presidency that's done so much in such a short period of time."

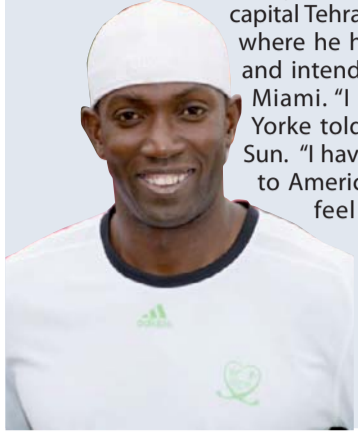
That's all music to the ears of his followers, who sent him to Washington to upend the established order and play the role of disrupter. "I can't believe there's actually a politician doing what he says he would do," says an approving Scott Hiltgen, a 66-year-old office furniture sales broker from River Falls, Wisconsin. "That never happens."

Disruption

Disrupt Trump has. But there may be more sound and fury than substance to many of his early actions. Trump did select Judge Neil Gorsuch to replace the late Antonin Scalia on the Supreme Court, a nomination that has drawn strong reviews from conservatives. But the president is regrouping on immigration after federal judges blocked his order to suspend the United States' refugee program and ban visitors from seven Muslim-majority countries, which had caused chaos for travelers around the globe. Some other orders on issues such as the US-Mexico border wall and former President Barack Obama's health care law are of limited effect. Trump says his early actions show he means to deliver on the promises he made during the campaign. "A lot of people say, 'Oh, oh, Trump was only kidding with the wall,'" the president told a group of police chiefs recently. "I wasn't kidding. I don't kid." But the Republican-led Congress is still waiting to see specifics on how Trump wants to proceed legislatively on top initiatives such as replacing the health care law, enacting tax cuts and revising trade deals. —AP

EX-MAN UTD STAR YORKE DENIED ENTRY TO USA

LONDON: Former Manchester United striker Dwight Yorke said he was "made to feel like a criminal" after being denied entry to the United States. The 45-year-old from Trinidad and Tobago said he was prevented from entering the US on Friday due to having played in a charity match in the Iranian capital Tehran in 2015. He was travelling from Doha in Qatar, where he had been working for broadcaster beIN Sports, and intended to return to his home in the Caribbean via Miami. "I couldn't quite believe what was happening" Yorke told yesterday's edition of British newspaper The Sun. "I have lost count of the number of times I have been to America. I love the country, yet I was being made to feel like a criminal. I had bought my ticket and checked in and was about to get on the flight when I was stopped by two officials. I thought, 'What is happening here?' They told me there was a visa problem and a red flag had come up against my name because of an Iranian stamp in my passport. —AFP

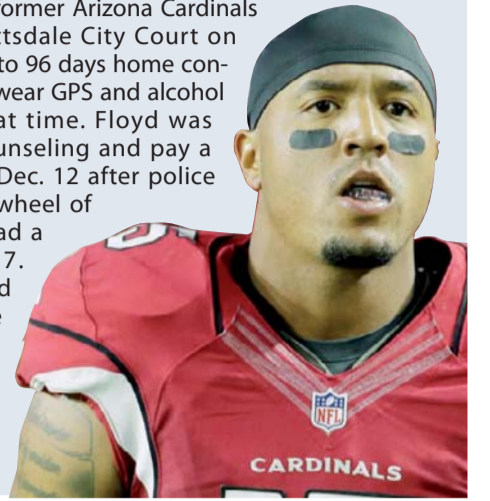


BELGIAN HERMANS FLYING HIGH IN OMAN

JEBEL AL AKHDAR: Belgium's Ben Hermans maintained his Tour of Oman lead with today's success in the fifth and penultimate mountain stage. After this summit finish win on the Jabal Al Akhdhar (Green Mountain) 5.7 climb, the RMC rider has a 22 second cushion over nearest rival Rui Costa going into yesterday's closing stage. Hermans was followed across the finish line by Italian Fabio Aru at 3sec and Portugal's Rui Costa at 11sec on the day. The 30-year-old has brought his good early season form to Oman after his second in last month's Tour of Valencia. In yesterday's stage he dominated the specialist climbers up a six minute final climb with an average gradient of 10.5% over the final 2,000 metres to the summit finish. "After my win on Wednesday (in the second stage) I was confident but it was tough going, even in the last few kilometres I wasn't able to get away from Fabio Aru who was always only 10 or 20 metres behind me." "When you look at the riders who came in behind me this has got to be the best win of my career." —AFP

EX-CARDINAL FLOYD GETS 24 DAYS IN JAIL

SCOTTSDALE: New England Patriots wide receiver Michael Floyd has pleaded guilty to second offense extreme drunken driving and been sentenced to 24 days in jail. The former Arizona Cardinals player entered the plea in Scottsdale City Court on Thursday. He also was sentenced to 96 days home confinement and will be required to wear GPS and alcohol monitoring devices during that time. Floyd was ordered to undergo alcohol counseling and pay a \$5,000 fine. Floyd was arrested Dec. 12 after police found him unresponsive at the wheel of his running car. Police say he had a blood alcohol level of 0.217. Anything over 0.08 is considered driving under the influence. The Cardinals released Floyd shortly after his arrest and he signed with the Patriots, winning a Super Bowl ring though he wasn't active for the title game. —AP



ST MORITZ: United States's Mikaela Shiffrin competes during a women's slalom, at the Alpine Ski World Championships, in St Moritz, Switzerland, yesterday. — AP

ALPINE SKIING

SHIFFRIN WINS RECORD-EQUALLING THIRD SUCCESSIVE SLALOM GOLD

ST MORITZ: Mikaela Shiffrin won a record-equalling third successive world championship women's slalom title with two blistering runs yesterday to secure a first gold medal for the United States at this year's event. The 21-year-old from Vail, Colorado matched the accomplishment of German Christl Cranz who completed her treble in 1939, finishing a staggering 1.64 seconds ahead of home crowd favourite Wendy Holdener of Switzerland. Stunned by the victory margin, Shiffrin jumped with joy on her skis after crossing the finish line and received a rousing ovation from the 25,000-strong crowd. "I've had lots of challenges and lots of amazing days and today was a really good day," Shiffrin told

reporters. "I am very happy to go home with two medals." It was a second podium finish for overall World Cup leader Shiffrin who also took the silver medal in Thursday's giant slalom. Swede Frida Hansdotter climbed from fifth to third with a strong second run before Holdener, second after the first leg, lit up the fan zone in the finish area with a gritty run which edged her ahead by 0.11 seconds. But any hopes of an upset the Swiss might have had were extinguished by a nerveless run from Shiffrin on a challenging course, which several pace-setters failed to complete on icy snow. It was also a second medal of the championships for Holdener who won the combined event last week.

The 31-year-old Hansdotter was happier with her result than the performance and heaped praise on Shiffrin. "She is unbelievable," said the Swede after capturing her third world championship slalom medal, having taken the 2013 bronze in Beaver Creek and the 2015 silver in Schladming. "She is so young and talented but it's unbelievable how good she is skiing. "Today was a fight with icy and aggressive snow conditions and I am not really satisfied with my skiing but for sure I am with the bronze." The championship ends with the men's slalom tomorrow when Austria's World Cup winner and overall leader Marcel Hirscher will be the hot favourite to complete the double after winning Friday's giant slalom. —Reuters



ST MORITZ: US skier Mikaela Shiffrin holds a US flag as she celebrates winning the women's slalom race at the 2017 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in St Moritz yesterday. — AFP

CURLING



SAPPORO: Qatar's Hanan Al Boinin shouts instructions to her teammates during a round-robin Curling game against Japan at the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, northern island of Hokkaido, yesterday. —AP



SAPPORO: Japan's Mari Motohashi, right, and Yurika Yoshida sweep the ice during a round-robin Curling game against Qatar at the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, northern Japan, yesterday.

DESERT TO ICE: QATAR TAKES ON CURLING AT ASIAN WINTER GAMES

SAPPORO: For members of Qatar women's curling team, just about everything is a new experience. Curling, a sport that has links with medieval Scotland and is more suited to the Canadian prairies, has taken a small foothold in the Middle East. Just how new are Qatar's players to the sport? Some of them in Japan for the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo had never experienced snow before. The fledgling curlers are doing their best to get up to speed but it's a huge challenge when you live in a desert climate. The Qatari women can only train one day a week on ice that is not quite up to international standards. It's a tough road ahead. Qatar lost 17-1 to Japan yesterday in a preliminary round game at Sapporo Curling Stadium. "For now, we are training more to get experience and know more about the game and its strategies," said skip Maryam Binali, who has been throwing stones for just 11 months. "We learned a lot from the Japanese team today because they are more experienced but hopefully we will do well."

University student Binali said she likes the sense of teamwork that the sport provides. Players in Qatar train on a public rink shared by figure skaters and ice hockey players. There are only two ice rinks in Doha so ice time comes at a premium. Soccer is the most popular sport in Qatar but the country is looking to broaden its sporting horizons - even to winter sports. The Qatari women's team is coached by Hungarian Lajos Belleli, who is a seven-time Hungarian national champion. "Curling is totally new and strange, a winter sport in one of the hottest countries in the world," Belleli said. "Curling is totally new there so I have to convince people that this will be good for them, which is not easy but a nice challenge." So far there are just seven female players - and 15 male curlers - in Qatar, which is the only country in the Middle East that has joined the World Curling Federation. Qatar could take inspiration from Japan, a country that has rapidly developed in the sport. Japan's women's team is ranked sixth and won the silver medal in the 2016 world



SAPPORO: Qatar's Jaber Al Ozali, center, throws a stone against South Korea during a round-robin Curling game at the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo.

RUGBY

O'SHEA TREATING ITALY 'LIKE AN ALCOHOLIC'

LONDON: Conor O'Shea says he has approached the huge challenge of being Italy rugby head coach like an alcoholic addressing his addiction and admitting there is a problem. The 46-year-old Irishman who replaced Frenchman Jacques Brunel last year — told The Times he needed to change the mindset of the players who were suffering the inevitable consequences of always being told they were useless. The many critics have had a field day following last Saturday's abject 63-10 defeat at the hands of his native Ireland with some even questioning do Italy deserve to stay in the competition-the well-funded Georgia being mooted as a potential replacement. That appears a longshot although another hammering against Grand Slam holders England at Twickenham today will provide further ammunition. "It's like an alcoholic. The first thing he has to do is say, 'I have a problem.' We have to acknowledge it," he told yesterday's edition of The Times. "Of course there is a lot to change, but any Tom, Dick and Harry can come in here and tell us what we need to do. "If someone says you are really bad at your job, and everyone else then keeps telling you that, then it's in your head. "There is so much negativity and I don't just mean external. These players are constantly told they are not good enough. "We need players mentally strong enough to deal with very tough times." O'Shea—who established his coaching credentials at English Premiership side Harlequins guiding them to the domestic title in 2012 and two European Challenge trophy victories—says the debate about Italy's future in the Six Nations is superfluous. "It was the four nations, then five," said O'Shea, who is following in the footsteps of coaching greats like Nick Mallett and Pierre Berbizier in trying to turn around the fortunes of Italy. "We should be expanding, not going the other way. "Over the last 30 Six Nations matches before this year Scotland had won one more than Italy, and go back to my day and Ireland would have been relegated a few times. "I look at it and think Italy has the third-biggest economy in Europe. If we want to grow the game, rugby can ill afford to say, 'We don't need you.' If we get our act together then the whole conversation becomes a moot point anyway." O'Shea, an exciting fullback as a player earning 35 caps and scoring 11 tries, says the promise being shown by the Under-20 side is a basis for optimism about the future as was the senior side's historic 20-18 triumph over an admittedly demoralised South Africa last November. "There are a lot of people on the outside saying they are not good enough," said O'Shea, who has brought in the experienced pair of Mike Catt and Brendan Venter to back him up in the coaching department. "Having been here long enough now, I can say they will be plenty good enough." —AFP

NASCAR BEEFS UP CONCUSSION TESTING BEFORE SEASON BEGINS

DAYTONA BEACH: Dale Earnhardt Jr. was confident NASCAR took the right step yesterday when it beefed up its concussion protocol by adding a consistent screening rule at all venues.

"Good to see progress being made and implemented. Health and safety is top priority," Earnhardt tweeted.

Earnhardt, long NASCAR's most popular driver, was sidelined for the second half of last season with a concussion. Earnhardt missed the final 18 races with nausea, vision and balance issues after at least the fifth concussion of his career following a June wreck.

In the 16 years since his father's

death at Daytona, NASCAR has introduced a series of measures designed to keep drivers safe, from helmet and restraint systems to impact-absorbing SAFER barriers along concrete walls, all designed to cushion the blows of high-impact wrecks.

NASCAR made baseline concussion tests mandatory for all drivers in 2014, but expanded the protocol this year just nine days before the Daytona 500 with a consistent screening tool and additional neurological support in the hope of keeping drivers healthier.

Drivers who are involved in a wreck that sends their car to the garage will

now be required to report to the infield care center for an evaluation. Under the old rule, a driver went to the care center only if their car had to be towed from the track.

NASCAR's standards will also require infield care center physicians to use the SCAT-3 diagnostic tool in screening for head injuries. NASCAR has already announced plans to use a traveling safety crew and a rotating roster of physicians. The new program will provide on-site support for neurological evaluations. The safety crew will come from American Medical Response and ensure that a physician and paramedics

are in the safety vehicle at all Monster Energy Cup events. AMR will also provide a small group that will travel to each race, and a physician who will serve as NASCAR's primary doctor.

NASCAR has identified 50 total concussions in the three national series since 2004. Daytona 500 champion Denny Hamlin said drivers had raised the issue of clarifying the protocol during their council meetings. "I think there was some confusion last year," he said.

Matt DiBenedetto was cleared to race at Phoenix International Raceway in November after NASCAR held him

out of one event because of a possible concussion. He missed one Cup race at Texas Motor Speedway, where he was involved in a crash during the Xfinity Series race one day earlier.

DiBenedetto said at Texas he felt fine and that NASCAR's doctors "wanted to err on the side of caution." Cup drivers advocated for more defined concussion testing akin to other sports, such as the NFL. "They sometimes have to protect us from ourselves," Hamlin said. "But we also want to make sure we're racing on the track with people that are 100 percent. I'm all for that. I think it's important we keep safety first." —AP



Jordan Spieth hits from the fairway on the third hole.

RUMFORD WIDENS GAP LEADING INTO NEW MATCHPLAY SUPER 6 FORMAT

PERTH: Australia's Brett Rumford extended his lead to five shots ahead of the match play finale to the World Super 6 Perth at Lake Karrinyup yesterday.

Rumford extended his margin from two shots at the halfway stage of the European Tour event with a four-under 68 to take the top seeding into today's new six-hole knockout format.

The top eight players after 54 holes of strokeplay earned a bye into the last 16 on the final day, with the next 16 taking on each other in the first round of the innovative new match play finish.

South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen, who won in Perth last year over 72 holes of stroke play, fired a 67 to finish in the group at 12-under alongside Australians Adam Blyth, Lucas Herbert, Steven Jeffress and Jason Scrivener and Canadian Austin Connelly. Australia's Jake Higginbottom took the final seeded spot on count back following a closing 66 that got him to 11-under. Rumford, who has won five European Tour titles, lost his tour playing privileges last season, but has revelled at his home Lake Karrinyup layout this week.

He bogeyed the first, picked that shot back up on the sixth but a double-bogey

on the next left him in danger of dropping out of the top eight.

But back-to-back birdies on the ninth and tenth got him back into the groove and four birdies in five holes from the 13th - sealed with a huge putt on the penultimate hole - gave a flourish to his third round. Oosthuizen, the 2010 British Open winner, has been playing steadily and continued with birdies on the sixth and tenth before he holed from the fairway on the 13th for a spectacular eagle. Another birdie on the 15th got him to 12-under.

"Match play is a different ball game," Oosthuizen said. "Your opponent can start really fast off and you can be in trouble. So it's all on how your opponent is also going to play. So it will be a bit of a different mindset starting out tomorrow. I think from the first hole it will be like playing the last hole of a tournament. You need to focus pretty hard to get off to a quick start because it's only six holes but it should be fun to see how it plays out." Scrivener and Connelly were the big movers into the top eight, both firing bogey-free rounds of 66.

Belgian Thomas Detry, England's Ryan Evans and American Johannes Veerman finished in a group of six at 11 under. —AFP

GOLF

SAM SAUNDERS TAKES TWO-SHOT LEAD OVER JOHNSON AT RIVIERA

PACIFIC PALISADES: Sam Saunders, grandson of golf great Arnold Palmer, got off to a strong start at Riviera Country Club on Thursday where he's in search of a first US PGA Tour title. Saunders fired seven birdies in a seven-under-par 64 to seize a two-stroke clubhouse lead over US Open champion Dustin Johnson and 23-year-old J.T. Poston, with American Brett Stegmaier five-under through nine holes.

World number one Jason Day, two-time major winner Jordan Spieth and world number five Hideki Matsuyama were among the afternoon starters chasing the target set by Saunders. Saunders, 29, took center stage in October with a moving eulogy at a memorial service for Palmer, who died on September 25 at the age of 87. While he once may have felt the pressure of playing in Palmer's shadow, that's a burden he no longer carries. "I don't need to compete against my grandfather's career," he said. "Nobody can. Nobody's going to compete. I don't care how many golf tournaments you win, nobody's going to compete in the terms of doing what he did for the game."

Instead, Saunders said, he's focused on improving his game, something he thinks he's done despite three missed cuts in four US tour starts this year. And with heavy rain forecast for today, he was pleased to get a fog-delayed first round under his belt.

"(It's) kind of a little bit of a bonus," said Saunders, who said he was "mentally prepared" for the possibility that weather could prevent him from playing at all today. Johnson, who could overtake Day atop the world rankings with a win this week, was also happy to complete the round. "It's definitely nice to having a later tee time tomorrow because I can get up and kind of see how things are going and we'll know if we're going to play or not." Johnson has been knocking at the door at Riviera for years-but has never produced a win. In 2015 he fell in a playoff to James Hahn, and last year he finished two strokes behind winner Bubba Watson.

GOOD GOLF

Johnson's round was enlivened by a bee sting on the green at the first hole, his 10th of the day. He responded with birdie putts of 24 and 31 feet at the second and third.

"The golf course gave me a little love back after I got the bee sting," said Johnson, who was alone atop the leaderboard at six-under before his lone bogey of the day at the par-three fourth.

"I was just hitting really good golf shots," said Johnson, who had six birdies in his 66.

Poston, making his 10th tour start, followed an opening eagle with a bogey, then settled down to make four more birdies the rest of the way for his share of second.

Five-time major winner Phil Mickelson headed a group on four-under 67. He was joined by Australia's Marc Leishman, Ireland's Pádraig Harrington, South Africa's Branden Grace and Americans Billy Hurley, Pat Perez and Kevin Na.

WOMEN'S AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Sarah Jane Smith shot a 6-under 67 in tough, windy afternoon conditions at Royal Adelaide to



PEBBLE BEACH: File photo shows Dustin Johnson hits his tee shot on the 18th hole during the Final Round of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am at Pebble Beach Golf Links in Pebble Beach, California. — AFP

take a one-stroke lead in the Women's Australian Open. The Australian had a 36-hole total of 9-under 137. Lizette Salas shot a 70 to join fellow American Marissa Steen (71), Thailand's Pomanong Phatlum (70) and Sweden's Caroline Hewwall (69) at 8 under.

First-round leader Katherine Kirk dropped into a tie for sixth at 7 under after a 74. The Australian had a late double bogey. Michelle Wie shot a 71 to reach 5 under. She had to overcome back spasms for most of the round that started with a double bogey.

Second-ranked Ariya Jutanugarn of Thailand had her second straight 72 to get to 2 under. Top-ranked Lydia Ko of New Zealand was even par after a 75.

CHUBB CLASSIC

Miguel Angel Jimenez had a late eagle and closed with a birdie for a 7-under 65 and a share

of the lead in the PGA Tour Champions' Chubb Classic. Doug Garwood and Scott Parel joined Jimenez atop the leaderboard on the Talon Course at The TwinEagles Club. Mike Goodes had a 66, and Scott Hoch, Tommy Armour III, Bob Tway, Duffy Waldorf and Tuesday qualifier John Elliott shot 67.

Jimenez hit a 3-wood to 10 feet to set up the eagle on the par-5 sixth - his 15th hole of the day - and made a 9-footer for birdie on the par-4 ninth. The 53-year-old Spaniard has three victories in 23 career starts on the 50-and-over tour.

Fred Couples and John Daly topped the group at 68 along with Jerry Kelly, the three-time PGA Tour winner making his senior debut.

Defending champion Bernhard Langer opened with a 69. Also the Chubb Classic winner in 2011 and 2013, the 59-year-old German star won the season-opening event at Hualalai for his 30th tour victory. — AFP

OLYMPIC WHITE ELEPHANTS? RIO'S GOT A HERD OF THEM

RIO DE JANEIRO: Rio's Olympic organizers promised there'd be no white elephants after the crowds and athletes went home. Unfortunately, six months later there's a herd charging through Brazil's run-down second city.

From the dead grass at the world famous Maracana stadium to the unsold apartments in the 31 towers of the athletes' Village that were meant to become a new luxury neighborhood, you don't have to look far to see the unfulfilled promises of South America's first Olympic Games.

Even a year before the Games started, a top official in the mayor's office, Pedro Paulo, promised: "We will leave no white elephants." Right before the August 21 closing ceremony, then mayor Eduardo Paes repeated the assurance.

City and sports officials point to a new metro line and bus network as lasting achievements. The transport system in often chaotic Rio was badly in need of help and these costly infrastructure projects are widely seen as a success.

But the Olympic Park, partly built on land formerly occupied by a deeply rooted local community, is in a state of eerie abandonment.

Open to the public only on weekends, the vast area where swimming, gymnastics, basketball and other popular competitions took place sees few visitors. Construction equipment is scattered about, former rows of seats are piled up, and sewage holes are left half-uncovered.

As for the Olympic swimming warm-up pool, where just half a year ago Michael

Phelps prepared to raise his medal tally to an Olympic record of 28, it's now a dank, mosquito-filled hole.

NO SUMMER SWIMMING

One of the most popular sporting legacies promised was to turn the Deodoro canoe slalom course into a giant swimming pool. This was sure to be popular with the poor residents of northern Rio during the city's scorching summers.

But instead the park is closed. And although the mayor's office says "everything is being done to reopen it as soon as possible," few are holding their breath.

At the base of Rio's problems is uncertainty over who will even run the installations. The Olympic Park was expected to go into the hands of a private management company, but no one was interested. So the Brazilian sports ministry had to take over.

The Arena of the Future was meant to be broken up and transformed into four schools-another bright idea in the optimistic legacy plans. However, this has not happened and the new mayor, elected after the Olympics, says more time is needed to check the budget.

"As a citizen, I'm very worried. I've learned not to trust politicians. If these schools don't get built it will be a true fiasco," Gustavo Martins, the project's original architect, said.

Other installations are meant to be turned over for use as high level sporting centers, but that also has yet to take place.

"We're going to have a meeting with the sports ministry next week and we hope to be able to use these installations in the second quarter," said Agberto Guimaraes, executive director at the Brazilian Olympic Committee.

POLLUTION

Arguably the biggest legacy promise was dramatically reducing pollution in Guanabara Bay, the sewage-infested bay where sailing events took place. Brazilian officials initially promised to cut out 80 percent of the untreated sewage pouring into the waterway.

That didn't come close to happening and now that the media attention has largely ended, there are doubts about the future of even tentative efforts to reduce the sewage and garbage. After the Games ended, officials predicted that 25 years would be needed to do the job properly and even then only if there were huge private investment.

The brightest spot is in transport, with a metro line extension connecting the western neighborhoods of Barra da Tijuca to the tourist-friendly south of Rio. A once dirty and abandoned harbor zone was given a huge makeover, where the Museum of Tomorrow and the AquaRio aquarium have proved hits. However, Brazil's recession has put a stop to plans for further development. "Rio's legacy plan is good," said Christophe Dubi, the International Olympic Committee's executive director. "But it has to be carried out." — AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: The outside cover of the Olympic Aquatic Stadium is falling off just six months after the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, at Olympic Park, which opens to the public only on the weekend in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on February 12, 2017. Rio's Olympic organizers promised there'd be no white elephants after the crowds and athletes went home. — AFP photos



RIO DE JANEIRO: View after part of the upper seats were removed from the Carioca Arena 1, which hosted basketball during the Rio 2016 Olympic games, at the Olympic Park, about six months after the event on Thursday.

GYMNASTICS

EX-US GYMNASTS DETAIL ABUSE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST DOCTOR

NEW YORK: Three former members of the US national gymnastics team, including an Olympic medalist, have come forward to detail the sexual abuse they say was inflicted upon them by a former team doctor, CBS News reported Friday. John Manly, a California attorney representing more than 40 women in a lawsuit against USA Gymnastics for failing to protect his clients, says Lawrence Nassar may have abused hundreds of women over more than two decades, some of them Olympians and at least one as young as nine years old.

"We know that at least 60 have come forward, but my best estimate is it's in the hundreds and possibly more," Manly told CBS television's 60 Minutes program in a report to be broadcast Sunday.

"I believe that at the end of the day, there are members of every single

Olympic team since 1996 he did this to."

Nassar, 53, was arrested last November on charges of sexually assaulting a child in Michigan. In December he was indicted on federal charges of child pornography possession. Dozens of women in lawsuits accuse Nassar, who treated elite US gymnasts as Olympic team physician from 1996 to 2015, of inserting fingers into their anuses and vaginas and fondling their breasts.

Nassar has denied the charges, saying he conducted only legitimate medical procedures.

Jessica Howard, the US national rhythmic gymnastics champion from 1999 through 2001, detailed to CBS an exam session with Nassar at the Karolyi race training headquarters near Houston. "He started massaging me and

he had asked me not to wear any underwear and then he just continued to go into more and more intimate places," said Howard, now 33.

"I remember thinking something was off, but I didn't feel like I was able to say anything because he was this very high profile doctor and I was very lucky to be at the ranch working with him."

"The girls would say 'Yeah, he touches you funny,'" Jeanette Antolin, on the US team from 1995 to 2000 and a member of the 1999 world championship squad that competed in China, recalled putting her trust in Nassar as well.

"I remember being uncomfortable because of the area, but, in my mind, I was like, 'if this helps, I'll do anything,'" Antolin said. "It was treatment. You don't complain about treatment."

A third woman who spoke with CBS

was not identified in promotional material for the broadcast. US teens have won the past four Olympic all-around titles, with Carly Patterson taking gold in 2004, Nastia Liukin winning the title in 2008, Gabby Douglas grabbing the crown in 2012 and Simone Biles triumphing last year at Rio.

'WHO WAS WATCHING HIM... NOBODY'

While a federal investigation into Nassar continues, the lawsuit filed last October by Manly claims USA Gymnastics and coaches Bela and Martha Karolyi failed to properly monitor Nassar and were partly responsible for allowing a culture that allowed him opportunities to abuse women.

"The issue is who was watching him and who supervised him?" Manly told

USA Today. "And the short answer is nobody." USA Gymnastics said this week that it notified the FBI about Nassar on July 28, 2015 and relieved him of national team duties the next day.

Those moves came after officials first learned of a complaint regarding Nassar on June 17, 2015 and conducted a follow-up investigation.

Manly told the Washington Post the lag time between USA Gymnastics receiving a complaint notification and turning to the FBI was woefully improper. "They are actually acting like they are responsible for him being caught. Nothing could be further from the truth," Manly told the newspaper.

"The fact that they are still acting like they don't have any culpability for this and still being secretive and duplicitous about it is abhorrent." —AFP

DEALING WITH TAHIR NOT ONLY ISSUE FOR NZ

AUCKLAND: Imran Tahir's wicket celebrations were among the highlights of South Africa's 78-run win in Friday's Twenty20 clash but New Zealand have more to worry about than just the exuberant leg-spinner as they head into the one-day series.

Their inability to pick Tahir's googly caused the home batsmen huge problems at Eden Park and their bamboozlement led directly to three of the five wickets he claimed.

With each victim, the 37-year-old embarked on a manic sprint towards the small groups of flag-waving South African fans in the stands.

"He's a big reason why we've had the success we have had in the last 10 months," South Africa captain Faf du Plessis told reporters. "He's just become so consistent and that's a massive weapon. Even if teams do get off to a good start, you know the chances of him coming on and doing well is very high."

Tahir's man-of-the-match performance, however, was helped by the pressure imposed by opening bowler Craig Morris, who took two wickets in two deliveries, and Andile Phehlukwayo's three wicket

haul through the middle order.

"Everyone bowled really well," du Plessis added of the bowling group that did the job without the rested Kagiso Rabada and injured Dale Steyn.

"Obviously the star is Imran but the seamers on that pitch were really good in the areas they bowled."

South Africa's specialist batsmen also dominated New Zealand's bowlers - the exception being Trent Boult (2-8) - with the aggressive David Miller expected to bolster the lineup after he recovers from a cut finger. New Zealand coach Mike Hesson recognised his side would need to step up in the first of five ODIs tomorrow, when Neil Broom and Ross Taylor return to potentially bring some middle order stability in Hamilton.

"All in all not a great performance and certainly one we're going to have to turn around pretty quickly," Hesson told reporters yesterday. "It certainly showed us how many good players they have."

"It was a thorough performance from South Africa but disappointing from our perspective that we didn't fire too many shots at them." — Reuters



BRASILIA: In this Sept 23, 2016, file photo, Brazil's Cristiane Justino, known as "Cris Cyborg," poses during the weigh-in for her UFC Fight Night in Brasilia, Brazil. The US Anti-Doping Agency has cleared UFC featherweight Justino on Friday, of a potential policy violation, ending her suspension. — AP

KICK BOXING

USADA CLEARS 'CYBORG' JUSTINO OF POTENTIAL DOPING VIOLATION

NEW YORK: The US Anti-Doping Agency cleared featherweight Cristiane "Cyborg" Justino of a potential policy violation Friday, ending her provisional suspension and allowing her to resume her UFC career.

USADA, which administers the UFC's doping policy, granted a retroactive therapeutic use exemption to Justino for a diuretic commonly used as a masking agent for steroids. Justino failed a doping test in December, but claimed the result was caused by a prescribed medication for an endocrine disorder.

After interviewing the fighter and her medical team, USADA accepted her explanation and granted retroactive permission to use the substance, which means she won't be punished further. Her representatives had claimed Justino took the substance to recover from a difficult weight cut.

"The application for a TUE was granted because the athlete had an unequivocally diagnosed chronic medical condition for which the use of Spironolactone is the appropriate standard of care," USADA announced in a statement.

Justino (17-1) is considered the world's top 145-pounder and likely the best pound-for-pound female fighter. After Justino flirted with the possibility of a 135-pound fight with former bantamweight champion Ronda Rousey for several years, the UFC created a 145-pound featherweight division last year largely to showcase her.

Justino fought twice in her UFC debut last year, stopping two opponents at a 140-pound catch weight. She was expected to compete in the first 145-pound title fight this winter, but she declined the fight, citing the strain of her previous weight cut to face Lina Lansberg in September.

Instead, Germaine De Randamie beat Holly Holm by decision last weekend to become the UFC's first 145-pound women's champion.

"I am extremely happy that USADA took the time to carefully review the detailed TUE application that I submitted, and agreed that my use of the prescription has always been medically justified," Justino said in a statement posted on her Facebook page. "I look forward to returning to the octagon as soon as possible, and proving that I am the Pound for Pound champion of (women's MMA). I would also like to thank my fans for their continued support, who made a very difficult time easier for me."

Justino's troubles last year resulted in the second doping suspension of her career. She also tested positive for a steroid while fighting in the Strikeforce promotion in late 2011.

Justino would seem to be the next logical challenger for De Randamie's belt in the thin featherweight division, but De Randamie suggested earlier this week that she will need surgery on her injured hand before she returns to the cage.

The Dutch kickboxer also said she would first prefer to give a rematch to Holm. The former bantamweight champion has appealed the

result of her loss to the New York State Athletic Commission, claiming referee Todd Anderson should have taken points from De Randamie for punches thrown after the bell in two rounds.

"I believe if Holly feels that the (lack of) point deductions are the reasons she lost the fight, and she's looking for a no-contest or a draw, she should simply accept the offer that I put out to

her to have a rematch," De Randamie said. "I believe I was the fair winner. I believe I had the better shots. I believe I was the better fighter, and I dominated the standup. I believe Holly is sad that she lost the fight."

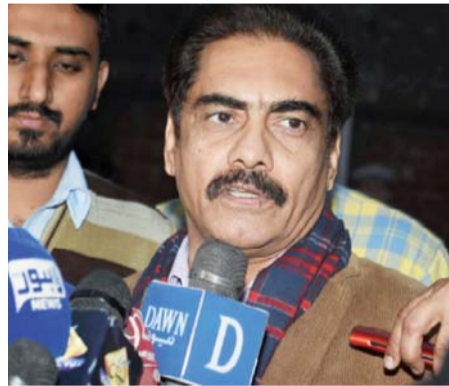
"... Holly is entitled to feel and do whatever she wants to do, and I respect that. I feel justice will serve." — AP

PAKISTAN CHARGES 2 IN PSL CORRUPTION PROBE

LAHORE: Pakistani cricket officials yesterday charged Sharjeel Khan and Khalid Latif for spot-fixing in a corruption probe that threatens to undermine the Pakistan Super League.

The pair, suspended after being accused of meeting a suspicious person linked to an international betting syndicate, could face up to a life ban from international and domestic cricket under Pakistan Cricket Board corruption rules.

"The PCB has issued Notice of Charge to the provisionally suspended players under



LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) spokesman Amjad Bhatti briefs the media after a Pakistan Super League (PSL) spot-fixing case hearing in Lahore yesterday. —AFP

the PCB Anti-Corruption Code," the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement.

Another former player Nasir Jamshed was also provisionally suspended over allegedly influencing the two players. Jamshed was reportedly arrested in London on Monday but was granted bail until April.

"In the meanwhile investigations will continue by Vigilance & Security Department with regard to any questionable activity by any player and player support personnel," the statement added.

Pakistan came under severe criticism for allowing Mohammed Amir to return to international cricket after he, along with Salman Butt and Mohammed Asif, were involved in a spot-fixing scandal at the Lord's Test against England in 2010.

All three players completed their five-year bans in September last year. Butt and Asif are also in line for national selection. Sharjeel, charged yesterday, scored three consecutive half centuries in Pakistan's one-day series in Australia last month.

He has appeared in one Test, 25 one-day internationals and 15 Twenty20 internationals. Latif was part of Pakistan's current Twenty20 team only, having played five one-days and 13 Twenty20 internationals. Both Latif and Sharjeel have denied any involvement in the alleged corruption. —AFP

BASEBALL

DODGERS' GONZALEZ TAKES HITTING BREAK TO HEAL TENNIS ELBOW

GLENDALE: Adrian Gonzalez is taking a two-week break from hitting to heal tendinitis in the Los Angeles Dodgers first baseman's right elbow.

Gonzalez still hopes to play for Mexico in the World Baseball Classic next month, he said Friday after reporting to camp. Gonzalez said he pursued his usual varied offseason workout program, including weightlifting and boxing exercises. It left him with a case of tennis elbow, or inflammation on the outside of the elbow after forearm tendons are overused.

"I don't play tennis," Gonzalez said with a laugh. The hitting break is purely a precaution, and Gonzalez said the injury isn't thought to be serious by the Dodgers. He initially felt the pain in December, but kept working out until the brink of spring training. "There's no pain when I'm just doing normal things, but I just feel it when I squeeze something the bat or the glove," said Gonzalez, who throws with his left hand. "I'd say it's about 90 percent (healthy), but you want to get that last 10 percent."

The 34-year-old Gonzalez is already five days into his two-week hitting break, but he will test the elbow before getting back in the cage. He is running and doing core-building exercises in the meantime.

He remains optimistic about his chances to join Team Mexico, which will be man-

aged by his brother, former big-leaguer Edgar Gonzalez. He is slated to play with Dodgers teammates Sergio Romo and Vidal Nuno on the Mexican team, which will be wildly popular if it can reach the tournament semifinals at Dodger Stadium.

Gonzalez is scheduled to report to his brother's team on March 4, shortly after the point at which he could begin swinging again. "Hope so, but I don't know," he said. "These (injuries), they tell you when they're ready."

Gonzalez has been exceptionally durable in his big league career, making at least 600 plate appearances and appearing in at least 156 games in 11 consecutive seasons. He batted .285 with 18 homers and 90 RBIs last season, and he played every postseason game during the Dodgers' run to the NL Championship Series.

Scott Van Slyke, Chase Utley, Rob Segedin and even 21-year-old top prospect Cody Bellinger could appear at first base for the Dodgers in Gonzalez's absence. Bellinger was invited to big-league camp for the second time this spring.

NOTES: Darin Ruf is off the Dodgers' 40-man roster after agreeing to a \$1.1 million, one-year deal with Samsung Lions of the Korean Baseball Organization. The power-hitting Ruf is likely to play mostly first base with the Lions. —AP

CRICKET

AUSTRALIA LEAVE INDIA A STRUGGLING IN TOUR MATCH

MUMBAI: India A struggled to score runs against a mighty Australian bowling attack yesterday as the visitors declared their innings at 469 on the second day of a three-day warm-up match in Mumbai.

The home team were 176 for four at close, with Shreyas Iyer (85) and Rishabh Pant (3) unbeaten as they need 293 runs with six wickets in hand to win the practice game at the Brabourne Stadium.

Iyer, who came into bat at number three, showed courage against the Aussie attack, hitting six off spinner Nathan Lyon on the first ball followed by 4 more sixes and 5 fours to reach 85 runs in 93 balls.

Australia picked up their first wicket at 19 when Lyon caught opener Akhil Herwadkar (4) off his bowling.

He struck again in the 18th over when Priyank Panchal (36) gave an easy one to Peter Handscomb with 63 runs on the scoreboard. His departure brought Ankit Bawne to the middle as he and Iyer stitched a 57-run

partnership. Bawne hit 4 fours in his brisk innings before being caught lbw by paceman Jackson Bird. Towards the end of the day, skipper Hardik Pandya (19) struggled to counter the Australia's bowling and was caught behind off Bird. Bird ended his figures at 2-15 in 11 overs with seven maidens. Lyon bowled 17 overs to end at 2-72. Spinner Steve O'Keefe and medium pacer Mitchell Marsh put some pressure on the batters from the other end although without any success.

Earlier in the day, Marsh followed in his brother Shaun's footsteps, hitting 75 off 159 balls with 11 fours and a six while Matthew Wade scored 64 runs to add another 142 runs to their overnight score to declare at 469 for seven. Steve Smith and Shaun Marsh scored fluent centuries on Friday to put their team in the lead. Australia are touring India on a high profile Test series, with the home side riding an unbeaten 19-match streak. The first of the four-match Test series begins on Thursday in Pune. —AFP



MUMBAI: Australia's Mitchell Marsh plays a shot during the second day of three-day practice cricket match between India 'A' and Australia at the Brabourne Cricket Stadium in Mumbai yesterday. Australia will play a four-match Test series against India with the first Test scheduled to start in Pune from February 23. —AFP

NHL TURNS 100: BORJE SALMING HAILED AS EUROPEAN TRAIL BLAZER

TORONTO: Exceptionally fit and muscular still, Borje Salming sits at his locker with a familiar No. 21 Toronto Maple Leafs jersey hanging behind him while pecking out a message on his cellphone. The faceoff for the Centennial Classic's alumni game between the Maple Leafs and Detroit is still a few hours away at Toronto's Exhibition Stadium. Except for the telltale creases of age that line the 65-year-old Salming's cheeks and temples, the former star defenseman looks hardly out of place among the Leafs' current crop of millennials. The only other significant difference from when Salming made his NHL debut in 1973 is the makeup of Toronto's

roster. Where Salming and fellow Swede Inge Hammarstrom were the only two Europeans on an otherwise all-Canadian lineup, the current Leafs feature a trans-Atlantic mix of North Americans, Russians, a Dane, a Swede and players from the Czech Republic and Estonia. It's no different than other teams around a league in which 56 Swedish-born players - enough to fill two-plus rosters - have appeared in 20 or more games this season. And much of that is due to Salming, the trail blazer, who played a key role in changing the perception of European players, who were once considered too soft to play the rugged NHL style of game.

"It's nice to hear that I sort of paved the way for a lot of people coming over here," Salming said, referring to the occasional reporters' queries regarding what he has meant to hockey. "But it's not a big deal." His contemporaries respectfully disagree about the impact Salming made during a 17-season Hall of Fame career. As former teammate Lanny McDonald put it: "Every European player should send a Christmas card to Borje every year and say, 'Thank you.'" When the NHL kicked off its 100th anniversary celebrations with the Centennial Classic on Jan. 1, Salming's presence at the weekend festivities was not overlooked.

EUROPEAN-BORN STARS

"I'm not sure the young players understand his magnitude and his stature," Russian-born and former Red Wings forward Igor Larionov said. "Borje was one of the pioneers who came to the league and played at the highest level for so many years and sent a message to the North American scouts that European players can play in this league." Before Borje, there were but 24 players born outside of Canada, the US and the United Kingdom to play in the NHL, according to a search of the league's website. And only a handful of those players developed their professions overseas, such as Ulf Sterner. The

Swedish forward made the jump to North America in 1964 after competing in two Winter Olympics, but appeared in just four NHL games with the New York Rangers. A majority of the European-born stars before the 1970s developed their skills on this side of the Atlantic after their parents resettled in North America. That was the case with Chicago's Stan Mikita, who was born in the former Slovak Republic, and was 8 when his family relocated to Ontario. Salming was different because he grew up playing in Sweden before he and Hammarstrom signed with the Leafs. Hammarstrom was a three-time 20-goal scorer.—AP

BASKETBALL

LITTLE BIG MAN: THOMAS A FULL-FLEDGED ALL-STAR

NEW ORLEANS: Isaiah Thomas isn't even average. The Boston Celtics list their two-time All-Star point guard at 5-foot-9 - even that is believed to be a bit generous - and 185 pounds. That means Thomas actually is slightly shorter and even a bit lighter than the typical male in the United States, at least based on the latest federal data that tracks such things. So in society, he's obviously not a big guy. But in the NBA, he's the little big man right now. Averaging 29.9 points per game and leading Boston to the No. 2 spot in the Eastern Conference so far, Thomas is being mentioned for reigning two-time NBA MVP Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors as someone worthy of consideration for the league's top individual honor this year. "Nobody in their right mind would have thought that," Thomas said of his MVP hopes. "At one point I might not have even thought I was going to be the MVP. But now I do. I'm going to keep going. I'm not trying to play for MVP - if it happens it happens, if it doesn't it doesn't. But that's definitely a goal of mine in my career at some point." It might come sooner than he thinks.

All-Star Media Day was Friday in New Orleans, and LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony both missed the Eastern Conference session for personal reasons. Their absences likely drove a few more people over toward the riser where Thomas took questions for a half-hour or so, though he seemed genuinely surprised when he arrived and saw plenty of reporters awaiting his arrival. Curry wasn't. He's a Thomas fan. "He's doing amazing things," Curry said. "I don't think that confidence (was any) different now than when he was a rookie or whatever. You go through each year, gain experience, get the right guys around you, good things happen. He's having an amazing year. It's been fun to watch." Thomas' path is well-chronicled. He was the 60th and last pick in the 2011 NBA draft, taken behind seven guys who have not - and probably never will - score their first NBA point. Of those selected that year, only Klay Thompson has more career points, only Kemba Walker has more career assists, and no one from the 2011 group who remains in the NBA has a better free-throw percentage than Thomas. Put simply, a lot of teams whiffed on him coming out of Washington, some multiple times. And those snubs are a big part of what makes Thomas tick.



BOSTON: Boston Celtics guard Isaiah Thomas (4) holds up his NBA All-Star jersey prior to the first quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Philadelphia 76ers in Boston, Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2017. At rear is Celtics co-owner Steve Pagliuca. — AP

The Celtics could have drafted Thomas twice that night and passed, but atoned for that when they swung a three-team deal to land him. The second anniversary of that trade is Sunday, when Thomas appears in his second All-Star Game - one in which he'll be playing on a team led by his Celtics coach, Brad Stevens. "Everything fuels him," Stevens said. "I think that's the thing we've all learned about Isaiah. Everybody knew he had a chip on his shoulder. Now you realize he's hungry for more. Success fuels him, too, just the same. He's an incredible guy because he just wants to get better, because he just wants to keep getting better whether he's getting accolades or getting criticism." These days, the criticism is in short supply. He has a chance to become the first player in Celtics history to average 30 points a game. Larry Bird averaged 29.93 in 1987-88; Thomas, right now, is at 29.87. Such comparisons make even Thomas shake his head. "It means everything," Thomas said. "To be mentioned with such great players like Larry Bird, like all the legends that played before me in a Celtics uniform, means a lot."—AP

ATHLETICS

FARAH BOWS OUT OF INDOORS WITH EUROPEAN RECORD

LONDON: Mo Farah ended his indoor career with a new European record, winning the 5,000 metres at the Birmingham Indoor Grand Prix yesterday in a time of 13 minutes 10.60 seconds. Farah, Britain's four-times Olympic champion, plans to focus on road racing after the outdoor world championships in London in August when he will say his final farewell to the track. The 33-year-old was helped to break the indoor mark at the Birmingham Indoor Arena in what became a two-way duel with Kenyan Albert Rop, who stretched him over the final two laps. It was a fitting way for Britain's most successful long-distance runner to end his indoor career - and a marked improvement on his only other appearance this season, when he came seventh in a cross-country event in Edinburgh last month. "I knew from Edinburgh I needed to do

some work," he told the BBC. "I had to go away and leave my family behind to do more training. It has paid off. Hard work pays off." Farah shaved over half a second off the European record - and more than 10 off the previous British best - after pace-maker Adam Clarke had taken the 11-man field through a fast opening to the race. Urging the crowd to raise the noise levels, Farah exuded his trademark calmness as he tucked in behind Rop for the final stages. He hit the front with two laps to go before extending his lead, much to the joy of the large crowd. Farah did not realise he had broken the record but paid tribute to the support he has received during his stellar career, in which he has won the Olympic 5,000 and 10,000-metres double twice. "The crowds have been so good for me over the years. I will miss it," he said. "I can't quite believe it's my last race." — Reuters



BIRMINGHAM: Britain's Mo Farah celebrates after winning the 5000m final during the Indoor athletics Grand Prix at the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham yesterday. — AFP



ANAHEIM: Florida Panthers center Aleksander Barkov, left, of Finland, and Anaheim Ducks defenseman Hampus Lindholm, of Sweden, vie for the puck during the first period of an NHL hockey game, Friday, in Anaheim, Calif. — AP

NHL

PANTHERS DEFEAT DUCKS 4-1 BEHIND GOAL FROM JAGR

ANAHEIM: Jaromir Jagr scored the go-ahead goal in the second period and James Reimer made 35 saves as the Florida Panthers defeated the Anaheim Ducks 4-1 on Friday night for their third consecutive win. Colton Sceviour had a goal, Aaron Ekblad scored on the power play and Derek MacKenzie added an empty-net goal, giving the Panthers six wins in their last seven games. Florida now trails Toronto by one point for the second wild card in the Eastern Conference playoffs. Andrew Coglian scored a short-handed goal and John Gibson stopped 27 shots for the Ducks, who had picked up a point in 12 of their previous 14 home games. Jagr gave Florida a 2-1 lead with a moment of his ageless brilliance. Jagr stole the puck from defenseman Josh Manson coming out from behind the Ducks' net and calmly used a series of dekes before pocketing his 760th career goal.

BLUE JACKETS 2, PENGUINS 1, OT

Brandon Dubinsky scored just over a minute into overtime as the Columbus Blue Jackets beat the Pittsburgh Penguins. Dubinsky lifted a shot over Matt Murray as he skated into the slot to win it for the Blue Jackets. Sergei Bobrovsky had 38 saves, and Ryan Murray scored in the second period as Columbus moved within a point of Pittsburgh for second place in the rough Metropolitan Division. Murray made 37 saves, and Ian Cole scored for the Penguins, who were

at five games. Matt Duchene set up the goal on a 2-on-1 break. Tyson Barrie also scored for Colorado, and Calvin Pickard made 28 saves. Last in the NHL at 16-38-2, the Avalanche are 6-2 in overtime. Jeff Skinner scored his team-leading 19th goal of the season for the Hurricanes, who have lost three straight. — AP

AVALANCHE 2, HURRICANES 1, OT

Mikko Rantanen scored at 4:23 of overtime to give Colorado a victory over the Carolina Hurricanes, ending the Avalanche's losing streak

NHL results/standings

Florida 4, Anaheim 1; Colorado 2, Carolina 1 (OT); Columbus 2, Pittsburgh 1 (OT).												
Western Conference						Eastern Conference						
Central Division						Atlantic Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	
Minnesota	38	13	6	190	131	82	Ottawa	30	19	6	148	146
Chicago	35	17	5	166	147	75	Boston	29	23	6	157	155
St. Louis	31	22	5	167	168	67	Toronto	26	19	11	174	167
Nashville	27	21	8	158	151	62	Florida	26	20	10	144	159
Winnipeg	26	29	5	174	191	57	Buffalo	25	23	10	143	161
Dallas	22	27	10	161	190	54	Tampa Bay	25	24	7	154	160
Colorado	16	38	2	111	187	34	Detroit	22	25	10	141	171
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division						
San Jose	34	18	6	161	141	74	Washington	39	11	6	192	121
Edmonton	31	19	8	168	151	70	Pittsburgh	36	13	8	202	160
Anaheim	30	19	10	153	151	70	Columbus	37	15	5	184	139
Calgary	29	26	3	152	165	61	NY Rangers	37	19	1	194	151
Los Angeles	28	24	4	141	141	60	NY Islanders	26	20	10	166	167
Vancouver	25	27	6	138	168	56	Philadelphia	27	24	7	151	177
Arizona	20	29	7	136	177	47	New Jersey	24	23	10	131	162
Eastern Conference						Atlantic Division						
Montreal	31	19	8	165	150	70	Carolina	24	22	8	141	158

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).

SOCCER

FOREIGN MANAGERS DON'T GET FA CUP: MOURINHO

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has suggested foreign managers are devaluing England's FA Cup by fielding under-strength teams that expose them to the risk of upsets. Liverpool, Bournemouth, West Bromwich Albion, Stoke City, Watford and Hull City have lost to lower-league teams this season and there are two non-league sides in round five for the first time ever. United visited second-tier Blackburn Rovers today and having been stung by an FA Cup defeat at Newcastle United during his first season at Chelsea, Mourinho is determined not to take unnecessary risks. "Maybe we don't have as many English managers with that culture as we should," he told reporters following United's 3-0 Europa League win over Saint-Etienne on Thursday. "Maybe we foreign managers, not everybody

studies and understands the culture of this country. In my case, I had immediately that situation with the match at Newcastle, so for me it was a lesson. "And I lost with Chelsea against a League One team (Bradford City, in January 2015). But I never threw it away. We lost because we lost. "So I try always to go serious. I like Wembley, like the FA Cup, so I have to try to get the second one." Of the managers to have fallen to lower-league opposition in the FA Cup this season, only Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp, Watford's Walter Mazzarri and Hull's Marco Silva are not British. United's trip to Blackburn falls before the second leg of their Europa League last 32 tie against Saint-Etienne on Wednesday and next Sunday's League Cup final against Southampton at Wembley. Mourinho's FA Cup tie against Newcastle with Chelsea in 2005 arrived in similar

circumstances, prior to a Champions League trip to Barcelona and a League Cup final meeting with Liverpool. **'RESPECT THE COMPETITION'** Mourinho saw a weakened team lose 1-0 at St James' Park and although Chelsea overcame Barcelona and beat Liverpool in the League Cup final to give him his first English trophy, he still regrets the defeat. "I threw it away," he said. "I thought in the same week was Champions League against Barcelona and the cup final against Liverpool and in the middle of it, we had the FA Cup against Newcastle. And I threw it away. I gambled too much. "I focused too much on Barcelona and Liverpool. It was good because we beat Barcelona and we won the final against Liverpool. But the feeling I threw it away was not good.—AFP

ATLETICO SUBSTITUTE GAMEIRO SCORES 3 IN 6 MINUTES IN LA LIGA

BARCELONA: Substitute Kevin Gameiro scored three goals in six minutes to power Atletico Madrid past Sporting Gijon 4-1 in the Spanish league yesterday. The league said only Bebeto in the 1995-96 season and David Villa in 2005-06 have scored faster hat tricks. Gameiro had only six goals in 21 previous league appearances this season,

backing up Fernando Torres in recent weeks. But with Torres misfiring and Atletico struggling to break the deadlock at 1-1, coach Diego Simeone sent Gameiro on in the 62nd minute at El Molinon Stadium. The French striker put the visitors back in front in the 80th when he received Antoine Griezmann's brilliant

side-footed pass and rounded the goalkeeper to score. Gameiro fired in his second a minute later and got his hat trick when he received a long ball behind the defense in the 85th. "I'm very happy for Gameiro because it is not easy to score three goals, and because they were very important for the team," Simeone said. "The changes

we made in the second half were decisive because they restored our balance in midfield, and later Gameiro's speed decided the match." Gameiro dedicated the hat trick to his grandmother. "We lost her this week and I have been thinking a lot about her. The three goals are for her," he said. Atletico's Yannick Carrasco opened the scoring

seconds after halftime, but Sergio Alvarez leveled for Sporting moments later. Sporting remained the more aggressive team and had Atletico pinned in its area until Griezmann found Gameiro to turn the match around. Atletico remained in fourth place at one point behind Sevilla, which hosts Eibar later. — AFP

LACKLUSTRE CITY HELD BY HUDDERSFIELD IN FA CUP

HUDDERSFIELD: Manchester City face an unwanted replay in the last 16 of the FA Cup after labouring to a 0-0 draw at second-tier Championship side Huddersfield yesterday. Pep Guardiola's side struggled to find any tempo against Huddersfield and must now try again at the Etihad Stadium to book their place in the quarter-finals. A disappointing day all round for City saw unused substitute Raheem Sterling apparently targeted with a plastic bottle thrown by a supporter from the main stand as he warmed up in the second half.

The bottle missed the England winger, leaving Guardiola to worry more about his team's lacklustre display with star forwards including an off-key Sergio Agüero unable to break down the Terriers' stubborn defence.

The Championship side began the game brightly and might have led early on through Rajiv van la Parra.

He was teed up on the edge of the City penalty area by Collin Quaner but his shot was too close to City goalkeeper Claudio Bravo. But it was the visitors who should have led moments later as they were denied by some desperate goalkeeping and defending. Nolito found himself in the clear but his shot was blocked well low down by Joel Coleman in the Huddersfield goal before Mark Hudson made a crucial goalline clearance from Jesus Navas's follow-up effort.

Agüero lifted a shot just over for City from the edge of the area moments after being admonished by Guardiola for not pressing defenders quickly enough.

But then came two scares for the Premier League side, first when Jack Payne's shot was tipped over by Bravo and then when Philip Billing found the City net but was denied the opening goal by an off-side flag against team-mate Martin Cranie.

Nolito saw another shot deflected just wide as the game remained an end-to-end affair. Van la Parra was then denied again by Bravo as the City keeper held comfortably onto his tame shot following a cross by Quaner.

The next chance fell to Agüero after a clever sequence of passes on the edge of the Huddersfield box, but the striker's effort was saved smartly by Coleman.

Agüero was back in the action just a few seconds into the second half when he weaved into the Huddersfield box but saw a firm shot turned away well by the diving Coleman. Some more fine footwork by the Argentine then took him away from two Huddersfield players but his pass for

Fernandinho was overhit and Coleman gathered.

The game became disjointed and lacking in tempo, although there then came the talking point on the touchline as Sterling went through his paces.

A plastic bottle was thrown from the home fans in the main stand towards the England winger, who did not respond as fellow substitute Bacary Sagna stared at supporters. — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA	
Real Sociedad v Villarreal	14:00
beIN SPORTS	
Valencia v Athletic de Bilbao	18:15
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Celta de Vigo v Osasuna	20:30
beIN SPORTS	
FC Barcelona v CD Leganes	22:45
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
Bologna v Internazionale	14:30
beIN SPORTS	
Udinese Calcio v Sassuolo	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Chievo Verona v Napoli	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Sampdoria v Cagliari Calcio	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Pescara v Genoa CFC	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
AS Roma v Torino FC	20:00
beIN SPORTS	
AC Milan v ACF Fiorentina	22:45
beIN SPORTS	

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
Monchengladbach v Leipzig	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
FC Koln v Schalke 04	19:30
beIN SPORTS	

FRENCH LEAGUE	
Girondins v Guingamp	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Olympique Lyonnais v Dijon	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Montpellier v Saint Etienne	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Paris Saint-Germain v Toulouse	23:00
beIN SPORTS	



BERLIN: Hertha Berlin's Marvin Plattenhardt, left, and Bayern's Arjen Robben, right, challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Hertha BSC Berlin and FC Bayern Munich in Berlin, Germany, yesterday. — AP

SOCCER

LAST GASP LEWANDOWSKI SAVES BAYERN IN BERLIN

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski hit a 96th-minute equaliser to salvage Bayern Munich's 1-1 draw at Hertha Berlin yesterday and extended their lead in the Bundesliga table to eight points. Bayern were seconds away from what would have been their second league defeat this season when Lewandowski fired home his 24th goal in all competitions to cancel out Vedad Ibisevic's first-half strike. "Robert Lewandowski is a fantastic player and very important for us," enthused Bayern's relieved coach Carlo Ancelotti. "We're happy, because it was a hard game."

"Hertha put in a good first half, but it was different after the break and we managed to create more pressure."

It was a Champions League hangover for Bayern following Wednesday's 5-1 hammering of Arsenal in the last 16 first leg as Ancelotti made four changes to the side that beat the Gunners. Hertha went ahead on 21 minutes when Ibisevic ghosted in behind Bayern's defence and deflected Marvin Plattenhardt's free-kick past Manuel Neuer. Despite enjoying more than 70 percent possession, Bayern struggled and Lewandowski's equaliser only came deep into added time. Thiago Alcantara's free-kick found Airen Robben on the edge of the area, his shot was blocked, but Lewandowski drilled home the rebound to deny Hertha a first win over Bayern in 12 attempts.

Berlin coach Pal Dardai was angry about the six minutes of added time. "I think that was a bonus for Bayern. Sorry to anyone who might be offended, but after five minutes (of added time), the game must be finished," he fumed.

"This wasn't a cup game, we don't play 120 minutes." Second-placed RB Leipzig can close the gap behind Bayern when they play Borussia Mönchengladbach away today.

BOUNCE BACK

Elsewhere yesterday, Lukasz Piszczek had a hand in all three goals as Borussia Dortmund bounced back from Tuesday's Champions League last 16 first-leg defeat at Benfica with a 3-0 trouncing of Wolfsburg at home. Dortmund's iconic south stand, nicknamed the 'Gelbe Wand' (Yellow Wall), which holds 25,000 fans, stood empty.

It was a German FA punishment after hooligans attacked visiting RB Leipzig fans, including families, earlier this month.

Dortmund went ahead when Wolfsburg defender Jeffrey Bruma headed Piszczek's close-range cross into his own net on 20 minutes. Poland international Piszczek added the second, heading home Ousmane Dembele's cross on 48 minutes, and then set up Dembele for the third on 59 minutes.

Hoffenheim climbed to fourth with a 2-0 win at home to bottom side Darmstadt as ex-Leicester City striker Andrej Kramaric scored both their goals. Ten-man Eintracht Frankfurt dropped to fifth after their shock 2-0 defeat to strugglers Ingolstadt, who had Australia striker Mathew Leckie sent off and remain second from bottom.

Ingolstadt took an early lead through French defender Romain Bregerie while Frankfurt finished the first half with 10 men. Defender David Abraham was shown a red card when his clearance kick connected with Dario Lezcano's chest on 35 minutes. Frankfurt's Japan midfielder Makoto Hasebe had a sec-

ond-half penalty saved, then hit the crossbar from the follow-up, and Pascal Gross scored Ingolstadt's second goal from a penalty at the other end 13 minutes later. Ingolstadt also played with a man less for the last 10 minutes after Leckie was shown a straight red for a similar foul to Abraham-accidentally kicking an opponent. Relegation-threatened Werder

Bremen escaped the bottom three with a 2-0 win at Mainz. Ex-Arsenal winger Serge Gnabry gave Bremen the lead with a towering header on 16 minutes.

Denmark international Thomas Delaney slammed home a free-kick to double the lead seven minutes later, but was later hospitalised with concussion. — AFP



HUDDERSFIELD: Huddersfield Town's German striker Elias Kachunga is fouled by Manchester City's French defender Bacary Sagna during the English FA Cup fifth round football match between Huddersfield Town and Manchester City at the John Smith stadium in Huddersfield, northern England yesterday. — AFP

DEMBELE KEEPS CELTIC JUGGERNAUT ROLLING ON

GLASGOW: Moussa Dembele was on target again as his 27th goal of the season helped runaway Scottish Premiership leaders Celtic to a 2-0 win over Motherwell yesterday.

The 20-year-old Frenchman-tipped for a call-up to Didier Deschamps' France squad for the matches against Luxembourg and Spain next month expertly despatched a first-half penalty to open the scoring.

James Forrest added a second before the break to seal Celtic's 20th consecutive victory as they remain unbeaten in 31 domestic matches since the start of the season. Victory extends their advantage over Aberdeen, who are away to Kilmarnock on Sunday, to 27 points with third-placed Rangers a further three behind ahead of their clash with Dundee.

Motherwell, who conceded seven to Aberdeen in midweek, were dealt a blow when experienced left-back Stevie Hammell was injured in the warm-up to be replaced by Joe Chalmers.

Their daunting task of trying to stop a Celtic side that had scored 16 in their past four games was made even harder when Stephen McManus injured himself in the

opening seconds before hobbling off in the fifth minute.

Despite this, Motherwell made a solid start and it took until midway through the half for Celtic to have a meaningful chance when Forrest's shot was parried by Craig Samson and Liam Henderson somehow missed the target with the rebound.

The visitors dealt with the pressure from Celtic until the 34th minute when substitute Zak Jules brought down Dembele to concede a penalty.

The Frenchman dusted himself down to take the spot-kick and sent Samson the wrong way for his seventh goal in three games. Motherwell had a chance for an almost instant equaliser when Stephen Pearson fired in a shot from the penalty spot but 'keeper Craig Gordon showed great reflexes to get down low and push away his effort. The visitors were left to contemplate what might have been when Forrest then fired Celtic further in front in the 41st minute.

The winger collected a pass wide on the right and he turned Chalmers inside out before drilling an angled shot into the bottom corner. — AFP

LINCOLN, MILLWALL CLAIM FAMOUS FA CUP UPSETS

LONDON: Non-league Lincoln City and third-tier Millwall struck late, late winners as Burnley and Premier League champions Leicester City were humbled on a historic day in the FA Cup yesterday.

Sean Raggatt scored an 89th-minute header as Lincoln, who reside in the fifth-tier National League, stunned Burnley 1-0 in the fifth round in one of the competition's biggest upsets. Ten-man Millwall, seventh in League One, claimed a third top-flight scalp in this season's tournament by dramatically sinking ailing Leicester 1-0 via a 90th-minute goal by Shaun Cummings.

"I'm lost for words. It's mad. I can't believe it!" Lincoln's match-winner Raggatt, 23, told BT Sport. "Crazy. A non-league side in the quarter-finals, in modern football. It's unheard of."

Eighty-one places below Burnley in the English football pyramid, Lincoln prevailed when centre-back Raggatt squeezed a header over the line following a late corner at Turf Moor. Lincoln, nicknamed 'The Imps', become the first non-league team to reach the FA Cup's last eight since Queens Park Rangers in 1914. They are the eighth side from below England's four fully professional divisions to have beaten top-flight opposition since World War II and only the second to have done so since 1989. "We said it was a one-in-a-100

chance and thankfully we got that opportunity," said Lincoln manager Danny Cowley.

"The last eight of the FA Cup sounds pretty good. We work hard on our corners and our free-kicks and we are mighty proud of the players." Burnley drew 1-1 at home to runaway Premier League leaders Chelsea last weekend and have beaten Liverpool and Leicester on home turf this season.

Lincoln join Hereford United, who toppled Newcastle United in 1972, and Sutton United, conquerors of Coventry City in 1989, among the ranks of the FA Cup's non-league giant-killers. Sutton, also of the National League, will hope to pull off another upset when they host Arsenal tomorrow.

Burnley manager Sean Dyche made six changes and it was quickly clear that his side were in for a scrap as Lincoln's Nathan Arnold squared for Jack Muldoon to sweep a first-time shot over the bar.

The home side procured the clearer chances thereafter, but could not take them, and with a replay beckoning Lincoln's moment of history arrived.

Sam Habergham's deep corner from the right was headed back across goal by Lincoln captain Luke Waterfall and Raggatt met it with a header that Burnley goalkeeper Tom Heaton could not keep out. — AFP



LONDON: Leicester City's German goalkeeper Ron-Robert Zieler (2nd R) catches the ball under pressure from Millwall's Irish striker Aiden O'Brien (R) during the English FA Cup fifth round football match between Millwall and Leicester City at The Den in south London yesterday. — AFP

Shiffrin wins
record-equalling
third slalom goldFarah bows out
indoors with
European record

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OLYMPIC WHITE ELEPHANTS? RIO'S GOT A HERD OF THEM Page 16



MADRID: Real Madrid's Gareth Bale, right, shoots to score past Espanyol's Hernan Perez during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Espanyol at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, yesterday. Bale scored once in Real Madrid's 2-0 victory. — AP

BALE BACK WITH A BANG AS REAL EXTEND LEAD

MADRID: Gareth Bale made an instant impact on his return from injury as Real Madrid extended their lead at the top of La Liga to four points with a 2-0 win over Espanyol yesterday. Bale had been sidelined three months and on his return took just 13 minutes to score as he swept home into the far corner after coming on as second-half substitute in a much changed Real line up.

Alvaro Morata opened the scoring of an otherwise uneventful contest when he bulleted home Isco's cross 12 minutes before half-time.

Earlier, substitute Kevin Gameiro hit a five-minute hat-trick as Atletico Madrid maintained their grip on fourth with a 4-1 win at Sporting Gijón.

Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane made seven changes to the side that started Wednesday's 3-1 Champions League last 16, first leg win with difficult La Liga trips to Valencia and Villarreal to come in the next week in

mind. Morata was one those handed a rare chance to start up front with Karim Benzema left out of the squad altogether. The Spanish international hadn't started any of Real's previous five league games, but made his case for more minutes as he powered home Isco's fine in-swinging cross for his 11th goal of the season.

Morata just failed to get on the end of a tantalising Cristiano Ronaldo cross and Ronaldo also had a goal ruled out for offside as Real bossed a first-half short on clear-cut chances.

Ronaldo should have made the game safe when he headed over from close range midway through the second-half. Bale's much-anticipated return since injuring ankle ligaments away at Sporting Lisbon on November 22 came 20 minutes from time when he replaced Morata. And the Welshman showed the home fans what they have been missing for the past three months as he

finished off a lightning quick Real counter-attack by firing into the far corner.

QUICK FIRE GAMEIRO

In Gijon, Gameiro was seconds away from making history as he just missed out on beating David Villa's record for the fastest hat-trick in La Liga history.

Gameiro was only introduced 28 minutes from time but struck in the 80th, 81st and 85th minutes and dedicated the hat-trick to his recently deceased grandmother. "Those goals are for my grandmother, who died this week. I scored three for her." Yannick Carrasco had bundled Atletico into the lead seconds into the second-half before Sergio Alvarez levelled three minutes later.

Defeat leaves Sporting still languishing in the relegation zone, two points off safety. The visitors got a break right at the start of the second period when Carrasco was

allowed to bear down on goal despite Antoine Griezmann standing in an offside position and tapped home at the second attempt after Ivan Cuellar had saved his first effort. The lead lasted just three minutes as Atletico's once solid defence was breached by Alvarez as his effort evaded the attempts of Stefan Savic to clear off the line.

Atletico have now conceded more goals in La Liga so far this season than all of last season in La Liga. Gameiro was summoned from the bench just after the hour mark as Atletico upped the pressure in search for a winner. Griezmann was harshly denied by the offside flag 15 minutes from time. However, the French international did have a vital role to play in Gameiro's first as it was his through ball from which Gameiro rounded Cuellar to slot home. Thomas Partey teed up Gameiro to thrash home seconds later and Gameiro completed his hat-trick with another composed finish on the counter-attack. — AFP

TENNIS

PLISKOVA STORMS TO FIRST QATAR OPEN TITLE

DOHA: Karolina Pliskova beat Caroline Wozniacki for the first time in her career to claim the Qatar Open title yesterday. The powerful Czech won in straight sets 6-3, 6-4 for her eighth WTA title and her second of the year, after her victory at the Brisbane International last month. It was the first Qatar title for the world number three and confirms the 24-year-old's growing reputation as a potential Grand Slam title winner. "It's amazing, it means so much to me to win the tournament," she said afterwards. "It was an unusual week for me, it was not easy with all the stoppages."

She added: "I was waiting for a good result here because I lost three years in a row in the first or second rounds, so big step. I'm excited to get the trophy."

Pliskova hit 27 winners and four aces in a match which she controlled from the beginning, after breaking Wozniacki in her first two service games. Her win was even more impressive given her late arrival in Qatar. Pliskova arrived in Doha after helping defending champions the Czech Republic into the Fed Cup semi-finals last weekend. Then her matches in Qatar were delayed by the wet weather, which meant she ended up-like Wozniacki-playing her quarter-final, semi-final and the

final within 24 hours of each other.

Wozniacki's defeat was the second time the Dane has lost in the Qatar Open after being defeated in straight sets by Russia's Vera Zvonareva back in 2011.

However, one consolation from her performances this week is that she is likely to move up three places in the world rankings to number 15. "I'm a little bit disappointed right now," said Wozniacki.

"It's a goal of mine to pretty much have won everything. "But she played really well today. I thought I played well. I did my best. It's been a tough week."

She added that wanted to use her form in Doha as a platform for the season. "Hopefully I can keep up my level and keep improving. I'm hoping for a good season." Both players will now head to the UAE where they are playing in the Dubai Championships.

Astonishingly, completion of the final yesterday meant the tournament was able to finish on time after a week of awful weather in Qatar.

Rainfall and thunderstorms throughout the week had so delayed the schedule that organisers said on Friday that if they could not finish the tournament by today there would be no winner. — AFP



DOHA: Karolina Pliskova (L) of the Czech Republic and Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki pose on stage following their final tennis match in the WTA Qatar Total Open yesterday, in Doha. Karolina Pliskova beat Caroline Wozniacki for the first time in her career to claim the Qatar Open title. — AFP

Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary BUSINESS

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Boursa Kuwait equities remain buoyant

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Audi RS 3 LMS, Audi R8 showcased at Gulf Run

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TRUMP'S CONTEMPT FOR TRADE DEALS FUELS ANXIETY

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NORTH CHARLESTON: President Donald Trump speaks in front of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner while visiting the Boeing South Carolina facility in North Charleston, SC, on Friday. —AP

TRUMP SEEKS TO RESET AMERICAN JOBS PITCH 'BUY AMERICAN AND HIRE AMERICAN,' THE NEW MANTRA

NORTH CHARLESTON: President Donald Trump tried to put a first month of tumult behind him Friday, pitching himself as a champion of US jobs and industry during a visit to Boeing in South Carolina.

A day after a grievance-filled press conference that raised questions about his temperament, the real estate mogul got out of Washington, back to basics and back on script.

Trump visited North Charleston to renew his campaign vow to champion jobs and industry. "As your president, I'm going to do everything I can to unleash the power of the American spirit and to put our great people back to work," Trump said.

"This is our mantra, 'buy American and hire American.' We want products made in America, made by American hands," he said, pledging to wean the country off imports. On the campaign trail, Trump tapped a rich seam of unease among American workers. Although the unemployment rate is at a low five percent

and wages are rising steadily, a triple whammy of deindustrialization, globalization and automation have hit the US heartland hard.

Trump repeatedly touted his business acumen and promised to transfer boardroom smarts to the Oval Office in order to bring back jobs. But poor management and scandal have plagued his first month in office. In four tumultuous weeks, Trump has seen his national security advisor ousted, a cabinet nominee withdraw, a centerpiece immigration policy fail in the courts and a tidal wave of damaging leaks.

The perception of a White House in disarray was further fueled as Trump's pick to replace Flynn, retired US Navy admiral Robert Harward, turned down the job, leaving a glaring hole in the National Security Council. Trump said Friday he was considering four new candidates, including acting advisor Keith Kellogg, a retired lieutenant general.

En route back to his Florida estate for the

third consecutive weekend, Trump sought more familiar ground at Boeing.

Back to business

The commander-in-chief appeared to be in his element, praising the roll-out of the 787-10, touring the cockpit and joking with Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg about negotiations for an order of F-18 Super Hornets. "We are looking seriously at big order, and we will see how that you know, the problem is that Dennis is a very, very tough negotiator. But I think we may get there," he said.

The US manufacturer employs some 7,500 people in South Carolina, where it has invested more than \$2 billion since beginning operations in the southeastern state in 2009.

Trump's prescription to drain the pockets of economic malaise that dot the country has been to rip-up "bad trade deals" and an tougher tariffs on imports.

"We are going to enforce, very strongly,

enforce our trade rules and stop foreign cheating-tremendous cheating, tremendous cheating," he said at Boeing. He pledged to address that issue with a "very substantial penalty" on firms that take US knowhow and transplant production overseas.

"It has to be much easier to manufacture in our country and much harder to leave. I don't want companies leaving our country. Making their product, selling it back, no tax, no nothing, firing everybody in our country," he said.

That may be a winning approach politically, but few economists believe it would be good for Americans' pocket book. Richard Baldwin, a professor of international economics at the Graduate Institute, Geneva recently accused Trump's team of pursuing "twentieth-century solutions for America's twenty-first-century industrial problems."

"In 2017, US workers are not competing with low-wage foreign labor, capital, and technology, as they did in the 1970s. Rather, they are com-

peting with a nearly unbeatable combination of low-wage foreign labor and US knowhow."

Ironically, Boeing Dreamliner, which Trump declared a "great name," may be a case in point. From nose to tail fin, many of the Boeing's components are made around the world: Wing tips in South Korea, the landing gear in England.

"If the Trump administration imposes tariffs, it will turn the US into a high-cost island for industrial inputs," said Baldwin. "Firms might be induced to move some production back to the US, if it is strictly aimed at US consumers. But they will be equally encouraged to offshore production that is aimed at export markets."

Friday evening Trump took to Twitter to again blast the media-casting several outlets as "the enemy of the American people"-and then heralding another campaign-style Florida rally scheduled for yesterday. The former reality star will seek the cheers of his supporters in Orlando a bid to restore momentum to his already embattled administration. —AFP

SAMSUNG FAMILY SUCCESSION HITS SNAG WITH CHIEF'S ARREST

SEOUL: South Korea was taken by surprise on Friday with the arrest of the scion of the country's richest family and de-facto leader at Samsung over his alleged involvement in a massive corruption scandal that engulfed the president and riveted the nation.

Prosecutors believe Lee Jae-yong, 48, a vice chairman at Samsung Electronics and the only son of the ailing Samsung chairman, gave bribes worth \$36 million to President Park Geun-hye and her close friend to help win government support for a smooth company leadership transition, including a contentious merger of two Samsung companies.

A look at how his arrest affects the electronics giant:

LITTLE IMPACT ON PHONE, TV BUSINESSES

Some conservative commentators are worried that Lee's arrest could hurt Samsung's businesses and therefore the economy, which relies on such companies for exports and jobs.

But others dismiss such concern as exaggerated. "What would affect its businesses are the Galaxy phone's success, the performance of the semiconductor sector and how fast Chinese rivals are catching up, not whether Lee Jae-yong is arrested or not," said Park Sang-in, a professor at Seoul National University.

Chiefs of companies such as Hyundai Motor Group and SK Group have been

jailed before but still ran their companies from behind bars. Samsung Electronics, which is the world's largest maker of mobile phones, TVs and computer memory chips, has three separate chief executive officers each overseeing its electronic component, mobile phone and television divisions.

But long-term business decisions, such as appointing executives and deciding on mergers and acquisitions, may be put on hold. Samsung normally announces per-

sonnel reshuffling and promotions each December, but postponed those announcements in 2016 as it was dragged deeper into the political scandal.

Lee is not the first in his family to face criminal charges. His father was convicted in 2008 and 2009 for embezzlement and tax evasion related to business dealings designed to pass down wealth to his son. Lee Kun-hee, the ailing chairman, stepped away from his role at the company when

prosecutors indicted him in 2008. The younger Lee will likely follow a similar course and stay away from leadership role once investigators formally bring charges against him.

Family succession hits snag

As he stepped up his role in the absence of his ailing father, Lee was seen as the new face of Samsung, fluent in foreign languages and educated overseas. Since Lee assumed a bigger role, Samsung promised to inject the company's top-down hierarchy with a nimble, startup-like attitude. Corruption allegations similar to those that took down his father may mean the damage to Lee's reputation is irreversible. Prosecutors were able to secure Lee's arrest in their second attempt, thanks to new evidence showing President Park's broader involvement in Samsung's family succession plan. Initially, prosecutors focused on their argument that Samsung offered bribes and in return, the government backed a controversial merger of two Samsung companies in 2015, which was a key step in the leadership transition.

But after the initial request was dismissed, additional evidence from a notebook that belonged to a top presidential adviser showed that the government gave favors to Samsung in other areas related to the Lee family's father-to-son succession, said Lee Kyu-chul, a spokesman for the special prosecution team. —AP



SEOUL: Lee Jae-yong, vice chairman of Samsung Electronics Co, gets into a car to leave after attending a hearing at the Seoul Central District Court in Seoul, South Korea on Thursday. —AP

EURO IS TOO LOW FOR GERMANY: MERKEL

MUNICH: German Chancellor Angela Merkel suggested yesterday that the euro was too low for Germany but made clear that Berlin had no power to address this "problem" because monetary policy was set by the independent European Central Bank.

Merkel made her remarks at the Munich Security Conference as US Vice President Mike Pence looked on. They seemed aimed at addressing recent criticism from a top trade adviser to President Donald Trump, who has accused Germany of profiting from a "grossly undervalued" euro.

"We have at the moment in the eurozone of course a problem with the value of the euro," Merkel said in an unusual foray into foreign exchange rate policy. "The ECB has a monetary policy that is not geared to Germany, rather it is tailored (to countries) from Portugal to Slovenia or Slovakia. If we still had the (German) D-Mark it would surely have a different value than the euro does at the moment. But this is an independent monetary policy over which I have no influence as German chancellor."

The euro has fallen nearly 25 percent against the dollar over the past three years, touching a 14-year low of \$1.034 in January. But it has since risen to roughly \$1.061. In late January, Peter Navarro, the head of Trump's new National Trade Council, said the euro's low valuation was giving Germany an edge over the United States and its European Union partners.

His comments came weeks after Trump himself said the dollar's strength against the Chinese yuan "is killing us", deepening concerns that his administration could pursue a more confrontational, protectionist approach to trade. Merkel and other German officials pushed back forcefully at the time.

Yesterday, the chancellor said she did not want to delve into the causes of Germany's trade surplus, noting that this was sure to be a continuing topic of discussion with US officials.

But she said both countries were proud of their products and Washington had no reason to be unhappy about the level of German imports. "When you look around the room and see how many iPhones and Apple products are in play, I think the vice president can be completely satisfied, and Fifth Avenue is still underpopulated with German cars," Merkel said, drawing applause from the audience. —Reuters

“CHEVROLET SILVERADO”

Kuwait's best-selling pick-up truck in its class
Chevrolet Alghanim proudly celebrates this achievement for
the second consecutive year



Chevrolet Alghanim has added a new achievement in its long list of successes; for the second consecutive year, the prized Chevrolet Silverado is officially the best-selling pick-up truck in Kuwait. This prideful triumph was not easily obtained as pick-up trucks have always been highly demanded in the increasingly competitive local market, especially other American pick-up trucks from other world-renowned brands. However, the Chevrolet Silverado has proved itself to be

The Chevrolet Silverado's innovativeness is what gained it the JD Power Award as the top-rated truck in terms of dependability and initial quality for the second consecutive year. The JD Power Ratings are a global benchmark for assessing vehicle quality; all major car brands around the world are keen on achieving high ratings due to JD Power's role in confirming real, genuine quality.

Chevrolet Alghanim is proud to offer the Chevrolet Silverado as the pick-up of choice due to its grand size, reliability and rich heritage in the realm of pick-up trucks. Apart from its intense performance, fuel efficiency and technological sophistication, the Chevrolet Silverado comes in a variety of models and features that are enveloped by the Silverado's steel frame, a factor that augments drivers' sense of reliability, endurance and strength on the road. Anyone who is a fan of an empowering and exhilarating drive is welcome to visit the nearest Chevrolet Alghanim showroom and test-drive the Chevrolet Silverado.

The New Silverado

The new Silverado is designed in a way that is consistent to the legacy of Chevrolet pick-up trucks as it encapsulates astounding power, modernized features and other elements that place it as the best and ultimate pick-up truck in comparison to previous models. The Silverado includes three Eco-Tec3 engine – V6 or V8 – in addition to a sturdier and comfortably spacious cabin. The Silverado is also equipped with innovative features such as improved driving options including command and control, inventive solutions for the trunk's storage space as well as the specified weight of the trailer

seamlessly switching to four-cylinder mode to save fuel during light-load driving. The 5.3L V-8 has fuel economy of up to 10.2 L/100km highway (2WD models), the best of any V-8 pickup. Silverado is equipped with the 4.3L V-6 has towing ratings up to 3,447 kg, the highest for any base V-6 in the segment. Silverado is equipped with the 5.3L V-8 and the max towing package have towing ratings of up to 4,264 kg, which is more than any light-duty pickup currently on the market.

The 4.3L V-6 Ecotec3 engine comes standard on WT models. The 5.3L V-8 is standard on LT, LT Z71, LTZ, LTZ Z71 and High Country models and available for WT models. The 6.2L V-8 is available on LTZ, LTZ Z71 and High country models. Eight-speed automatic transmission is standard on LTZ trims equipped with the 5.3L EcoTec3 V-8. The GM-developed Hydra-Matic BL90 eight-speed is approximately the same size and weight as the Hydra-Matic 6L80 six-speed automatic. Its 7.0 overall gear ratio spread is wider than GM's six-speed automatic transmissions, providing a numerically higher first gear ratio to help drivers start off more confidently with a heavy load or when trailering. The BL90 also enables numerically lower rear axle ratios, which reduce engine rpm on the highway. Functional, aerodynamic exterior Silverado's exterior design blends strong Chevy truck heritage with a refined, modern aesthetic. A twin-port grille, full-width bumper and dual power dome hood create a strong presence, which is carried through in sculpted body sides and fender flares.

The Silverado design is about much more than just looks, however. The front end is engineered to

the most popular, reliable and trusted choice for pick-up truck fans especially the youth who enjoy the Chevrolet Silverado's many features, its varied usage that reflects the young's dynamic and modern lifestyle and finally, its mighty power and empowering looks that is complemented by its fierce design, technological features, entertainment options and many other features that greatly heighten its popularity on any road.



ports, auxiliary jack, and Bluetooth streaming audio for music and most phones. The 8-inch high-definition color touch screen radio, standard on LT models, enables users to scroll or drag through menus. LTZ and High Country models receive an 8-inch high-definition touch screen with and embedded navigation. Silverado also features four selectable themes for the display screen and drive information center, which tailor the look of the displays to the taste of the customer.

Stronger, quieter cab

The truck cab is stronger, with nearly two-thirds of the structure made from high-strength steel, for a confident feel and improved safety. Similarly, the main rails and key cross members of the updated frame are high-strength steel with major elements

enabling customers to carry more cargo while still being able to park in many garages. Engineered and validated for demanding customers

The team that designed the Silverado went to extremes to design a truck that would exceed the demands of the customers. For example, the Silverado underwent more than 6 million miles of durability testing in the torture chambers at the Milford Proving Ground, over the deserts and mountains of Nevada and across the frozen flats of Kapuskasing, Ontario. That's equivalent to 240 trips around the earth. In addition, the trucks accumulate more than 7 million real-world miles during final testing, bringing total test miles to more than 13 million. The increased power, torque and efficiency of the EcoTec3 engine family resulted from an unprecedented level of computer analysis, including extensive computational flow dynamics, to optimize the burning of air and fuel in the cylinders. More than 10 million hours of



computational analysis went into the engine program. More than 6 million hours – about 685 years' worth – of analysis went into the advanced combustion system alone. Even the basics, like the inlaid doors, were tested to the extreme, with the doors undergoing nearly 150 truck lives' worth of testing.

Chevrolet Premium Care Program

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Alghanim will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance.



5.3L V6 engine
BEST TORQUE IN ITS CLASS!

which is at 4,264 kilograms. The new Silverado is available in different models for many different individuals who have varying lifestyles including businesspeople who usually opt for the Work Truck (WT) for light excursions to those who prefer a more luxurious drive with the Silverado High Country.

Powertrains

The EcoTec3 lineup for the 2016 Silverado includes a 4.3L V-6 and 5.3L V8 and 6.2L V-8s, all matched with proven, efficient six-speed or new 8-speed automatic transmissions (Standard on LTZ). A 4.3L V-6 is SAE-certified at 285 horsepower and 413 Nm of torque, a 5.3L V-8 is certified at 355 horsepower and 519 Nm of torque, and a 6.2L V-8 is certified at 420 horsepower and 624 Nm of torque. All three EcoTec3 engines feature direct fuel injection, Active Fuel Management (cylinder deactivation) and variable valve timing, a combination not found in competitive trucks. The engines also use a compact overhead-valve design and weight-saving components such as aluminum blocks and cylinder heads, to reduce mass, for additional energy savings. All three provide the proven power, torque and dependability of a large-displacement engine,



5.3L V8 engine
BEST FUEL-EFFICIENT IN ITS CLASS!

improve air flow for more efficient engine cooling, while the roof and tailgate spoiler were shaped in the wind tunnel to smooth airflow over the truck for reduced drag. Inlaid doors, which fit into recesses in the bodyside, reduce wind noise for a quieter cab.

Interiors tailored to truck customers

The interiors of the new Silverado LD reflect the same focus on form and function. The upright instrument panel, six-gauge instrument cluster and multiple storage options are tailored specifically to the needs of truck customers. Controls are functional, logically placed and easy to operate with work gloves on. Rear doors on crew cabs are larger, for easier entry and exit, and rear doors on double cab models are now hinged at the front for easier access, especially in tight spots. Chevy MyLink for powerful, intuitive connectivity All Silverado Work Truck Models feature a 4.2-inch diagonal color display radio or optional 7-inch diagonal color touch radio with AM/FM Stereo, a USB port and auxiliary jack for MP3 devices. Chevrolet MyLink radio with new 7-inch diagonal touch-screen- standard on LS- includes AM/FM stereo with seek-and-scan and digital clock, USB



6.2L V8 engine
THE MOST POWERFUL IN ITS CLASS!

hydroformed for reduced mass and improved strength. Shear-style body mounts tune out both up-and-down and side-to-side movement for a quieter, more comfortable ride. Double cab and crew cab models have a set of hydraulic body mounts to further isolate the cabs. Combined with numerous other acoustic and NVH (noise vibration and harshness) enhancements, the intended result is a solid, refined feel with no loss in traditional truck capability. Smart solutions for cargo management The pickup box also benefits from this focus on providing Silverado customers with the right tools for the job. The box is made from roll-formed steel for increased strength and reduced mass, compared with the stamped beds used by major competitors, and it features a range of smart solutions for everyday life. Silverado's CornerStep bumper, combined with handholds built into the box rail protectors, makes it easier to access the box. The bed is also available with upper tie-down hooks, under-rail light-emitting diode lighting, and an EZ Lift and Lower tailgate.

Silverado Light Duty crew cabs are available with a long 6'6" box, in addition to the 5'8" box,

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	104,137,002	3.66%	5,614,958	1.99%
BASIC MATERIALS	16,041,624	0.56%	5,750,426	2.03%
INDUSTRIALS	208,078,224	7.31%	41,240,475	14.58%
CONSUMER GOODS	14,253,928	0.50%	2,139,989	0.76%
HEALTH CARE	10	0.00%	3	0.00%
CONSUMER SERVICES	39,649,234	1.39%	3,460,432	1.22%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	107,714,657	3.78%	23,996,231	8.48%
BANKS	375,262,112	13.18%	78,959,737	27.92%
INSURANCE	5,770,576	0.20%	413,495	0.15%
REAL ESTATE	1,059,822,171	37.22%	60,410,981	21.36%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	913,122,185	32.07%	60,487,054	21.38%
TECHNOLOGY	3,663,958	0.13%	374,612	0.13%

SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	865.96	840.74	3.00%	10.93%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,306.32	1,301.44	0.37%	30.01%
INDUSTRIALS	1,514.87	1,478.70	2.45%	12.71%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,129.33	1,139.45	-0.89%	0.38%
HEALTH CARE	1,225.37	1,235.49	-0.82%	-1.53%
CONSUMER SERVICES	988.65	973.47	1.56%	6.93%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	690.53	674.68	2.35%	8.55%
BANKS	988.83	938.91	5.32%	18.11%
INSURANCE	1,173.77	1,134.97	3.42%	18.05%
REAL ESTATE	1,081.68	1,028.24	5.20%	24.31%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	791.64	745.56	6.18%	32.59%
TECHNOLOGY	828.09	848.81	-2.44%	36.39%

BOURSA KUWAIT EQUITIES REMAIN BUOYANT

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Bursa Kuwait ended last week in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 6,824.49 points, up by 3.67 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 2.02 percent after closing at 428.76 points, whereas the KXS-15 Index closed at 974.89 points up by 1.33 percent. Furthermore, the week's average daily turnover increased by 15.49 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 56.57 million, whereas trading volume average was 569.50 million shares, recording an increase of 7.29 percent.

The Bursa witnessed a positive performance and the three indices were able to realize good gains to compensate a part of the losses recorded during the last two weeks due to the profit collection operations.

The Bursa witnessed such performance in light of the purchasing trend that included many listed stocks of leading and small-cap ones that declined in the previous period to a tempting levels of purchase, amid a control of an optimistic state over the investment arena in the market regarding the listed companies results for 2016.

Also, the market received some support from the increased liquidity levels during most of the daily sessions of the week, where the total value in the Bursa during the last five sessions reached around KD 282.85 million, up by 15.49 percent from a week earlier.

In addition, the market capitalization reached KD 28.41 billion by the end of last week, up by 1.9 percent compared to its level in a week earlier, where it reached then KD 27.88 billion. On an annual level, the market cap gains for the listed companies reached 11.82 percent from its value at end of 2016, where it reached then KD 25.41 billion.

(Note: delisting of Refrigeration Industries & Storage Co and Taiba Kuwaiti Holding Co during the last week contributed to the decrease in the Bursa market cap by around KD 435.85 million, the total market value of the two mentioned companies)

Moreover, the Bursa Kuwait witnessed in the first session of the week a mixed closing for the three indices, where the Price and Weighted indices increased supported by the speculative operations that concentrated on the small-cap stocks, especially the ones being traded in prices below its book value, in addition to the partial purchasing operations that targeted some heavy stocks, while some leading stocks witnessed selling operations, especially in the Banks and Real Estate sectors, which caused KXS-15 index to decline and close the session in the red zone.

On the next session, the indices continued its fluctuation, as the Price Index continued its upward direction and was able to end the session in the green zone affected by the continued speculative operations concentrated on the small-cap stocks, however the Weighted and KXS-15 indices dropped as a result to the selling trend that included few leading and heavy stocks.

On the mid-week session, the three market indices were able to record good gains that pushed it to close in the green zone, amid a return to the strong purchas-

ing operations that concentrated on the leading stocks of which recorded different drops in the previous two sessions, which enhanced the Price Index's gains and enabled the Weighted and KXS-15 indices to compensate all its losses recorded since the beginning of the week. Also, the Bursa continued its positive performance on Wednesday's session, in light of the gradual increase in the cash liquidity levels, amid a noticeable purchasing demand on the leading stocks especially in the Banks sector.

The Bursa indices returned to fluctuate once again at the end of week session, where the Price and KXS-15 indices were able to continue to increase and recorded limited profit by the end of the session, which enhanced its weekly gains somewhat, while the Weighted Index went against the current and ended the session in the red zone, lightening by this its weekly gains.

For the annual performance, the price index ended last week recording 18.73 percent annual gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the weighted index increased by 12.80 percent, and the KXS-15 recorded 10.15 percent growth.

Sectors' Indices

Nine of Bursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, while the other three recorded declines. Last week's highest gainer was the Financial Services sector, achieving 6.18 percent growth rate as its index closed at 791.64 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Banks sector's index closed at 988.83 points recording 5.32 percent increase. The Real Estate sector came in third as its index achieved 5.20 percent growth, ending the week at 1,081.68 points. The Basic Materials sector was the least growing as its index closed at 1,306.32 points with a 0.37 percent increase.

On the other hand, the Technology sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 2.44 percent to end the week's activity at 828.09 points. The Consumer Goods sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 0.89 percent, closing at 1,129.33 points, followed by the Health Care sector, as its index closed at 1,225.37 points at a weekly loss of 0.82 percent.

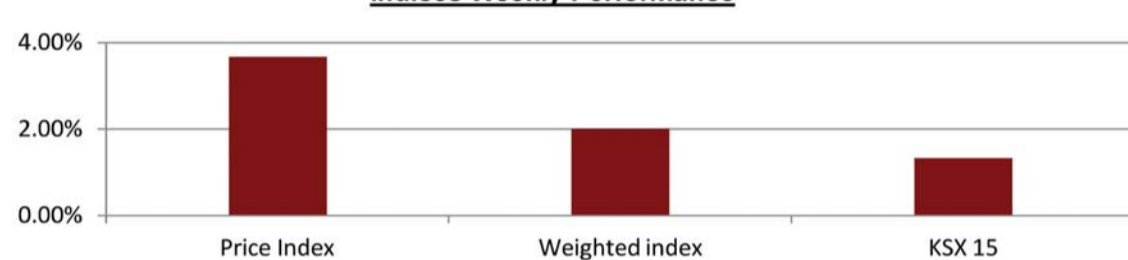
Sectors' Activity

The Real Estate sector dominated a total trade volume of around 1.06 billion shares changing hands during last week, representing 37.22 percent of the total market trading volume. The Financial Services sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 32.07 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 913.12 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 78.96 million or 27.92 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 60.49 million representing 21.38 percent of the total market trading value. — Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES				
	Price Index	Weighted index	KXS 15	
Weekly	Last week	6,824.49	428.76	974.89
	Previous week	6,582.75	420.28	962.07
	Change (Point)	241.74	8.48	12.82
	Change (%)	3.67%	2.02%	1.33%
Annual	Last year	5,748.09	380.09	885.02
	Change (Point)	1,076.40	48.67	89.87
	Change (%)	18.73%	12.80%	10.15%

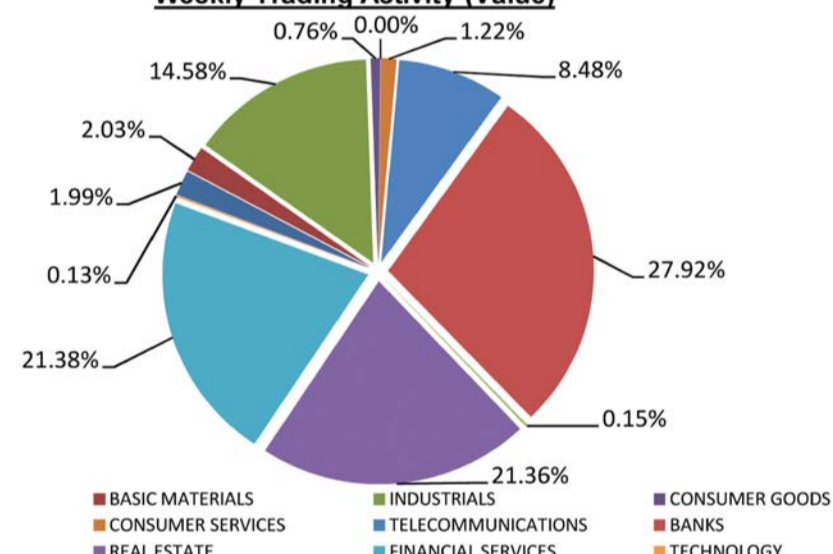
Indices Weekly Performance



Last Five Days Activity



Weekly Trading Activity (Value)



TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK

Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
MANAZEL	49.50	39.50	10.0	25.32%
PAPER	410.00	330.00	80.0	24.24%
ARABREC	50.00	40.50	9.5	23.46%
MENA	34.00	28.00	6.0	21.43%
ITHMR	68.00	56.00	12.0	21.43%

TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK

Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
HAYATCOMM	80.00	94.00	-14.0	-14.89%
MARAKEZ	38.00	43.00	-5.0	-11.63%
KHOT	236.00	265.00	-29.0	-10.94%
AMAR	51.00	57.00	-6.0	-10.53%
MASSALEH	50.00	55.00	-5.0	-9.09%

STOCKS INCH TO NEW RECORDS; S&P 500 UP 4 STRAIGHT WEEKS

NEW YORK: Stock indexes inched ahead to record highs Friday, barely, after a late-afternoon push erased losses from earlier in the day. It caps the fourth straight week of gains for the Standard & Poor's 500 index, its longest such streak since July.

Reports through the week showed that the economy is improving and corporate profits are growing more quickly than analysts expected. The encouraging data, along with hopes for lower taxes and other business-friendly policies from Washington, pushed the S&P 500 to a 1.5 percent rise last week, its best weekly performance since the first week of January. The S&P 500 rose 3.94 points Friday, or 0.2 percent, to 2,351.16. The Dow Jones industrial average edged up by 4.28 points, less than 0.1 percent, to 20,624.05 and also set a record. The Nasdaq rose 23.68, or 0.4 percent, to 5,838.58, its own all-time high.

Slightly more stocks fell than rose on the New York Stock Exchange. The last two days have been lackluster for stocks, with the S&P 500 dipping on Thursday, in comparison to the strong run they had been on. That slowdown was more a result of investors looking to cash in some profits than on any fear or need to get



NEW YORK: Specialist John Parisi (left) and trader Michael Smyth work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Friday. — AP

out of the market, said JJ Kinahan, chief market strategist at TD Ameritrade.

"People don't want unnecessary risk heading into a three-day weekend," he said. "This is more about taking off risk than about aggressive selling." U.S. markets will be closed Monday for Presidents Day. Kinahan pointed to relative calmness in the markets for the VIX index, which measures expectations for upcoming volatility in the S&P 500, and for gold, a traditional landing spot when investors are nervous. Kraft Heinz surged to the biggest gain in the S&P 500 after it made an offer to buy European consumer goods giant Unilever. Unilever rejected the bid, which offered 18 percent more than where Unilever's shares closed on Thursday, and called it too low. Kraft Heinz, which is behind the Lunchables and Oscar Mayer brands, jumped \$9.37, or 10.7 percent, to \$96.65. U.S.-listed shares of Unilever, which sells Breyers ice cream and Dove soap, surged \$5.96, or 14 percent, to \$48.53. Campbell Soup had the biggest drop in the S&P 500 after the company surprised analysts by reporting weaker revenue in its latest quarter than a year earlier. Its earnings were better than Wall Street had forecast,

however. Shares fell \$4.07, or 6.5 percent, to \$58.48. General Mills fell \$2.31, or 3.8 percent, to \$59.23 after it warned of tougher times ahead. It said weaker-than-expected U.S. sales of yogurt and soup pushed it to cut its sales and profit forecast for its fiscal year, which ends in May. Treasury yields gave back some of the gains they made earlier in the week. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note fell to 2.42 percent from 2.45 percent late Thursday. The two-year yield dipped to 1.19 percent from 1.21 percent, and the 30-year Treasury yield sank to 3.02 percent from 3.05 percent.

In European stock markets, the French CAC 40 index fell 0.7 percent, Germany's DAX was virtually flat and the U.K. FTSE 100 rose 0.3 percent. In Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225 index fell 0.6 percent, the Hang Seng in Hong Kong fell 0.3 percent and South Korea's Kospi index slipped 0.1 percent.

The dollar fell to 112.93 Japanese yen from 113.11 yen late Thursday. The euro fell to \$1.0607 from \$1.0677, and the British pound fell to \$1.2416 from \$1.2497. Benchmark U.S. crude oil rose 4 cents to settle at \$53.40 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, fell 16 cents to close at \$55.81 a barrel. — AP



TORONTO: The Acura NSX is on display during the Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto, Thursday. —AP Photos



TORONTO: The new Toyota Camry cars are revealed during the Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto.



TORONTO: The Lexus LF-FC concept car is revealed during the Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto.



TORONTO: The BMW 540i is on display during the Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto, Thursday.

KFH PARTICIPATES IN 2017 IIF MENA FINANCIAL SUMMIT HELD IN DUBAI

KUWAIT: Group Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh stressed the importance of practically facing the economic challenges facing the GCC banks in light of the fall in oil prices, indicating the necessity of applying best practices and highest standards in the structural changes, regulatory compliance and cyber security as they are the major challenges for now.

His statement was made during his participation in the 2017 IIF MENA Financial Summit held in Dubai for 2 days to discuss the main challenges facing the economies of the MENA region and the effect of the drop in oil prices on the GCC banks.

Al-Nahedh said that banks should offer best service quality, and implement best technologies in efforts to preserve customers' rights and protect their information, yet to achieve growth in all indicators.

He emphasized the need for deepening and diversifying financial markets in the region by exploring the needed policies and market instruments.

He added that despite the geopolitical variables that take toll on the foreign investment in Turkey, and caused fall in the value of the

Turkish Lira, the Turkish government took several procedures to boost liquidity in banks and revitalize the market in order to continue the development in all sectors, mainly the energy and transportation sectors. He said the position of KFH-Turkey is good, the asset quality is strong, and the Turkish market is still promising. KFH is operating in different geographies including Turkey, Saudi, Bahrain and Malaysia, indicating KFH Malaysia is transforming to digital banking to be distinguished among peers.

Al-Nahedh stressed the importance of implementing structural reforms and income diversification to achieve sustainable development. He discussed the developments of non-bank segment of the financial markets in the MENA region.

The session included besides Al-Nahedh, Mark Robinson, Chief Executive Officer, Commercial Bank International PSC, Amin Al-Husseini, Chief Executive Officer, Oman Arab Bank, Abdulaziz Al Onaizan, Chief Executive Officer, Bank Al Bilad, Vince Cook, Chief Executive Officer, and National Bank of Fujairah.

The summit has been attended by many banking, finance and investment leaders and decision Makers as well as finance ministers.



Mazin Al-Nahedh speaking.



TRUMP'S CONTEMPT FOR TRADE DEALS FUELS GLOBAL ANXIETY

SEVEN DECADES OF AMERICAN POLICY BEING DISMANTLED

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump is moving quickly to dismantle seven decades of American policy built on trade deals and multinational alliances that help fuel the US and global economies.

And no one is sure what will replace them. The void risks intensifying uncertainty at home and abroad. Without knowing whether trade will be disrupted, business people in the United States and abroad could be forced to rethink their plans.

"The big problem comes when there is uncertainty," says Marcus Moufarrige of Servcorp, a company in Sydney, Australia, that sells office space and technology services abroad. "Uncertainty stops businesses from making decisions. It stops everything."

For now, stock prices are soaring as investors focus on Trump's pledge to cut taxes and business regulations. But his break with the past is raising worries among some. Fitch Ratings, for instance, warns that the uncertainty surrounding Trump's policies poses global risks - from disrupted trade relations to confrontations that unsettle investors.

The president's hostility toward existing trade deals and suspicion of long-term allies is also leaving a vacuum in global leadership - one that China seems eager to fill. President Xi Jinping last month became the first Chinese head of state to attend an annual gathering of business elites in Davos, Switzerland. Xi used the occasion to declare China a champion of free trade, usurping the traditional US role as the leading booster of globalization. China, the world's leading exporter, wants to expand its global influence. Trump has offered few details of his trade plans, beyond pressuring US companies to keep or create jobs in America, taking a tougher line in forging deals and slapping tariffs on nations that are deemed to exploit the United States.

"There's not a lot of substance to his policies," says Gordon Hanson, director of the University of California San Diego's Center on Global Transformation. "It consists of two things: Jaw-boning

corporate America - 'create more jobs here or else' - and across-the-board trade protectionism."

Companies heavily involved in imports or exports can't easily develop their business plans without knowing what specific moves Trump will embrace or achieve.

Among the uncertainties:

- Will Trump insist on taxing imports if he doesn't get the concessions he wants from America's trading partners?

- If America abandons existing agreements, would allies trust it to adhere to any new trade deals?

- Would Trump risk igniting a trade war whereby other countries impose retaliatory taxes and sanctions on US goods? Will America's old alliances endure? If not, what replaces them?

Trump argues that the existing order has short-changed America - especially blue-collar US workers - exposing them to unfair competition with low-wage foreign laborers and to unjust trade practices by China and others.

The result, he said in his inaugural speech, is "rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation." "From this day forward," Trump declared, "it's going to be only America first."

His words resonate among communities that blame low-wage foreign competition for the loss of 4.8 million US factory jobs since 2000 and among families whose incomes have stagnated.

Trump has pulled the United States out of a 12-nation Asia-Pacific trade accord negotiated by the Obama administration. He's intent on renegotiating a pact with Mexico and Canada - and dumping it if he can't improve the version in place since 1994. He's questioned NATO's usefulness, considered slashing America's financial contribution to the United Nations and bickered with allies Mexico and Australia.

Critics say Trump is tearing down an international system that nurtured peace after World

War II, encouraged global commerce, lifted much of East Asia out of poverty and empowered the United States to become the world's leading superpower.

"This is the biggest reversal we've had since World War II," says Adam Posen, president of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a think tank that promotes free trade. "It does have echoes of the '20s and '30s, when the US said, to its detriment, that everyone else is ripping us off."

In Roseville, Illinois, a soybean and corn farmer named Ron Moore had expected to benefit from the Trans-Pacific Partnership with 11 Asia-Pacific countries. The TPP would have pried open Japan's market to more US farm exports, thereby benefiting US cattle and hog farmers. Moore provides feed to those livestock producers. "It was going to add value to my soybeans," says Moore, whose soybeans are shipped down the Mississippi River to New Orleans and often on to China and other foreign markets. "We're a little disappointed."

The TPP had stalled in Congress. But Trump officially pulled out of the deal, saying he could do better by negotiating with countries one on one. Some critics backed his argument. They argued that the TPP would have killed American jobs by exposing US workers to low-wage competition in Southeast Asia.

But the TPP was also a diplomatic effort to counter China's influence in Asia. Now, writes economist Gareth Leather at Capital Economics, "the demise of the TPP has created an opportunity for China."

"Who will negotiate with us if we renege on our deals?" asks Hanson of the University of California San Diego. Also in Trump's crosshairs: The North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada, which he's called the worst trade deal the United States has ever negotiated. Trump says he wants to renegotiate NAFTA or scrap it. He's also threatened to tax US companies that move to Mexico

and ship goods back to the US.

Since NAFTA took effect 23 years ago, the US trade gap with Mexico has surged as factories moved south of the border to capitalize on cheaper Mexican labor. Some analysts echo Trump's criticism that existing trade deals have hurt many Americans.

"NAFTA is packed with incentives to offshore jobs," says Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, which opposes many existing pacts. "NAFTA must be replaced - not tweaked - to actually deliver better outcomes for working people." But US exporters benefited from Mexican purchases, too. And many companies have built complex supply chains that span the U.S.-Mexico border. Pulling out of NAFTA would threaten their operations.

Trump says his shift in policy - along with big tax cuts and looser regulation - would restore countless factory and mining jobs. Most economists are skeptical. If the US imposes taxes on Chinese and Mexican imports, they warn, those countries would impose taxes of their own on U.S. exporters. The result could be a job-killing trade war. Even if Trump does draw some factories back to America, he'd face another problem: They aren't the huge employers they used to be. American factories produce more than twice as much as they did when manufacturing employment peaked in 1979 - with fewer than two-thirds the workers.

"The jobs we lost in manufacturing were in 20th century factories that employed lots of people," UC San Diego's Hanson says. It would also be hard to undo decades of globalization. In 1960, trade - exports and imports combined - equaled 9 percent of US economic output. By 2015, it was 28 percent, according to the World Bank.

"It sounds good: America First," says Ron Moore, a farmer who is president of the American Soybean Association. "But we live in a global economy nowadays." —AP



AUDI RS 3 LMS, AUDI R8 SHOWCASED AT GULF RUN

AUDI KUWAIT GIVES CUSTOMERS A TASTE OF AUDI SPORT

KUWAIT: During the 12th edition of the Gulf Run last weekend, Audi customers and fans had the chance to gain a first-hand experience of Audi Sport. They were treated to hot laps in the Audi Sport flagship model - the Audi R8 - and as a special surprise in the all-new Audi RS 3 LMS. The latter is the newest addition to the "League of Performance" race car squad. The Middle East is the first region worldwide offering the Audi RS 3 LMS experience. Organized by Audi Kuwait, represented by Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company, close to 100 customers had the chance to check out the cars at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhr.

Gulf Run started in 2005 as a weekend getaway for a group of friends passionate about automobile racing. The goal is to promote automobile racing and training in a professional environment; while educating drivers on proper racing techniques. Sixty cars from Kuwait roared into action at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East" - showcasing many top-of-the-line sports cars, among them the Audi Sport heavyweights.

Gulf Run CEO Ahmad Al-Mudhaf expressed his delight in being back at BIC for another edition of the event. He said that Gulf Run at BIC is always an enjoyable and memorable occasion for all those who participate, and it succeeds in its aim of promoting safety on the roads, especially amongst youth who are big fans of motorsport.

Al-Mudhaf thanked BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al-Khalifa and the entire BIC team for their exceptional work as hosts each year. He said that it is because of BIC's signature hospitality and smooth running of the event that they are always happy to come back to Bahrain and hold the meeting in Sakhr.

Tarek Al-Shafie, General Manager of Fouad Al Ghanim & Sons Automotive Company, the exclusive dealer of Audi in Kuwait, said: "Customer relationships are of paramount importance to us and we pride ourselves on affording our clients the ultimate experience. Introducing Audi enthusiasts to the exceptional RS 3 LMS was our way of engaging our customers in a different manner and exposing our customers to Audi's racing heritage."

The annual Gulf Run activities started on December 16-17, 2016 with a Kart Race at Sirbb Circuit in Kuwait, followed by a car show at Murooj where Audi Kuwait presented the Audi RS Q3 and the Audi R8. The highlight of the 12th edition of the Gulf Run was the racing weekend in Bahrain.

The Audi RS 3 LMS is touring the region and can be seen at the Dubai Autodrome next before it travels to Oman and Qatar. The 330 hp race car made its Audi Sport customer racing debut at the Dubai 24-hour race with UK-based Cadspeed Racing who celebrated a class victory and a podium in the TCR Middle East.

The Audi Group, with its brands Audi, Ducati and Lamborghini, is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the premium segment. It is present in more than 100 markets worldwide and produces at 16 locations in twelve countries. 100 percent subsidiaries of AUDI AG include Audi Sport GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy). In 2016, the Audi Group delivered to customers 1.87 million automobiles of the Audi brand, 3,457 sports cars of the Lamborghini brand and about 55,451 motorcycles of the Ducati brand.



WARBA BANK REACHES AGREEMENT WITH AL-MULLA INTERNATIONAL FINANCING CO

KUWAIT: Warba Bank has announced that an agreement has been concluded with Al-Mulla International Financing Company by which the bank will increase the allocated amount of the acquisition of financing portfolios from Al-Mulla International Financing to reach the amount of KD50 million. This substantial agreement reflects Warba Bank's commitment to provide innovative financing solutions to its clients in line with Islamic Sharia as well as the bank's strategy of expansion locally and regionally.

It is worth noting that this cooperation of Warba Bank and Al Mulla International Finance Company comes as a result of the tremendous success realized by both parties during 2016, when the bank acquired from the company a portfolio in the amount of 30 million Kuwaiti dinars.

On this aspect the CEO of Warba Bank Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem said, "this agreement represents a good example for companies looking for reliable resources for financing and liquidity, and also reflects the commitment of Warba Bank to offer innovative financing Islamic solutions through its available facilities which will help companies consolidate their assets. Such an agreement is a clear indication of Warba Bank's ability to play an effective role in the development of Islamic economy in Kuwait and globally."

Al-Ghanem added, "we are proud to have concluded this agreement with Al-Mulla International Finance Company, a renowned, deeply-rooted company, involved in multi-purpose projects including consumer financing and financed renting. This agreement signifies that the bank is has adopted the right strategy taking the path of cooperating with local companies in the various sectors and aspects in line with Islamic Sharia. It represents our readiness to extend communication with our client companies whom we deem our partners at any achievement and success that we may realize, which gives us more incentive and motivation towards continued incessant efforts that would meet their financing needs and consequently help develop all means that would serve and meet our needs."

On this same subject, Khalid Abdul Aziz Al-Muraikhi, Deputy Chairman and CEO of Al-Mulla International Financing Company said, "We are happy and proud of such joint cooperation with WARBA BANK, and for this second time to



Photos by Joseph Shagra

achieve such significant arrangement which will be in the mutual interest of both parties. Al-Mulla International Financing Company activity has witnessed noticeable growth subsequent to becoming a financing company operating along the principles of Islamic Sharia and licensed by Kuwait central bank in December 2013." He added, "Our first experience of cooperation with WARBA BANK has proven the strength and professionalism of the BANK in providing innovative banking financing solutions that consolidate the BANK's position in the Islamic banking industry, which have largely contributed to growing our financial portfolio and to providing effective financing solutions to our clients." In this connection, Al-Mulla International Financing Company is considered one of the pioneering companies in personal financing with extensive reputed experience in this sector in Kuwait.

The new agreement derives from Warba Bank's new strategy being enforced in cooperation with McKinsey & Company International Consultants which is fundamentally based on making available leading banking investment tools and leading financing services that help companies and investors and help develop the profits of the bank and transferring it to a banking facility that would provide leading services for business while pursuing its successes in the

retail sector. The five tenets of the strategy also include basics that would emphasize the objectives of the bank of making available outstanding banking services to clients and consolidating the digit value of the bank.

Warba Bank has been able to realize noticeable and significant impact in providing the best financing and investment opportunities in the past year during which the bank has achieved many successes such as the bank's participation in financing a complex for Kuwait National Petroleum Company in the amount of 25 million Kuwaiti dinars, a project which relates to the environmental fuel of the company, and assumed the principal role of issuing bank jointly with Berhard bank of Malaysia for the provision of a financing venture in the amount of 174 million dollars in line with Islamic Sharia through a group of international financing companies for the construction of a residential tower in New York, USA.

Amongst other leading financing operations concluded by the investment group of Warba Bank were four joint financing agreements of the bank's clients including Kuwait National Petroleum Company in the amount of 1.2 billion Kuwaiti dinars; Etihad Airways in the amount of 145 million Kuwaiti dinars; Ajman Bank in the amount of 230 million dollars; and a multi-currency joint venture in the amount of 155 million dollars for the Cooperative Agricultural Bank of Turkey. Warba Bank has crowned its operations for the year 2016 by issuing 2 bond projects including, Kuwait Finance House - Turkey in the amount of 500 million dollars and the Islamic council for private sector development for the amount of \$300 million.

Al-Ghanem concluded, "Thank God we have been able to win client and investor confidence. Today, Warba Bank enjoys a distinctive role in the local market acquired through its flexible innovative financing solutions and by developing a portfolio of services and banking products which take into consideration client needs and aspirations. We will continue on this path throughout 2017 in order to achieve more successes and to effectively contribute to the Islamic banking industry, both locally and regionally.

130 SHOWROOMS, 14 COUNTRIES

INSPIRING MILESTONES IN 30 YEARS BY JOYALUKKAS

From its humble beginning of a single showroom in the UAE in 1987, Joyalukkas has changed the landscape and widened the horizon of the jewellery retail industry. Today the Joyalukkas Group has grown into a multibillion-dollar corporation with diversified interests, spanning retail, fashion, money exchange, realty and aviation industries. The Joyalukkas brand has become a household name and the Group today enjoys the loyal patronage of over 10 million customers in the UAE, India, UK, Singapore, Malaysia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the USA.

Joyalukkas, dubbed the world's favourite jeweller, has enjoyed much acclaim since inception. Some of the first and biggest accomplishments include, The first retail chain to be awarded both ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certification, 7 years of Super brand status in a row, The world's largest showroom recognition from Limca Book of World records and more. Joyalukkas Jewellery is renowned worldwide for quality, designs, best value offerings, convenience and setting new benchmarks in customer service.

"When I opened the doors of the first Joyalukkas showroom 30 years ago, I had a simple goal: to offer the very best. Every new showroom and location brings us closer to our goal of being where our customers are. Each achievement affirms our goal and motivates us to aim even higher moving forward," says Mr. Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group. "But all of this would not have been possible without the loyalty and support of our dear patrons. They are the

driving force behind our efforts and constant pursuit of excellence. They have made the past 3 decades highly rewarding for us and our gratitude knows no bounds. It is my pledge to tirelessly work towards delighting our customers every time they visit a Joyalukkas showroom."

Joyalukkas Group has been on an aggressive expansion drive since 2015, growing the jewellery division from 110 showrooms to its current 130 across the globe. Work is now underway currently to open showrooms in new territories, such as Canada, Australia and Sri Lanka by the close of the second quarter of 2017 which spread Joyalukkas presence across 14 countries. Many exciting initiatives new product lines and innovative services are also in the works. The vision of Joyalukkas Jewellery is to 'Ornament the world' and the world's favourite and largest jewellery retail chain is doing everything possible to accomplish this.

Joyalukkas Group is a multi-billion dollar conglomerate, with varied business interests. The group operates its various business operations across UAE, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Singapore, Malaysia, UK, US and India. The group businesses include Jewellery, Money Exchange, Fashion & Silks, Luxury Air Charters, Malls and Realty. Joyalukkas employs over 8,000 professionals across the world, and is one of the most awarded and recognized Jewellery retail chains in the world.



LEADERS OF TEACHERS' UNION, TAXPAYERS CLASH ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CHANGES

DES MOINES: The head of the state's teachers' union and a government efficiency advocate clashed on how and whether sweeping changes to Iowa's public employee collective bargaining law will benefit taxpayers and public services.

The changes in House File 291, which was approved by the Legislature Thursday and signed into law by Gov. Terry Branstad Friday, won't lower property tax bill immediately, but will have a "very beneficial effect in containing the growth and spending by governments," Gretchen Tegeler, president of the Taxpayers Association of Central Iowa.

"This is a containment strategy over the long-term," Tegeler said Friday during taping of Iowa Press, which can be seen on Iowa Public Television.

Iowa State Education Association President Tammy Wawro agrees that it will hold down spending - personal spending by public employees who don't have confi-

dence that they will continue to have the jobs and benefits they now enjoy. She doesn't think stripping public employees of most of the bargaining rights they have enjoyed for the past four decades will save local governments or taxpayers any money. "I'm not sure what in this bill gives taxpayers that," she said about the potential savings Tegeler predicted. A fiscal analysis by the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency concluded that "Sufficient information is not available to determine the total fiscal impact."

"It would seem to me the fiscal note on here says it is inconclusive," Wawro said. "So I'm not sure where we would see that."

What Wawro does see in the bill, passed largely along party lines in the GOP-controlled House and Senate, is an "actual disrespect for the teaching profession" that will make teacher reconsider whether they want to stay in their jobs and discourage people from entering the profession. — AP



ROBOT PROBES SHOW JAPAN REACTOR CLEANUP WORSE THAN EXPECTED

TOKYO: Robot probes sent to one of Japan's wrecked Fukushima nuclear reactors have suggested worse-than-anticipated challenges for the plant's ongoing cleanup. The plant's operator Tokyo Electric Power Co. said the remote-controlled "scorpion" robot was sent into the Unit 2 reactor's containment vessel Thursday to investigate the area around the core that had melted six years ago, but its crawling function failed while climbing over highly radioactive debris.

The robot, carrying a dosimeter, thermometer and two small cameras, transmitted some data and visuals but could not locate melted fuel - key information to determine how to remove debris out of the reactor. The robot was abandoned inside the vessel at a location where it won't block a future probe. Preliminary examinations over the past few weeks have detected structural damage to planned robot routes and higher-than-expected radiation inside the Unit 2 containment chamber, suggesting the need

to revise robot designs and probes.

Similar probes are being planned for the two other melted reactors. A tiny waterproof robot that can go underwater will be sent to Unit 1 in coming weeks, but experts haven't figured out a way to access badly torn Unit 3. TEPCO needs to know the melted fuel's exact location and condition and other structural damage in each of the three wrecked reactors to figure out the best and safest ways to remove the fuel. Despite the incomplete probe missions, TEPCO stuck to its schedule to determine methods for the melted fuel removal this summer and start work in 2021, company spokesman Yuichi Okamura said.

Scorpion probe

TEPCO is struggling with the plant's decommissioning, which is expected to last decades, following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that led to the meltdown. Tens of thousands of residents had evacuated their homes, many of

them still unable to return due to high radiation. Earlier this month, another robot, designed for cleaning debris for the main "scorpion" probe, had to return midway through because two of its cameras became inoperable after two hours when its total radiation exposure reached a maximum tolerance of 1,000 Sievert - a level that can kill a human within seconds.

The original duration planned for the robot was 10 hours, or 100 Sievert per hour. Inadequate cleaning, high radiation and structural damage could limit subsequent probes, and may require more radiation-resistant cameras and other equipment, TEPCO officials said. TEPCO officials said that despite the dangerously high figures, radiation is not leaking outside of the reactor. Images captured from inside the chamber have showed damage and structures coated with molten material, possibly mixed with melted nuclear fuel, and part of a disc platform hanging below the melted core. —AP



TOKYO: This photo released by TEPCO shows a remote-controlled scorpion robot inside the Unit 2 reactor's containment vessel at Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in Okuma town, Fukushima prefecture, northeastern Japan. —AP



Cape Canaveral: In this file photo, space shuttle Atlantis is mounted on Pad 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. —AP

MOONSHOT PAD ROARING BACK INTO ACTION WITH SPACEX LAUNCH

SPACE X FALCON 9 ROCKET TO HOIST SUPPLIES

CAPE CANAVERAL: The launch pad used to send Americans to the moon and shuttle astronauts into orbit is roaring back into action. Dormant for nearly six years, NASA's Launch Complex 39A should see its first commercial flight this weekend. A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket will use it to hoist supplies to the International Space Station. Yesterday morning's planned launch was SpaceX's first from Florida since a devastating rocket explosion at a neighboring pad last summer.

The accident prompted SpaceX to whip 39A into shape sooner than anticipated under its lease with NASA. The pad wrecked in the Sept 1 accident remains unusable. "I can tell you it's an extra special launch Maybe extra nerve-racking," SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell told reporters Friday just outside the pad fencing. A brief rundown on historic Launch Complex 39A at Kennedy Space Center:

Big beginnings

NASA built 39A, as it's commonly known, in the mid-1960s for the monstrous Saturn V moon rockets. It was first used in 1967 for an unmanned test flight, followed by another early the next year. Next came the astronauts, with Apollo 8 soaring to the moon right before Christmas 1968. SpaceX chief Elon Musk noted

late last week via Instagram, "We are honored to be allowed to use it."

Show stopping acts

The crescendo came on July 16, 1969, as Apollo 11's Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins embarked on the first manned moon landing. All six Apollo moon-landings originated from here, as did close-call Apollo 13. Columbia made the first space shuttle flight from this pad on April 12, 1981, while Atlantis closed out the program from the same spot on July 8, 2011.

Frequent flier

This will be the 95th rocket launch from 39A. It was the departure point for 82 space shuttle flights and 11 Apollo missions, as well as the unmanned 1973 launch of Skylab, NASA's original space station. One flight resulted in casualties. As Columbia lifted off on Jan 16, 2003, foam insulation from the external fuel tank broke off and gouged the left wing. Columbia and its crew were lost 16 days later during re-entry.

SpaceX takeover

SpaceX signed a 20-year lease with NASA in 2014, beating out another tech billionaire's rocket company, Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin. Renovation

work was accelerated after SpaceX's Sept 1 rocket explosion a few miles away at Launch Complex 40 on Air Force property. The accident occurred during fueling for a prelaunch test. It is from pad 39A that SpaceX plans to launch Falcon rockets with space station-bound astronauts for NASA as early as next year. The company also might send spacecraft and, ultimately, crews to Mars from this location as well. "What an awesome use of a great American asset," Kennedy Space Center's director, Robert Cabana, said Friday. Without the lease agreement, "this pad would have just sat here and rusted away in the salt air."

Lesser-known twin

Just a mile to the north, Launch Complex 39B is the lesser-known, lesser-used twin. Apollo 10 christened 39B in 1969. In the shuttle era, Challenger inaugurated the pad on Jan. 28, 1986. The doomed flight with schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe lasted 73 seconds. In all, 53 shuttle missions began from this pad, for a total of 59 launches of all types. It was last used in 2009 for an unmanned test flight of NASA's Ares rocket, canceled soon afterward. NASA is transforming 39B for its yet-to-fly Space Launch System megarocket, intended to send astronauts beyond low-Earth orbit. —AP

HOW TO WATCH OSCAR-NOMINATED FLICKS FROM YOUR COUCH

NEW YORK: Movie fans, rejoice! You can watch about two-thirds of the Oscar-nominated flicks from your couch. But it'll cost you. Of the 62 full-length movies and shorts nominated for any category, only 11 are available online through an all-you-can-watch subscription - Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime or HBO Now. A month's subscription to all four will cost you more than \$39.

Buying or renting the remainder online will cost you about \$175 more. (This doesn't include as many as 22 titles that aren't available online at all.) Narrowing your ambitions by focusing on just best picture and the four acting categories will still cost you about \$70, not including the monthly subscriptions. And limiting yourself this way might set back your hopes of winning the Oscar pool.

Here's your viewing guide:

Best picture (and directing)

None of the nine best picture nominees is available through a subscription service. You can rent "Arrival" and "Hell or High Water" through Amazon, Google Play or Apple's iTunes. You'll have to buy downloads of "Hacksaw Ridge," "Manchester by the Sea" and "Moonlight" to watch over the weekend, though iTunes says rentals of all three are coming Tuesday. "Fences" will be available for purchase only next Friday.

Rentals typically cost about \$3 or \$4, or a dollar more if you want it in high definition. Buying downloads usually cost about \$15 for standard definition or \$20 for HD. Shop around, as prices aren't always the same at the various services. Based on the cheapest options, including waiting for rentals, you'll have to spend more than \$35 on the best picture movies.

You'll need to visit a theater for "Hidden Figures," "La La Land" and "Lion." All three are available as pre-orders, meaning you buy now and the download will automatically be available whenever it comes out online. But the movies aren't likely to be online before the Feb. 26 ceremony. The good news is you'll get the nominees for best directing out of the way, as all five movies are also up for best picture.

Acting nominees

In addition to the best picture flicks, you'll need to watch six more movies to

catch everyone nominated for the four acting categories. "Captain Fantastic," "Florence Foster Jenkins" and "Loving" are available for rent. "Nocturnal Animals" is available for purchase right away, with a rent option scheduled for Tuesday. "Jackie" comes out Tuesday. The cumulative total: about \$70. To see "Elle," you'll need to visit your local Cineplex or indie theater.

Screenplay categories

All but two of the nominees in the two writing categories overlap with best picture. "The Lobster" is available through Amazon Prime, while "20th Century Women" isn't online at all.

Full-length cartoons

Netflix has "Zootopia." "Kubo and the Two Strings" is available to rent. "Moana" will be available for purchase Tuesday. Head to theaters for "My Life as a Zucchini" and "The Red Turtle."

Full-length documentaries

Netflix produced "13th" and streams it exclusively. Amazon Prime has "Life, Animated." Hulu has "O.J.: Made in America" (as does WatchESPN, though you'll need to sign in with a cable or satellite TV account). "Fire At Sea" can be rented, while "I Am Not Your Negro" isn't expected online until June.

Foreign language

Rent "A Man Called Ove" and "Tanna." "Toni Erdmann" isn't available until April 11. Pre-orders are being taken for "The Salesman," but there's no release date. Buy a ticket for "Land of Mine."

The 15 shorts

The documentary shorts "Extremis" and "The White Helmets" are available exclusively at Netflix. You can purchase the animated "Piper" through Amazon, Google Play and iTunes. iTunes also has the live action "La Femme et le TGV" and is expected to get the animated "Blind Vaysha" and "Borrowed Time" on Tuesday. Shorts cost about \$2 each to buy. The cable channel Shorts HD plans to release the shorts online on Tuesday, likely in separate packages for each of the three categories. —AP



CALIFORNIA: This file photo, shows the Amazon logo in Santa Monica, California. —AP

NEW SUPERCOMPUTER AIDS CLIMATE RESEARCH IN COAL STATE

CHEYENNE, Wyoming: A new supercomputer in the top coal-mining state has begun critical climate-change research with support from even some global warming doubters, but scientists worry President Donald Trump could cut funding for such programs. The \$30 million, house-sized supercomputer named Cheyenne belongs to a federally funded

research center. It got to work a few weeks ago crunching numbers for several ambitious projects, from modeling air currents at wind farms to figuring out how to better predict weather months to years in advance.

It's the fastest computer in the Rocky Mountain West - three times faster than the 4-year-old supercomputer named Yellowstone it is replac-

ing and 20th-fastest in the world. Capable of 5.34 quadrillion calculations per second, Cheyenne is 240,000 times faster than a new, high-end laptop. Located in a windy business park near the city of Cheyenne, the National Center for Atmospheric Research-Wyoming Supercomputing Center that houses the water-cooled machine continues to enjoy support even from Wyoming's coal cheerleaders who doubt humankind is warming the Earth.

"Before we start making policy decisions on this, the science has got to be good," said Travis Deti, executive director of the Wyoming Mining Association. The vast majority of peer-reviewed studies, science organizations and climate scientists have found the Earth is warming and that the warming is man-made and a problem, but Wyoming's relationship with climate science is complicated at best. The University of Wyoming in 2012 removed a campus artwork made of charred logs after the fossil fuel industry objected to the piece's climate-change-awareness message. —AP



WYOMING: This photo provided shows the new supercomputer named Cheyenne at the National Center for Atmospheric Research at the supercomputing center in Cheyenne, Wyoming. —AP

ALPHABET'S LOON INTERNET PLAN CLOSER TO DEPLOYMENT

MOUNTAIN VIEW: Google parent Alphabet said Thursday that artificial intelligence-infused navigation software has significantly sped up plans to deploy Project Loon internet balloons to serve remote regions of the world. Teller said Loon is one of the more mature projects at X and that it "would be a natural state to graduate into its own company" but there were not plans at the moment for that to happen. —AFP

"We intend to be part of an ecosystem in any country where we are doing testing we would work with a local telco." Part of the money-making vision for Loon would be to get revenue from telecom operators for extending their reach. Teller said Loon is one of the more mature projects at X and that it "would be a natural state to graduate into its own company" but there were not plans at the moment for that to happen. —AFP

"Our timelines are starting to move up on how we can do more for the world sooner," said Astro Teller, who heads the team at the Alphabet unit X, in charge of "moonshot" projects of the technology giant. "We are looking to move quickly, but to move thoughtfully," Teller told a small group of reporters inside a former Silicon Valley shopping center transformed into a "moonshot factory." The acceleration was credited to software leaps that allow internet-serving balloons to ride high-altitude winds to ideal locations or loop in patterns that create consistent webs of internet coverage in the sky.

"We've been working to make the balloons smarter; almost like a game of chess with the winds," Teller said. He expected Loon to be partnering in coming months with telecom companies to provide internet to "real users," in a step up from tests done to see how well the high-floating technology works with networks on the ground. Teller declined to specify where Loon might first be integrated into telecommunications networks providing service to customers. "We are not going to all of a sudden be everywhere," Teller said.



MOUNTAIN VIEW: Astro Teller, the captain of moonshots for Google-parent Alphabet, discusses Project Loon internet-serving balloons at the X lab near the technology giant's headquarters in Mountain View, California. —AFP

MEXICAN GRAY WOLVES SEE INCREASE IN WILD POPULATION

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico: There are now more Mexican gray wolves roaming the American Southwest than at any time since the federal government began trying to reintroduce the predators nearly two decades ago.

The annual survey released Friday by the US Fish and Wildlife Service shows at least 113 wolves are spread between southwestern New Mexico and southeast Arizona,

marking an improvement over the 97 wolves that were documented the previous year. "We are encouraged by these numbers.

But these 2016 results demonstrate we are still not out of the woods," Fish and Wildlife Service regional director Benjamin Tuggle said in a statement. More work needs to be done to ensure the population grow by about 10 percent each year, Tuggle said. The survey comes as the agency gathers comments on plans to release two packs of Mexican gray wolves in wilderness areas near the Arizona-New Mexico border this year in an effort to bolster a struggling population threatened by inbreeding. The Fish and Wildlife Service released details this week of its latest plan, saying it will submit the public comments along with a request to the state of New Mexico for a permit to release the animals.

It will ultimately be up to New Mexico and a federal court whether the releases happen because the state and the agency are locked in a legal battle over the endangered predator, marking just the latest skirmish in a broader fight over states' rights and the Endangered Species Act. In a case

before a federal appeals court, New Mexico and 18 other states argue that the law requires the Fish and Wildlife Service to cooperate with them on how endangered species are reintroduced within their borders. Federal attorneys contend the law allows the agency to go around a state, if necessary, to save a species.

The court has yet to make a ruling, and until then releases in New Mexico are prohibited. New Mexico contends there's no way to determine whether the proposed releases would conflict with the state's own wildlife management because federal officials have yet to develop a comprehensive recovery plan for the wolves. The agency is under a court order to release a draft plan later this year. Federal officials say the releases are an important tool for avoiding a genetic bottleneck. Of the 70 or so Mexican wolves in the wild for which individual genetics are known, all but four males are descendants of the Bluestem Pack's breeding female.

Without releases from the more genetically diverse captive population, "there is very little potential for natural pair formation among unrelated wolves

in the wild now or in the future," wolf managers stated. Their plan also calls for more cross-fostering of pups, which involves placing captive-bred pups in the dens of wild wolves with the intention that the pack's adults would raise them as their own. Last year marked the first successful cross-fostering attempt with a litter in New Mexico. According to the survey, 50 wild-born pups survived in 2016 compared with half that the previous year.

In all, officials reported a total of 21 packs with at least 50 wolves in New Mexico and 63 wolves in Arizona. A subspecies of the gray wolf, Mexican wolves nearly disappeared in the 1970s. The federal government added them to the endangered species list in 1976. The Fish and Wildlife Service began reintroducing the wolves in New Mexico and Arizona starting in 1998, but the effort has been hampered by everything from politics to illegal killings and genetics. The agency has been criticized for its management of the predators by both ranchers, who say the animals are a threat to their livelihoods, and environmentalists who want more captive-bred wolves to be released. —AP



NEW MEXICO: In this undated file photo, a Mexican gray wolf leaves cover at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, Socorro County, New Mexico. —AP

TALK TO BABIES AND LET THEM BABBLE TO BRIDGE WORD GAP

WORD PEDOMETERS TO INFLUENCE SCHOOL-READINESS FACTORS



RHODE ISLAND: In this photo, caseworker Stephanie Taveras, left, reads a book with 20-month-old Gracey Niebla, right, at the child's home in Providence, Rhode Island. —AP photos

WASHINGTON: Even infants can have conversations with mom or dad. Their turn just tends to involve a smile or some gibberish instead of words. That's a key lesson from programs that are coaching parents to talk more with their babies - and recording their attempts. At issue is how to bridge the infamous "word gap," the fact that affluent children hear far more words before they start school than low-income kids. New research suggests intervening early can at least boost the words at-risk tots hear, and maybe influence some school-readiness factors.

One program in Providence, Rhode Island, straps "word pedometers" onto tots to record how many words a day they hear from family or caregivers - not TV. Another in New York City records video of parents practicing conversation strategies with babies too young to even say "Da-da." Parents say: "Wow, look what I did there. I made a sound and my child smiled at me," said Dr. Alan Mendelsohn of New York University. "The power in that is really something." The research was presented Friday at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston. Scientists have long known the power of simply talking to babies - the sooner the better.

A landmark 1995 study found that poor children hear a fraction of the words their peers in wealthier homes do, adding up to about 30 million fewer words by age 3. The reasons are myriad. If mom's exhausted from two jobs, she's less likely to read that extra bedtime story or have time to explore "this little piggy" when putting on a tot's socks. Those children have smaller vocabularies and lag academically, and can find it hard to catch up. That's in part because early experiences shape how the brain develops in those critical first years of life.

Conversational turns

Programs are popping up around the country to spread the "let's talk" message. There's little data on which interventions really work. But researchers outlined some promising early findings Friday - and noted

the problem is about more than word quantity. "Yes, you can talk more, but what is the quality of your language?" said Caitlin Molina, executive director of the Providence Talks program. "It's not just the adult word count but the conversational turns, the back and forth, that engage the child." Providence Talks has enrolled more than 1,300 babies and toddlers since 2014 in programs that train parents to build in more conversation during the day.

First, coaches provide strategies. Don't just read the book but ask about the pictures. Turn off the radio in the car to talk about where you're going. Describe the colors when dressing a tot, and pause to give them a chance to babble back. Then, one day every two weeks, the children wear a small recorder that counts how many words they hear and the number of those "conversational turns." It can count the returning baby babble but not the TV or radio. Parents are given the scores, to track their own progress. Early results show two-thirds of participating families improve.

Children who started the program hearing an average of 8,000 words a day were averaging 12,000 a day when the coaching ended, Molina said. Brown University has begun an independent study to track whether the improvement was enough to make a difference once those children begin kindergarten. In New York, Mendelsohn is studying a program that coaches parents at the pediatrician's office, while they're waiting for routine well-baby visits. The coaches use a prop - a free book or toy - to explain strategies for conversation and engagement, and record the parent trying.

Going over the video shows what he or she did right and where to improve. More than 400 at-risk families were randomly assigned to the video coaching or standard pediatric visits. By age 3, youngsters in the coaching program did better at imitation play and attention, and displayed less hyperactivity, Mendelsohn reported. He said the benefits appear to last as he's tracking the first children in that study who've reached kindergarten age. —AP



MISSISSIPPI: In this photograph, a Hoffman's two-toed baby sloth, at the zoo was prepped for its first appearance before local media at the Hattiesburg, Mississippi Zoo. —AP

BOY OR GIRL? IT'S A SLOTH, SO WE DON'T KNOW YET

HATTIESBURG, Mississippi: Zookeepers are waiting for a DNA test to learn whether Hattiesburg Zoo's baby sloth is a boy or a girl. That's because sloths' sex organs are internal. They'll have to send a bit of fur to a larger zoo to learn the gender of the Hoffman's two-toed sloth born to Mo and Chewy, curator of mammals Stephen Taylor said Friday. Mama Mo, hanging upside-down with the baby resting on her belly, was on public view Friday for the first time since giving birth Feb 5.

The first days after birth are delicate for any animal, and Taylor said this one didn't start suckling on its own. After about half a day, zookeepers began feeding it puppy milk replacement from a syringe fitted with a nipple instead of a needle, he said. "We're still hoping it'll pick it up once it gets more coordinated and mobile," he said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. Not that sloths, native to Central and South America, are wildly active at any time.

They were named for their inaction, an adaptation to their low-nutrition diet of leaves. The baby's even slower than adults - and clumsy, Taylor said. "It just sits on mom's tummy right now," he said. About every two hours, a zookeeper disengages the baby to feed it. Starting Friday, those feedings moved from behind the scenes to the sloths' viewing window. Since it was a workday, there wasn't much of a crowd. "I imagine tomorrow's going to be pretty nuts," Taylor said.

Because of the baby, Mo hasn't been part of the twice-weekly "sloth experiences" which let visitors pay extra to mix up sloth food and even hold Chewy, who used to be a pet, on their laps. It's likely to be "quite a few months" before she and the baby return to the sloth experience room, Taylor said. Although sloths are born with a full coat of fur, their eyes open, and a full complement of teeth and long claws, they're dependent on their mothers for about a year, according to the zoo. —AP



RHODE ISLAND: This photo shows a digital audio recorder at a home in Providence, Rhode Island.

ABUNDANT FISH DRAW 1 MILLION PENGUINS TO ARGENTINE PENINSULA

PUNTA TOMBO, Argentina: More than a million penguins have traveled to Argentina's Punta Tombo peninsula during this year's breeding season, drawn by an unusual abundance of small fish. Local officials say that's a record number in recent years for the world's largest colony of Magellanic penguins, offering an especially stunning spectacle for the tens of thousands of people who visit the reserve annually. The peninsula's tiny islets are well-suited to nesting and have sardines and anchovies close to the shoreline.

The flightless birds come on shore in September and October and stay while the males and females take turns caring for their eggs and hunting for food. The warm-weather birds breed in large colonies in southern Argentina and Chile and migrate north as far as southwestern Brazil between March and September. They are around 20 inches tall and have a broad crescent of white feathers that extends from just above each eye to the chin and a small area of pink on the face. —AP



PUNTA TOMBO: Penguins walk on a beach at Punta Tombo peninsula in Argentina's Patagonia. —AP



WORLD'S OLDEST SEABIRD HATCHES NEW CHICK

HONOLULU: The world's oldest known seabird has a new chick. The US Fish and Wildlife Service said Thursday Wisdom's offspring hatched at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge last week. The Laysan albatross is at least 66 years old and is the world's oldest breeding bird in the wild. Fish and Wildlife Service project leader Bob Peyton says Wisdom has returned to Midway for over six decades. He says she has raised at least 30 chicks.

Midway Atoll is home to the world's largest colony of albatross. The island about 1,200 miles northwest of Honolulu was the site of a pivotal World War II battle. Nearly 70 percent of the world's Laysan albatross rely on the atoll for habitat. Midway is part of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. —AP

FRIENDS SAVE SPEAR FISHERMAN FROM SHARK MAULING

SYDNEY: A shark badly mauled a man spearfishing yesterday in northern Queensland leaving him in serious condition after friends saved his life by pulling him aboard their boat, the ambulance service said. The 26-year-old suffered severe blood loss with multiple bites to his upper and lower leg, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) reported. "Rescue helicopter is transporting to Cairns Hospital with one male patient with serious leg injuries," Queensland Ambulance tweeted.

Cairns resident Glenn Dickson was spearfishing with three friends off Hinchinbrook Island, north of

Townsville, where paramedics said they believed he was bitten by either a bull shark or a tiger shark. His friends were also in the water at the time of the attack but managed to haul him back onto the boat before calling emergency services.

"The initial actions by three friends have definitely saved his life because he was losing so much blood," ambulance spokesman Martin Taylor told ABC. Taylor said they applied a tourniquet to his leg to staunch the blood flow. "They put a tourniquet up high and tight on his femur and stopped the subsequent bleeding which was quite significant." —AFP

CHINA CLOSES LIVE POULTRY MARKETS AMID FLU OUTBREAK

BEIJING: China is ordering the closure of live poultry markets in its south-central regions as it grapples with the worst outbreak of bird flu in years that has killed at least 87 people. State media reported Friday that the National Health and Family Planning Commission ordered closures anywhere with cases of the H7N9 strain. Most reported cases have been found in the densely populated Yangtze and Pearl river deltas from Shanghai to Hong Kong.

Those areas generally experience mild, wet winters that are ideal for the virus transmission. In all, more than 250 cases have been reported from 16 provinces and regions, including as far away as the southwestern province of Yunnan. The death toll since the start of the year has been unmatched since at least 2013. In addition to the market closures, the commission is training health workers in the screening, early diagnosis and treatment of the disease, while urging people to avoid contact

with live birds. H7N9 is considered to be less virulent than the H5N1 strain that the World Health Organization has linked to hundreds of deaths worldwide over the last decade. H7N9 is not believed to be transmitted between humans, but rather by infected poultry. China has gained extensive experience in dealing with such crises since being hit by the 2003 SARS outbreak that was believed to have originated among animals in southern China.

A preference among Chinese for live-bought, freshly-slaughtered poultry complicates the government's efforts to eradicate such diseases. The official Xinhua News Agency said the market closures this time have "greatly reduced the number of new infections in many regions," citing Ni Daxin, deputy director of the emergency response center at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This story corrects virus strain. —AP

BODY OF TORTOISE LONESOME GEORGE RETURNED TO GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

QUITO: The embalmed body of the giant tortoise known as Lonesome George—the last known survivor of a species that died out in 2012 — returned home to the Ecuadorian Galapagos Islands Friday. The body arrived in Puerto Ayora, the capital of the archipelago's Santa Cruz Island, on an Ecuadorian military

plane after undergoing taxidermy work at New York's American Museum of Natural History, the Galapagos National Park said. The giant tortoise—thought to be around a century old when he died in June 2012 — was the last known member of the subspecies *Geochelone nigra abingdoni*. He failed to repro-

duce despite a decade's long conservation effort that earned him the moniker "Lonesome George." His body will go on display at the park starting Feb 23, after having starred in an exhibit at the New York museum from Sept 2014-Jan 2015. The Pacific island chain is famous for its

unique flora and fauna studied by Charles Darwin as he developed his theory of evolution. Of the 15 species of giant tortoise known to have originated in the Galapagos, three, including George's, have gone extinct—victims of plundering 18th-century pirates who damaged the islands' fragile ecosystem. —AFP

CANADA OPIOID CRISIS LEADS TO MORE ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

OTTAWA: A surge in the number of overdose deaths in Canada has led to more organs being available for transplant, an official at the epicenter of the opioid crisis said Friday. "We've seen more organs available for transplant and a proportion of those have been due to drug overdoses," David Landsberg, British Columbia medical director of transplant services, said in a telephone interview with AFP. Canada is in the grips of a deadly spike in fentanyl abuse. Highly potent and addictive, the analgesic is estimated to be up to 100 times stronger than morphine.

Two milligrams of pure fentanyl—the size of about four grains of salt—is enough to kill the average adult. The government announced Friday a Can\$75 million (\$57.3 million) package to combat overdose deaths linked to fentanyl and try to curb abuse for its heroin-like effect. The uptick in both fentanyl overdose deaths and transplants began in late 2016. From the beginning of this year to February 15, there have been 59 organs from 20 donors used in transplants, according to figures provided by BC Transplant.

That is up from 37 organs from 10 donors transplanted in the same period in

2016. One quarter of the organs transplanted this year came from people who died of a fentanyl overdose, said Landsberg. The coroner in westernmost British Columbia, which has been hardest hit by Canada's opioid crisis, reported 914 "apparent illicit drug overdose deaths" in 2016 — a 79.2 percent year-over-year increase. Fentanyl-related deaths accounted for two-thirds of the total, it said. The trend so far this year has not abated, with 116 overdose deaths reported in Jan.

Federal Health Minister Jane Philpott earlier announced Can\$65 million to combat the opioid crisis, plus another Can\$10 million to bolster British Columbia emergency services. Last year, faced with soaring fentanyl overdose deaths, the federal government cracked down on imports of fentanyl and its precursors, distributed thousands of naloxone kits and removed legal hurdles to opening new supervised injection sites. The first new sites in more than a decade—also called drug consumption rooms—were approved earlier this month in Montreal. Until now, Vancouver had the only safe injection site on the continent. —AFP



NEW MEXICO: In this file photo, New Mexico Tech Professor Penny Boston crawls through the Mud Turtle Passage on the way to the Snowy River formation during an expedition in Fort Stanton Cave, New Mexico.

BIOLOGISTS FIND WEIRD CAVE LIFE THAT MAY BE 50,000 YEARS OLD

LIFE ON EARTH EXTREMELY TOUGH, VERSATILE

BOSTON: In a Mexican cave system so beautiful and hot that it is called both Fairyland and hell, scientists have discovered life trapped in crystals that could be 50,000 years old. The bizarre and ancient microbes were found dormant in caves in Naica, Mexico, and were able to exist by living on minerals such as iron and manganese, said Penelope Boston, head of NASA's Astrobiology Institute. "It's super life," said Boston, who presented the discovery Friday at the American Association for the Advancement of Science conference in Boston.

If confirmed, the find is yet another example of how microbes can survive in extremely punishing conditions on Earth. Though it was presented at a science conference and was the result of nine years of work, the findings haven't yet been published in a scientific journal and haven't been peer reviewed. Boston planned more genetic tests for the microbes she revived both in the lab and on site. The life forms - 40 different strains of microbes and even some viruses - are so weird that their nearest relatives are still 10 percent different genetically.

That makes their closest relative still pretty far away, about as far away as humans are from mushrooms, Boston said. The Naica caves - an abandoned lead and zinc mine - are half a mile deep. Before drilling occurred by a mine company, the mines had been completely cut off from the outside world. Some were as vast as cathedrals, with crystals lining the iron walls. They were also so hot that scien-

tists had to don cheap versions of space suits - to prevent contamination with outside life - and had ice packs all over their bodies.

Tough Earth life

Boston said the team could only work about 20 minutes at a time before ducking to a "cool" room that was about 100 degrees. NASA wouldn't allow Boston to share her work for outside review before

Friday's announcement so scientists couldn't say much. But University of South Florida biologist Norine Noonan, who wasn't part of the study but was on a panel where Boston presented her work, said it made sense. "Why are we surprised?" Noonan said. "As a biologist I would say life on Earth is extremely tough and extremely versatile." This isn't the oldest extreme life.

Several years ago, a different group of scientists published studies about microbes that may be half a million years old and still alive. Those were trapped in ice and salt, which isn't quite the same as rock or crystal, Boston said. The age of the Naica microbes was determined by outside experts who looked at where the microbes were located in the crystals and how fast those crystals grow. It's not the only weird life Boston is examining. She is also studying microbes commonly found in caves in the United States, Ukraine and elsewhere that eats copper sulfate and seem to be close to indestructible. "It's simply another illustration of just how completely tough Earth life is," Boston said. —AP



BOSTON: This image provided by Penny Boston shows a red wall in a cave with butterfly crystal. —AP photos



KANSAS CITY: This photo provided by the Kansas City Zoo in Kansas City, Missouri, shows Ruw, a female baby chimpanzee that was born at the zoo. —AP

BABY CHIMP ABANDONED BY MOM TO JOIN KANSAS CITY ZOO EXHIBIT

KANSAS CITY: A baby chimpanzee rejected by her mother last year and raised so far by humans at the Kansas City Zoo is expected to make the public primate exhibit. The Kansas City Star reports that Ruw, pronounced "roo," is a female chimpanzee born on April 1. She was rejected by her mother days after her birth, so

zookeepers have been raising her in hopes of introducing her to the zoo's chimpanzee group. The zoo released a statement Thursday saying Ruw "continues to grow and learn how to be a chimp from her surrogate moms." Ruw is expected to be in the public display with the rest of the primate troop today afternoon and tomorrow. —AP

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HONDA MOTORCYCLES BLAZE THROUGH THE ANNUAL KUWAIT RIDERS BIKE SHOW



The 2017 Kuwait Riders Bike Show started with a thunderous roar that includes various activities, events and most of all, the best and most exclusive motorcycle models including ones from Honda Alghanim, the exclusive distributor of Honda motorcycles in Kuwait. Honda's motorcycles had a significant presence in the show due to the large amount of Honda motorcycle fans who enjoy riding motorcycles for practical reasons as well as for their pure enjoyment. This year's show was held at Safir Hotel, Bneid AlGar on Feb 1 to 4, 2017.

Due to Honda's keenness on standing out amongst the crowd of motorcycles, Honda Alghanim launched a one-of-a-kind promotion that was widely popular during the bike show itself as well as at Honda's showroom. The promotion comprised of discounts on a range of motorcycles including the FC6, VT1300 and CTX1300 and a Buy One Get One Free offer that awaited the show's attendees on the TRX680 and CRF50F. Undoubtedly, the TRX680 is one of the strongest motorcycles as it is designed for bumpy and rugged roads. Its ATV engine features a single-cylinder fuel injected with 675cc that provides ample torque and dependable power.

Also known as the Golden Wing, the F6C is known for its spectacular design that is created with a twin-spar aluminum beam frame with a six-cylinder boxer engine and a 113.99 HP at a 5,500 RPM power. Another motorcycle that was part of the show as well as the offer is the CRF50F, a mind-blowing creation that was built to drive smoothly on mountain and rough roads. The engine is injected with 49cc with a one air-cooled cylinder and two valves. It also has an adjustable throttle limiter in which riders can control its

power as they wish.

The VT1300 is a true original among Honda's motorcycles as it offers a unique package that is almost accessible to all customers. The VT1300 never disappoints rider with its amazing performance and magnificent crafting. Moreover, it is offered with a V2 four-stroke engine and a 56.99 HP at 4,250 RPM power. The CTX1300 and the CTX1300 Deluxe are two of Honda's high-tech motorcycles with a 1261cc engine. CTX1300 and the CTX1300 Deluxe contain Bluetooth audio, anti-lock brakes, self-cancelling turn signals and a traction control.

Honda Alghanim welcomes everyone to visit its new Motorcycle and Power Product showroom in Al Rai near Ace Hardware to benefit from this ongoing offer on Saturday to Thursday from 8:30 am to 8:30 pm and on Friday from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm.

The all-in-one Honda vehicles showroom besides Safat Alghanim on the fourth ring road includes a service area that welcomes over 70 cars every day at its 16 vehicle maintenance areas. Honda Alghanim's working hours are from Saturday to Wednesday 7:30 am to 8:30 pm Thursday 7:30 am to 6:30 pm and Friday 2:00 pm until 7:00 pm.

Alghanim Motors, the exclusive distributor of Honda automobiles, motorcycles, power products, and marine products in Kuwait, is committed to providing customers with flexible payment solutions and efficient and cost-effective services. The waiting lounge offers entertainment and comfort for customers with gaming consoles, digital satellite TV, free wireless internet and relaxing massage chairs. For more information, please call 1822777.

NBK SPONSORS DASMAN TALKS: A YOUTH FORUM FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Organized by Dasman Bilingual School under the patronage of Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for youth Affairs, Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsors the Youth Forum for secondary school students "Dasman Talks," as part of its commitment toward corporate social responsibility. NBK's sponsorship and support to Dasman Bilingual School comes in line with the bank's commitment to corporate social responsibility as well as the vital role it plays in supporting all students, youths and educational initiatives.

The forum sheds the light on encouraging young people to build their public speaking skills

and focus on the required tools to create an environment ripe for their leadership. It aimed at empowering youth and the development of their vision, creative power, and drives to make the future an inclusive, sustainable place for themselves and coming generations.

NBK is committed to supporting youths and empowering them to realize their potentials. NBK provides career and training opportunities to encourage youths to assume roles and obtain the required tools to create an environment ripe for their leadership. It is worth mentioning that Dasman Model Bilingual School serves the interests of students with different learning abilities.



MARINA HOTEL LAUNCHES SPECIAL PROMOTIONS IN CELEBRATION OF HALA FEBRUARY

Marina Hotel Kuwait invites guests to take advantage of a host of special promotions coinciding

with the festivities of "Hala February". The hotel invites its guests to celebrate with multitude of special room packages

including complimentary breakfast, and is ready with its best offer and guarantees that all guests have an enjoyable time with their friends and family.

Marina Hotel's stunning coastal setting provides a broad range of leisure options with access to the hotel's various facilities, gym, private beach and three swimming pools. The hotel's Wi-Fi connection ensures that guest's communication needs are duly met during their stay throughout the festive period.

Overlooking the azure waters of the Arabian Gulf, Marina Hotel features an excellent choice of dining options. Unwind in the finest ambiance at the hotel and enjoy with your family and friends a delightful dining experience. Start your morning with steaming coffee and a delicious buffet breakfast at Six Palms restaurant followed by a delectable lunch and dinner buffet at the Atlantis Restaurant with a magnificent sea view.

These exclusive offers combined with the hotel's attractive features provide an exciting getaway. With the convenient location of the hotel, close to many shopping attractions and areas like Marina Mall and Marina Crescent; where "Hala February" promotions and enter-



The groom, Ali with his father, uncle and friends

Islamic studies teacher, of Jaber Al-Ali Sec. School, Ali Saleh Salem Al-Humaidah recently got married. A special reception was held at Al-Hasawi Weddings Hall in Nuzha area and was attended by family, friends and co-workers. Congratulations Ali and may you have a long happy life.

tainment is at a high point Marina Hotel is certainly the place to be for the entire family, as well as groups of friends to share and spend together.

"Hala February" is the prime time to experience true Arabian hospitality,

Marina Hotel's facilities, friendly staff and family touch create the perfect holiday atmosphere. For more information, please visit our website: www.marinahotel.com

OOREDOO DELIVERS SPECIAL SONG FOR NATIONAL HOLIDAYS



Mijbil Al-Ayoub

Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, produced a special song in celebration of the national holidays of Kuwait, performed by the famous singer Balqees and featuring talk show personality Abla Fahita. The song was written by lyricist Saad Al-Musailem, composed by Fahad Al-Nasser and directed by Ahmed Al-Najjar. With her mellifluous voice and sincere performance, Balqees croons in praise of Kuwait and the unique characteristics of its people, including the country's distinguished dialect and other qualities of which they are known in the Gulf region.

The song's sincere lyrics are coupled with a great melody that combines different musical modalities from around the region, symbolizing the harmonious relationship Kuwaiti enjoy with their neighboring countries. The video clip of the song features a unique performance by well-known Egyptian puppet character Abla Fahita, who received nationwide recognition for her satirical talk show in which she humorously tackles trending social and political issues. The video also features well-known social media influencers such as Yaqoub Boushahri, Hessa Al-Loughani, Louluh Al-Aslawi, Hessa and Munirah Al-Kulaib, and the Kuwait National Television Music Band.

Commenting on this, Ooredoo Kuwait's Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Al-Ayoub said "We are happy to share the joy of the national holidays with the people of Kuwait with this song - this participation is deep-rooted within our company's values of caring and connecting. We aim to

have a proactive role in all the events that matter to our audience, and we plan to launch a series of activities throughout the national holidays that we are certain they will enjoy."

Branding Senior Manager Fatima Al-Mukhaizeem said that the theme, lyrics and music were carefully selected to reflect a certain message in the song.

"We wanted to celebrate everything that is beautiful about Kuwait and its wonderful people. We selected the lyrics and music to symbolize the harmonious unity of Kuwaitis. We had the pleasure to collaborate with beloved characters such as Balqees and Abla Fahita, and were happy to collaborate with a number of the most admired social media personalities."

Al-Mukhaizeem added that the song's video clip features a number of Kuwait's most visited tourist attractions, including the old Muabraqiya Souk, in addition to Shaheed Park and Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Center. The song is produced by Senyar, which has collaborated with Ooredoo on a number of award-winning projects including Ooredoo's Ramadan TVC in 2016 and 2015. Ooredoo also announced that it will launch a series of activities during the national holidays to interact directly with people in different locations across Kuwait, including some activities at Murooj Market, Kuwait's most-visited youth and entrepreneur outdoors market to which Ooredoo is a strategic sponsor. Additionally, Ooredoo will continue to distribute national holiday paraphernalia.



Fatima Al-Mukhaizeem



Artists, Balqees



IISM BIDS FAREWELL

India International School Mangaf organized Farewell Party on February 2, 2017, where students of XI bid farewell to the outgoing class XII students with great enthusiasm. The function began with a red carpet welcome of the day's guests of honor, the handsome and pretty youngsters clad in the best of their collection, by staff and students. The host of the event, students of XI, presented a variety of entertainment programs including group dance, solo song performances, witty skit which stirred peals of laughter throughout, mime with a highlight on the importance of education etc.

The outgoing students participated in a 'Fashion Parade' and Anud Javed was crowned with the title of 'Ms. Farewell' and Lyrion Andrew Aguiar was awarded the title of 'Mr. Farewell'. Some exciting games were also arranged for the students and were enjoyed by all. Token of love and appreciation was given to the students by the school management and their juniors in "Gift distribution ceremony". The school Director,

Malayil Moosa Koya and Principal, F. M. Basheer Ahmed wished good luck to the final year students for their board examination and their future. They also expressed their hope that students will continue holding best positions in the upcoming exams and uphold the goodwill of the school.

The school Head Boy Moosa Kazi and Head Girl Sadaf Mariyam addressed the gathering and, with lumps in their throats, shared the memory of their precious 14 years journey at the school. They profusely thanked the management, teachers and their juniors for making the day a red letter one for them. Megha Suresh, Master Hano Cherian, Master Sahir Irfan and Navid Alam were the masters of the ceremony. Welcome address and vote of thanks were proposed by Aqeela Ahmed and Adeena Aziz, respectively. The celebration came to an end with the sumptuous meal.



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EMERGENCY 112

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 05:05
 Shorook: 06:24
 Duhr: 12:02
 Asr: 15:15
 Maghrib: 17:40
 Isha: 18:57

MATRIMONIAL

Jacobite parents invite proposals for their son, Post Graduate Engineer, 29/173, working in Kuwait. M4marry profile ID - 4178223. Email: scariahrej@gmail.com (C 5275) 18-2-2017

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GANIJI ZAINAB QURESH, wife of Murtuza Mustafa Jawadwala, holder of Passport No. J0366967 & Civil ID No. 283021503013 has changed my name to

ZAINAB MURTUZA JAWADWALA hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by my new name ZAINAB MURTUZA JAWADWALA. (C 5274) 16-2-2017

I, Sonu son of Halasha Ram, holder of Indian Passport No. M4637344 & Civil ID No. 280101012966 has changed my name Som Nath Halasha Ram hereinafter in all my dealings and documents I will be known by name of Som Nath Halasha Ram. (C 5273) 15-2-2017

FOR RENT

A west Mishref 3 room apartment including one master bedroom and bathroom between the other two + maid room with bathroom + reception + kitchen + lift + two parking spaces.

For inquiries call: 9 7 2 1 8 5 3 2

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

DANAH UNIVERSAL SCHOOL OF KUWAIT

RECRUITMENT OPEN DAY

AdvancED ACCREDITED | NCA

POSITIONS:

- PRINCIPAL
- VICE PRINCIPAL
- SOCIAL WORKER
- MUSIC TEACHER
- MATH TEACHER
- ENGLISH TEACHER
- LIBRARIAN

REQUIREMENTS:

- Native speakers for Principal & Vice Principal, Masters degree is a must
- Minimum Bachelor's in relevant subject for teachers.
- Minimum +5 years experience of working in any reputable Institution.
- Must be familiar with American curriculum.
- Health : No chronic disease likely to affect performance.

Venue:- Meeting room no. 15 A, Floor no. 15, Symphony Style Hotel, Salmiya.
 Date:- 4th March 2017.
 Time:- 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Contact us: Tel: 25662546/7
 Email: info@aldanahbsk.net

KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (16/02/2017 TO 22/02/2017)

Time	Movie	Time	Movie
11:30 AM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	6:30 PM	RINGS
1:30 PM	RINGS	8:45 PM	THE REMAINS
1:30 PM	RINGS	10:45 PM	PET
1:30 PM	PET	12:45 AM	
3:45 PM	MUHALAB-2	12:00 PM	FANAR-3
6:00 PM	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic	2:00 PM	KAABIL- HINDI
9:00 PM	KAABIL- HINDI	5:00 PM	AL MOKHAYAM
11:00 PM	JOLLY LLB 2 -Hindi	8:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
1:00 AM	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic	10:00 PM	JOLLY LLB 2 -Hindi
	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic	12:05 AM	KAABIL- HINDI
	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic		EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic
12:45 PM	MUHALAB-3	11:30 AM	FANAR-4
3:00 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	1:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
5:00 PM	ARSENAL	3:15 PM	GOLD
7:15 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	5:15 PM	GOLD
9:30 PM	ARSENAL	7:45 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
11:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	9:45 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
	ARSENAL	12:05 AM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
12:45 PM	FANAR-1	11:45 PM	FANAR-5
3:15 PM	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic	1:30 PM	ARSENAL
5:45 PM	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic	3:30 PM	ARSENAL
7:45 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	5:30 PM	RAEES- HINDI
10:15 PM	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic	7:45 PM	ARSENAL
12:30 AM	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic	9:45 PM	ARSENAL
	EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic	11:45 PM	ARSENAL
12:15 PM	FANAR-2	12:30 PM	MARINA-1
2:15 PM	PET	2:30 PM	ARSENAL
4:15 PM	RINGS	4:30 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA
	PET	6:30 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
	THE REMAINS		GOLD
			ARSENAL

NOTE: PLEASE CARRY YOUR RESUME ALONG WITH YOUR PASSPORT & DEGREE COPY.

FOLLOW US: Dusk_kw, Dusk_kw, Dusk Universal School of Kuwait, www.dusk-kw.net

REQUIRED

For a Major Foodstuff Co.

- Sales Representatives
- Sales Executives
- Merchandisers
- Salesmen
- Cashiers
- Drivers

- Transferable visa is a must
- Driving license for jobs 1-2-3

24826638
24835003
 Fax: 24847818
 waredb.co@gmail.com

NOTICE
 February 8, 2017

Mr. Phintsho Tshering Bhutia son of Mr. Palden Bhutia, resident of Doma s communication, Rishi Road Kalimpong, Darjeeling, West Bengal, India and Ms. Sarita Subba daughter of Mr. Shankar Subba, resident of Sunwar Busty, Aloorari, Darjeeling, West Bengal, India, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (attachecons@indembkwt.org, welfaresection@indembkwt.org) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Sanjeev-Saklani)
 Attaché (Consular) and
 Marriage Officer,
 Embassy of India, Kuwait.

Ph: 00965- 22550171 - 00965-22533125
 Fax: 00965- 22573910
 Email: attachecons@indembkwt.org
 welfaresection@indembkwt.org

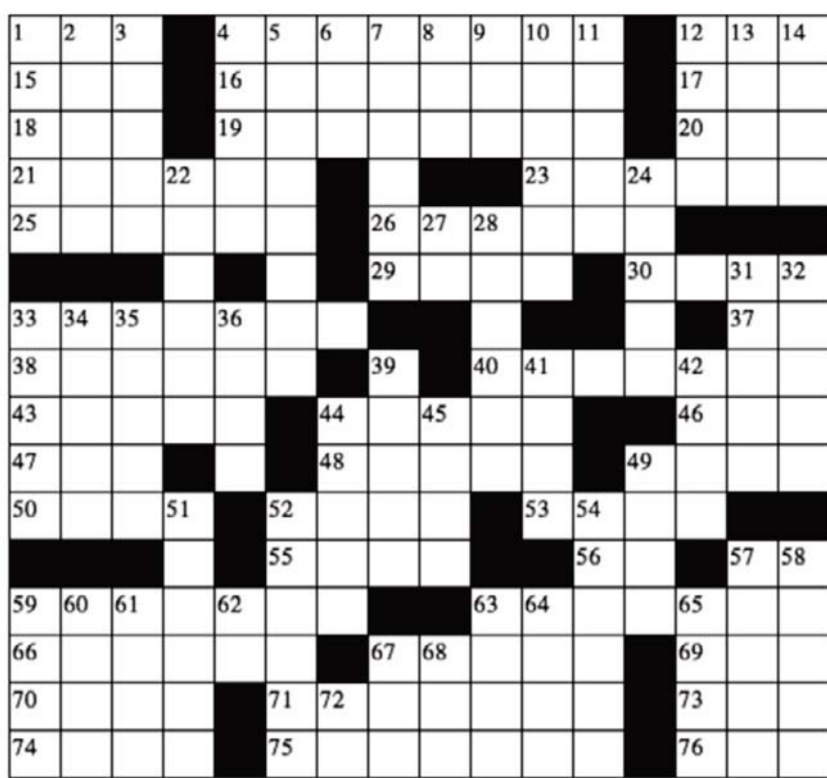
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Sunday 19/2/2017				Departure Flights on Sunday 19/2/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KAC	155	Istanbul	13:50
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:55	FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
KAC	742	Dammam	01:00	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	KAC	693	Muscat	14:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	561	Amman	15:00
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	KAC	80	Jeddah	15:15
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:05	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
MSC	405	Sohag	02:30	QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	412	Bangkok	02:50	KAC	1543	Cairo	16:15
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	KAC	103	London	16:30
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	PGT	861	Istanbul	16:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	LMU	511	Cairo	17:00
CEB	0018	Manila	03:15	CEB	0019	Manila	17:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	QTR	1087	Doha	17:30
KAC	358	Kochi	03:30	JZR	560	Sohag	06:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
PGT	4860	Istanbul	04:05	KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	514	Tehran	04:35	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:05
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
QTR	8511	Doha	05:45	KAC	541	Cairo	07:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	QTR	8512	Doha	07:15
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	KAC	773	Riyadh	07:30
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
BAW	157	London	06:40	KAC	563	Amman	08:00
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	KAC	617	Doha	08:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35	KAC	679	Dubai	08:10
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	BAW	156	London	08:55
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	FDB	054	Dubai	08:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	117	SNN/New York	09:00
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	101	London	09:45
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
KAC	362	Colombo	09:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:55
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	KAC	613	Bahrain	10:10
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	10:35
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:05	JZR	482	Istanbul	10:35
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	KAC	501	Beirut	10:55
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	IRC	529	Ahwaz	11:05
KAC	618	Doha	11:50	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	VIZ	203	Baghdad	12:00
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	791	Madinah	12:05
KAC	680	Dubai	12:55	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	521	Al Najaf	12:50
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
				JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10

CROSSWORD 1526



ACROSS

- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Having the color of caramel.
- Standard temperature and pressure.
- A member of an Indian people of northern California living along the Russian River valley and adjacent Pacific coast.
- Any of various large edible marine gastropods of the genus *Haliotis* having an ear-shaped shell with pearly interior.
- A branch of the Tai languages.
- A town in north central Oklahoma.
- Small silvery schooling fishes with protrusible mouths found in warm coastal waters.
- A small piece of cloth.
- Expressing deep personal emotion.
- (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- (biology) Having branches or flower heads that bend downward.
- Annual or perennial herbs with large leaves that resemble the leaves of cabbages.
- The lean flesh of a fish similar to cod.
- French explorer (with Jacques Marquette) of the upper Mississippi River valley (1645-1700).
- English monk and scholar (672-735).
- A mountain range in western Russia extending from the arctic to the Caspian Sea.
- (sometimes followed by 'of') Having or showing realization or perception.
- Used in combination to denote the middle.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- An antibacterial drug (trade names Rifadin and Rimactane) used to treat tuberculosis.
- A long lace for fastening boots.
- Gone by.
- Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
- A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
- Acquire or gain knowledge or skills.
- Genus of East Indian trees or shrubs.
- Italian poet (1569-1625).
- The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
- Behave in a certain manner.
- Perennial of the genus *Phytolacca*.
- A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
- A master's degree in business.
- The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.
- (Japan) Ritual suicide by self-disembowelment on a sword.
- An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
- An interest followed with exaggerated zeal.
- An odorless gum resin formerly used in medicines.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
- A supplement to a will.
- A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
- A unit of resistance equal to a billionth of an ohm.
- The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- The time period between dawn and noon.
- Provide with a coating, as of chocolates.
- A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
- Any of a number of tiny parallel grooves such as.
- Express gratitude or show appreciation to.
- North Atlantic sea poacher.
- Any of three poisonous colorless isomeric phenols.
- An Indian tree of the family *Combretaceae* that is a source of timber and gum.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- The herpes virus that causes infectious mononucleosis.
- Mostly tropical songbird.
- A lake in northwestern Russia north of St. Petersburg.
- An association of people to promote the welfare of senior citizens.
- Little known Kamarupan languages.
- German mathematician (1804-1851).
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- Port city that is the capital and largest city of Latvia.
- An organic compound that contains a hydroxyl group bonded to a carbon atom which in turn is doubly bonded to another carbon atom.
- Covered with paving material.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A town in northern Egypt.
- A wad of something chewable as tobacco.
- A member of an Athapaskan people that migrated to Arizona and New Mexico and Utah.
- An organization of independent states to promote international peace and security.
- The capital of the state of Kansas.
- A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
- A curve that lies on the surface of a cylinder or cone and cuts the element at a constant angle.
- A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
- (of persons) Highest in rank or authority or office.
- A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
- (informal) Informed about the latest trends.
- An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.

DOWN

- German industrialist who was the first in Germany to use an assembly line in manufacturing automobiles (1871-1948).
- A range horse of the western United States.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today may be one of your most memorable days this month. Luck is in your corner for whatever you want to enjoy, accomplish or discover. Financial opportunities will be available through family connections now. Speak up and let your ideas be known. There will be some opportunities today that will help you move forward with a long-term plan. This could mean updating furniture or looking into some real estate. Emotional seriousness, a sober orientation and a practical awareness of the nature of time are keynotes of your deepest feelings. There is a tendency to be too strict with yourself and to insist that whatever does not contribute to security and other long-term goals is trivial. Lighten up this afternoon-enjoy some entertainment.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

The intellectual and communicative talents of those close to you take on greater importance today. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends. Your more reserved qualities are present and valuable for the decision-making process. Nourishment is important and if you are in a cold region of the country, you may consider a good stew or soup for the noon meal today. If you have been exercising in the evening or late afternoon, change your exercise time to mornings. You will find yourself better equipped to take on the day. Emotional security and a sense of belonging and nurturing are felt instinctively. Finances, investments, romance, diet, etc., are issues you ponder. Rely on your own good sense when problems arise today.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may feel a little left out today as others talk and exclude you from a conversation or two. Not to worry, however, you will find out the details in due time for now these issues do not concern you. Be patient with others today and use your intuition to guide you. You feel a love of order and law-an appreciation for responsibilities and duty. Problems are valued for what you learn through the process of discovery. Sympathy and understanding are emotional qualities that take on greater importance. It is wisdom that will be the most reliable today and this is a good day. You appear perhaps more charming and refined than usual all day long. If you are involved in a love relationship-this may be the time to ask the big question.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Take a little trip, or get outside this morning. You may want to break that routine and try something new or different. You will find a way around almost any obstacle and you are in control and able to guide yourself with ease. Understanding the people around you and helping them to understand you are important tasks. You may be teaching a few people some form of education to help them graduate or to help them learn a language before going on a trip. People will notice your self-assurance and comment on your positive attitude. Your sense of inner direction is good and at least one important goal can be achieved today. Emotional seriousness will bring you an awareness of the nature of time; art accomplishments are fun and rewarding.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

The awareness of the nature of time hits you today and you could be deciding to secure your future with children or perhaps the purchase of a permanent home. Remember that tiny causes can lead to big effects. You really do not have to make big changes right away. This is a time of changes on the personal and psychological level as well as if you are transforming into an entirely new person. The ability to enchant others finds this a time when mysticism and idealism seem to really be living in you. Outer circumstances and the flow of events make it easy for you to enjoy your surroundings-easy does it. If you are looking for a relationship, look for someone that has an interest in business affairs-not any one business in particular.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This is a day you will enjoy away from the workplace. Friendships and involvement in group activities play a more important part in your life now. You and a friend of yours could be in your old neighborhood this afternoon having a great time helping someone with the upkeep of his or her house or some other good-neighbor deed. With your visit and helping agenda, you and your friend could decide on some regular way to help others. Friends are indeed our true riches. The satisfaction that comes from accomplishing things in cooperation with others is something no one can take away from you and are memories you talk about for years. This is a time when you enjoy a little interaction with others. You may feel that you are in harmony with others.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a good day for expressing your ideas. Others may find you especially witty and eccentric just now. You may feel like talking a bit more than usual, exploring new ideas or getting happily lost in a conversation. There is an urge to communicate. Also, perhaps a short trip or a special phone call is in order later today. Neighbors or brothers and sisters will likely bring all kinds of good experiences your way. You can demonstrate great understanding and sensitivity to others. Your image is highlighted, increasing your self-confidence. You can do anything you set your mind to do this day. This may be a time you play with some new ideas for future goals. If you are looking for a romantic match, look in new places for new faces-smile.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Firm plans are developing now for some old ideas of the past to come into fruition. Figuring out how to organize these projects may be most important. There is a special interest with regard to some animal or the condition of a lake. Whether your purpose is to bring about awareness and a healing or some other change, there will be success, but success may not come quickly. This may be a life work and you won't have to do it alone. You encourage others in many avenues of life. Friends and acquaintances may grab your attention this afternoon; the evening will bring about some closure to this day with the feeling of everyone coming together. You discover new reasons and ways to enjoy and appreciate life during this time.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Daydreams are a big part of your morning-especially if you have not had enough rest lately. You may find yourself talking about your dreams with a friend or loved one this morning. A book that references some interesting dream visuals can be a lot of fun. Mostly, there are ordinary dreams and teaching dreams. Writing down the information you receive and reviewing the information later would be a good thing to do. This may take patience for a review later but you could find a review very informative. There is a desire to study the occult and you may find interesting studies regarding dreams and how to understand them. You will do well in activities that include children, young people and your home this afternoon. Romance is yours tonight.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Slow days are necessary in order to build back emotional strength and perhaps make new plans. Don't be too strict with yourself, especially if you think you are not progressing as you should. Patience with yourself is just as important as when you are giving another person time to work through some new discovery or difficulty. Creative work this afternoon can clear away a writer's block. You have an interest in antiques and may decide to clean up an old piece of furniture to sell this next week. You may decide to shop this afternoon for the future tools or crafts you may need. Get out and kick up your heels this evening. You know the old saying about all work and no play, etc. Stimulate your brain by enjoying a few social gatherings.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

While relaxing this morning, all sorts of ideas come into focus. If you are thinking of a move, you will more than likely think of how to make that move as pleasant as possible for everyone involved. That is just the way you are... Thinking of others. When you think of changes, you tend to think of the positives and if a negative situation shows itself, you will learn and teach and move forward. You have a lot of enthusiasm for new beginnings and positive outcomes. Your determination to know personal success will always find you seeking knowledge and skill; education possibilities are available this year. This is a time when you look at where you have been and where you want to go. The possibilities are limitless.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

The technique of buying some time before speaking your mind is a difficult, but necessary, step to take at this time. If you are planning for more education, include a friend or family member in that next course, or make sure you make some friends from the class-you enjoy critiquing the teacher and the subject matter. Employment possibilities such as computer technologies, telecommunication, writing, accounting, and psychology will put you in a position of greater earning power. Purchasing things for the house may have you planning a shopping expedition. Start planning your meals for next week and enjoy healthy, low-fat meals. Enjoy relaxation time tonight that would include a loved one. Perhaps a lovely dinner away from home would be good.

WORD SEARCH

Movie Actors 3

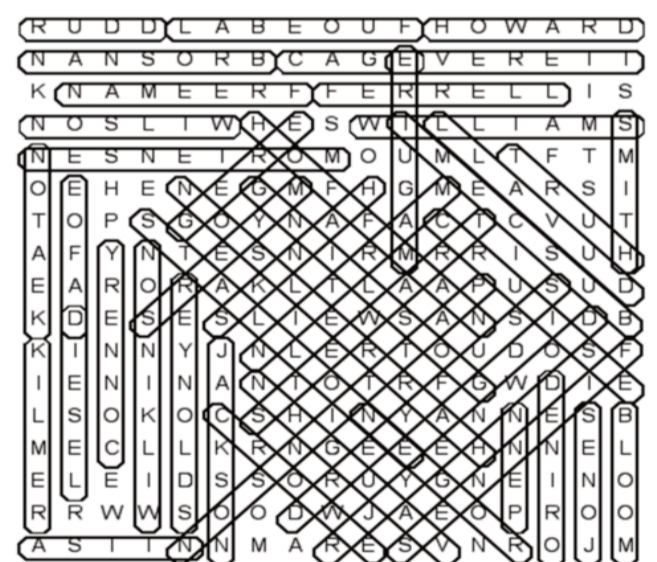
Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Forest Whitaker won an Oscar.



- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| ARKIN, Alan | GLOVER, Danny | PACINO, Al |
| BALE, Christian | GOODING JR, Cuba | PAXTON, Bill |
| BANDERAS, Antonio | HARRIS, Ed | PITT, Brad |
| BRODERICK, Jim | HAWKE, Ethan | QUAID, Dennis |
| BRODERICK, Matthew | KINGSLEY, Ben | RADCLIFFE, Daniel |
| BRODY, Adrien | MACY, William H. | SINISE, Gary |
| BYRNE, Gabriel | MALKOVICH, John | SLATER, Christian |
| CRAIG, Daniel | MCGREGOR, Ewan | STRATHAIRN, David |
| DAY-LEWIS, Daniel | MURPHY, Eddie | THORNTON, Billy Bob |
| EASTWOOD, Clint | MURRAY, Bill | WALKEN, Christopher |
| FIRTH, Colin | NICHOLSON, Jack | WASHINGTON, Denzel |
| FISHBURN, Laurence | NORTON, Edward | WHITAKER, Forest |
| FRASER, Brendan | OLDMAN, Gary | WILLIS, Bruce |

Yesterday's Solution

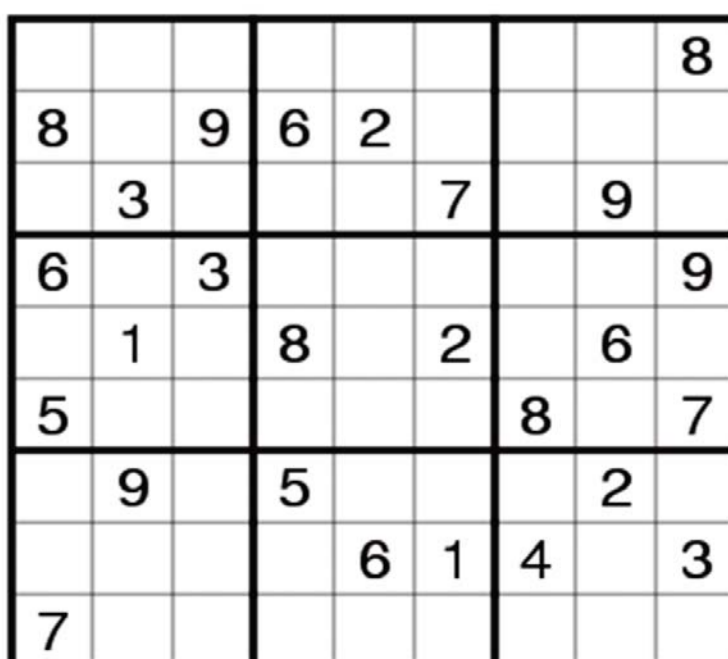
Movie Actors 2



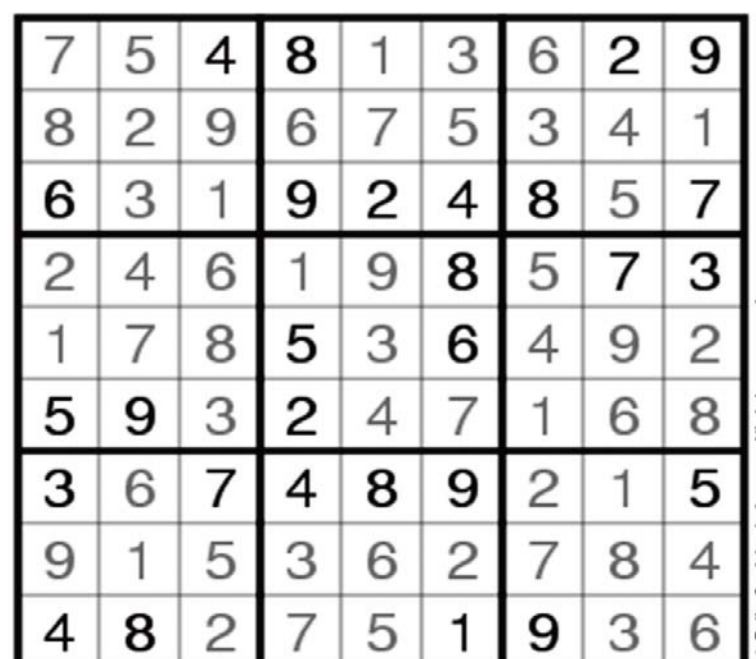
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| ASTIN, Sean | FIENNES, Ralph | MARTIN, Steve |
| BLOOM, Orlando | FREEMAN, Morgan | MORTENSEN, Viggo |
| BROSNAN, Pierce | GERE, Richard | MYERS, Mike |
| BUSCEMI, Steve | GOSLING, Ryan | PATTINSON, Robert |
| CAGE, Nicolas | HANKS, Tom | PENN, Sean |
| CONNERY, Sean | HARRELSON, Woody | REYNOLDS, Ryan |
| CROWE, Russell | HOFFMAN, Philip Seymour | ROGEN, Seth |
| CRUISE, Tom | HOWARD, Terrence | RUDD, Paul |
| DAFOE, Willem | HURT, William | SMITH, Will |
| DE NIRO, Robert | JACKSON, Samuel L. | STALLONE, Sylvester |
| DIESEL, Vin | JONES, Tommy Lee | STEWART, Patrick |
| DOWNEY JR, Robert | KEATON, Michael | KAUGHN, Vince |
| DREYFUSS, Richard | KILMER, Val | WILKINSON, Tom |
| DUVALL, Robert | LABOUF, Shia | WILLIAMS, Robin |
| EVERETT, Rupert | MAGUIRE, Tobey | WILSON, Owen |
| FERRELL, Will | | |

The hidden movie title is: KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Bieber accused of faking illness to avoid deposition

The 22-year-old singer was due to be deposed in Los Angeles earlier this month over a lawsuit which claims he and collaborator Skrillex used a "vocal riff" written by Casey Diemel, also known as White Hinterland, without permission on their track 'Sorry' but Justin was a no-show due to a reported illness. According to thetennessean.com, Diemel's lawyer said in a new filing: "Justin Bieber is not above the law. Justin Bieber knowingly and in bad faith failed to appear at his scheduled, agreed upon deposition on Feb. 8, 2017, in Santa Monica, California. "Hours after skipping the deposition, Defendant Bieber posted pictures on his Instagram page toasting a drink with friends - implicitly celebrating that he has violated the law, the respect for this Court, and the respect for all the parties and counsel who flew to

California to accommodate Defendant Bieber." Diemel and his lawyers had flown to Los Angeles for the deposition but after Justin failed to show up, they have asked that the popstar travel to Nashville, Tennessee instead on March 2. The lawyer wrote: "Defendant Bieber's flagrant delay tactics, past sanctions for similar conduct, refusal to reschedule, coupled with his social media campaign, warrants the Court to impose Rule 37(d) sanctions against Defendant Bieber, most importantly an order requiring Defendant Bieber to appear in Nashville, Tennessee for his deposition on March 2, 2017." And Diemel's team have asked that they be given a summary judgment if Justin fails to attend the rescheduled deposition.

Sheeran installs gym and pool in parents' house

The 26-year-old singer wants his parents John, 60 and Imogen, 57, to live long and healthy lives so has put them on a new fitness regime. He told The Sun: "I think any kid at my age starts getting worried about their parents' health. "I have bought them a cross-trainer and built them a swimming pool. "They are now training and swimming every day. I want them to be able to hang out with their grandkids for a very long time." However, in his own home, Ed has opted to build a pub, where he intends to host parties in the coming years. He recently said: "I've built a pub. Like, I had a bar before, a bar where you could pour beers but now this has like a selection of beers, which is cool. "So, basically, there's an underground tunnel to get there that you can close off. So, if I have a

party, everyone goes in the pub and no one can get in the house so you get no one raiding the cupboards or smashing anything. You have to go underground to get to the pub." Ed - who recently returned to the spotlight after a year-long hiatus - said the pub will be especially useful in the event of him having kids, because it will afford him a bit of space from the stresses of being a parent. He explained: "I think it's great, but the problem with my house at the moment is when I have a house party it's all in the house and if I have kids I still wanna have mates around and have beers and stuff like that so it's good to have something that's separate. Me and my wife will take turns getting p**ed."



Boy George was forced to wear a 'bulletproof vest' during US tour

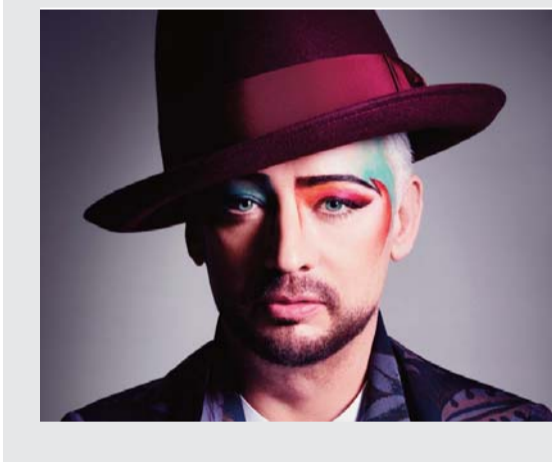
The 'Karma Chameleon' hitmaker has revealed he had to don the protective gear when Culture Club were playing a gig in Louisiana after the band were sent threatening messages. He said: "I was thinking, 'I can't cancel the gig so I'd better wear a bulletproof vest.'" The 55-year-old singer - real name George O'Dowd - admitted the threats from some people meant the group were restricted from appearing on certain shows. He added: "People didn't want to have me on kids' shows." And when he was dubbed one of the most "flamboyant and iconic" stars of all time by 'Life Stories' host Piers Morgan, he insisted he doesn't see himself in that way. He quipped: "Well I don't think you think about yourself in those terms, do you know what I mean? You don't wake up in the morning and think, 'Oh I'm really iconic.'" And Boy George also opened up about the late George Michael, admitting the pair were constantly "battling all the time" as they had so much in common. Speaking on Piers Morgan's Life Stories, he shared: "We had our squabbles, he was my rival, he was called George, he made soul music so everything he did it was like we were kind of battling all the time. "The only time we really got together was when friends tricked us and there was this one particular night where the two girls in Bananarama invited me to a dinner at a Japanese restaurant and he was there as well and we had such a brilliant time."



MARIAH CAREY WANTS TO KEEP HER NEW RELATIONSHIP PRIVATE

Although the 46-year-old star's new boyfriend Bryan Taneka features in her reality TV show 'Mariah's World' and she often shares pictures of them together on her Instagram page, Mariah insisted she wants their romance to stay out of the spotlight. She said: "I'm just going to be like 'I really don't talk about my personal life.' Because that's what I used to do and it really worked for a minute, back, a while ago. "I just don't feel comfortable talking about my personal life. Me and my boyfriend don't want to do that." Mariah started dating Bryan after splitting from her billionaire fiancé, James Packer, in October, and her new track 'I Don't' was inspired by the break-up. She said: "Ever since the tour wrapped I took some time just to process my feelings and I started

writing a song to express what I've been going through. "And if you're not getting the love that you need from someone that you're supposed to be in a real relationship with, then why remain in that situation?" The 'Fantasy' singer - who has five-year-old twins Moroccan and Monroe with ex-husband Nick Cannon - recently admitted she finds songwriting to be "very healing". She said: "I need to be in the studio. I feel like a different person when I'm not in the studio. "Performing is a whole different thing, but being in the studio is creating and that's what I love to do best. Songwriting is very healing for me. The studio and the experience of creating new music, it feels so much more like home to me than anywhere else."



Kate Hudson is 'old school' when it comes to dating



The currently single actress - who was previously married to musician Chris Robinson and was also formerly engaged to Muse frontman Matt Bellamy - has said she doesn't understand the interest in dating apps such as Tinder, Raya and Bumble, and thinks it is "crazy" how many "celebrity types" are signing up to meet people online. She said: "What's crazy is that there's a lot of, you know, celebrity types on these dating apps, which kind of makes you go, maybe ... no. I can't imagine. So, you look at a guy, he's hot, and then you see his profile and you're like, 'Maybe I'll text him or maybe we'll match,' and then you start texting and then it just goes away. Like, all your girlfriends seem to maybe go to lunch and then it's like, 'What happened to that guy you met on Raya or Bumble and whatever else?' The 'Deepwater Horizon' star - who has son Ryder, 13, with Chris and son Bingham, five, with Matt - thinks it's far better to "meet a guy in Starbucks"

and talk to them face-to-face, rather than through a phone. Speaking during an appearance on 'The Ellen Degeneres Show', Kate, 37, said: "I just think, why don't you just meet a guy in Starbucks? Why don't you just go up to someone and why doesn't a guy have the guts to come up and say, 'Hey, I'm so-and-so. How about we hang out?' Maybe I'm old school, but I'm alright." Previously, the 'Almost Famous' actress said she likes to keep her love life out of the spotlight for the sake of her children. She said: "The reason I don't talk about anything like that is because I have kids. People ask that question as if, 'Oh yeah, it's really healthy to publicly talk about who I am or am not dating when I've got a tween.' [Ryder] can read, and he can hear. I'm not going to indulge in that kind of thing until there's someone in my life who I am introducing to my kids."

Lisa Marie Presley's daughters taken into child protection

Lisa Marie's eight-year-old girls Finley and Harper Lockwood - the granddaughters of late rock 'n' roll legend Elvis Presley - are currently under the care of California's Department of Children and Family Services and will remain under their supervision until a trial next month after she allegedly found inappropriate pictures and videos on her estranged husband Michael Lockwood's computer. According to the court documents, obtained and seen by DailyMail.com, Lisa claimed as part of her ongoing divorce from her guitarist husband of 11 years that Beverly Hills Police Department found 80 of Michael's electronic devices during a raid on her home and, although they've seized the gadgets, they are still analysing the evidence she found. She said in the papers: "I was shocked and horrified and sick to my stomach. My understanding is that Tennessee law enforcement is also conducting an investigation related to the photos and videos that I discovered. "I have no idea what else may be on those devices and fear that there are more

and worse images and evidence in these unanalysed devices." The 49-year-old singer - who had an estimated fortune of \$300 million but claims it's nearly all gone - also said in the papers that she has to pay for two nannies to go along with her estranged husband to monitor him thoroughly when he visits their children. Lisa and Michael - who got married in a ceremony worth \$340,000 in Japan in 2006 - separated in June last year and have been locked in a bitter divorce ever since. The brunette beauty - whose mother is Priscilla Presley - cited "irreconcilable differences" for the reason behind their split and has reportedly requested full custody of their girls. Michael, 55, then requested that his wife pay him \$40,000-a-month spousal support and \$100,000 toward his legal costs. Lisa doesn't think she should have to pay the musician anything and has revealed she too is strapped for cash and doesn't know if she can afford her divorce lawyer Mark Gross.



Spencer thinks Viola Davis will win Best Actress

The 46-year-old actress has been nominated alongside the 'Fences' star for her role in 'Hidden Figures' but believes that Viola will come out on top. She said: "For me, being nominated puts no pressure whatsoever. I have no hopes in hell of winning. Viola Davis is winning so I'm excited just to be invited to the party. It is an extreme honor to be nominated. "There were so many wonderful performances. The fact that mine made the top five, I am thrilled to death so there's no pressure ... "When they called my name on Oscar [nominations announcement] morning and my publicist called me, that right there was a wonderful moment for me. I don't take it for granted my minuscule chance that my name is called on February 26. I would be grateful but for me, it already has been called in." And Octavia doesn't feel bad for her co-stars Janelle Mon-e and Taraji P. Henson missing out on a nomination for their part in the movie and confessed she used her one vote to vote for herself. She added: "I didn't feel bad because it's beyond our purview. We only get one vote in the Academy and yes, I voted for myself. If I was only going to get one vote, it was going to be for me. But I also voted for Janelle and Taraji because I felt like they were amazing." Octavia has remained close to her 'The Help' co-stars, which includes Viola and Emma Stone, since they all starred together in the 2011 movie and was thrilled to see them both nominated.



FEATURE



Brooklyn Beckham has injured his arm whilst on a ski break

The 17-year-old budding photographer - the son of retired soccer star David Beckham and former Spice Girl Victoria Beckham - was spotted with his arm in a sling after suffering a fall during a holiday with his family in Whistler, Canada. Brooklyn was enjoying the break at the picturesque ski resort with his parents and his three siblings, Romeo, 14, Cruz, 11, and Harper, five. As of the time of writing, it is unclear how serious Brooklyn's injury is, but the teenager will no longer be able to hit the slopes with his family during the remainder of their vacation. Previously, the family of six took to warmer climates in December when they enjoyed a family holiday in the Maldives, where the aspiring photographer is believed to have met up with his former girl-

friend Sonia Ben Ammar, whom he followed on Instagram during his visit to the sunny island. It's not known if the pair have bumped into each other while lapping up the sun in the tropical country but they have both posted photographs on their social media sites seemingly taken in the same vicinity on the idyllic island. Shortly after Brooklyn re-followed the model on the photo-sharing site, he reportedly liked a shot she had uploaded of her sporting a mesh bikini in the sea. Holidaying in the Maldives has no doubt brought back fond memories for the young pair - who dated for five months - as they first met while there in 2014.

GOMEZ 'VERY GRATEFUL' FOR 110 MILLION INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

The 'Heart Wants What It Wants' hitmaker is thrilled to have reached the impressive amount of followers on the photo sharing site and says she will "continue to cherish her platform and speaking [the] truth". Captioning a photograph of herself standing on stage in front of thousands of fans, she wrote: "Thank you fam for 110. I promise I will continue to cherish my platform and speaking truth but more importantly, each and every one of you have changed my life. I'm very grateful." And Selena has another reason to celebrate as her romance with The Weeknd is going from strength to strength. The 24-year-old singer recently shelled out a hefty \$30,000 on a birthday party for the 'Can't Feel My Face' singer. The party was held at Dave & Buster's in Hollywood, which was attended by the singer's friends including French Montana, Big Sean and 2 Chainz. Whilst Selena wasn't able to make it to the party, she was seen with him on a romantic yacht trip. A source said of the couple's romance: "Selena looked happy and in a romantic mood." The Weeknd looked happy and very amorous. They were very intimate and looked very much in love." Whilst an insider added: "They are falling for each other. He has told [Selena] how much he cares for her. [They have a] crazy connection. Selena feel really confident. Abel is proud to have Selena by his side ... "He really likes her. They text every day. They have a really sexy and flirty relationship. They laugh and like each others personalities. As of now, they are just having fun and enjoying each other. "She is happy and doesn't mind sharing that with the world. Abel makes her feel secure and Selena has nothing to hide. Selena gets passionate about things real fast and that is exactly what she is doing with The Weeknd."

Caroline Flack is set to make her stage debut in 'Crazy For You'

The 37-year-old television presenter will star as Irene in the critically acclaimed musical production, in which she will perform alongside the previously announced Tom Chambers, who will take on the role of Bobby. Jamie Wilson Productions took to Twitter to announce the news on Friday (17.02.17) when they said: "We are delighted to announce that @carolineflack1 will be making her stage debut as Irene in @crazyforyoutour #crazyforcaroline (sic)". 'Crazy For You' has been dubbed as "high energy, high kicking and gloriously glamorous" and was created by the production team behind hit musicals 'Sister Act' and 'Nativity! The Musical'. Caroline couldn't contain her own excitement about the role, tweeting: "Dusting off my dancing shoes again ... can't wait." According to the website for the production, "'Crazy For You' charts the troubled love story of Bobby, son of a wealthy New York banking family and frustrated Broadway hooper, and Polly, daughter of the proprietor of a failing theatre in Deadrock, Nevada. Sent to close the theatre down, Bobby falls for Polly and, in the guise of a Hungarian impresario, decides to save the theatre by putting on a show". For Caroline - who has been trained in musical theatre - the role will encompass some of the dance skills she put to the test when she was crowned winner of UK dance competition 'Strictly Come Dancing' in 2014. Tom Chambers also appeared on the Latin and ballroom show in 2008, where he also came out in first place. 'Crazy For You' opens at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth on August 17, before heading on a UK tour which runs up until December.



Jourdan Dunn's collection with Missguided will be unveiled next month

The 26-year-old model has teamed up with the popular online fashion house to design a new collection titled LONDUNN x MISSGUIDED, and the brunette beauty has revealed her line will launch online and in store on March 11. Alongside a picture of the catwalk icon's campaign spread across a large billboard, which was shared on her Instagram account, she wrote: "LONDUNN inna LONDUN! Londunn Missguided 11.03.17 #londunnmissguided (sic)." And the brand have also confirmed the release date on their social media page. Alongside an advert of the fashion mogul sporting a black bralette and white jacket, which they uploaded to their photo sharing site, they

wrote: "COMING SOON #LONDUNNXMISSGUIDED by @jourdandunn | 11.03.17 #missguided#jourdandunn (sic)." Jourdan - who has seven-year-old son Riley Dunn - teased she was working on a new project with Missguided earlier this month with a behind-the-scenes picture of her on the photoshoot. She captioned a picture of her wearing a two piece underwear set, which had her the title of her capsule emblazoned across the elastic waistline of the bra and knicker set: "LONDUNNXMISSGUIDED #bts #sooncome (sic)". And the label are "super excited" they have been able to collaborate with "mega babe" Jourdan on the new collection.



Lottie Moss believes her eyebrows look like 'big slugs'



The 19-year-old model - who is the sister of 43-year-old catwalk icon Kate Moss - claimed she had "really fat brows" and once cut a slit in her facial feature, which, on reflection, she has admitted was a "bad move". Speaking about her beauty blunder to W magazine: "I had really fat brows, like two big slugs on my face vibes. I also shaved a slit in my eyebrow. "It was a bad move." And the blonde beauty - who signed to Storm Model management in 2014 - has revealed she "prefers" sitting and admiring fashion shows rather than starring in them because it's "so easy" to enjoy the presentations instead of being in pain walking on the runway in an uncomfortable outfit, which she has witnessed before. She explained: "I sometimes prefer sitting [to walking in the shows]; it's so easy. "I was sitting a show recently and there were these shoes that were so beautiful, but looked so painful. One of the girls was limping a bit, and I honestly wanted to cry for her. But it was so beautiful, maybe it was worth the pain." Meanwhile, Lottie - whose full name is Charlotte - was introduced to fashion designer Marc Jacobs when she was a child, but didn't realise "how big of a deal" he was until she got older. She explained: "I met him briefly at my sister's wedding. I don't really remember it because it was five years ago, and I was thirteen years old, but I remember being there and my mom going, 'That's Marc Jacobs.' At the time I didn't really know how big of a deal he was. I was just like, 'Okay, he makes clothes.'"



Start the spring-summer season in style with Centrepoin't's latest collection

Sparkle with style inspiration from Centrepoin't's Spring Summer collection. Strike a pose and make your mark with fashion in the latest trendy looks. This season, Splash's collection sees a return of nautical styling with a neo twist with colorful stripes seen in both an optical re-arrangement and in the classical nautical style. The shapes for this season are contemporary and modern, offset by a romantic pink palette that is dominant in major collection pieces. Distinctive styles with dreamy blossoms such as Berry and citrus tones also featuring through the collection along with cooler shades of aqua, lavender, and lilac.

Key details in the collection feature delicate long lines, feminine ruffles and shoulder focus as key details. The athleisure trend of previous seasons continues with urban sporty silhouettes sporting the nautical theme. Women can show off their pretty feet in a range of brightly-colored and floral-printed sandals this season. Wedges are still in style with feminine pearl detail. Comfortable sneakers, beautiful ballerinas and stiletto-heeled sandals all feature in the fashionable selection of

footwear from Shoe Mart. To set a statement this season, Lifestyle brings you a collection of sporty and earthy tones as well as joyful, feel-good brights to add a bohemian look to bags, such as tropical skins and cross body bags. Ladies can chose from a range of fashionable accessories to complement your summer outfits with lighter tones of Swarovski crystals and pastel shades for your scarfs.

A simple natural glow is the look of this season with a signature red lip to add glamour to the Spring Summer night. Lifestyle has a range of matt, glossy and frosty shades to suit every woman's style sentiment. As the weather turns warmer, eyes are bold and bright emphasizing the power of colour in a glossy texture and finish.

Babys'hop has a pretty palette of pinks for the princess in every little girl. Salmon rose, neon pink and yellow, bright regatta blue, Irish green and softer bird egg green and crystal rose are also infused through the collection. Peasant blouses, pretty sports shorts, plush-textured and mesh-bonded jerseys, statement printed empire-waist dresses are the collection highlights

with scalloped edges, graphic embellished numbers, and patchwork and Havana tile patterns featuring in the style. Barbie themed style remain a favorite with little ladies this season as do Disney themes and Hello Kitty looks.

The athleisure trend dominates the boy's collection at Babys'hop this season with key pieces including loose-fit pants and volume shorts. Collarless shirts, ringer tees, retro knit polos, and resort sets help dapper tots and teens get Spring Summer-ready. Bright aquatic greens and blue are the highlight of the color palette along with earth brown and flaming orange.

Splash's menswear range showcases key themes of 90's Nostalgia, Soft Grunge, Military Mania, and Indigo & Beyond. This collection is inspired by 90s graphic styling teamed with modern minimalism. The military look has also emerged as a staple after its resurgence as a strong trend over the last few seasons. Denim stays strong this season with a range of denim shirts and jackets in a color palette that includes blue and grey. The collection palette consists of cobalt blue, blazing yellow, black, military green, off-set by subtle shades of desert pink.

Key Pieces in the collection include waterfall shrugs, drop shoulder tees and printed waistcoats.

Men can shop from our range of trendy Spring Summer footwear. With a collection of smart and comfortable sandals, high-top sneakers, formal leather loafers, and casual canvas slip-ons, Shoe Mart has all the shoe staples covered. Lifestyle brings you a selection of tasteful and elegant home d'Écor products. Inspired from architectural elements and fragments, new additions of flower vases, bathroom accessories and scented candles. The collection pieces incorporate floral patterns with a combination of modernist styles that will fill your home with summer's relaxed vibes all year round. Get your hands on the latest spring summer collection at Centrepoin't stores located in Al Rai, Avenues, Hawally, Salmiya, Fintas, Jahra, Fahaheel, Sulaibikhat, Kuwait City and Khaitan.



FEATURES



This image released by Summit shows director Mel Gibson, center, and actor Vince Vaughn on the set of the film, "Hacksaw Ridge." Gibson is nominated for an Oscar for best directing for his work on the film. — AP photos



In this image released by Fox Searchlight Pictures, from left, Armie Hammer portrays Samuel Turner, Nate Parker portrays Nat Turner and Jayson Warner Smith portrays Earl Fowler in a scene from "The Birth of a Nation."

From Parker to Gibson: Hollywood's sliding scale of justice

As the final votes pour in ahead of the Academy Awards' Tuesday afternoon deadline, Hollywood is drawing to a close an awards season that has, from Nate Parker to Mel Gibson, often been a confounding morality play.

By even movie standards, the dramatic swings of fortune are hard to believe. Parker, hailed as an Oscar sure-thing at last year's Sundance Film Festival, saw his "The Birth of a Nation" torpedoed by the fallout of a tragic 18-year-old rape allegation against him. But just as Parker was disappearing, Mel Gibson, a pariah for the last decade, engineered an unexpected comeback that culminated with six nominations for his "Hacksaw Ridge," including best picture. Hollywood's scales of justice, never particularly scientific, have rarely been harder to read. The sometimes puzzling ethical calculus has prompted many to question the standards - some amalgamation of art, fame, race, facts and rumor - used to weigh the bad behavior of stars and would-be nominees.

Clearing the past

Some of the closest races this Oscar season - including that of Casey Affleck, one of the best-actor favorites - have been over whether a contender was nimble enough to outrun his past. Everyone agrees: such judgments are playing an increasingly significant role in awards season and show business, in general.

Gibson was one of the few to publicly defend Parker, who in 1999 was charged - along with his Penn State roommate and "Birth of a Nation" collaborator Jean Celestin - with raping another student. Parker was acquitted, Celestin was convicted, but the charge was later overturned, and the alleged victim,

whose family said she never recovered from the incident, killed herself years later. Parker has steadily maintained his innocence, but his Facebook responses and his evasion of the topic at a press conference at the Toronto International Film Festival did little to stem the backlash against him. (An attorney for Parker didn't respond to interview requests.)

"I don't think it's fair," Gibson said during a Hollywood Reporter round-table interview. "He was cleared of all that stuff. And it was years ago." Gibson (who declined to be interviewed) has had his own scandals to overcome. His anti-Semitic tirade in 2006, recorded while being arrested on suspicion of drunk driving, was seemingly the end to his stardom. He later plead no contest in 2011 to domestic battery of former girlfriend Oksana Grigorieva. Damning audio recordings surfaced of their arguments, too. But his comeback was seemingly made official by the Oscars. And Gibson is now reportedly in talks to direct a sequel to "Suicide Squad."

The spotlight of illustrious platforms like the Oscars tends to shine a light on previously dormant cases. It was the 2014 Golden Globes lifetime achievement award for Woody Allen that led Ronan Farrow to renew the 25-year-old molestation allegations against the filmmaker, which Allen has long denied. Even Roman Polanski, whose "The Pianist" won best picture in 2003, was forced to step down as president of France's Cesar Awards after protests by women's groups. The director pleaded guilty in 1977 to unlawful sex with a minor.

"This mirrors the larger trend within the culture," says Scott Berkowitz, president of the anti-sexual assault organization RAINN. "People are paying vastly more attention to sexual violence issues and personal behavior and the atmosphere has



This Feb 6, 2017 file photo shows Casey Affleck at the 89th Academy Awards Nominees Luncheon in Beverly Hills.

become much more sympathetic toward victims and much more scornful of defenders. Part of that trend has been because of celebrity cases."

The shunned Affleck

Though it's done little to upset his winning streak, Affleck has been trailed through awards season by sexual harassment allegations made against him in 2010 while directing the mockumentary "I'm Not There." Producer Amanda White, in a civil suit, alleged Affleck made "unwelcome sexual advances" during shooting. Cinematographer Magdalena Gorka, in a separate suit, said Affleck got into bed with her without her consent. The suits were settled for undisclosed sums. A publicist for Affleck said the terms of the settlement preclude him

from discussing it. Many articles have conflated Affleck's alleged crimes with those of Parker's, suggesting race has played a role in their varied treatment, despite the considerable differences between them. Some analysts believe the questionable comparison affected the Oscar race. Affleck's formidable rival, Denzel Washington ("Fences"), pulled out a surprise win at the Screen Actors Guild Awards, and many now peg him as the front runner.

Feinberg recently co-wrote a column saying Oscar voters should limit their judgments to the screen. It's a personal decision for moviegoers and Oscar voters, alike, as evidenced by the stream of op-eds that have accompanied this awards season - from author Roxane Gay to actress Constance Wu to actress Gabrielle Union, a rape survivor.

So how much does any of this influence the average academy voter? Bruce Feldman, a former awards strategist and academy member, says he struggles with these questions every year. "It's not just the high-profile public cases of misbehavior that might affect an individual's vote," says Feldman. "There's also all the people we work with in this industry, many of whom treat others very badly on a daily basis, whose transgressions aren't reported in the press. Academy members aren't robots. We're human, with the same feelings and imperfections as everyone. Personally, I try very hard to base my vote purely on artistic merit. Oscars are awarded for achievement, not on whether you're a saint or a scoundrel."



This image released by A24 shows Alex Hibbert, foreground, and Mahershala Ali in a scene from the film, "Moonlight." (INSET) This Feb 6, 2017 file photo shows Mahershala Ali at the 89th Academy Awards Nominees Luncheon in Beverly Hills. — AP photos



FILMMAKER ROSI BRINGS MED MIGRANT CRISIS TO OSCARS

A female voice crackles over the radio, begging for rescue from a crowded migrant boat sinking into the Mediterranean as the coast-guard barks over and over: "What is your position?" Like much of Italian master Gianfranco Rosi's cinematic, Oscar-nominated documentary "Fire at Sea," this opening scene plays out like a narrative thriller, except the lives in danger are real. "I wanted to reverse the question. We should be asking ourselves, 'What is my position about this tragedy?' We can no longer be the silent majority," Rosi told AFP in Los Angeles ahead of next week's awards.

As Europe grapples with its biggest migrant influx since World War II, Rosi's harrowing film offers an unflinching look at life on the Italian island of Lampedusa. Thousands of asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East have arrived in Italian waters trying to reach the European Union over the last two decades. Many others - some 4,000 last year - have perished on the dangerous journey in rickety, overcrowded boats.

Eritrean-born Rosi has toured the world with the film, which competes for the best documentary Oscar with American entrants "I Am Not Your Negro," "13th," "Life, Animated" and the favorite, "O.J.: Made in America." One of the most decorated documentary filmmakers in the business, Rosi, who is in his early 50s, won the top prize from a jury led by Meryl Streep at the Berlin Film Festival last year. His star was already on the ascendant after he took home the Venice Film Festival's 2013 Golden Lion for "Sacro GRA," which looks into everyday life off a Rome ring road.

Rosi spent a year living on Lampedusa, just another tiny island barely meriting its inclusion on the map, he thought when he started filming in

2014 - before millions began heading into Europe across the Balkans. "I realized only in Berlin how the movie became political and I could feel politics breathing into the frame," Rosi said. "Before, Lampedusa was just Italy. Now it's a universal problem, a metaphor, almost."



The picture is told through the eyes of a 12-year-old local boy, Samuele Pucillo, and a doctor, Pietro Bartolo, who has been tending to the dehydrated, malnourished and traumatized arrivals for a quarter-century. "How do you get used to seeing pregnant women, dead children?" Bartolo laments, admitting that the horror has infected his dreams. Rosi accompanied coastguard rescue missions answering the terrified SOS calls of people on boats, most of them arriving from Libya. Many of the vessels are packed with corpses of people who suffocated from diesel fumes. Rosi said the film's nomination for a best documentary Oscar was an opportunity to "carry the call for help from Lampedusa... to Hollywood."

Moments of truth

The US spotlight on the movie comes with the refugee crisis a hot-button public policy issue following President Donald Trump's elevation to the White House. The Republican leader stood on an anti-immigration ticket, vowing to build a wall on the southern border with Mexico. In one of his first acts in office, Trump issued an order banning travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries, though it's since been withdrawn after hitting legal objections. "This is a tragic moment here as well. America was always the land of freedom, the land of immigrants. What happens when it turns its back on history to build barriers?" Rosi asks.

Rosi's filmmaking style sets "Fire at Sea" apart from more traditional documentaries, dispensing with the usual tropes of interviews to camera, on-screen text and a narrator. Rosi says that when he is behind the camera he is looking for moments of truth that show more than a long monologue could ever say, drawing on poetic language to create an "emotional connection with reality."

"I like to close the door of information and interact more with emotion with the audience... beyond any number, there is a person, some eyes looking at you," he says. Rosi lived through his own migrant crisis at age 13, evacuated by Italian soldiers from his east African homeland without his parents during the Eritrean War of Independence against Ethiopian troops.

New spotlight for Oscars bound Mahershala Ali

Mahershala Ali's universe is expanding, personally and professionally. After almost 20 years as an actor, he's attending his first Academy Awards as a star of two of its best picture nominees: he's Taraji P Henson's love interest in "Hidden Figures"; in "Moonlight," he's favored to win the supporting actor Oscar for his portrayal of a compassionate drug dealer.

Meanwhile, Ali is also preparing for first-time fatherhood with wife Amatus Sami-Karim, the artist he fell in love with while studying for his master's degree at New York University in 2000. They married in 2013, and her pregnancy paralleled his rising profile. The 43-year-old actor talked with The Associated Press about why he finds the convergence of his personal and professional milestones grounding, the role music plays in his performances and what he wants to do next. The interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: How are you juggling awards season with the expansion of your family?

Ali: Having a child is the polar opposite experience of the awards season experience. The awards-season experience ... requires you to be out in the community, in the heart of the community, at the nucleus of the film community in a really committed way for about a six-month period of time. Having a child requires you to nest, to be in your home, and to create and make your home and environment that is one that is potentially very welcoming and nurturing for a child. ... The pregnancy has been a real anchor for me to be able to check in.

AP: You're working on Robert Rodriguez's big sci-fi film, "Alita: Battle Angel." Have you been shooting while all this is going on?

Ali: I literally just wrapped (last week) in Austin, Texas. I really loved working on that job, but I've never enjoyed working on a project so much and wanted to get home so bad at the same time.

AP: You've said you make playlists for each character you portray - music they might listen to or that helps you get into their headspace. Are you doing the same thing for your new role as a dad?

Ali: There's stuff that will pop up for me that makes me think of our child or the hospital, things that feel right for that vibe and the energy that you want in the hospital and even after the baby's born... I was telling my wife the other day that, knowing my father (late Broadway performer Phillip Gilmore), they must have been playing a lot of music when my mom was pregnant, or like right after I was born, because my connection to music is so strong. I cling to it. I vibrate out to it. I release stress to it. Music is really always close to me. It's really present in my work in terms of how I relate to characters is through rhythm and sound, even in their speech.

AP: What about your ultimate job - after fatherhood, of course - you want to play Marvin Gaye?

Ali: I would love to be able to connect with the family about that and, first and foremost, to have their blessing. Because that would be a dream role. I am such a fan and admirer of Marvin Gaye: the man and the musician and the artist. ... I would love dearly to do that project and bring some aspect of Marvin Gaye's life to the screen and to assist and participate in that. That would be a dream come true. — AP

Great-grandson to reinvent iconic French restaurant

The Troisgros restaurant, a veritable shrine to France's haute cuisine, is pulling out of the town it put on the map thanks to the three Michelin stars it has boasted since 1968. The move out of the central town of Roanne to a rural village just eight kilometers away may seem modest, but to the Troisgros dynasty it is a sea change. "It's not an uprooting," said Michel Troisgros, 58, who took over the reins in 1996. "On the contrary, we are putting down new roots."

For Michel's 30-year-old son Cesar, the great-grandson of the restaurant's founder who is being groomed to head the new kitchen, Saturday's move is nothing short of a rite of passage. "He will be another man in another place," said Michel, whose father Pierre and uncle Jean helped start the nouvelle cuisine craze in the 1960s. But Cesar "is not an heir like I was," Michel said, praising his son's "effervescent creative powers."

"He'll run a kitchen operation of his own conception." Cesar, the second of Michel's three children, admitted: "I feel more at ease than I did in Roanne in a kitchen with more than 80 years of history." The bespectacled young man with a short-cropped beard like his father's began his training at the Paul Bocuse Institute along with his younger brother Leo.

"It's not easy for me, because I tell myself that if I can't do things just as well I shouldn't do them at all."

'Inspired by the countryside'

Cesar's great-grandparents Jean-Baptiste and Marie started the restaurant in 1930 at a prime location across from the rail station in Roanne, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) from France's gastronomic capital, Lyon. Cesar's mother Marie-Pierre said his approach to cuisine is "obviously more modern than Michel's. He's more inspired by the countryside and very involved with our suppliers."



Michel said the Maison Troisgros decided to move out of the town because it wanted more space, land to grow its own ingredients and better light. The new, ultra-modern restaurant in a 19th-century manor estate sitting on 17 hectares of land opens today in the sleepy village of Ouches, home to fewer than 1,500 people.

Michel, Marie-Pierre and Cesar served their last meals at the Roanne restaurant - where one could enjoy the likes of rabbit, crab and mint bisque or white asparagus with chives, walnut and saffron with lemon zest - on January 1. The family invested eight million euros (\$8.5 million) in the new establishment, which includes a hotel with 15 rooms.

Floor-to-ceiling windows give guests the impression of eating al fresco amid sculptured steel pillars evoking trees. The restaurant's two wings flank a towering old oak tree. While the lunch menu will dip in price to 140 euros from the old restaurant's 205 euros, dinners will be as high as 410 euros. The family also runs restaurants in nearby Iguerande and in Paris, as well as in Tokyo and Moscow. — AFP

Cesar Troisgros (R) and Leo Troisgros (L), both chef and sons of French Chef Michel Troisgros cook together in the kitchen of the new family restaurant on February 15, 2017, in Ouches, near Roanne, central France. — AFP



Models present creations by British designer Matty Bovan during the Fashion East catwalk show on the second day of the Autumn/Winter 2017 London Fashion Week. — AFP photos

LONDON FASHION WEEK



Models present creations by British American designer Mimi Wade



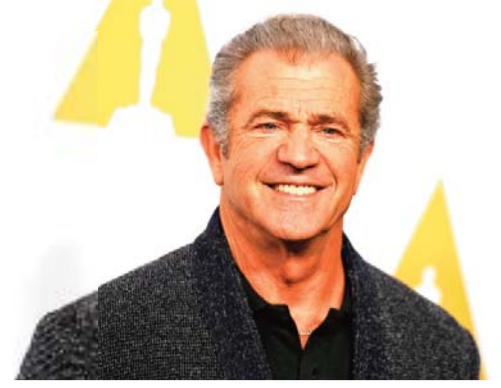
Models present creations by ASAI

Lifestyle

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Hollywood's sliding scale of justice

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This picture taken on February 16, 2017 in Fangshan village in China's coastal province Fujians, shows Zheng Yinquan performing the 'eating flowers' ritual. Villagers in eastern China have a unique way of washing away the taint of evil spirits — by bathing in a shower of scorching sparks. — AFP

Imagining a 50-year-old Kurt Cobain

Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain, who defined grunge and the rise of alternative rock, would have turned 50 on Monday. He remains an enduring cultural presence even for many young people—but what would he be doing if he were alive? The 27-year-old shot himself at his home in Seattle on April 5, 1994, ending his life, his suffering and, at least symbolically, the grunge movement. Rock has kept evolving since his suicide yet "Nevermind," Nirvana's brutal 1991 masterpiece, is still widely considered one of the most influential albums in history. "He remains the most important musician of the last two decades in music, with an album that is still one of the last great rock records," said Charles R. Cross, who has written three books on the artist including "Here We Are Now: The Lasting Impact of Kurt Cobain."

To Cross, Cobain's key contribution is opening the way for songwriters to tackle a wider emotional range. Nirvana's songs included "Lithium," a frank exploration of Cobain's manic depression, and the

searing "Rape Me." "His impact on songwriting was that he made it okay for songs to be about painful emotions, angst, depression—even something as awful as rape," Cross said.

Nirvana was at the forefront of a boom in alternative rock, as mainstream audiences increasingly listened to Seattle grunge bands who also included Pearl Jam and Soundgarden—as well as hard-edged groups from elsewhere in the United States such as Green Day and Smashing Pumpkins. Nirvana's influence can be heard in more recent bands such as Cloud Nothings, Cage the Elephant and Fall Out Boy—but also in more unexpected areas. Rap superstar Jay Z quoted Nirvana's breakthrough hit "Smells Like Teen Spirit" in his track "Holy Grail," which featured Justin Timberlake.

Stan Cuesta, a French music journalist who has written a book on Nirvana, said the group's fan base remains surprisingly young. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" has enjoyed a recent resurgence with nearly 500 million views on YouTube. "Nirvana's audience

today isn't the people who listened to the group at the time. It's young people. It's funny as some of them weren't born when Kurt Cobain died 23 years ago," Cuesta said.

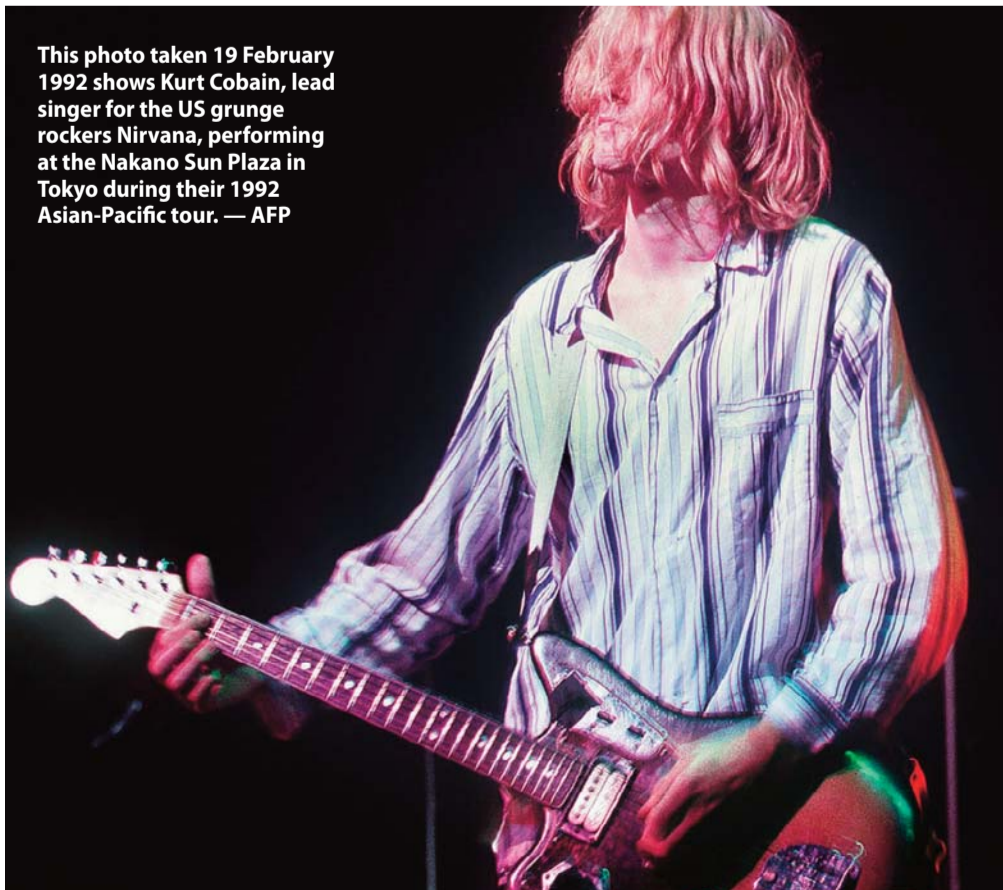
Kurt Cobain in an internet era

But Cobain—with his ragged cardigan and thick blonde locks—may be better known for some younger fans for his look rather than Nirvana's music, Cuesta said. "Kurt's poster is in everyone's bedroom like Che Guevara's poster used to be, even if people don't necessarily know much about Che's political activities or Nirvana's music," he said. Cobain—whose suicide note quoted Neil Young's line that "it's better to burn out than to fade away"—may have hated his contemporary image.

But what would Cobain have been like as a 50-year-old in 2017, an era when most artists feel obliged to promote themselves constantly on the internet and many make their music on laptops instead of in garages? "I don't think Nirvana would have been around long to begin with," Cuesta said. "He said so at the time. His success was weighing heavily on him. He would have pursued a solo career different than what he was doing at the beginning."

A possible sign of what Cobain would have become could be seen in "MTV Unplugged in New York," the last recording of Nirvana which was released months after his death. Recorded for the MTV series of the time, Cobain went mellow with an acoustic guitar. In addition to Nirvana songs, the session featured multiple covers including of David Bowie's "The Man Who Sold the World" and the folk standard "Where Did You Sleep Last Night?" "He would have done something softer, more acoustic. He always had this blend of pop and punk," Cuesta said. "He might have gone more experimental. One of the things that was most gratifying for him was his recording with William Burroughs," the legendary beat poet whom Cobain accompanied on guitar as he recited "The Priest They Called Him."

Some of Cobain's early recordings, made on cassette as he grew up in the lumber town of Aberdeen, Washington, were released in 2015 to accompany "Montage of Heck," a documentary that had the cooperation of the rocker's widow Courtney Love. Cuesta said it was possible to imagine a 50-year-old Cobain with a diverse solo discography that, much like Neil Young's, goes in both electric and acoustic directions. "It's a bit of a fantasy, but I would imagine him aging well." — AFP



This photo taken 19 February 1992 shows Kurt Cobain, lead singer for the US grunge rockers Nirvana, performing at the Nakano Sun Plaza in Tokyo during their 1992 Asian-Pacific tour. — AFP

Jolie in Cambodia for premiere of new film

Angelina Jolie said yesterday that she hopes her new film about Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge will help educate the world about the brutality of the 1970s regime and shed a light on the plight of young people in war zones today. "First They Killed My Father" is based on author and human rights activist Loung Ung's account of her survival as a child under the 1975-79 communist Khmer Rouge regime, believed to be responsible for the deaths of 1.7 million Cambodians from starvation, disease and execution.

Speaking at a news conference ahead of the film's premiere, the actress-turned-director said she hopes the movie will "remind everybody that there are little Loung's all around the world today" in various war zones and corners of the world. "Her story is their story and so this is, in many ways, universal, and we hope that that is something that you think about as well," said Jolie, who directed the film and co-wrote the screenplay with Loung.

Jolie has had an affinity for Cambodia since she began goodwill work for the U.N.'s refugee agency in 2001, and her eldest son, Maddox, 15, was adopted from the country. She also has established a foundation to promote social

development in rural Cambodia. However, the Hollywood superstar stressed that Cambodia's history is not just the war.

"I hope that the young people, when they see this film, that yes, they will learn part of their history, but I hope they also see - I hope all of you see - that this is a country of talent and art and love and beauty," Jolie said. Maddox worked on the production of the movie, which was shot on location in Cambodia in late 2015 and early 2016. Jolie said that Maddox is very proud of his Cambodian heritage and that she and her children see Cambodia as their "second home."

"The children are very close to the children who are in the film and, in fact, many of them are best friends," she said. "So, they're simply happy to be back with their friends. Maddox is happy to be back in his country." The film, a Netflix original production, will be shown on the streaming service later this year. Jolie's previous directorial projects include the 2015 marriage drama "By the Sea," in which she starred alongside then-husband Brad Pitt, and the 2014 survival story "Unbroken." — AFP



Hollywood star Angelina Jolie interacts with Cambodian child actress Sareum Srey Moch during a press conference at a hotel in Siem Reap. — AFP