

Kuwaiti killed,
head smashed
with rock

8



NBA superstar
LeBron takes
aim at racism

47



Kuwait Times
Ramadan Timings 2017

Imsak	Fajr	Shorook	Duhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
03:05	03:15	04:49	11:46	15:20	18:43	20:14

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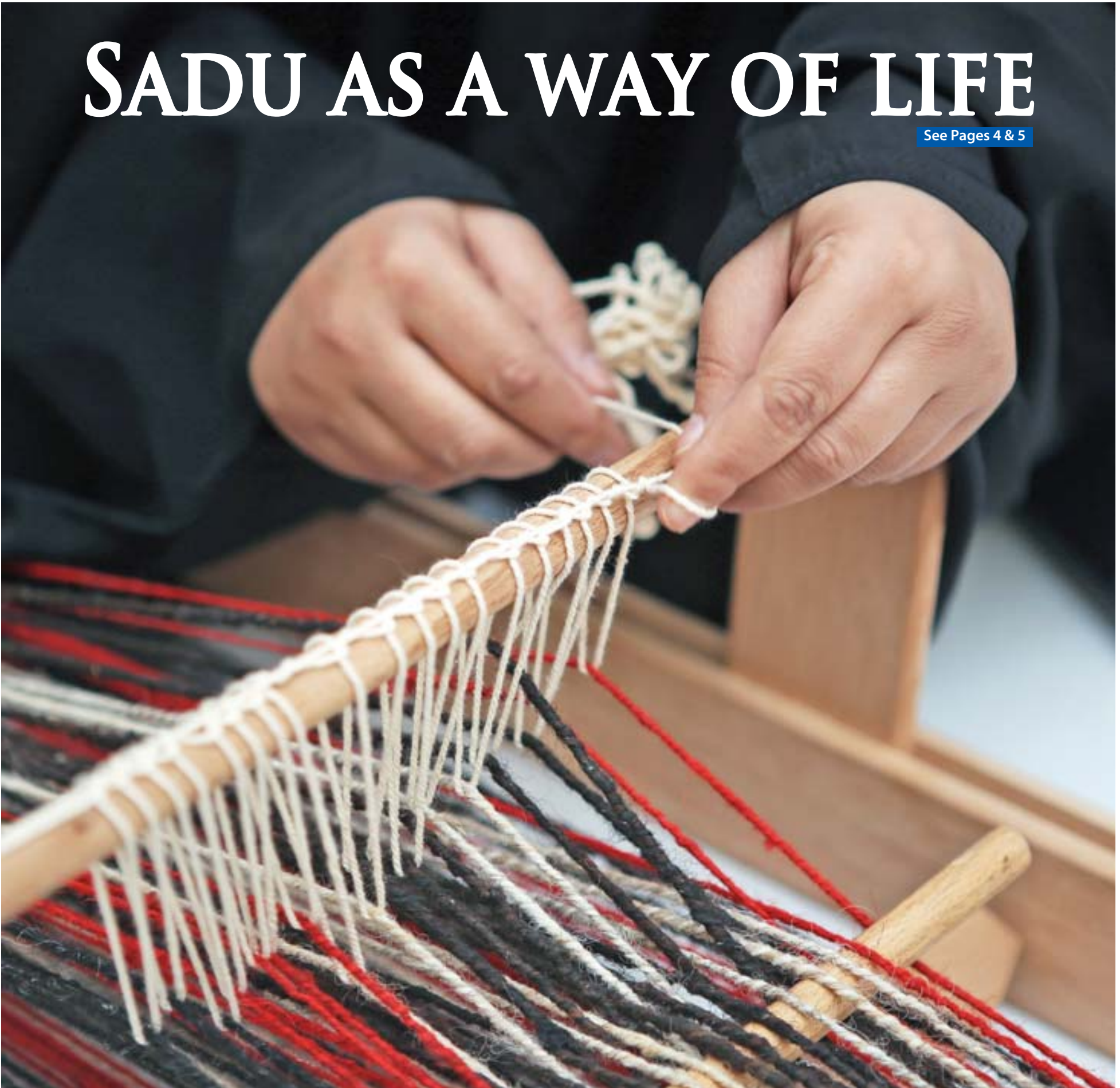
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SADU AS A WAY OF LIFE

See Pages 4 & 5



IN MY VIEW

LESS CULTURE, MORE SUCCESS

By Jeri Al-Jeri

local@kuwaittimes.com



Success is what we target and attain. It gets addictive when our brain's pleasure signals are fired up, causing us to experience a very pleasurable state of mind. Eventually, this equation of "seek and you shall receive" was changed by our inherent culture. Our ancestors, who lived in caves, considered food and shelter to be their goals. This caused them to hunt walking, flying and crawling protein packets, and gather and store whatever they logically computed to be of any use for their survival in the wild.

Case in point - the genesis of this very straightforward notion of "grab what you need", encompassed an array of skills and knowledge, making "experience" a valued component of their maximum form of civilization, which was a bricolage of ideas and morals that were reinforced experimentally.

While typing this article via my smart phone, I cannot help but to think about the depth of "experience" that has been persevered to finally invent such a "magical" collocation of minerals as a "success" of human technological advancement. And since culture is the only vessel of learning, the level of what every Tom, Dick and Abdullah considers his success to be, it has become more complex than plucking vegetables! So why not decrease culture in our now more facilitated reality and respect being a "rebel"? Is it invalid or not permitted to say that culture has become too weighty for our psyche?

Steve Jobs never graduated from college, and figured out his way to the "American Dream" is his twenties. The Saudi billionaire Suleiman Al-Rajhi donated \$91 billion for a single agricultural project to feed the poor after he began his career as a kid dusting ashes off kitchen floors to be rewarded a bag of coal to sell in any market he could reach. Prior to the oil era, all Gulf countries depended on wood to cook their daily meals. He also never considered it to be shameful to carry rich families' goods around for a halalah - a penny. And yet he was too poor for school and never had an opportunity to graduate from secondary school.

Educationally, Bill Gates was not too far ahead himself. And the same goes for Edison and Shakespeare, both of whom did not gain any scores that helped others forecast their geniuses in their fields. Beethoven had a very unfortunate childhood, and the inventor of the most formidable form of Japanese martial art was an 88-year-old soldier who was released from his duties after the empire's shameful defeat. This illustrated to me not how far power can get you, but how cultural standards have led us astray from the one thing that united these men - simplicity.

My parents needed my name to be socially validated to be legitimate. Collective conscience needed to process and produce this novel cultural bit of information that this newborn human being is going to be called Jeri. And prior to his maturity, a whole set of mental diagrams are going to judge and "guide" his personal reward behavior(s). But what if these diagrams kept reassuring me about unnecessary "bits of information", such as how scared I should be from that T-Rex, or chickenpox for that matter. And since we survived Y2K and 2012, we are still able to make our reward system as simple as snatching cherries from branches and yet be more sophisticated to achieve what is beyond survival - happiness.

Photo of the day



Photo shows the wing of a Kuwait Airways plane in midflight. Summer is high travel season in Kuwait where hundreds of thousands leave to escape temperatures that easily soar above 50C. — Photo by Fatma Khan/KUNA

In my view

LETTER FROM AN EXPAT

By Dana Al-Rashid

local@kuwaittimes.com



I am nothing; a nobody. I am but a supporting actor, playing a minor role in lives that are deemed far more important than mine. I am nameless and faceless - you can't recognize me, because we're all the same to you. I'm just here to serve. I am the one who sweeps dirt - along with my dreams - under your feet. I was promised this dreamland, where there is clean water, electricity, and plenty of money to feed my children. But as soon as I arrived here, I was left on the streets with no work for several months, under heavy debt, and with no ability to travel back home, as my passport is no longer in my hands.

My humble salary is around KD 100, more or less, usually less. Despite that, some people say it's too much, and reminisce about the "good times" when it was no more than KD 60-70. I sometimes receive my pay on time, but other times I don't get it for many long months on end. I survive in those months on tips from kind and charitable people by washing their cars or carrying their groceries. I realize that I am but few rights away from being considered a slave.

make me feel closer to home, but I was very mistaken. Every day I face various forms of racism, discrimination and even ridicule. I am the teacher you mock, and the doctor you insult. I am the employee you disrespect. I take it all with a smile; for I have no other choice.

You say I upset the demographic balance, yet you refuse to do laborious jobs and even some office jobs - you barely even do your own job! I do the same work, but with around a KD 400 difference. In contentment, I overlook the sore difference and remind myself that locals deserve the privilege and encouragement from their own country. But what's truly shocking is that some wish for this gap to increase even more by enforcing strict, biased laws against us, followed by public statements that stir hatred and separation from one another in an "us vs them" mentality.

You demand that we work tirelessly for your comfort, yet you don't want to see us in the same shops and public places. You have implicitly created separate malls, parks and even hospitals that segregate expats from locals. After decades of hard work and lifting the country on our very shoulders, are we now considered unwanted? And can you truly make do without us?

Regards,

The "Expat"

I am your fellow human; your brother. I am an Arab, a Muslim; just like you. I thought that moving here would

IN MY VIEW

IS THIS EVER GOING TO STOP?



By Ramona Crasto

ramonacrasto@kuwaittimes.net

It's 7.30 and I'm awake, must be Sunday. I check the Kuwait Times website as a morning ritual and just when I thought with all the visits our delegations are making around the world, there might be a little peace, except the Festival of rockets in the East, I open my eyes to another attack, the world mourns at the loss of the future generation at the UK massacre. After the 2005 London bombings, this attack has being the deadliest one on the UK soil.

How does someone see a place filled with enthusiastic youth enjoying the time of their life, as a target? Even hell has its norms, only if you sin you get there. But suicide bombers search for a chance to make earth a living hell. Manchester as a country came together at such a time of great despair. This one sentence by one of the survivors broke my heart saying, "I got home safe with my kids, but many won't."

All these security measures that we take are for nothing. It's completely useless. People still pass through metal detectors and high end security. Now how is that possi-

ble? Technology of course, but shouldn't we be as step ahead of all this. Is this ever going to stop?

The key to these issues is not waiting for someone to claim it, you cut the root of the problem and the problem will cease to exist. War, attacks and our everyday routine walk side to side on a daily basis now and all we do is comment and mourn and support which isn't bad, it's humane. But actions speak louder than words, that's what I was taught as a child and I believe it's high time we put all those moral science lessons to some use.

I don't mean to provoke violence against violence. I remember this saying, if you rob a robber's house, it isn't robbery. If you put an end to people responsible for such massacres, it isn't a threat to their human rights because they took those rights away from all the people that they slaughtered like animals. All this simply proves their dominance and fear that is increasing and taking over the world. After dinosaurs, we have been a dominant species on this planet and I don't think you'll want such power to fall in the hands of people who make Satan look better.



One of the most popular fish in Kuwait, the Hammour. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

In my view

PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR

By Sana Kalim

local@kuwaittimes.com

I know that this is not a topic that we should comfortably discuss (especially during this holy time of the year). However IS continues to be a threat, and looking at trends of attacks, we should be prepared for an attack close to the time of Eid - suggesting that it's the 'optimum time for jihad'. Thus, I would like to take this opportunity to show how this war affects you psychologically, and how the psychology of a terrorist works.

Firstly, we are all affected by the media psychologically on our views of IS. On the news, we always see attacks against terror-prone regions. However, we never see the attacks themselves, rather quirky animations or the launch of the missile. We have people further embellishing the beauty of the weapons rather than weighing the costs of human lives. It's as if the media are trying to show us how the missile works and not the impact of the missile. Are we being controlled so we don't question authority? News broadcasters can sway us to believe in a certain way, through clever substitutes such as 'conspiracy theories' or even 'fake news' (though I do not doubt its existence).

Now, why do we even wage war in the first place? Well, if we are looking at it from a scientific perspective - psychologists suggest that it's natural for human groups to wage war because we're made up of genes which demand to be replicated. So it's natural for us to try to get hold of resources which help us to survive, and to fight over them with other groups. Other groups potentially endanger our survival, and so we have to compete and fight with them.

There are also biological attempts to explain war. Men are biologically primed to fight wars because of the large amount of testosterone they have, since it is widely believed that testosterone is linked to aggression. Violence may also be linked to a low level of serotonin, since there is evidence that when animals are injected with serotonin, they become less aggressive.

All of this is true - however, there are personal 'positive' impacts of war which may drive us as well, making us feel more alive, alert and awake. It enables us to

express higher human qualities such as discipline, courage, unselfishness and self-sacrifice. Moreover, war relates back to our own human identity. We are social creatures - we have a need for belonging and identity which can easily manifest itself in ethnicism, nationalism, or religious dogmatism. We believe that only our group has feelings, and deserves to be protected. In psychology, it's called 'moral exclusion', and so we alienate the other group. They are not us, therefore they deserve to be punished.

How does war affect the fragile human mind? Well, it's the soldiers who get the worst burn of shell-shock, PTSD and homesickness. Regular people on the other hand almost ignore the conflict - as if it is non-existent. This is of course dangerous, more so by the fact that we start to forget about the value of a human life.

Now what about IS' soldiers? They are not any different from us. We are all human beings after all. What has occurred for the creation of IS has happened time and time again before in history. War bonds people together in their groups, and this bonding creates some of the fear and distress individuals feel when their beliefs break down. It also offers self-esteem to people who feel humiliated by their loss of place and status in a relatively orderly society.

When this happens, then individual and group identities partially merge and the person's actions become as much a manifestation of the group as of the individual will. When this happens, people can do terrible things they would never have imagined doing otherwise: Individual conscience has little place in an embattled, warring group, because the individual and group selves are one so long as the external threat continues. It is groups that are capable of savagery, much more than any individual alone.

In this time of peace, we need to further understand ourselves, become more mindful and be hyper aware as to why we are acting the way we are. For the human mind is fragile, and a certain push can cause anyone to become alarmed.

Reference: Psychology Today

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Sadu as a way of life

By Faten Omar

Al Sadu is a traditional form of weaving practiced by the Bedouin women of Kuwait. The traditional colors are black, white, brown, beige and red, with distinctive patterns in the form of narrow bands of geometric designs. Weavers often gather in small groups to spin and weave, exchanging family news and occasionally chanting and reciting poetry. Sadu weavers are now mostly older women whose numbers are declining. Kuwait Times met a veteran weaver - 49-year-old Laila Yasser - to learn more about Sadu history.





Al-Sadu, or simply Sadu, is a traditional form of weaving that relies on geometrical shapes and designs. It is the traditional artisanal craft of Bedouin women of the Arabian Peninsula. In Kuwait, Al-Saud House is a local cooperative dedicated to the preservation of this important textile art and heritage. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Kuwait Times: How long have you been weaving and what brought you into this line of work? Who taught you to weave?

Laila Yasser: I started when I was 15-years-old. As Bedouins, Sadu and weaving are our life - we had to make the carpets, cushions and pillows all from Sadu. Girls learn by watching, and are gradually given tasks to do, such as sorting the wool, before learning the more intricate skills involved. When you are young, you start simple with small cushions maybe, then you weave larger pieces, because Sadu is not an easy task. Young girls do not have the physical strength as it requires strenuous effort. My mother and aunts taught me this art. The women and girls in the family had a mini-workshop in the house to start learning Sadu.

like to involve Sadu more in modern furniture.

KT: Which Sadu piece took the longest amount of time to make?

Yasser: The longest time that took me to make one piece was two months and 10 days. The piece took a lot of hard work.

KT: Do you think Sadu is being relegated to history?

Yasser: No; many young girls come to Sadu House for weaving workshops, where they are interested in learning the history of this beautiful handcraft. It is a joy for them.

KT: What advice can you give to people who want to become weavers?

Yasser: Sadu weaving is an interesting thing to do, and I advise every girl to try it. It is good for the mind, and discharges negative energy from the body.

KT: How long does it usually take to become a master weaver like you?

Yasser: It depends from one person to another. My daughter knew how to weave Sadu even as 3-year-old girl, and wanted to be involved, as the colors attracted her.

“ One meter of plain Sadu can take up to two days of work. One with many details in the piece, it could take up to a week. ”

KT: Is weaving your full-time job?

Yasser: Yes, I work for Sadu House. It takes orders and I work from home. Two years ago, I started to make bags of Sadu for many customers.

KT: What are the technical challenges you face when making Sadu?

Yasser: It is hard at first when you try a new design. One mistake could make you start over from scratch. It is hard to unspin the yarn and re-sew it.

KT: How many hours do you work per day on a carpet?

Yasser: One meter of plain Sadu takes up to two days of work. But if there are many details in the piece, it could take up to a week.

KT: Are there any designs that you haven't made yet, but would like to make?

Yasser: I would like to develop and work on a clothing collection made of Sadu. I haven't tried it yet, but I would also



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THE VIEW FROM ABROAD



Scene in the 'Obscure Persian Gulf Sheikdom' that 'uses its wealth to improve the lot of all its people.' 1952.

Boom Time in Kuwait
An Obscure Persian Gulf Sheikdom, Enriched by Oil, Uses Its Wealth to Improve the Lot of All Its People.
By Paul Edward Case

Boom Time in Kuwait: An Obscure Persian Gulf Sheikdom, Enriched by Oil, Uses Its Wealth to Improve the Lot of All Its People. 1952.

Kuwait: THE POSH ARABIAN PLAYGROUND

'LIMITED VIEWPOINT PORTRAYS ONLY A NARROW WINDOW TO KUWAIT'

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

As soon as you pick up a copy of the National Geographic magazine and turn the cover to the first page, you feel as though the yellow frame is a window that looks out to the world around you, revealing oddities and wonders of mankind and other creatures on planet Earth.

Nat Geo correspondents have reached nearly every corner of the world since the past 189 years, and have visited Kuwait several times. However, oil seems to be the only issue that has garnered their attention when it comes to our little corner of the world.

See, for instance, the December 1952 edition. The magazine discussed in depth the post-oil period in a story titled "Boom Time in Kuwait: An Obscure Persian Gulf Sheikdom, Enriched by Oil, Uses Its Wealth to Improve the Lot of All Its People".

More than 20 pages were dedicated to the political, social, economic and educational changes in the state, in addition to water production. In his description of Kuwaitis, he tells us that they are now wearing Western suits tailored in Baghdad using the finest British fabrics.

Although this may be true, the National Geographic did not defy the trend of stereotypical images prevalent about Arab countries. Seventeen years later, another report on Kuwait was published in 1969 titled "Kuwait, Aladdin's Lamp of the Middle East".

The writer claimed that once a Kuwaiti expressed his concerns about a change in

morality, as he told him that he earlier used to work for money and now he only sits for it. At the end of the report, he praised the simplicity of the Kuwaiti society and how any individual could meet the ruler of Kuwait.

'Oil, the Dwindling Treasure'; 'The Arab World, Inc: Who Are Those Oil-Rich Arabs' and 'What Are They Doing With All that Money?' - these are all titles of feature stories on the oil wealth of Kuwait, as if Kuwait is only about money and oil barrels.

After the mid-1970s, the National Geographic's interest in the country declined, hence news on Aladdin's lamp no longer attracted its readership, until Saddam Hussein, the late Iraqi president of "the water and oil oasis" Iraq invaded Kuwait, expanding its maritime borders overlooking the Arabian Gulf and doubling its oil production by taking over the oilfields.

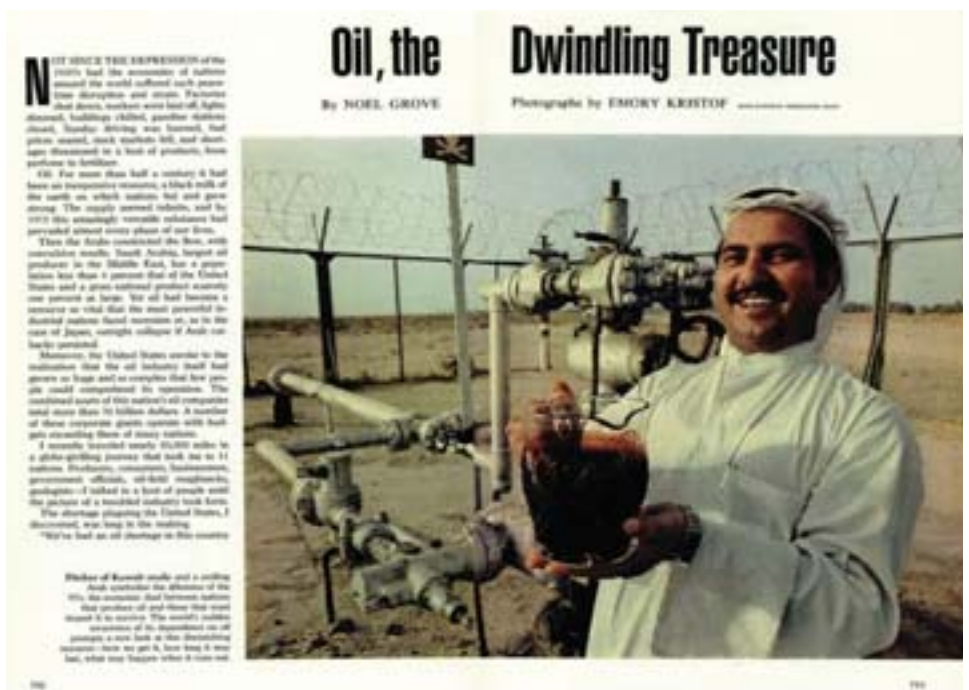
Where are the real people of Kuwait in all this? Nat Geo correspondents may have had trouble breaking into the walls of privacy of Kuwaiti families, but may not have been interested in attempting this from the ground up. Those familiar with documentaries by foreign travelers on Kuwait during the same era and the pre-oil period understand that the Kuwaiti society is more open than today to speak and comply with photographers' lenses.

On the other hand, it is unjust to accuse the National Geographic of superficiality and hidden agendas. The image of Arabs in general at that time in the West was not complete due to a lack of communication. Moreover, rich Arab countries made no efforts to clarify and correct the fallacies of racism.

Over the last year, two Western journalists texted me asking for some information about Kuwait, which coincided with local crises. Bad news sometimes is good news! Today, in the midst of world conflicts and media wars, the deformation of the Arab image is vast. Arab governments and media have a great responsibility to address them by focusing on the human being and drawing a new, more credible image.



Kuwait, Aladdin's Lamp of the Middle East. 1969. — National Geographic



Oil, the Dwindling Treasure. 1974.



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah left for Saudi Arabia yesterday to check the Kuwaiti forces involved in the 'Operation Restoration of Hope'. The minister was accompanied by Chief of General Staff of Kuwait's Army Lieutenant General Mohammed Khaled Al-Khader, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and a number of senior army officers. The Minister was seen off at the airport by Defense Ministry Undersecretary Jassar Al-Jassar, Deputy Chief of the Kuwaiti Army General Staff Lieut. Gen. Abdullah Nawaf Al-Sabah and senior army officers. — KUNA

KUWAITI FM MEETS CHINESE UN ENVOY

NEW YORK: Kuwait First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met late on Wednesday with Chinese Ambassador to the UN Liu Jieyi on the fringes of the General Assembly session. The two sides discussed bilateral ties and other regional and international issues of common concern. They also underlined historic bilateral relations, as well as reaffirming commitment to coordination of stances vis-a-vis the agenda items of the current UNGA session.

Iftar for OIC envoys

In another development, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held an iftar meal for delegates of the member States at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the UN. The iftar was held on sidelines of the UN General Assembly session for electing non-permanent members in the Security Council (2018-2019). The minister in a statement at the banquet shed light on causes of the Muslim nation, affirming that Kuwait in the event it has occupied a non-permanent seat at the Security Council will support various Islamic causes. He expressed aspiration to boost cooperation with the Islamic group at the UN. — Agencies



'KUWAIT BY YOUR SIDE' DISTRIBUTES PACKAGES

RIYADH: The 'Kuwait by your side' campaign has launched the project of distributing food packages in Yemen's Mahrah Governorate, as part of the third phase of current relief aid in the country. In a ceremony held in the governorate yesterday, Rashed Ali Yashoul, director general of the social affairs bureau in the province, stressed that Kuwait has been providing aid for Yemeni people through carrying out several projects. He expressed his gratitude to Kuwaitis for unlimited support for the Yemeni people. For his part, Amin bin Yahya, head of the food package project in the governorate, said the scheme aims to distribute up to 3,000 food packages, thanking the State of Kuwait, its leadership and government for this support. The project targets to distribute about 71,000 food packages in several provinces in Yemen. — KUNA



MUNICIPALITY INSPECTION

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Ahmadi Municipality inspection teams recently launched an inspection campaign that resulted in issuing 27 citations. 74 illegal adverts were also removed. Meanwhile, Hawalli Municipality inspectors recently filed 57 citations over inedible foodstuff items, operating without a health certificate and other violations. Informed sources said that inspectors confiscated and destroyed 471 kilograms of meat, fish, fruits and dairy products.

Kuwaiti murdered

A Kuwaiti in his forties has been arrested for murdering a citizen by deliberately running him over with a car and smashing his head with a rock in Sabah Al-Salem, security sources said. Case papers indicate that the suspect was seen hitting the victim with a rock in Sabah Al-Nasser area. Eyewitnesses added that the driver stepped out of his car and used a large rock to smash the injured man's head before he drove off. The suspect was arrested one hour later. He admitted to killing the man over an unsettled scores that goes back to decade ago. A case has been filed.

SALMIYA BUILDING FIRE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A fire recently broke out in a Salmiya building. Firemen rushed to the scene and battled the blaze. According to security sources, the fire started from a pile of wood in the building yard. The fire was controlled without any casualties. Another fire broke out Wednesday evening at a restaurant in Mangaf and was put off by firemen.



WHAT DO YOU WORSHIP?

By Teresa Leshar

Humans have a need to worship, a need most appropriately satisfied in the worship of God. However, when God is not worshipped, other things fill the vacuum. Some people seem to worship physical pleasure, indulging in food, alcohol, drugs and so forth. But they realize that it was a poor god when their addictions turn to diseases, and they are left to deal with the devastating effect they have on their bodies and relationships.

Other people worship wealth and materialism, amassing far more than they can use while cheating others of their rights and denying the needy some easy compassion. Yet others value romantic love above all else, shifting from one relationship to another when commitment and unconditional love require sacrifice and emotional work. Some people are controlled by the pursuit of human youth and beauty: Working out diligently to keep an attractive body, spending hours shopping for flattering clothes, plastering their faces with makeup, undergoing painful procedures to enhance physical beauty.

Still others worship power and domination, or elements of nature, or things even more undeserving than these. Fulfilling our needs, investing in the future, seeking loving relationships, aspiring for promotions, and striving to be healthy and fit are all worthy goals; but when they crowd out or completely replace spirituality and our relationship with God, they become deceitful gods who distract you from what's important in life.

Worship is always God-centered for those who submit exclusively to their Creator - the true Muslims. Every deed, whether big or small, is worship when it is done to please God. In Islam, worship involves both the mind and body. For example, the prayer engages the body, mind, voice and heart at regular intervals. Worship in Islam also involves both restraint and expenditure. We restrain ourselves during fasting, which is an annual month-long course in self-discipline, compassion and gratitude, and we worship with expenditure when we pay zakat, which is compulsory charity that reinforces the concept of collective responsibility.

Worship in Islam is also both personal and communal. Optional late night prayers are encouraged, and these are usually prayed in seclusion, yet other prayers are to be performed in congregation. The largest congregation of Muslims takes place every year during the pilgrimage, or hajj, which unites believers through time and space in a single rite whose focus is worshipping the Creator.

Worship in Islam is not the mere performance of rites and rituals, but a frame of mind and a way of life. God said in the Quran, "I have created man and jinn to worship Me" (51:56). To worship our Creator is the most exalted occupation a human can aspire to and yet it is within anyone's reach. It does not require one to isolate himself from worldly endeavors, but to focus on a higher authority while engaging in them.

It does not require one to abstain from physical pleasures but to express gratitude for the many bounties he enjoys. It does not require deep study and rigid exercise, but a sincere and tender heart, ever mindful of the Creator. With the proper mindset and intentions, a person can be in a state of worship 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. With this achievement, you can say that your life is "mission accomplished."

Courtesy of the TIES Center, whose mission is to empower Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and inter-faith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, please call 25231015/6 or e-mail: info@ties-center.net.



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis shop for fruits at a market during the holy month of Ramadan in downtown Kuwait City. During Ramadan, practicing Muslims do not eat, drink, smoke or have sex between sunrise and sunset. — By Yasser Al-Zayyat

SPEND RATIONALLY DURING RAMADAN

KUWAIT: With the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, a Muslim person is usually confused weighing physical needs against the spiritual ones, which highlights the significance of family economics. Religiously speaking, this is a month of worship when a Muslim doubles efforts to come close to Allah, does more good deeds, pray for forgiveness, give alms and is kind and generous to all people. But nowadays many people are seduced into favoring their bodily needs and hurry to buy lots of foodstuffs and goods that are generally needless, thus turning the holy month into a month of extravagance.

In an attempt to correct this lavish lifestyle, KUNA interviewed Salah Al-Jimaz, an expert in family economics. He noted that shopping centers see hectic movement in this month with people buying lots of foodstuffs, clothes, home appliances and accessories that add to the financial burdens of shoppers. "People think they have free will to buy whatever they need, but in fact, they are controlled or influenced by

promotion campaigns of companies that lure shoppers to their products and convince them that they must buy now immediately," he said. "Here I'd like to set forth five ways that could help people to spend rationally and control their needs:

"First, do not buy food when you are hungry because you will be over-influenced by your instinct for food; "Second, write down your needs before going to a shopping center and avoid buying any unlisted product; "Third, avoid shopping at heavy rush hour when crowds of shoppers distract your attention and make you buy needless things; "Fourth, do not take along your kids; surely they will distract you and force you into buying lots of things; "And finally, classify the items you need to buy, such as rice, sugar, drinks and detergents, into categories and specify a certain time for buying them on a weekly or a monthly basis," he said. Al-Jimaz added that the values of noble Islam are against extravagant spending that leads a person to borrowing and poverty. — KUNA

Crime

Report

PORTERS FIGHT OVER 1 DINAR

KUWAIT: Two porters working in a department store face arrest after brawling over a dinar. A female citizen gave the two porters KD 1 as a tip when they carried her purchases to her vehicle, asking them to split the tip. One of the porters sustained facial injuries. A case was filed.

Man commits suicide

A man was recently found hung by the neck in a tree in Ardhya, said security sources noting that a citizen out jogging before iftar found the body hanging to the tree and called the police. Initial investigations showed that the man had been going through some financial problems and, apparently, decided to take his own life. A suicide case was filed.

Wanted man arrested

A citizen who was wanted for a KD 50,000 financial claim was recently arrested for speeding in Hawally. When he was stopped and his identity checked, it was found that he had a warrant outstanding. The man was arrested.

Man with gun arrested

A citizen was recently arrested by a highway patrol in possession of an unlicensed gun loaded with six bullets and a knife, said security sources noting that the man was originally stopped for dangerous driving.

Man shot in his bed

A citizen in his twenties was recently found shot to death while in his bed at his house in Jahra. The man was shot twice, once in the face and once in the neck. Investigations revealed that the deceased lived with his divorced mother and that he had been having disputes with various relatives and acquaintances. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Car stolen

A female citizen reported that an unidentified thief stole her 2016 model Korean vehicle when she left it parked, with the engine running in Bayan. A case was filed.

Maid hurt in jump to escape

An Asian housemaid recently sustained various injuries and bone fractures when she jumped from a balcony while trying to escape her sponsor's house in Zahra. The woman was rushed to Mubarak hospital for treatment.

Heroin dealer arrested

An Asian was recently arrested in the possession of 120 grams of heroin and 80 grams of ICE, packed for sale, said security sources noting that the suspect was arrested while selling drugs to an undercover agent and on searching his house, the drugs were found.

International

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2017

IS seals area around symbolic Mosul mosque

12



Move to re-write Venezuelan constitution amid mass protests

14



Malaysia airlines jet diverted over bomb scare

17



TOKYO: A three-dimensional puzzle of US President Donald Trump produced by Japan's Tenyo is displayed at the International Tokyo Toy Show. — AFP

PUTIN DENIES HACKING CLAIMS, HAILS TRUMP RUSSO-PHOBIC HYSTERIA MAKES IT 'SOMEWHAT INCONVENIENT'

ST PETERSBURG: President Vladimir Putin insisted yesterday that the Russian state has never engaged in hacking and said Moscow will wait out the current political storm in the US to forge constructive relations with President Donald Trump, whom he praised as a straightforward person with a "fresh set of eyes." The Russian leader acknowledged the possibility that some individual "patriotic" hackers could have mounted some attacks amid the current cold spell in Russia's relations with the West, but scoffed at allegations that hackers could influence the outcome of elections in the United States or Europe.

Speaking at a meeting with senior editors of leading international news agencies, Putin also alleged that some evidence pointing at Russian hackers' participation in cyberattacks - he didn't specify which - could have been falsified in an attempt to smear Russia. "I can imagine that some do it deliberately, staging a chain of attacks in such a way as to cast Russia as the origin of such an attack," Putin said. "Modern technologies allow that to be done quite easily."

'Russo-phobic hysteria'

US intelligence agencies have accused Russia of hacking into Democratic Party emails, helping President Donald Trump's election victory, and the Congressional and FBI investigations into the Trump campaign's ties with Russia have shattered

Moscow's hopes for a detente with Washington. Putin said the "Russo-phobic hysteria" makes it "somewhat inconvenient to work with one another or even to talk."

"It's having an impact, and I'm afraid this is one of the goals of those who organize it are pursuing and they can fine-tune the public sentiments to their liking trying to establish an atmosphere that is going to prevent us from addressing common issues, say with regard to terrorism," the Russian leader said. Putin said Russia had been encouraged by Trump's campaign statements in which he lamented Russia-US ties being at a historical low and promised to improve them. He added that Moscow still hopes to forge a constructive dialogue with Trump.

Putin predicted "this will end, sooner or later," adding that "we are patient, we know how to wait and we will wait." The Russian president praised Trump as "a straightforward person, a frank person." Putin added that while some see Trump's lack of political background as a disadvantage, he sees it as beneficial because "he has a fresh set of eyes."

Asked if Russian hackers could try to shape the outcome of German parliamentary elections later this year, Putin said: "We never engaged in that on a state level, and have no intention of doing so." He noted that Russia can work constructively with any German leader, adding that he had good ties with German Chancellor Angela Merkel despite some differences.

Russian meddling was also a concern in France, with Putin publicly expressing his sympathy for President Emmanuel Macron's rivals in the campaign. Macron's aides claimed in February that Russian groups were interfering with his campaign, and a document leak hit Macron's campaign in the final hours of the French race. Moscow has strongly denied all allegations of election meddling. Putin argued that hackers, wherever they come from, can't sway election outcomes because the public mood cannot be manipulated that easily.

Campaign influence

"I'm deeply convinced that no hackers can radically influence another country's election campaign," he said. "No hackers can influence election campaigns in any country of Europe, Asia or America." Putin added that while the Russian state has never been involved in hacking, it was "theoretically possible" that Russia-West tensions could have prompted some individuals to launch cyberattacks. "Hackers are free people, just like artists who wake up in the morning in a good mood and start painting," he said. "The hackers are the same, they would wake up, read about something going on in interstate relations and if they have patriotic leanings, they may try to add their contribution to the fight against those who speak badly about Russia. — AP



HOMS: In this March 18, 2017 file photo, gunmen carrying their weapons and some family members leave the Al-Waer neighborhood bound for a town on the Turkish border.



ISKENDERUN: In this March 18, 2017 photo, Syrian Lt Col Ahmed Al-Saoud, center, commander of the US-backed Division 13 uses his mobile phone in a Syrian restaurant surrounded by aides and bodyguards. — AP photos

SHORT OF ALLIES, SYRIA'S REBELS DOWN, NOT OUT

INTERNATIONAL POWERS LOOK AFTER THEIR OWN AGENDAS

GAZIANTEP, Turkey: They are veteran Syrian rebels who for years tried to bring down President Bashar Assad. These days they're doing little fighting with his forces as they struggle to find a place in Syria's bewildering battlefield, where several wars are being waged at once. Battered by defeats and divisions, the rebels reel around trying to find allies they can trust as international powers look after their own alliances and agendas.

Their options are limited - one is to line up behind Turkey, which is recruiting groups to fight its own war in Syria, primarily against Syrian Kurds but also Islamic State militants. Another option is to ally with al-Qaida's affiliate, the strongest opposition faction. Despite differences with Washington, all of them hope for support from the United States. But they feel it has abandoned them, throwing its weight behind the Syrian Kurds. The Associated Press spoke to several veteran rebels who move between Syria and Turkey and found them desperate for resources and support but intent on fighting for years to come.

The tattooed fighter

Nothing blurs Tarek Muharram's determination to fight Assad. Not the loss of his beloved city of Aleppo to government forces. Not the hours he and his comrades now spend in a small apartment in the southern Turkish city of Gaziantep, watching TV and smoking, waiting for the next battle. He quit his banking job in the Gulf to return home and join the rebellion in 2011. Over the years, he fought alongside several different rebel groups, including ones backed by the United States.

The fall of Aleppo was a watershed moment. It cost the rebels their strongest base, their resources, their homes. "We had reached a dead end," said the 39-year-old Muharram. Now he and his group, Noureddine el-Zinki, have now joined the alliance led by the Al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. The move caused many of his group to break away. But for Muharram, anything else would

have required too many concessions, including accepting a role for Assad.

Muharram says he has his personal differences with Al-Qaida - he doesn't always pray, for example, and he smokes. He sports a wolf-head tattoo on his arm, something militants frown upon. But he said the Al-Qaida-led alliance has kept its weapons pointed in the right direction, against Assad, and has resources and support. He and the 50 men he commands would drop their guns rather than be pushed to fight it. The fight to remove Assad is far from over, he said. "The revolution will end with a ballot box. There is no legitimacy for a new Syria without elections."

Rebel without a land

He defended his hometown of Daraya outside Damascus for years under a bloody, destructive siege by Assad's troops. But finally resistance collapsed, and last summer, Capt. Saeed Al-Nokrashi and the 700 men in his faction, Shuhada al-Islam, part of the U.S.-backed Free Syrian Army umbrella, were forcibly displaced north to Idlib province.

Idlib's Al-Qaida-linked overlords immediately kidnapped some of his best fighters. "This was to pressure us to join them," Al-Nokrashi said, speaking at his home in the southern Turkish town of Reyhanli and holding his 6-year-old son, born during the Daraya fighting. The fighters were eventually freed. But the incident highlighted the more complicated world they were in. "We were insulated in Daraya," he said. "Our confrontation was only with the regime. Now the choices are many."

The threats are, too. The Islamic State group is a concern, as are the Syrian Kurdish forces, who he said are trying to "create a separate state in the north." Then there are pro-Assad Iran and Shiite militias. These days, al-Nokrashi's fighters languish in Idlib, struggling to make ends meet and focused on their families: Some have opened food shops, bringing the Damascus area's cuisine to Idlib. A few joined the Al-Qaida-linked group.

Al-Nokrashi tried turning to diplo-

macy and attended one session of the Russia-backed talks in the Kazakhstan capital, Astana, where rebel commanders sat briefly in the same room as the government delegation. He became disillusioned and boycotted the following meeting. But in recent weeks, the United States, Turkey and Western and Gulf countries backed a new attempt at a coalition against Assad known as the Northern Front Operation Room. So far, 17 factions have joined, al-Nokrashi said. The alliance has yet to fight a battle.

The Al-Qaida hunter

Lt Col Ahmed Al-Saoud drives around Turkish seaside city of Iskenderun with another car of Syrian bodyguards and aides behind him. He has been living almost permanently in Turkey since al-Qaida's affiliate attacked him and his group, the US-backed Division 13, in Syria last year. When he tried to return home in April, an ambush was waiting for him. He survived, but one of his commanders was killed.

A defector from Assad's military, Al-Saoud has received Western aid from the start. His fight against the extremists, who tried to gain a foothold in his Idlib hometown of Maaret Numan has been relentless. But he feels let down now that the US is throwing its weight behind Syrian Kurdish militias. "We can't be temporary allies for a certain stage and then they drop or back me as they please," Al-Saoud said.

He fears US support will only deepen the Kurds' determination for self-rule, leading to the division of Syria, in the process boosting support among Sunni Arabs for Al-Qaida. During a recent AP visit to his home in Turkey, Al-Saoud was constantly on the phone with his commanders back home. Al-Saoud also has joined the Northern Front Operation Room. But he is skeptical of its Islamist leadership which would minimize the role of more secular groups like his; and also deny him direct contacts with the Americans. "My aim is a Syria free of Assad and of terrorism," he said. — AP

FIRST ROBOTIC COP JOINS DUBAI POLICE

DUBAI: After bringing in Lamborghinis and Ferraris to patrol roads, Dubai police have enrolled a robotic officer, the first in a unit that aims to make up a quarter of the force by 2030. The robotic cop stood to attention Wednesday night at the foot of Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower, as tourists and passersby snapped selfie souvenir photos by its side. Wearing a police cap and moving on wheels, the robot features a computer touch-screen on its chest that can be used to report a crime or inquire about speeding tickets.

"Our aim is to raise the number of robots to 25 percent of the police force by 2030," said Brigadier Khaled Al-Razzooqi, head of Smart Services at Dubai police. The robot, to be deployed mainly at tourist spots, is equipped with a camera that transmits live images to the operations room and it can identify suspects wanted by police. The main purpose is to "find a new way to deal with people", said Razzooqi, while acknowledging that robots could not replace humans on tasks such as making arrests. Police in Dubai, a growing tourism hub which attracted nearly 15 million visitors last year, have previously attracted media attention by parading expensive luxury cars as patrol vehicles. —AFP

TUNISIANS GET JAIL TERMS FOR EATING IN RAMADAN

TUNIS: A court in northern Tunisia handed one-month jail terms yesterday to four men for eating in public during the Muslim dawn-to-dusk fasting month of Ramadan, a spokesman said. The four had been "eating and smoking in a public garden, a provocative act during Ramadan", which started last week, Chokri Lahmar, prosecution spokesman at the court in Bizerte, told AFP.

He said the four men had 10 days to appeal against their one-month sentences before the terms take effect. Their sentencing, which followed complaints from other local residents, comes ahead of a call circulated on social media for a June 11 demonstration to protect the rights of those who decline to take part in the Ramadan fast.

Although the state has the role of "guardian of religion" under the constitution, Tunisia has no specific law banning eating in public during Ramadan, a controversy which resurfaces each year in the North African country. Most restaurants and coffee shops remain shut in Tunisia during daylight hours over the holy month, but some establishments open behind closed curtains to prevent customers from being seen. —AFP

SWEDEN ANTI-IMMIGRANT PARTY SECOND LARGEST

STOCKHOLM: The anti-immigration Sweden Democrats party is the country's second largest, a reference poll suggested yesterday, two years after Sweden took in the highest number of refugees per capita in Europe. With just over a year to go to a general election, Statistics Sweden (SCB) said if an election were held today, the Sweden Democrats would garner 18.4 percent of voter support, up almost one percentage point from its previous survey in November.

The party would thereby overtake the conservative Moderates, which were credited with 18.1 percent. Prime Minister Stefan Lofven's Social Democrats party, which has dominated Swedish politics in the postwar period, remains the largest with 31.1 percent support, according to SCB. The Sweden Democrats have enjoyed a swift rise in public support in recent years, capitalising on Swedes' frustration over immigration, segregation, crime and security. They first entered parliament in 2010 with 5.7 percent of votes, rising to nearly 13 percent in the 2014 election. But the party has long been shunned by Sweden's political establishment—all of the parties in parliament have held up a cordon sanitaire around it because of its roots in the neo-Nazi movement.

Broken taboo

The head of the conservative Moderates, Anna Kinberg Batra, broke a longstanding taboo in January when she opened the door for a cooperation with the Sweden Democrats, sparking a deep rift within her stunned four-party centre-right opposition Alliance. Since then, the Moderates have seen their support tumble, losing almost five points from SCB's November poll when it garnered 22.8 percent, as calls multiplied within the party for Batra's resignation.

Rejoicing over yesterday's poll numbers, the Sweden Democrats said the other parties would have to begin cooperating with them if they want to win a majority in parliament. Lofven's government is a minority coalition with the Greens Party, while the four-party opposition Alliance also falls short of a majority. "There's really no other alternative, and the Moderates have realized that," Mattias Karlsson, the Sweden Democrats parliamentary group leader, told news agency TT.

Over the years, the Moderates, which governed for two consecutive terms until 2014, have consistently lost voters to the Sweden Democrats, forcing them to take a harder stance against immigration. Yet they have failed to win back those voters. "The party continues to talk about immigration and immigrants but it hasn't helped it win back Sweden Democrat voters or gain stronger support for its immigration policies," Sweden's main daily Dagens Nyheter wrote in an editorial after SCB's poll was published. "There will certainly be a discussion about whether the party should change course, but the party is split on that." Sweden will hold legislative elections in September 2018. —AFP

ISRAEL MINISTER SAYS STATE WON'T FUND NUDE SHOWS

JERUSALEM: Israel's outspoken culture minister is threatening to withhold funding from two productions showing at a top festival because they contain nudity, provoking mockery and claims of censorship. Miri Regev said her office would not subsidise shows "harmful to the basic values of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state". In a letter to Israel Festival director general Eyal Sher, Regev wrote that full nudity—even in the framework of art-offended many people in Israeli society.

While the festival and audiences could make their own choices, "state funding cannot be distributed to activities detrimental to the values of society and its identity", Regev wrote to Sher on Tuesday. The Israel Festival, which opens later Thursday, is the country's largest and most important interdisciplinary arts festival, featuring performances by domestic and international artists. This year two productions—"Pindorama" from Brazil and Spain's "And what will I do with this sword?"—feature nudity.

Sher stressed that both of these shows were only for those who had bought tickets and were staged in auditoriums, not "in the wider public sphere". "We state clearly on all marketing material which performances include nudity, specifically because we are sensitive to those who might not be interested in such shows," he said on Thursday. "The public is invited to choose from among a wide variety of renowned shows that will take place over the three-week festival."

Sher said they were not considering changing the programme, and noted that the ministry's funding enabled the festival to "bring the most original, contemporary, innovative, daring materials based purely on artistic considerations". —AFP



MOSUL: Displaced Iraqis evacuate their home in western Mosul's Zanjili neighborhood on June 1, 2017 during ongoing battles between Iraqi forces to retake the city from Islamic State (IS) group fighters. — AFP

IS SEALS OFF AREA AROUND SYMBOLIC MOSUL MOSQUE

IRAQI FORCES PUSHING TO RECAPTURE REMAINING POCKETS

BAGHDAD: Islamic State group militants have blocked the area around a highly symbolic mosque in Mosul's Old City where the group's leader made his first and only public appearance in 2014, a resident said yesterday. The move came as US-backed Iraqi forces are pushing to recapture the city's remaining pockets.

The militants have ordered families living near Al-Nuri mosque - also known as the Great Mosque - to leave their houses and sealed all the roads leading to it, said the resident who lives in the IS-held sections of Mosul. Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi delivered a Friday sermon in Al-Nuri mosque in 2014 after IS seized almost a third of Iraq and declared an Islamic "caliphate" on territory it controlled in Iraq and neighboring Syria.

'Crooked Minaret'

The iconic 840-year-old "Crooked Minaret," which leans somewhat like Italy's Tower of Pisa, survived destruction by IS militants as residents formed a human chain to protect it when the militants came to blow it up. The extremists demolished dozens of historic and archaeological sites in and around Mosul, saying they promote idolatry.

"The militants are not moving in groups anymore, we see one or two from time to time in the streets as a majority of them are moving through the houses, using the holes they made in the walls," he told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear for his safety. According to UN estimates, more than 100,000 people are still trapped in their houses in IS-held areas. Mosul's Old City is an ancient district of narrow alleyways and tightly packed homes, two main challenges to security forces. "We are dying slowly with no water and no food," the resident said of the deteriorated situation in their areas.

Meanwhile yesterday, the UN special

mission to Iraq said violence killed at least 354 civilians and wounded 470 others in Iraq last month. Of those, there were 160 civilians killed and 52 wounded in Nineveh province, where Mosul is provincial capital. The Iraqi government last October launched a wide-scale military offensive to recapture Mosul and the surrounding areas, with various Iraqi mili-

tary, police and paramilitary forces taking part in the operation. The city's eastern half was declared liberated in January, and the push for the city's western section, separated from the east by the Tigris River, began the following month. Since then, the IS hold on Mosul has shrunk to just a handful of neighborhoods in and around the Old City district. —AP

FACEBOOK, GOOGLE CRACK DOWN ON HATE SPEECH: EU

BRUSSELS: Facebook, Google and other US internet giants have sharply boosted efforts to clamp down on online hate speech, a top European Union official said yesterday. The EU joined forces with the companies a year ago to combat online extremism, responding to growing alarm in Europe over the use of social media as a recruiting tool, especially by the Islamic State group.

"The companies are now removing twice as many cases of illegal hate speech and at a faster rate when compared to six months ago," Vera Jourova, the EU commissioner for justice, said in the first annual progress report. It "shows that a self-regulatory approach can work", said Jourova, who called for further progress-particularly from Twitter.

Facebook was the only one of the four giants—the other two are Microsoft and YouTube—to review and act on most hate speech notifications within 24 hours, she added. "Facebook shows that they invested a lot of capacities and a lot of efforts to do the take downs in the necessary numbers in the agreed times," Jourova told reporters. Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and Google's

YouTube announced a code of conduct in May last year, pledging to remove online hate speech within 24 hours of being notified.

A year on, a recent survey of 24 EU countries showed that on average, in 59 percent of cases, internet firms responded to notifications of illegal hate speech by removing the content. That is more than twice the level of 28 percent recorded six months earlier. Jourova said she would try to enlist the support of other tech firms and make other improvements to the system, all the more so as "extremism and radicalization in Europe is on the rise". She referred to the May 22 attack at a pop concert in Manchester, northern England, carried out by Salman Abedi, a 22-year-old born and raised locally.

As detectives try to determine how Abedi was radicalized, Jourova warned that many young people were vulnerable to online extremist recruitment. The tech firms have pledged to fight speech under European laws that bar incitement to violence or hatred directed against people based on race, color, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. — AFP

SOROS HITS BACK AT HUNGARY'S ORBAN

BUDAPEST: Investor George Soros hit back yesterday against Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban over the leader's attempts to shut down a Budapest university which Soros founded after the fall of communism. In a speech in Brussels, the Hungarian-American billionaire accused Orban of building a "mafia state" in Hungary. In doing so, he reached for a term that has gained currency among Orban's critics, who see the prime minister as leading an increasingly authoritarian and corrupt political system in which he and those in his inner circle are growing richer, often with European Union funds.

Soros praised the Hungarians who have staged large street demonstrations in past months in defense of the Central European University, a graduate school which Soros founded in 1991 in order to strengthen the rule of law across the region. Orban's Fidesz party passed new legislation in April that threatens its continued existence in Budapest. "I am full of admiration for the courageous way the Hungarian people have resisted the deception and corruption of the mafia state the Orban regime has established," Soros told policymakers and economic leaders in a speech at the Brussels Economic Forum.

Hungarian government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs said Soros' words reveal he "has his own political agenda." "Who exactly is George Soros and what does he have to do with Europe and its fate? Why should what he says carry any weight? The democratically elected representatives of the member states will decide," Kovacs said. Soros, an 86-year-old Holocaust survivor from Hungary, has emerged as one of the global figures most hated by populists and nationalists. They denounce his support for liberal causes, including LGBT, women's and refugee rights, and fault his financial speculation as a cause of the pain felt by many in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

Soros' admirers praise him for the many good causes he has supported and feel it is being used as a scapegoat by authoritarian politicians, noting troubling parallels between the language used against him and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories of the past. In late April, Orban described Soros to the European Parliament as a "financial speculator who is now attacking Hungary." Soros decried how Orban "has made me the target of his unrelenting propaganda campaign." "He cast himself in the role of the defender of Hungarian sovereignty and me as a currency speculator who used his money to exert control over Hungary in order to profit from it," Soros told his Brussels audience. "This is the opposite of who I am. I am the proud founder of the Central European University that has, after 26 years, come to rank among the 50 best universities in the world in many of the social sciences." —AP

6TH NIGHT OF PROTESTS IN MOROCCO'S NORTH

AL-HOCEIMA: Thousands of people have demonstrated in northern Morocco for the sixth straight night as protesters demand the release of the leader of a popular movement in the neglected Rif region. The Rif has been shaken by social unrest since the death in October of fishmonger Mouhcine Fikri, 31, who was crushed in a rubbish truck as he protested against the seizure of swordfish caught out of season.

Initial protests in the fishing port

of Al-Hoceima triggered a wider movement demanding more development and railing against corruption, repression and unemployment. Nasser Zefzafi, who emerged as the head of the grassroots Al-Hirak Al-Shaabi, or "Popular Movement", was arrested on Monday after three days on the run. Late Wednesday, between 2,000 and 3,000 protesters once again took to the streets of Al-Hoceima, shouting slogans such as "We are all Nasser Zefzafi" and

"Corrupt state". "Arrest us, we are all activists," read one banner.

Although fewer demonstrators turned out than the previous night, the protest appeared better organized, with volunteers in fluorescent jackets including women marshalling the crowd. The mainly ethnically Berber Rif region has long had a tense relationship with Morocco's central authorities, and was at the heart of Arab Spring-inspired protests in 2011.



AL-HOCEIMA: Thousands of protestors crowd the steets of the northern Moroccan city of Al-Hoceima, during a demonstration demanding the release of Nasser Zefzafi, head of the grassroots Al-Hirak Al-Shaabi, or "Popular Movement". — AFP

'Social justice'

Cilia Hirani, a member of the Popular Movement, told AFP that everyone in the Rif "believes in freedom, in humanity and in social justice". "If you imprison our leaders, we will resist and we will resist until our demands, which are rights in democratic countries, are granted," she said. Najib Ahamjik, often referred to as the movement's number two, remains at large but continues to use social media to call for "mobilisation". Nawal Benaissa, one of the public faces of the Popular Movement, was among three young women on Wednesday who urged protesters to demand "freedom for prisoners". Anti-riot police were at the protest, following clashes between demonstrators and security forces over the weekend, but the crowd dispersed at around midnight without incident.—AFP



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CONVICTED AUSCHWITZ GUARD DIES IN BERLIN

BERLIN: Reinhold Hanning, a former SS sergeant whose conviction last year on 170,000 counts of accessory to murder for serving as an Auschwitz guard was hailed as a long-overdue victory for Holocaust victims, has died. He was 95. Hanning died on Tuesday, his attorney Andreas Scharmer told The Associated Press yesterday without providing further details. Hanning was convicted last June in Detmold state court in northwestern Germany and sentenced to five years in prison, though he never served time behind bars as his case was still being appealed.

Unlike most other death camp guards who have been brought to trial, Hanning apologized for his wartime service in Auschwitz from January 1942 to June 1944, telling Holocaust survivors from around the world who attended the proceedings that "it disturbs me deeply" to have been a part of the Nazis' genocidal machinery. "I am ashamed that I saw injustice and never did anything about it, and I apologize for my actions," he said, speaking with a weak voice into a microphone while sitting in a wheelchair. "I am very, very sorry."

Hanning joined the Hitler Youth with his class in 1935 at age 13, then volunteered at 18 for the Waffen SS at the urging of his stepmother. He fought in several battles in World War II before being hit by grenade splinters in his head and leg during close combat in Kiev in 1941. Following the injury, his commander decided he was no longer fit for front-line duty and assigned him to Auschwitz.

Burning bodies

In a statement to the court, Hanning said he didn't know what Auschwitz was at the time but quickly found out. "People were shot, gassed and burned. I could see how corpses were taken back and forth or moved out," he said. "I could smell the burning bodies; I knew corpses were being burned." Nearly 1 million Jews and tens of thousands of others were killed in Auschwitz, which was located in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Though his own duties were not directly linked to the killings, with him being initially assigned to register patrols and work details and later posted to a guard tower, he was tried under new legal reasoning in Germany that anyone who helped a death camp function can be held culpable as an accessory to murder. That argument was first successfully used in 2011 in Munich to convict former Ohio autoworker John Demjanjuk on allegations he served as a Sobibor death camp guard. Although Demjanjuk denied serving at the death camp and died before his appeal could be heard, it opened a wave of new investigations by the special prosecutor's office in Ludwigsburg responsible for Nazi war crime probes, including that of Hanning.—AP

MAKER OF IVANKA SHOES DENIES LABOR VIOLATIONS

SHANGHAI: A Chinese company that makes shoes for Ivanka Trump and other brands denied allegations yesterday of excessive overtime and low wages made by three activists who have been arrested or disappeared. The Associated Press reported Tuesday that Hua Haifeng, an investigator for China Labor Watch, a New York-based nonprofit, had been arrested on a charge of illegal surveillance while his two colleagues, Li Zhao and Su Heng are missing and rights groups fear they have been detained. They were investigating Huajian Group factories in the southern Chinese cities of Ganzhou and Dongguan.

"We are shocked," Long Shan, a spokeswoman for the Huajian Group, said in an email to The Associated Press. "As a renowned global media outlet, you have put out many untrue reports not based on facts and without our consent." China Labor Watch executive director Li Qiang said yesterday he still had not been able to confirm the status of the two men. Huajian was contacted before AP's initial reports were published but issued no statement until yesterday. Long said the company had stopped producing Ivanka Trump shoes months ago. She said that Hua Haifeng joined the group's factory in Dongguan on May 20, but left after less than a week, and Su Heng began working at their Ganzhou factory on April 28, but also left after a short time. She said she did not know their current whereabouts. "By coming to Huajian to work, they are Huajian employees. Huajian staff must comply with China's laws and regulations and Huajian's rules," she said, adding that at least one of the men "used methods like taking photographs and video to obtain the company's trade secrets, which is not in line with the company's regulations.—AP



CARACAS: An anti-government demonstrator walks past two National Guard soldiers' motorcycles that were set on fire by protesters when the soldiers ran from their bikes after falling during clashes with protesters.—AP

MOVE TO RE-WRITE VENEZUELAN CONSTITUTION AMID PROTESTS

NAKED POWER GRAB

CARACAS: Venezuela's opposition called for weekend protests as the deadline neared for candidates for an assembly to re-write the constitution a gathering opponents slam as a naked power grab by the leftist government. Sixty people have died and around 1,000 people have been wounded since April 1, when opponents of President Nicolas Maduro intensified their attempts to remove him from power, according to government figures.

The massive protests have been fueled by soaring inflation and shortages of food and medicine, a result of Venezuela's economic collapse driven by the fall in prices for its crucial oil exports since 2014. In an attempt to stabilize its foreign exchange market, the government on Wednesday devalued its currency, the Bolivar, by 64 percent. Under the overhauled official exchange system, the government let investors bid for US dollars at a new higher rate in what Maduro said was an effort to undermine the black market.

The rate of 2,010 Bolivars per dollar represents a sharp devaluation compared to 721 bolivars under the previous system, but is still far below the black market rate, currently around 6,000 bolivars per dollar. The central bank sold \$24 million overall, mostly to companies importing foreign goods. "The amount assigned was laughable. It shows the lack of currency," economist Jesus Casique told AFP.

Protests and more protests

On Wednesday some 5,000 protesters clashed with police when they tried

to march to the foreign ministry headquarters in a demo aimed at coinciding with an Organization of American States meeting on Venezuela. Violent clashes later broke out in eastern Caracas, which authorities said resulted in scores of wounded. The OAS meeting at the group's headquarters in Washington, however, was suspended because members could not agree on how to handle the Venezuelan crisis a development that Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez celebrated as a victory. "The only consensus is that there is no consensus," Rodriguez told VTV state television from Washington. "The voice of moral authority imposed itself they have been defeated," she said.

The domestic opposition to Maduro, however, feels far from being defeated, and has called for more demos on Saturday, this time to protest widespread hunger. "The game seems to be deadlocked. The government is becoming more and more repressive and the opposition is continuing its protests in the street," said political analyst Luis Salamanca. "There could be a total, serious confrontation, permanent chaos. Anything could happen here even a popular uprising." Opposition congressional speaker Julio Borges visited European lawmakers on Wednesday in Brussels, where he warned Maduro's plan to re-write the constitution will trigger more bloodshed. At a news conference, Borges asked for "help" from EU institutions so that "those who have violated human rights are also hit with sanctions."

Venezuelan National Guard forces on Wednesday assaulted several

reporters, including AFP photographer Luis Robayo, as they covered a protest. Robayo said the troops beat him as they sought to prevent him taking pictures of clashes between demonstrators and the National Guard on Caracas' Francisco Fajardo highway.

Journalists beaten

"The National Guard started to go by on motorbikes. They approached and one of them hit me several times in the head, then they pushed me and I fell. They lifted me up by the (bulletproof) vest, and my camera fell," he recalled. One of them tried to take off Robayo's gas mask and arrest him only to be told to stop by a superior, the photographer said. Guards took away the photographer's vehicle and belongings, his driver said. At least two photographers with other media faced beatings and brief arrests, professional associations and colleagues said.

Authorities on Wednesday began a 48-hour process of signing up candidates for a planned constitutional reform body, a move that has inflamed anti-government protests. Maduro opponents say he aims to keep himself in power by stacking the planned "constitutional assembly" with allies. The electoral authorities have called on candidates to sign up online to seek election to the 545-member assembly, which will be tasked with writing a new constitution. The center right-led opposition coalition has vowed not to take part. "I hope no one will commit treason by taking part in such an absolutely fraudulent process," opposition leader Henrique Capriles said.—AFP

44 MIGRANTS DIE OF 'THIRST' IN DESERT

NIAMEY: At least 44 migrants, including women and babies, were found dead after their vehicle broke down in the desert of northern Niger while on the way to Libya, local officials said yesterday. "The number of migrants who died in the desert is 44 for now," said Rhissa Feltou, the mayor of Agadez, a remote town on the edge of the Sahara that has become the smuggling capital of Africa.

Last year, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded 335,000 migrants heading northwards out of Niger. The Red Cross, which said "at least 44 migrants have died", has dispatched a team to the site "to gather information" on the circumstances. A security source who asked not to be named said "the sub-Saharan migrants, including babies and women, died of thirst because their vehicle broke down".

In early May, eight migrants from Niger, five of them children, were found dead in the desert while on their way to Algeria. Also in May, soldiers on patrol in northern Niger rescued around 40 migrants from various west African countries who had been abandoned in the desert by people-smugglers they had paid to get to Libya. The group included people from The Gambia, Nigeria, Guinea, Senegal and Niger, all of them hoping to reach the Libyan coast and from there cross the Mediterranean to Europe.

Libya has long struggled to control its 5,000 kilometers of southern borders with Sudan, Chad and Niger, even before the 2011 uprising that toppled dictator Moamer Kadhafi. In the chaos that followed, traffickers stepped up their business, with tens of thousands of people each year making the perilous crossing to Italy just some 300 kilometers away. Germany and Italy last month called for an EU mission to be installed on the border between Libya and Niger to reduce the migrant flow. By mid-April this year, Italy had registered nearly 42,500 migrants coming by sea, 97 percent of them arriving from Libya. — AFP

GOLDEN TRIANGLE GANGS CHURNING NEW HIGHS

BANGKOK: Southeast Asian drug cartels are diversifying the narcotics they produce, the UN's crime agency warned Wednesday, with more than 160 new highs hitting the market in the last eight years. The Golden Triangle—where Laos, southern China, Thailand and Myanmar intersect—is the world's second largest drug producer after Latin America.

It is notorious for churning out heroin and methamphetamine. But cartel chemists are now also making new drugs to hook customers on cheap compounds that have yet to be made illegal. So-called New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are appearing at an alarming rate with 168 new drugs detected since 2008 across 11 Southeast Asian nations and China, according to a report released Wednesday by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

"The world of drugs has become much more complex," Martin Raithelhuber, an expert on synthetic drugs at the UNODC, told AFP. "We are seeing a lot of new substances around, substances you may not even have heard of but they're there." While heroin and meth remain the product of choice for the region's narco-gangs, new substances are fast emerging with just three detected hitting the streets in 2008 compared to 80 last year.

The new compounds act as stimulants, hallucinogens, sedatives and opioids and can be taken alone or cut with existing drugs on the market to save costs or intensify the high. Many NPS are so new that governments struggle to ban them—and when they do chemists can simply tweak the formula to create a fresh compound with similar properties. With little research on new highs, the risks to the user rise.

One of the most famous new highs in recent years is fentanyl and its many derivatives. An opioid that is 100 times more powerful than heroin, fentanyl is wreaking havoc across North America. An estimated 2.6 million Americans are hooked on prescription opioid painkillers with 33,000 fatal overdoses a year. Raithelhuber said most of the new highs detected in Southeast Asia, many of them fentanyl type substances, were aimed at European or North American consumers.—AFP



French President Emmanuel Macron (C) and French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian (2ndL), speak at the harbor of Lorient, on June 1, 2017, after visiting the high seas emergency tow vessel "Abeille Bourbon". — AFP

FRENCH PROBE PILES PRESSURE ON FLAILING MACRON MINISTER

NEW GOVT OUTLINES BILL ON CLEANING UP POLITICS

BREST: French prosecutors said yesterday they had launched a preliminary investigation into a property deal involving one of President Emmanuel Macron's ministers, on the same day his new government outlines a bill on cleaning up politics. The announcement by prosecutors in western France adds to the pressure on Richard Ferrand, who has rebuffed calls to resign over allegations of favoritism towards his common-law wife in a lucrative deal with a health insurance fund.

The affair has embarrassed 39-year-old Macron, who swept to power on May 7 on a pledge to rejuvenate France's corruption-plagued political class—a win he aims to cement in June's parliamentary elections. It comes as Justice Minister Francois Bayrou prepares to set out the contents of the president's first highly-anticipated bill, which will tighten ethical standards for holders of public office.

Ferrand, one of Macron's first prominent backers and formerly secretary general of the president's *Republique En Marche* (Republic on the Move) party, has denied any wrongdoing. He told France Inter radio on Wednesday: "I am an honest man." "Everything I have done in my professional life is legal, public and transparent," he insisted. The *Canard Enchaîné* investigative newspaper reported last week that an insurance fund that Ferrand headed in his native Brittany—

where he is an MP — agreed in 2011 to rent a building from his partner Sandrine Doucen and carry out renovations that boosted its value.

Ferrand, a 54-year-old minister for territorial cohesion who is running for re-election to parliament, says Doucen made the fund the best offer and that he had no say in the matter. Prosecutors initially waved away the allegations, saying there were no grounds for an investigation but yesterday said they changed their minds in light of "extra elements that could implicate" Ferrand following a complaint from anti-corruption association Anticor.

Prosecutor Eric Mathais said the investigation would focus on whether the deal between Doucen and *Les Mutuelles de Bretagne* breached laws on probity in office and the workings of a public insurance fund. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said Tuesday he would not ask Ferrand to step aside unless he was formally charged with an offence. Yesterday, Philippe held that line, with his aides saying the launch of an investigation had "not changed the rules"

Accusations of double-standards

The Ferrand affair, as it has been dubbed, is the lone snag in an otherwise smooth start to Macron's tenure, during which he has been praised for standing up to US President Donald Trump and taking a firm line with

Russian leader Vladimir Putin on human rights. Macron's rivals on the left and right have seized on the controversy to try win back ground lost to the centrist ahead of the June 11-18 parliamentary vote.

A Kantar Sofres poll on Tuesday showed Macron's fledgling party on course to win the first round of the election with 31 percent. The conservative Republicans party, still smarting from the defeat of its corruption-accused candidate Francois Fillon in the presidential election, has accused Macron of ethical double-standards—as has Marine Le Pen's far-right National Front (FN) and the Socialist Party.

Le Pen, who was runner-up to Macron in the presidential vote, said the Ferrand affair "looks terribly like the Fillon affair". Beyond the allegations about the property deal Ferrand has also been left red-faced by revelations that he hired his son as his parliamentary assistant for four months in 2014. The total sum involved — 7,045 euros—is a fraction of the money earned by Fillon's wife for a similar job over which Fillon is charged with misuse of public funds, but employing his son contradicts Ferrand's loud complaints about nepotism. "Do what I say, not what I do," the left-wing *Liberation* daily wrote in a biting front-page headline Wednesday, alongside a picture of Ferrand. It added in an editorial: "When you preach morals in public life, this is a messy affair." —AFP

CHASTE PEACOCKS, COSMIC COWS, SAYS INDIAN JUDGE

NEW DELHI: Peacocks don't have sex, but rather shed tears to conceive, according to a judge in western India whose unique theories have set off a social media storm in the country. At a hearing in Rajasthan state's high court Wednesday, judge Mahesh Chandra Sharma urged India's government to declare the cow considered sacred in Hindu-majority India as the national animal since it is "as pious as a peacock".

"The peacock is a lifelong celibate. It never has sex with the peahen. The peahen gets pregnant after swallowing the tears of the peacock," Sharma said on his last day in office before retiring. Sharma's comments, made in response to an NGO's petition on the condition of state-run cow shelters, sparked a flurry of jokes and comments on social media. "Profoundly ironic, that it was the peacock (not its tears but plumage) that led Darwin to propose the landmark theory of Sexual Selection," said Anand Ranganathan on Twitter.

Some users posted wildlife footage of peacocks mating to disprove his theory, while several pointed to suggestions on Quora, a user-generated question-and-answer site that his celibacy claim came from ancient Hindu epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana. In his 145-page order, Sharma cites Hindu scriptures to bolster his case — listing the "miraculous" age-defying qualities of cow dung and urine. "(Mother cow) is the only animal that inhales as well as exhales oxygen," he said. "Cow urine has the miraculous property of destroying any kind of germs. It provides strength to mind and heart. It stops ageing," he said, adding that its horns "acquire cosmic energy".

"Houses plastered with cow dung are safe from radio waves." Cows have increasingly become a focal point of nationalist discourse in India where Prime Minister Narendra Modi's right-wing government has made cattle protection a key theme since coming to power in 2014. The government last week prohibited the sale and purchase of cattle for slaughter across India, sparking protests in states where beef is eaten. The slaughter of cows, as well as the possession or consumption of beef, is banned in most but not all Indian states. Some impose up to life imprisonment for infringements. At least a dozen people, mostly Muslims, have been killed by Hindu mobs in recent years over rumors that they were eating beef, slaughtering cows or smuggling them.—AFP

RIGHTS GROUPS URGE PROBES BLOODSHED IN DR CONGO

KINSHASA: International and local rights groups called on the UN yesterday to open an urgent inquiry into the months-long violence that has swept central Democratic Republic of Congo, leaving over a million homeless. "The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) should urgently establish a commission of inquiry into the situation in the central Kasai region," said a coalition of 262 Congolese and nine international NGOs, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

The central Kasai region has seen a major spike in violence since September when government forces killed a tribal chief and militia leader called Kamwina Nsapu who had rebelled against President Joseph Kabila. Since it began, the unrest has claimed more than 400 lives and forced more than 1.2 million people from their homes, UN figures show. Unconfirmed local figures put the number of dead as high as 3,000.

The UN has also reported finding 40 mass graves, with two of its researchers investigating the violence abducted and killed. "The violence in the Kasai region has caused immense suffering, with Congolese authorities unable or unwilling to stop the carnage or hold those responsible for the abuses to account," said Ida Sawyer, Central Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "An independent, international investigation is needed to document the abuses, identify those responsible, and help ensure justice for the victims." The NGOs' call came just days ahead of an HRC meeting in Geneva that begins on June 6.

In May, the UN Security Council expressed doubts about Kinshasa's ability to independently probe the murder of the UN experts. Last week, the Congolese public prosecutor said he was investigating allegations that former development minister Clement Kanku may have been linked to the murders. "We cannot expect anything from such national investigations," Rostin Manketa, who heads the Kinshasa-based rights group Voice of the Voiceless, told AFP.—AFP



JALALABA: Afghan security forces stand alongside an alleged Islamic State (IS) militant during a press conference at the National Directorate of Security (NDS) headquarters. — AFP

KABUL STILL REELING AFTER DEADLY TRUCK BOMBING

GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO PROTECT CITIZENS

KABUL: Kabul was reeling yesterday from its deadliest attack since 2001, with anguished residents burying their dead as authorities cleared away mangled wreckage and public anger mounted over the government's failure to protect citizens in the heart of the capital. No group has so far claimed Wednesday's attack, launched from a sewage tanker packed with explosives, which tore a massive crater in the ground and killed at least 90 people, mainly civilians, while wounding hundreds.

Angry citizens demanded answers from the government over the perceived intelligence failure leading to the assault, which underscores spiraling insecurity in Afghanistan. "For how long will we have to tolerate this bloodshed in our country?" a sobbing resident asked on local Tolo News. "I have lost my brother in the blast and the government is constantly failing to provide us with security." The brazen attack during the holy month of Ramadan highlighted the ability of militants to strike even in the capital's most secure district, home to the presidential palace and foreign embassies that are enveloped in a maze of concrete blast walls.

Authorities swept off debris and shards of glass littered across the streets, and cleared away the charred carcasses of blown-up vehicles, as shocked residents prepared for funeral ceremonies. With more than

400 people wounded, the injured spilled over into hospital hallways as huge crowds gathered outside waiting for news of their loved ones or searching for still missing relatives. Health officials warned some victims may never be identified as their bodies were torn into pieces or burned beyond recognition.

Global outrage swelled over the massive blast, the deadliest single attack in Kabul since the Taliban were toppled from power in a 2001 US-led invasion. US President Donald Trump told his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani in a phone call that the timing of the attack during Ramadan underscores "the barbaric nature of the terrorists who are enemies of all civilized peoples". UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his "abhorrence" at the strike. The lights at the Eiffel Tower were switched off on Wednesday night to honor the scores of victims. The monument's lights had already been turned off on Tuesday after suicide blasts in Baghdad killed at least 42.

Kabul deadly for civilians

Afghanistan's intelligence agency has blamed the Taliban-allied Haqqani Network for Wednesday's attack. The Taliban, currently in the midst of their annual "spring offensive", denied they were involved. The insurgent group rarely claims responsibility for attacks that kill large numbers of civilians. The

Islamic State group has had no such compunctions, claiming responsibility for several deadly bombings in the Afghan capital, but so far has not issued a claim in Wednesday's blast. The explosion, which Kabul residents compared to an earthquake, damaged several embassies in the area, which houses diplomatic and government buildings and is replete with check points and armed security guards. At least 11 Afghan guards working for the US embassy were among those killed and 11 American citizens working as contractors in Kabul were among the wounded, US officials have said.

Germany said an Afghan guard had been killed at its embassy, which was "in the immediate vicinity" of the attack, while several other countries also reported damage to their missions. Frequent mass casualty attacks made the city the deadliest place in Afghanistan for civilians in the first quarter of 2017, according to the United Nations. Afghan troops backed by US and NATO forces have been struggling to beat back the insurgents, and the White House is considering sending thousands more soldiers to break the deadlock in the battle against the Taliban. US troops in Afghanistan number about 8,400 now, and there are another 5,000 from NATO allies. They mainly serve in an advisory capacity — a far cry from the US presence of more than 100,000 six years ago.—AFP

BORDER SHELLING KILLS PAKISTANIS IN KASHMIR

MUZZAFFARABAD: Pakistan yesterday said two of its civilians were killed and seven injured in Indian cross-border shelling in the disputed Kashmir region. Senior government official Raja Tahir Mumtaz said the incident occurred in the Poonch sector along the Line of Control (LoC), the de-facto border that divides the Himalayan territory. "These civilians were sleeping in their hous-

es, one of the dead was a 65-year old," Mumtaz said, adding that four women were among those injured.

Mohammad Ashfaq, a police official in the area, added that several houses were also damaged due to the mortar fire. Nafees Zakariya, Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesman, confirmed the deaths in a press briefing in Islamabad and accused India of

carrying out unprovoked ceasefire violations. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947. Both claim it in full and have fought two wars over the mountainous region.

India said last week it had destroyed military bunkers being used to harbor militants in Pakistani territory, a claim denied by

Islamabad. It came after New Delhi accused Pakistan of murdering and mutilating Indian soldiers at the border. Tensions reached dangerous levels again last September, with both sides blaming one another for cross-border raids. There have since been repeated outbreaks of firing across the LoC, with both sides reporting deaths and injuries including of civilians. — AFP

B'DESH NAVY RESCUES CYCLONE SURVIVORS

DHAKA: The Bangladesh navy said yesterday it has rescued 23 fishermen from the Bay of Bengal and is searching for scores more missing since a cyclone hit two days ago. Most were plucked from a sinking boat which had broken down, leaving them stranded at sea when Cyclone Mora hit on Tuesday, killing seven people and destroying thousands of homes.

The navy said its ships were conducting an "extensive search" of the area after the storm left a trail of devastation along the coast. They are also carrying food, emergency relief and two medical teams to Kutubdia and Saint Martin's, two coastal islands that were hit hard by the cyclone.

"At least 15 ships have been deployed to search for survivors in the Bay of Bengal after the storm," a senior Navy official said. "They are still in the sea and have rescued 23 fishermen from the water." A navy helicopter and a maritime patrol aircraft are also conducting aerial searches for survivors, it said. As the cyclone advanced on Bangladesh, local authorities increased the maritime threat to its highest level and ordered all fishing vessels to remain at port.

However Mushtaq Ahmed, a fishing industry representative in Cox's Bazar, said eight boats carrying around 150 fishermen had failed to return. "We heard some 60 fishermen were rescued by Bangladeshi and Indian navy ships. If they're our men, we think some 90 fishermen are still missing," he told AFP. "They could be moored on an island or adrift at sea. In the past we have seen that most of the fishermen return to their fishing ports within a week or two. We hope this time they will also be back in good health." Bangladesh suffers frequent cyclones and fishermen are often reported missing only to be found in their villages after the storm has subsided.

Extensive search

Ahmed said it was the first time the navy had conducted such an extensive search for missing fishermen after a cyclone. The rescues brought the total number of people plucked from the sea since Tuesday to 56. An Indian navy ship rescued 33 Bangladeshi survivors on Wednesday and handed them over to the local authorities, senior government official Zillur Rahman Chowdhury told AFP. "All 33 are fishermen," Chowdhury said, adding they were tossed into the sea after their boats were caught in the cyclone.

Meanwhile, aid workers said emergency food and aid had reached tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees living in camps in Cox's Bazar, which bore the brunt of the storm. The World Food Programme said it was handing out 100 tons of high-energy biscuits to nearly 20,000 refugee families after the cyclone destroyed or damaged thousands of homes.

"After a day of going hungry with my kids, this is amazing," said Rohingya refugee Abdul Khalek after he received 30 packs of biscuits for his family of eight. Thousands of Rohingya have been sleeping in the open since the storm hit, despite continuing rain. Cyclone Mora came after heavy rains in Sri Lanka caused the worst flooding the island has seen in well over a decade, killing more than 200 people. South Asia is frequently hit by flooding in the summer with the arrival of the annual monsoon rains. — AFP



MELBOURNE: Police in tactical gear board a Malaysia Airlines plane after a man tried to enter its cockpit. — AP

MALAYSIA AIRLINES JET DIVERTED IN AUSTRALIA OVER BOMB SCARE

POLICE HAVE DETERMINED NO 'TERRORIST' LINKS

CANBERRA: A Malaysia Airlines plane returned to Australia after a mentally ill passenger threatened to detonate a bomb and attempted to enter the cockpit before he was tackled and tied up by passengers, police said yesterday. The 25-year-old Sri Lankan man Manodh Marks had been discharged from a Melbourne psychiatric hospital on Wednesday before buying a ticket on the late-night flight to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Victorian Police Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton said.

Police have determined he had no "terrorist" links or associates, Ashton said. About 10 minutes after Flight 128 took off from Melbourne, Marks walked from his economy seat to the cockpit door clutching an electronic device and threatening to blow up the plane, creating panic among passengers. Passengers subdued him and tied him up with belts. "At that point, he was essentially trussed up," Ashton told reporters. Marks, who is in Australia on a student visa while studying to be a chef, appeared in the Melbourne Magistrates Court on Yesterday charged with endangering the safety of an aircraft and making false threats. He faces a

potential 10-year prison sentence on each charge. His lawyer Tess Dunsford told the magistrate Marks suffered from a psychiatric illness and would not apply for bail. He did not enter pleas to the charges. He will appear in court next on Aug. 24.

Scott Lodge said he was one of four passengers who "pounced" on Mark "All of a sudden, someone has him in a chokehold and got his arm behind his back and the other guy eventually choked him and he passed out," Lodge said. Ashton described the device Marks carried on the plane as an "amplifier-type instrument." Passenger Andrew Leoncelli described it as a Boom box portable music player. "He was saying: 'I'm going to the blow the f-ing plane up, I'm going to blow the plane up,'" Leoncelli told Australian Broadcasting Corp. "He was agitated, is the best description -100 per cent, he was agitated."

High-profile disasters

The Airbus A330-300 carrying 337 passengers returned to the airport about 30 minutes after takeoff. Passengers were kept on the plane for 90 minutes after landing and the plane was searched for

potential bombs at a remote part of the airport, Ashton said. Police wearing body armor took Marks off the plane. The airline said the incident would be investigated. Malaysia's state-owned airline has had two recent high-profile disasters. Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down over the Ukraine in 2014 with the loss of all 283 passengers and 15 crew. And Flight 370 with 238 people aboard disappeared four months earlier.

It is believed to have crashed in the southern Indian Ocean but has not been found. Victoria State Premier Daniel Andrews offered government support for the passengers stranded by Wednesday's ordeal. "I don't think any of us have a true understanding of the trauma, just how frightening this experience would have been," Andrews said.

Andrews cautioned against governments responding to the drama by banning mentally ill passengers from flying. "We want to be very careful not to be driving people away from getting the care they need," he said. "We don't want to be stigmatizing any more than mental illness is already stigmatized." — AP

DAUGHTER FEELS 'ACCUSED' IN KOREA CORRUPTION CASE

SEOUL: She is probably the most loathed 20-year-old in South Korea, the privileged daughter of the woman at the center of a corruption scandal that brought down a president. After several months in detention in Denmark, Chung Yoo-ra returned to her home country in a hoodie and handcuffs on Wednesday to be questioned about bribery allegations involving corporate giant Samsung as well as her studies at a prestigious Korean university.

Prosecutors also hope her extradition leads to more evidence against former President Park Geun-hye, who was removed from office in March and is now being tried on charges of bribery, extortion and abuse of power. "Speaking for myself, I feel wrongfully accused," Chung told a throng of journalists at Incheon International Airport amid a barrage of camera flashes. She was then escorted to a prosecution office in Seoul for questioning about the corruption scandal that centers on Park and Chung's mother, Choi Soon-sil, a longtime confidante of the former president. Some of the reasons for the anger swirling around Chung:

Confidante's daughter

Chung is the only child of Choi, who has been charged with taking tens of millions of dollars from companies in bribes and through extortion and also manipulating state affairs from the shadows during Park's presidency. Her parents are divorced and her father, Chung Yoon-hoe, was Park's top aide for more than a decade before she became president in 2013. Chung was part of the South Korean squad that won the team equestrian gold medal at the 2014 Asian Games and had been training in Germany, living there with her infant son and mother, when the corruption allegations emerged last October.

Choi returned to Seoul to face the investigation, while Chung sought refuge in Denmark. She was arrested in the northern city of Aalborg in January and fought extradition, but a Danish court ruled in favor of South Korean prosecutors. Chung told reporters at the airport on Wednesday that she didn't know any key details about the corruption scandal or her mother's dealings with Park. She said she plans to eventually bring her infant son, who is still in Denmark, to South Korea, but didn't say when.

"My baby spent too much time without a family member there, so I thought it would be better for me to quickly relay (to investigators) my position and solve the problem by eliminating misunderstandings," she said. Chung was being investigated not far from a Seoul court where her mother stood trial and reportedly pleaded with the "people of the nation" to forgive her daughter, who she said was "not really a bad kid." "I feel more pain in my heart today because my daughter took the difficult road back home," local media quoted Choi as saying.

The Samsung link

Prosecutors have alleged that Ewha Womans University admitted Chung despite questionable qualifications and granted her academic favors because of her mother's presidential ties. Crucially, they may also question Chung over allegations of bribery between Park and corporate giant Samsung. According to prosecutors, Park colluded with Choi to take about \$26 million in bribes from Samsung and was promised tens of millions of dollars more from Samsung and other large companies. Prosecutors say the bribery included \$7 million Samsung provided to a sports consulting firm controlled by Choi that financed Chung's equestrian training in Germany.

Prosecutors believe Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong, who has also been arrested, sponsored Choi's family in exchange for Park's support of a 2015 merger between two Samsung affiliates that allowed Lee to promote a father-to-son transfer of corporate wealth and leadership at the group. Park and Choi have denied the bribery accusations in court. Lee has also denied using the payments to win support for the merger, saying Samsung was just responding to Park's requests to support culture and sports. — AP



MARAWI: Government troops escort rescue workers and trapped residents near the town center where heavy fighting between troops and Muslim militants have been raging in Marawi as fighting between government forces and Muslim militants enter its tenth day. — AFP

PHILIPPINE FRIENDLY FIRE AIRSTRIKES KILL 11 TROOPS

BLACK FLAGS OF IS RAMPAGING THROUGH MUSLIM CITY

MARAWI: Philippine airstrikes aimed at Islamist militants who are holding hostages as human shields killed 11 soldiers, authorities said yesterday, as they conceded hundreds of gunmen may have escaped a blockade. The friendly fire deaths bring to 171 the number of people reported killed since militants waving the black flags of the Islamic State (IS) group began rampaging through the Muslim city of Marawi last week.

Shortly after the violence erupted President Rodrigo Duterte imposed martial law across the southern region of Mindanao, home to 20 million people, to quell what he said was an IS bid to establish a base in the mainly Catholic Philippines. But the government's narrative of being in "full control" of Marawi took a hit yesterday when defence chiefs said 11 soldiers were killed in a misguided bombing mission. "It's very painful. It's very sad to be hitting our own troops," Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told reporters in Manila. "It's sad but sometimes it happens in the fog of war."

Lorenzana also warned that many militants may have escaped, despite checkpoints throughout the city and surrounding it. "We have reports they are going to some of the towns around Marawi city," Lorenzana said.

He said there were about 500 militants at the start of the unrest and only between 50 and 100 were believed to still be in Marawi. According to the military, 120 gunmen have been killed, meaning as many as 330 remain unaccounted for and could have slipped out of the city. Adding to concerns about the rising threat of IS, Lorenzana said militants from Saudi Arabia, Chechnya, Yemen, Malaysia and Indonesia were among the dead.

Appeals to end airstrikes

The military has relentlessly dropped bombs and fired rockets at the militants, who have been hiding in residential areas of Marawi where local authorities believe about 2,000 people are trapped. The gunmen are also holding hostages, some of whom have been forced to speak on propaganda videos call-

ing for troops to withdraw. Local authorities have repeatedly warned that the trapped residents and hostages are in grave danger of being killed in the air assaults, and on Yesterday repeated calls for them to end.

"We continuously appeal to the chain of command to refrain from using airstrikes," Zia Alonto Adiong, a local politician and spokesman for the provincial crisis management committee, told reporters in Marawi. The International Committee of the Red Cross on Wednesday called for a humanitarian ceasefire.

Lorenzana said airstrikes may be curtailed because of the friendly fire incident, but Duterte signalled his intent to destroy all terrorist threats in Marawi and across Mindanao. "If it's war, my orders are really are to wipe them out, everyone. When I say wipe them out better if you shoot him in the head, shoot him again in the heart," Duterte said in a speech in Manila. However he did not comment on the friendly fire deaths. The militants have murdered 19 civilians, the military has said, while insisting none has died in any air assaults or the intense street-to-street battles.

Thirty-two soldiers and police officers have been confirmed killed. The clashes erupted when security forces raided a house to arrest Isnilon Hapilon, a veteran Filipino militant regarded as IS's leader in the Philippines. He is on the US government's list of most-wanted terrorists.

Authorities said they were taken by surprise when many gunmen emerged to protect Hapilon and then went on a rampage through Marawi, which has a population of 200,000. The militants mostly belonged to a local group called the Maute and the infamous Abu Sayyaf kidnap-for-ransom gang that Hapilon has helped lead for many years.

A Muslim separatist rebellion in the southern Philippines has killed more than 120,000 people since the 1970s. The main Muslim rebel groups have signed accords with the government aimed at forging lasting peace, giving up their separatist ambitions in return for autonomy. The Maute, the Abu Sayyaf and other hardline groups have rejected the peace process. — AFP

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2017

Friday Times

Lifestyle

www.kuwaittimes.net

A close-up photograph of a giraffe's head and neck, showing its characteristic brown and white stripes. The giraffe is holding a skewer of food in its mouth. The skewer consists of a bamboo stick with several layers of food: a slice of tomato, a piece of lettuce, another slice of tomato, and a slice of mushroom. The giraffe's long, dextrous tongue is visible, reaching out to grasp the skewer. The background is a clear blue sky.

Lebanon bans Wonder Woman film over Israeli actress

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Giraffe Elish is fed with a vegetarian kebab at London Zoo, yesterday. The world's tallest vegetarians were given 'street food' ahead of the start of new evening events, featuring exclusive tours, animal talks and demonstrations, special entertainment and a street food market. To eat the giant skewer, the giraffes have to use their dextrous, elongated tongues to pull the tasty treats off the bamboo, just like they have to tug vegetation off the tops of trees to eat. — AP

The art of everyday objects growing like mushrooms

What is nicer after a long day than sinking your feet into comfortable slippers? But one Italian designer is hoping to show that shoes made from mushrooms can be just as cosy. A pair of light brown slippers, bowls, lampshades and even a chair are also among the everyday objects that artist Maurizio Montalti has been fashioning from various fungi, such as the "mushrooms that you find in the forest when you take a walk." Montalti, 36, hopes one day his new, sustainable material could even replace plastic, made from diminishing fossil fuels and difficult to recycle.

"I started working with fungi as part of my design practice a few years ago," he told AFP, saying he was seeking a "different vision" on the benefits of humans engaging "with species, which are usually disregarded, such as fungal organisms." His prime material is mycelium, the white, organic and underground part of a mushroom composed of a network of tiny threads. At first invisible to the human eye, the network can become so dense that it grows into a visible, furry mass. "Mycelium is a very interesting product because it is able to break down all leaves for instance, or all kinds of products that we don't use anymore," said Ilja Dekker, technician at the world's only microbe museum, Micropia, in Amsterdam.



Italian designer Maurizio Montalti poses for a picture in front of everyday objects he created, a chair, vases and even slippers, based on mycelium, the white and film-forming part of mushrooms, at the Micropia Museum displaying the invisible world of microorganisms in Amsterdam on May 2, 2017. — AP

This means it can be used to make different products. "It can be used to build all types of things like vases, things that we can put inside our houses. But also to build our houses, as a building material to actually make a house," she said. Micropia, an interactive museum housed next to Artis, Amsterdam's zoo, is hosting a small permanent exhibition of Montalti's work as part of its mission to highlight how useful microbes are.

Cooking fungi

His concept of "growing design" allows objects to grow naturally with no external shaping, cutting or sculpting, much as plants do in the wild. Placed into moulds made from wood, clay, plastic or plaster, the mushroom is left to gorge on organic matter like wood chips, straw, hay or linen. "They feed on such plant matter and while degrading it, they also extend their microscopic filamentous threads and they create this very interconnected network of threads which works as a binding glue, you could say as a natural glue," said Montalti.

At some point the process has to be halted otherwise the ravenous fungi would just continue to grow, completely breaking down the organic matter. So the mould is placed into a low-heat oven, which, in effect, cooks the fungus inside. The fungi culture is "fully deactivated" leaving behind an "inert material, but still fully natural and fully compostable," he said. In this way, in 10 days a sand-coloured vase was created, or a whitish, rough chair which took 20 days to make. "Every object is unique," said Montalti, highlighting how the kind of fungus used, the organic food source or environmental conditions can all change the object's look, colour and feel.

At the start of his research Montalti had been looking at using fungi to help break down materials, such as to stop pollution. But it was when he "stumbled" upon the creation of a new material that he took a different turn. Depending on what kind of fungi is used, the material it produces can be stiff or elastic, porous to water, brittle or resistant to heat. — AFP

These undated photos provided by the New York Historical Society Museum and Library shows an installation view of The Gallery of Tiffany Lamps, designed by renowned Czech architect Eva Jiricna, and comprises a 4,800-square-foot, two-storey space measuring nearly a city block. — AP photos



New-York Historical Society casts new light on Tiffany Lamps

A newly renovated section of the New-York Historical Society showcases dozens of lamps by Louis Comfort Tiffany, putting renewed focus on how the works were made - and by whom. The 4,800-square-foot Gallery of Tiffany Lamps, a permanent display area on the museum's fourth floor, features a dramatic glass staircase leading to a mezzanine where there are high-tech, interactive displays, as well as actual templates and tools used to make Tiffany lamps.

The new floor also features a Center for Women's History and a section on interpreting US history through the lens of New York. But the real eye-catchers are the 100 lamps, made starting in 1898 for use with kerosene and later electricity, and all illuminated here for maximum impact. "Electricity was very liberating from a design standpoint because it permitted much more slender lamp bases, as opposed to the bulbous bases required for use with kerosene," explains museum director Margaret K. Hofer, who curated the exhibit with Rebecca Klassen.

The show reveals the subtle gradations of colors and textured glass, and the enormous range of bases, for which Louis C. Tiffany and his firm were famous. But the thrust of the exhibit is to dispel the long-held idea that Tiffany himself crafted the now-iconic lamps. It celebrates the crucial and little-known role of women in their design and production.

The focus is on Clara Driscoll, an aspiring artist from Ohio, and her team of "Tiffany girls" in the Women's Glass Cutting Department. Their importance was revealed only in 2005 with the discovery of Driscoll's correspondence, some of which is on view at the museum. "Many people don't realize that while Tiffany had the artistic vision, approved all the designs and led the firm, he employed skilled designers and craftspeople - many of them women - who did the actual designing, glass cutting and crafting," says Hofer.

"The many letters Driscoll wrote home while working for Tiffany were languishing in archives in Ohio and in Queens, and they reveal that she was responsible for the designs of most of the nature-themed lamps. They also reveal a trove of new information about the workings of Tiffany Studios," she says. Highlights include examples of Tiffany's famous Dragonfly shade, including variations of the original design conceived by Driscoll in 1899 featuring dragonflies with brass filigree wings and gleaming glass eyes.

Kerosene lamp

Also featured are a rare Gourd shade on a root base (one of only two known to exist); a unique Clematis hanging shade; a Fruit shade depicting ripening fruits around the circumference of a shade set above a sinuous bronze and pottery base; and an elaborate Cobweb shade on a Narcissus mosaic base, all from around 1900. Driscoll was also behind the famous Wisteria and Poppy shades, in addition to other works in glass and bronze. Along with her design work, she managed a large department in

which women selected and cut glass for lamp shades, windows and mosaics.

The company employed both men and women, but the genders were tasked with designing different types of lamps. For the most part, women selected and cut glass for designs featuring flora and insects. Men were assigned lamps in geometric patterns, often meant for studies, offices and libraries.

There was often friction between the departments, according to Driscoll's correspondence. In one case, Clara made color charts for the men for a certain design, and she writes about how nervous she was to criticize them. Adding depth to the exhibit, a large, interactive diorama illustrates the rise of electrification in the area



around 25th Street, where Tiffany Studios was based. There's also a model of the boarding room in which Driscoll sat while writing much of her correspondence.

"She wrote her letters home by the light of a kerosene lamp, but her window looked out onto a city being transformed by electricity," Hofer says. Driscoll worked at Tiffany Studios for most of 20 years. Because only single women were permitted to work at the firm, she was forced to leave upon her marriage in 1889, returning after her husband died several years later. Her career ended when she married again in 1909.

Louis Tiffany, a pioneer of Art Nouveau style, was a painter and interior designer, as well as a glassmaker. Born in New York City in 1848, he was the son of Charles Tiffany, founder of the Tiffany and Co. store, which now stands on Fifth Avenue. Louis Tiffany created a type of glass he called "Favrile," which stood out in its vibrant and iridescent coloring, and eventually started his own firm. Tiffany retired in 1919. Tiffany Studios filed for bankruptcy in 1932, and he died in 1933. The company's records were destroyed, causing most documentation of its workings to be lost - until the recent discovery of Driscoll's meticulous notes. — AP



50 YEARS AFTER 'SGT PEPPER,' ROCK WORLD STILL ENJOYS THE SHOW

Fifty years ago, The Beatles transformed from floppy-haired boy wonders who wanted to hold your hand to abstruse philosophers whose vision spanned civilizations. And the effect is still being felt. "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" has been called the original concept album and even the greatest album of all time. Either way, its release half a century ago represented a landmark in music history, with stars once focused on churning out radio-friendly singles newly imagining albums as intricate pieces of art.

The anniversary of the album, which came out on June 2, 1967 in the United States shortly after its British release, has set off a revival of "Sgt. Pepper" which will include weekend commemorations in The Beatles' native Liverpool. A reissued edition, with a dynamic mix by the son of Beatles producer George Martin, is forecast to top the next weekly chart in Britain, where "Sgt. Pepper" was already the third top-selling album ever. "We were always being told, 'You're gonna lose all your fans with this one,'" Paul McCartney, the driving force behind the album, told British magazine Mojo for the anniversary. "And we'd say, 'Well, we'll lose some but we'll gain some. We've gotta advance,'" he said.

Start of modern mixing

The album was rooted in a subtle irony. The Beatles, the quintessential pop foursome, performed in character as another, fictional band—"We're Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band / We hope you will enjoy the show," the opening track declares. The album was recorded over a then unthinkable five months as Martin made use of early mixing equipment. The Beatles brought out instruments from an organ to a harmonium to an 18th-century piccolo trumpet, which McCartney had spotted at a televised Bach concert. On "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," likely the album's most recognizable track, the musical key rapidly shifted and John Lennon's voice drifted higher as the recording of his voice was slowed down.

George Harrison, freshly inspired from a retreat to India, played the sitar to merge ragas with Western pop on "Within You Without You" as he reflected on the spiritual quest to control the ego. Adding to the mystique was groundbreaking cover art. Instead of glossy photos then in vogue, The Beatles appeared as a brass band surrounded by a motley assortment of historical and contemporary figures from composers to writers to actors. Even in an age before the internet, the cover spawned conspiracy theories in particular that McCartney was dead because of a misinterpretation of a badge he was wearing.

Many fans saw hidden meanings in the songs, such as seeing LSD in "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." The quest for secrets was not entirely off the mark, with McCartney later revealing that the album featured a dog whistle inaudible to humans.

Birth of artistic rock

Concept albums were not entirely new. Jazz, not to mention classical music, had long sought unifying themes. The Beach Boys a year earlier had released "Pet Sounds," whose tracks were tied together by an aesthetic, if not a narrative. Beach Boy leader Brian Wilson was said to have been devastated by the success of "Sgt. Pepper," contributing to a breakdown as he shelved his mythically unfinished "Smile" album. "Sgt. Pepper" would have a major influence in years to come as more rock artists conceived of concept albums including The Who and Pink Floyd to, in more recent times, Radiohead and Beyonce. — AFP

LEBANON BANS WONDER WOMAN FILM OVER ISRAELI ACTRESS

Lebanon has banned the screening of Hollywood blockbuster "Wonder Woman" because of its lead actress Gal Gadot, who served in the Israeli military, on the grounds of a long-standing boycott of the Jewish state. The decision sparked a social media frenzy, with some Lebanese mocking the authorities but others welcoming it as part of a campaign to isolate Israel. An official with Lebanon's General Security told AFP the interior ministry has "decided to ban the screening of this film based on the recommendation of the Arab League's Israel Boycott Office".

Lebanon and Israel are still technically in a state of war, and the Arab League maintains a Damascus-based office responsible for coordinating a regional boycott of the Jewish state. Lebanon's economy and culture ministry, which oversees the boycott of Israeli products locally, recommended the film be banned after last year requesting the Arab League office issue a blanket ban on all the work of the 32-year-old actress. Gadot, who like most young Israelis did military service, made headlines in 2014 for a Facebook post defending the Jewish state's blistering offensive in the Gaza Strip run by the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas.

"I am sending my love and prayers to my fellow Israeli citizens," she wrote. "Especially to all the boys and girls who are risking their lives protecting my country against the horrific acts conducted by Hamas, who are hiding like cowards behind women and children." The Lebanese ban has sparked a storm on social media, with some welcoming the decision which led to advertising

In this file photo, Gal Gadot arrives at the world premiere of "Wonder Woman" in Los Angeles. — AP



posters for Wonder Woman across the capital vanishing overnight. "The campaign to boycott supporters of Israel in Lebanon has succeeded," said the Arabic-language Facebook page of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, which seeks to isolate Israel over its occupation of the Palestinian territories. But many in Lebanon mocked the decision as censorship or a waste of time, pointing out the film could be viewed online. "Liberating Palestine one movie at a time. #LiveLoveCensorship," wrote the Stop Cultural Terrorism in Lebanon group, which promotes freedom of expression.

'In typical Lebanese fashion'

Blogger Elie Fares accused the government of inconsistency, pointing out that several of Gadot's movies have aired in Lebanon in past years. "In typical Lebanese fashion and because we definitely have our priorities in order,

Lebanon's government decided to rise up from its slumber and resist, even though the movie has been announced for over three years now," he wrote on his "A Separate State of Mind" blog. "The fact of the matter is that if you have a problem with the content of a movie, the actor or actress leading it or anything pertaining to it... Simply don't go watch it," he added. "Call for a boycott, but you sure as hell have no right in making sure no one else gets to watch it too." Lebanon is considered one of the most liberal countries in the Arab world, with a thriving arts scene. But its interior ministry's censorship bureau occasionally bans content considered to incite confessional dissent, attacking morals or state authority, or to reflect Israeli propaganda. So far, Lebanon appears to be the only Arab country to order a ban on Wonder Woman, which remains scheduled for release across the region including in Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia later this month. — AFP

Jerry Garcia guitar raises more than \$3 mn for rights group

A guitar of Grateful Dead legend Jerry Garcia on Wednesday raised more than \$3 million at an auction to support a leading civil rights group. Known as Wolf, the custom-made electric guitar was a constant concert companion of Garcia until the jam rock icon died in 1995. The original buyer put the guitar back on auction to raise money for the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Alabama-based group which wages legal battles against white supremacists and other hate groups. At a charity concert in New York, Brian Halligan, the CEO and co-founder of marketing firm HubSpot, bought Wolf for \$1.932 million including the premium.

An anonymous charity matched his pre-premium \$1.6 million bid, bringing the total donation for the Southern Poverty Law Center to \$3.2 million. Halligan is one of the legions of "Deadhead" fans, who for years journeyed from concert to concert to experience the band amid a welcoming community of fellow travelers.

'Somewhat priceless'

The entrepreneur - who co-wrote a book on the Grateful Dead's lessons for

marketing-promised to take good care of the guitar and to lend it upon request. "I don't plan on selling it or trading it, and so it's somewhat priceless," he told AFP. "I



Jerry Garcia's guitar is auctioned on May 31, 2017 in Brooklyn, New York. — AP

doubt this will sell anytime soon, if ever," he said. The auction comes as the Southern Poverty Law Center voices alarm at a rise in hate crimes, especially targeting Muslims and immigrants, since Donald Trump began his presidential campaign. Wolf has a long history. It was constructed by luthier Doug Irwin, with Garcia debuting it at a 1973 concert with Hell's Angels bikers in New York.

He bequeathed the guitar back to Irwin, who had fallen destitute in the intervening decades, but the move set off a battle within the Grateful Dead who initially objected and said Wolf belonged to the band rather than Garcia personally. After Irwin won out, it was bought for \$789,000 in 2002 by Dan Pritzker, a Deadhead philanthropist and heir to the Chicago family behind the Hyatt hotel chain. Pritzker decided to put the guitar back on sale to support the center amid alarm at the direction of the United States since Trump's victory, said Arlan Ettinger, president of the Guernsey's auction house behind the sale. The guitar's auction price, while high, does not top the 2015 record of \$2.4 million paid for a Gibson guitar on which John Lennon played "Love Me Do" and other early Beatles songs. — AFP



This undated photo provided by the Mexico Tourism Board and Fideicomiso 'Ah-Chihuahua' shows the exterior of the Museum of the Revolution in the Border in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.



This undated photo provided by the Mexico Tourism Board and Fideicomiso Ah-Chihuahua! shows visitors looking at a chair on display at the Museum of the Revolution in the Border. — AP photos



Photo shows photos and artifacts on display at the Museum of the Revolution in the Border.

Ciudad Juarez museum seeks to tell Mexican Revolution story

Towns along the US-Mexico border often are stereotyped as enclaves for bar-hoppers, smoky factories, cheap souvenirs and long entry lines for cargo and trucks. They also are known for inexpensive tacos and a plethora of adult entertainment options. Cultural sites, in particular on the Mexican side, rarely get much attention. But within a 20-minute walk from the Stanton Street Port of Entry in El Paso, Texas, visitors to Ciudad Juarez can enjoy a different experience and get a better understanding of a moment in history that fundamentally changed Mexico and the United States. (This route also avoids the city's dangerous neighborhoods regularly mentioned in accounts of cartel violence.)

El Museo de la Revolucion en La Frontera, or the Museum of the Revolution in the Border, tells the story of the Mexican Revolution and its aftermath still felt today. The armed struggle, which lasted from 1910 to 1920, transformed Mexican society and sparked a

massive migration of Mexicans to the United States that remade the demographics of cities in the American Southwest. Yes, the conflict gave rise to Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata as revolutionary heroes of the poor. The war also spurred new movements in art, literature, journalism, photography and radical notions of land reform that spread across Latin America.

For those with only a basic knowledge of the Mexican Revolution, the museum guides visitors through the pre-revolutionary Mexico of dictator Porfirio Diaz and the intellectual movements opposing his rule. Exhibits touch upon El Plan of San Luis de Potosi - a call to remove Diaz and the re-establishment of democracy - and writers speaking out against what they described as colonial rule at the expense of the poor.

Newspaper accounts in the US talked about the growing unrest south of the border, and the museum explains in an easy-to-understand narrative how elite to middle-class political leaders

joined efforts to remove Diaz. Using photographs, old documents and clothing, the museum goes through the short presidency of reformer Francisco Madero, followed by his overthrow and assassination at the hands of Gen. Victoriano Huerta. Opposition to Huerta led to more violence as Villa in northern Mexico and Zapata in the south took up arms for their causes.

The museum shows how a call for censorship resulted in a boom in journalism, with reporters covering the violence and political unrest of the day. It also led to photojournalists, like British-born Jimmy Hare, coming to Mexico to experiment with the latest camera technology to capture scenes of war. Some of those scenes ended up on postcards that became popular in the United States. Still, out of the chaos came music - recorded songs depicting the suffering and separations caused by war - and art, including images of revolution that inspired Diego Rivera's later work, as the museum explains.

The exhibits, mostly in Spanish with limited English translations, give visitors enough visuals that most are self-explanatory. For example, the assassinations of Villa and Zapata are shown through photographs of mourners. The unrest led many Mexicans to cross into the U.S. New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez, the nation's only Latina governor, for example, can trace her family's roots back to the Mexican Revolution. Her family is descended from Toribio Ortega, a general under Pancho Villa, the governor's brother told the El Paso Times in 2010.

Some Mexican restaurants in the American Southwest display black-and-white photos of the war, with some establishments claiming their original owners are pictured in the images. But beyond the myths and legends, the Museum of the Revolution in the Border offers a foundation for learning about a turbulent chapter of history that dashed dreams of an egalitarian world across the border. — AP



Photo shows an exhibit about photojournalism on display at the Museum of the Revolution in the Border .



File photo shows a No. 7 subway train rides the rails in the Queens borough of New York.



Patrons ride the number 7 subway train in the Queens borough of New York.

For train and transportation buffs, New York's a paradise

If you're a rail fan or happen to have one in your family, New York City is a great place to visit. Arguably the most transit-friendly city in America, New York dazzled my 8-year-old son, not only with its ubiquitous subway lines but also with various train-related destinations. During our urban adventure, we visited the best-known train terminal in the nation, crossed the East River on an aerial tram and strolled through vintage passenger cars. Simply riding the subway, at \$2.75 a pop, was a treat for us. On our way to the New York Transit Museum in downtown Brooklyn, we took the Q train, which runs over the Manhattan Bridge.

Despite stormy skies, we had a good view of the Brooklyn Bridge across the way, the East River below and lower Manhattan from the last car. We walked several blocks and eventually found the museum in the decommissioned Court Street subway station. The street entrance can be deceiving: It looks and feels like an actual subway station because it once was, although now it's got museum signs on it. You even have to go down two flights of stairs below street level, just like you would for a real subway station, to enter.

Wooden body coach

Inside, my son loved the old-fashioned wooden subway turnstiles from the last century. But the old passenger cars on the platform level really got his attention. He pretended that one of the cars, once used in an elevated train in Brooklyn, was rolling down the tracks and he was running after it to get on. The beautiful lightweight wooden body coach was made in Newark, Ohio, in 1907 for the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company, or BRT. The car was in service



File photo shows the Roosevelt Island Tram crossing the East River to Roosevelt Island in New York.

in New York between 1908 and 1969 before its restoration in 1979, according to the New York Transit Museum.

I was fascinated by the old advertisements and announcements posted inside the 20 retired passenger cars. There was a World War II-era message telling riders to observe "meatless days, wheatless days and porkless days" to help win the war. An undated ad for Lux laundry soap informs women donning pantyhose to "expect runs unless" they use their product "after each wearing." Other ads featured Chesterfield cigarettes and Carstairs blended whiskey for \$3.61 a bottle. One of my favorite ads, from 1912, addressed onboard heating regulations. It decreed that between Oct 15 through April 15, passenger cars would be "equipped with suitable heating apparatus" to heat the cars between 40 and 65 degrees F, except when a storm, accident or emergency caused the heating system to fail. Sounds downright chilly, right?

Green ceiling

Leaving Brooklyn, our next stop was the iconic Grand Central Terminal, which 82 million passengers flow through each year. The massive station, built 104 years ago, is still captivating. In the main concourse, my son peered up at the green ceiling, famous for a depiction of the zodiac, and his jaw nearly dropped. It features 12 constellations painted in gold leaf and 2,500 stars, 59 of which are illuminated by LEDs. We talked with a friendly, informative attendant at the information booth beneath the station's famous four-faced clock, who told us where to find the nearby New York Transit Museum Gallery Annex & Store in Grand Central. It's a good place to buy train-related books, toys and memorabilia. If you don't feel like trekking to the exhaustive museum in Brooklyn, this smaller space may do the trick.

Our next stop was the Roosevelt Island aerial tramway, which offers stellar views as it rises as high as 230 feet (70 meters) to cross the East River. The nearly three-minute ride between Manhattan and tiny Roosevelt Island is a steal for \$2.75. (Just like the subway, it requires the use of a prepaid MetroCard, which riders swipe at the turnstile to enter.) The windowed cabins are suspended on cables and carry up to 109 passengers about three-fifths of a mile (1 kilometer), at up to 17 mph (27 kph). There are cool views of the island, Manhattan and the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge, but my slight fear of heights prevented me from enjoying it as much as I could have. I was relieved to soon be on firm Roosevelt Island ground.

We briefly checked out the 2-mile-long island (3.2-kilometer), named for Franklin Delano Roosevelt, before heading back to Manhattan on the tram - though you can also take a subway back under the river. But in New York, transportation buffs don't have to hunt down the tram, Transit Museum or even Grand Central to get their kicks. Just grab a subway map - free from the manned station kiosks - or download one on your phone, and go for a ride. Whether you encounter rush hour commuters, a mariachi band, a preacher or a panhandler, it's bound to be colorful - but it also happens to be the cheapest and most efficient way to traverse the city. — AP



In this file photo, an acrobatic performer hangs from handrails of a subway car as he entertains riders on the Q train in the Brooklyn borough of New York. — AP photos



A passenger waiting for a Brooklyn bound A train reads the subway line map at the 42nd Street station in New York.



Photo shows the interior of Grand Central Terminal in New York with the constellations from the zodiac designed into the ceiling.

Thai peanut veggie bowl will make you a tofu fan

By Melissa D'Arabian

If you aren't a tofu fan, listen up. This just might be the recipe that turns it all around for you, as it did for my husband and daughter. I toss extra firm tofu cubes in a lightly spicy (or not; your call) peanut sauce and then roast it until the edges are golden and lightly caramelized. These slightly sweet, peanutty cubes sit atop a bowl filled with enough veggies to load up on an array of vitamins, including some makeshift zucchini and carrot noodle-like ribbons.

To make this a satisfying meal, I add brown rice, which is more filling than the more traditional rice noodles, and more filling than just sticking with the "veggie noodles." I love the combo of cold veggies paired with warm rice and just-cooked tofu, but this dish works perfectly as a brown-bag option, served cold or at room temperature. Plus, it's pretty, with the array of vegetable colors,

so it will brighten up your lunch, even if you are working through it, eating at your desk.

If you haven't considered including tofu even occasionally into your meal rotation, this ingredient is worth a second look. A 3-ounce serving has about 10 grams of protein and offers one-quarter of the day's calcium, plus a nice smattering of other minerals - all for about 90 calories. Plus, tofu is incredibly wallet-friendly. Even organic, non-GMO tofu can be had for a couple of dollars a block. Tofu can be a divisive ingredient, I realize, so feel free to swap it for chicken or shrimp, a handful of cooked white beans, or even leave it off entirely - the bowl is filling on its own. No matter how you prepare it, you'll want to include this Thai Peanut Veggie Bowl in your repertoire.

THAI PEANUT VEGGIE BOWLS

Ingredients

2 tablespoons peanut butter (smooth or chunky)
1 tablespoon honey
2 tablespoons lime juice, plus 1 additional tablespoon
2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
1/4 cup reduced sodium soy sauce
1 tablespoon olive oil
A pinch dried red pepper flakes (optional)

1-4 tablespoons water, depending on texture
1 12-ounce block of organic extra firm tofu, blotted dry, cut into large cubes
4 cups baby spinach
1 cup shredded red cabbage
2 medium zucchini
2 medium carrots, peeled

1/2 red pepper, cut into small sticks
1 1/3 cups cooked brown rice, warm
1 green onion, chopped
1/4 cup chopped fresh herbs: cilantro, mint, basil (or mixed)
Salt and pepper, if needed

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. and line a baking tray with parchment paper. In a medium bowl, place the peanut butter and honey and microwave long enough to soften, about 10 seconds. Whisk until smooth.

Add in the lime juice, vinegar, soy sauce, olive oil and red pepper flakes (if using) and whisk until smooth. Add water, 1 tablespoon at a time until thick, but pourable sauce is created.

Remove half of the sauce to a small bowl and set aside.

Toss the tofu cubes in the remaining peanut sauce in the medium bowl until coated. Place on the parchment paper and bake until edges begin to caramelize, about 20 minutes, turning halfway through bake time.

Meanwhile, make the zucchini and carrot ribbons by using a vegetable peeler to make as many long, wide strips as you can from each vegetable. Layer in four individual bowls (or to-go containers if making brown bag lunches): spinach leaves, cabbage, red pepper, warm rice, carrot and zucchini ribbons, green onion and fresh herbs. Top with hot peanut-roasted tofu. Add the final tablespoon of lime juice to the reserved peanut sauce and drizzle over the bowls and serve, adding salt and pepper if desired. — AP



Outdoor grilled ratatouille creates lovely summertime char

By Melissa D'arabian

Ratatouille is a classic vegetable dish starring eggplant, zucchini, peppers and tomato that is deeply steeped in the culture of Mediterranean France. When I married a man from the heart of Provence, one of the first lessons I received from my new mother-in-law Muriel was how to make a proper ratatouille. (The other was how to pluck feathers from a newly-butchered turkey, but that's a story for another day.) Turns out, my American sensibilities had me cooking a ratatouille far too long, making it a gloppy stew of indistinguishable mixed vegetables, a crime I've seen committed more often than not here in the US.

Muriel was kind in her rebuke, and showed me her way instead. The most important lesson was to cook each vegetable separately, to honor their individuality. Moreover, the vegetables needed to be cooked in the same pan, in a specific order, so that the flavors would be built just right. (The order, in case you are wondering, is: eggplant, zucchini, peppers, onion, tomatoes, and I use the acronym EZ-POT to remember.)

I was skeptical. But her version is easily the best I have ever eaten, so I follow it without fail, even if the rebellious part of me wonders if I dared to cook the zucchini out of order, would anyone really notice? But, why mess with genius? Unless it's BBQ season and I want to grill out! After years of following proper EZ-POT protocol, I decided to try an outdoor grilled version of ratatouille. A little summertime char on the veggies could be a good thing. And indeed it was.

The result was a tasty dish that was somewhere in between a grilled vegetable salad (but not quite as acidic) and a traditional ratatouille (but not quite capturing that synergistic vegetable vibe). Still, a worthy summertime side dish in its own right. Grilled ratatouille is a happy complement to any grilled meat or fish, and it's hearty enough to be the main dish for vegetarians. And leftovers can be spooned on top of roasted potatoes, rice, a green salad, or even spread on toast, sprinkled with cheese and broiled for a quick lunch.



GRILLED RATATOUILLE

Ingredients

Servings: 6
Start to finish: 30 minutes
2 small or 1 large eggplant, cut into 1-inch slices (no need to peel)
2 medium zucchini, trimmed and cut in half lengthwise
1 sweet yellow or red pepper, cut into "cheeks" or quarters, seeds, removed
1 medium sweet white onion, peeled, quartered with root intact (to keep it together)
1 pint grape tomatoes
Olive oil in mister
Dressing:
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons high quality olive oil

1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, minced
6-7 basil leaves, gently torn
Salt and pepper

Preparation

Heat the grill to medium and lightly oil the grates. Season the vegetables with salt and pepper, and spray them lightly with the olive oil mister to coat. (If you don't have a mister, pour a little oil in your hands and lightly toss the vegetables in a bowl using your hands to coat them very lightly with olive oil.) Cook the vegetables on the grill until tender but not floppy, turning halfway through cooking time - about 12-15 minutes total for the eggplant, onion quarters and sweet pepper, 8-10 minutes for the zucchini and 2 minutes for the tomatoes.

Meanwhile, make the dressing: Whisk together lemon juice and red wine vinegar in a small bowl, and drizzle in the olive oil, whisking to make an emulsion. Add the thyme and salt and pepper to taste, and an additional tablespoon of water if needed to make more sauce. As the vegetables are removed from the grill, chop the onion (the inside may not be fully cooked and that's OK), and cut the rest of the veggies into nice-sized cubes, and place in a large bowl. The pepper skin will be charred and can be kept or removed. Pour the dressing over the vegetables while still warm and toss gently. Add the fresh basil leaves to the vegetables, and stir. Adjust salt and pepper for seasoning and serve, hot, room temperature or chilled. — AP



Standing tall in the age of remasters

By Aakash Bakaya

Maybe it's not really the "age" of re-masters, not just yet in any case. But as the PC gaming market grows, publishers are starting to realize the enormous value of remaking older classic games. Sometimes, the games aren't really all that old to begin with while a few remakes are miles from being considered true 'classics'. Last month, PlatinumGames released the original 'Bayonetta' on Steam to near universal acclaim. It ran like a dream and proved to publishers that even console exclusives can be reborn on the PC as long as it runs well and still retains the original's qualities and charms. Remaster releases haven't all been smooth however.

Activision's decision of bundling in 'Call of Duty 4: Remastered' exclusively with the special edition of last year's 'Infinite Warfare' was slammed by critics and customers alike. Adding salt to that fresh wound, Activision then decided to include new DLC map packs at a 15\$ cost. The most disgusting fact about this addition - it was 9\$ when they released it 9 years ago. It's safe to say 'COD4: Remastered' left a sour taste in the mouth. But a few months later Blizzard dropped a bombshell with the announcement of 'Starcraft: Remastered' - set to release later this year. Blizzard hasn't put out any information about its pricing but has made the base game free and previewed a lot of the new visuals and features coming to the remake.

Reliving the past

The hype for the upcoming 'Starcraft' remaster got me interested in trying out some of Blizzard's older games to see how they hold up as well as come to terms with how games age and what that means to the art-form. So I picked up 'Diablo 2' (and its expansion) to test how much of its former glory it can relive after 17 years. Surprisingly enough - it's still one of the most fun and captivating gaming experiences you can find.

Before getting into 'D2's many pros and prevalent cons - let me provide a small run-down of other older (dated?) games I've tried over the last few years, some of which I've never played before. Firstly, 'Half-Life' and its sequel still retain their pristine quality. The first one might suffer from a slightly too long game

length and tedious platforming sections but overall it's a magnificent package that I would recommend to anyone. Its sequel (and its expansion episodes), now almost 13 years old, somehow manages to top it's legendary predecessor with stellar visuals and a collage of set-pieces that make most modern games quaint in comparison. I also recently finished 'Metroid Prime' (the 2001 Gamecube exclusive) on my PC and it was a blast.

On the other side of this spectrum, I tried 'Fallout: 2' (a game I missed out on growing up) and couldn't really get into it. The UI was bleak and un-friendly and the story was too cryptic and slow. Admittedly, I'm in the minority having that opinion on 'Fallout' but I proved to myself that I am not looking at everything with rose-tinted glasses filled with nostalgia. This made me slightly



hesitant on picking up 'Diablo: 2' again (the last time I played it was in 2007) but the recent patches (yes Blizzard is still supporting it online) to make it compatible with newer systems won me over. I loaded it up, created a 'Classic Battle.net' account and jumped right in.

Stomping through hell

I'm not sure what it was, maybe it was the music or the excitement about trying out an Amazon class for the first time but I was (and still am) bowled over. As a big ARPG fan, 'D2' hooked me almost effortlessly. The grim atmosphere, Matt Uelmen's immaculate score and just the plain fun of running around and slaughtering demons was intoxicating. It still provided a great amount of depth with a loot system barely matched today and never feared in putting the player in difficult positions or letting them explore the game by their lonesome. I'm still shocked at how well the game truly holds up. The gameplay is clunky at first but as your character grows in power, the game smoothens out and its simplicity becomes a major part of the overall enjoyment factor.

The graphics might have been criticized when it was released but in 2017, it comes right around into being a unique aesthetic palette with only a few blemishes at points. Playing it on a

800x600 resolution might turn off others but I was happy it ran as smoothly as it did. The story-line grabbed my as well. Straight-forward but full of visceral imagery, the writing draws you in and makes the chase of 'The Dark Wanderer' all the more captivating. When folks say they remember a time when video-game writing didn't patronize the player - they're most likely referring to this. If you are unfamiliar with 'Diablo' lore, 'D2' remains a great jumping point.

But is the game hindered by a couple of archaic (in other words 'old-school') design choices? Of course it does. 'D2' is a seminal product of its time but its barebones online capabilities and cumbersome UI options are a burden but one that must be borne to reap the fruits. The inventory space is so small you'll spend a good amount of time just managing it and even with the recent patches; bugs still pop up at times.

Learning from experience

These are problems utterly unique to gaming. Watching an old-film, reading an old book - with the right mind-set, it can be experienced in the exact same a modern one does. But an old game? Those 'dated' aspects must be dealt regardless of mind-set. Older visuals can still have charms but what about mechanics

that are simply better today? Physics-engines, diverse options and general 'quality-of-life' changes we take for granted in modern games didn't exist back then. But that does not mean it cannot be overcome.

Whether it's been played for the first or tenth time, games as an art-form must be given the benefit of the doubt when we look back at its earliest iterations. Does Dark Souls 3 automatically make the first one irrelevant - does Diablo 3 make its predecessors unnecessary? The answer to both is a resounding 'NO'. Game design is constantly evolving and some of its most important lessons can be learnt from its earliest successes.

'Diablo: 2' has a small list of those issues but if you're keen on picking it or any other classic game up on Steam or GOG (which has an amazing collection of old games, DRM free) then dive right in. If it's in a genre you've always liked then it's there little to lose. There's a reason some games have stood the test of time and are still played passionately today. Nothing makes me more proud to say that 'Diablo: 2' is easily included in that list. Hell, I wouldn't be surprised if it remains on top of those lists for decades to come.



Friday Times

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Travel



Mexico City

Canals, cuisine and
a certain sinking feeling





Mexico City's Xochimilco neighborhood has been an area of canals and farming for centuries.

An age-old agricultural method is still in practice today along Mexico City's canals of Xochimilco and it's driving a popular farm-to-table movement at the capital's top restaurants. But can the ancient farming system manage to survive in the face of urban encroachment?

Welcome to Xochimilco

The meandering canals of Xochimilco are the last vestiges of a once-vast system of lakes and canals that crisscrossed the Valley of Mexico. Declared a Unesco World Heritage site in 1987, today's waterways span some 180km in a protected area that's home to hundreds of migratory and native bird species.

Every day, scores of colorful gondola-like boats (known as trajineras) ply the canals, offering visitors a vivid reminder of the city's pre-Hispanic legacy (granted, some visitors see the outing as more of a booze cruise). During the ride, boats glide past chinampas, man-made island plots used today for everything from soccer pitches and quirky art exhibits to farms and nurseries. In the N'huatl language (spoken by the indigenous people), Xochimilco means "flower field." Built from the shallow canals' muddy soil and decaying vegetation, the artificial islands in Xochimilco date back to the 11th century but it is said that the chinampa farm system has been around for much longer in the Central Mexico region.

The Mexica (aka Aztecs) perfected the skill of building chinampas and they would transport their crops from the southern edge of their capital, Tenochtitlan, along waterways to the city center. But after the Spanish conquest,

tadors defeated the Aztecs in the 16th century they proceeded to drain many of the area's

lakes and canals and eventually a colonial city went up atop a sloshy, dried-out lake bed.



Xochimilco's fertile soil makes growing crops a year-round proposition

Many of today's chinampa farmers grow plants and flowers, which require less care than vegetables, but as more of the city's restaurants seek fresh, pesticide-free produce you see more and more veggies cropping up along the shores of Xochimilco.

The rise of locally sourced cuisine

Purchasing produce from chinampas makes perfect sense for social-minded restaurateurs - they support local growers while helping to preserve an important Mexican tradition. Yolc'n, one of Xochimilco's top farms, supplies produce such as radishes, beets, carrots, leafy greens and herbs to 17 of the capital's restaurants. The nutrient-rich soil dredged from the canals is highly productive and it yields vibrant flavorful crops that make a notable difference when preparing any number of dishes.

Sud 777, for instance, does a salad called ensalada caliente de verduras chinamperas, chinampa-grown vegetables plated with exquisite purees. Chef Edgar Nu'ez was one of the first chefs in Mexico City to work with locally produced ingredients from the chinampas and he continues to do so today with great pride. "It's a very old agricultural method and it's very much an important part of our cultural identity," he says.

Evening falls on the Bell Tower and distant Drum Tower



Dozens of trajinera operators rely on the canals of Xochimilco for their livelihoods.

Seafood restaurant Contramar, known for its popular tuna tostadas and pescado a la talla (grilled whole fish), buys spinach, chard and cilantro from the island farms, while Maximo Bistrot Local chef Eduardo Garcia uses that same pungent cilantro when preparing ceviches for his daily changing menu. Garcia honed his skills under the tutelage of Chef Enrique Olvera of Pujol, one of Mexico City's finest restaurants and another loyal patron of the chinampa farm system.

Troubled waters

Sadly, the once-pristine waters of Xochimilco have become increasingly polluted over time, due in part to illegal island settlers dumping sewage into the canals. What's more, excessive groundwater pumping (to meet the sprawling city's insatiable demand for water) is depleting the area's aquifers and the government has resorted to pumping treated agua into the canals to maintain water levels.

Some but not all farmers have figured out how to work around the problems associated with urban encroachment. Yolc'n, for example, works plots removed from illegal settlements and its farms use a sophisticated water filtration system implemented by a local university.

When proper steps are taken, chinampa farmers produce a very clean product. Nicos chef Gerardo Vazquez, who has been buying ingredients from the farms for a decade, measures bacteria levels of the crops in his small laboratory and they test cleaner than most store-bought produce.

But environmental degradation has not just affected growers. Early in 2017, tour boat operators found themselves temporarily out of work after a fissure opened up and swallowed a large section of water from a canal.

The canal was sandbagged off and the 3-meter-long (10 foot) gap eventually was plugged, but the downtime proved costly for those who rely on the canal for their livelihood. Some researchers believe the crack opened up because of movement from a nearby geological fault, but other experts blame over-exploitation of the aquifers - and they fear these incidents will occur on a more regular basis if excessive groundwater pumping continues.

The sinking city

Xochimilco has an environmental management plan in place, but Mexico City's water problems are so much bigger than the canals. Geologists estimate that in certain areas the



Sud 777 restaurant uses fresh ingredients from the chinampas of Xochimilco in many of its dishes.

city sinks about 6 centimeters (2.5 inches) a year, and as water tables drop, subsidence becomes a more serious concern. To fully grasp the sinking-city phenomenon, check out the slanted Cathedral Metropolitana, Mexico City's iconic cathedral on the capital's main square, or the teetering 17th-century Ex Teresa Arte Actual museum nearby.

Water issues may not seem all that obvious when cruising the wetlands of Xochimilco, but environmentalists warn that without a more forward-thinking approach to water regeneration and conservation, tour boat operators, chinampa farmers and the city's inhabitants in general might find themselves up the proverbial creek without a paddle.





Aries (March 21-April 19)

You could find that you are appreciated and valued for your feelings as well as your ability to be productive without much guidance. You will have time for your creative moods today, but mostly there are opportunities to solve problems. This could involve interaction with the public or with young people. Co-workers will find you especially witty and an instant umbrella of warmth, friendship and self-expression. This afternoon you may have insights with regard to your personal circumstances. Interested in serving others, you worry about their welfare. You like to take care of everything and are always redeeming, salvaging and restoring. You may find yourself teaching and preaching concerning the conservation and preservation of our planet.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have a natural ability to grasp spiritual and visionary matters. You can perform with imagination and metaphysical thoughts as others work with durable things. This is because you understand what is behind and connecting things. Much of your own self-image is wrapped up with your ability to work with images-dreams and the imagination. You would make a good teacher in areas of music or philosophy and all that is mystical. A few new work opportunities will open up soon and all you have to do is choose the one for you. No clinical deductions here-just be thankful for the opportunities. There is a chance you could soon work with theatrical props or some other similar task. A sense of support and harmony makes this a happy time.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You stay busy most of this day; people may have to call your name to get your attention. You might have figured the day would go faster if you kept your concentration steady and you were right. Some days are harder to navigate than others but today is a good day with lots of opportunities to fine-tune a few ideas you have had lately regarding a family goal. There are ways to bring about this goal soon and it may include anything from a new home to a fantastic voyage. You may have also noticed that there are some profitable opportunities for you at this time, and you will gain some expert advice on some future plans that have recently occupied your mind. Meeting a few people after work may take on a special treat.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today you may decide to discuss your financial plans with a person of influence. You may be more creditworthy than you had thought. You will soon find it is easy to choose the right financial path for you. More and more, others realize that you are not what you appear to be. Your personality and the way the world sees you appear more independent and outgoing than is the case when people get to know you. Someone may express this today. An extroverted manner screens a more inward and quiet-seeking self. In other words, after people get to know you, you are much more sensitive and interested in exchanging ideas and opinions with others. You have a great understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Health and work goals take on greater importance. You are freedom-loving, independent and at times, even a trifle remote. You may not be bound by relationships and are thus not much of a domestic. Today is all about business and when you get home a bit late you might become involved in a book in order to relax. There are new insights into how you can add to your finances and you may find a plan whirling around in your head. An exercise routine can be most beneficial for you and will help you to revive your energies and focus your thinking as well as help with physical benefits. You are very well-organized and comfortable in your disciplined life... And it serves you well. As you think about that new financial plan, write out a clarification.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your positive attitude lets you get right to the point today. There is plenty of enthusiasm and you warm up to ideas and people quickly. Your inner self-confidence is admirable and burns with its own light. You could have difficulty in getting your ideas across to others, but if you rephrase your explanation, results will improve. Any confusion or misunderstandings will eventually be eliminated. You may have doubts about those who talk too much and seem long on ideas-patience. Circumstances can throw you into a situation where you must deal with communications, service or hidden interests. You may deal with education or psychology, or teaching principles and techniques to others. This afternoon you deserve a little breather.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You will undoubtedly be able to rely on your own wits today. Financial dealings are successful and basically assured. For whatever reason, you felt it necessary to hold back your business expertise in the past; now is the time to move forward. You actually love responsibility and tend to pile on the chores at home as well as work. This afternoon you will enjoy a little slower pace. Neighbors or friends may find you tending your tomato vines or caring for your yard. Whatever the case, you seem to enjoy some time with nature for now. Your appreciation for hard work and discipline is lifelong, even in your personal life, but you also enjoy an occasional timeout. Later this evening you will enjoy the company of loved ones or friends at a play or movie.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Good practical job-related thoughts and ideas are available. The ability to communicate with superiors or describe what you see may cause co-workers to group together in order to encourage you to represent them. Your mind is quick and sharp and your words are the only weapon you will need. You have insight into your emotions and drive and can talk about your feelings with great insight and flexibility. The cycle that begins for you now will be marked by a more intense focus on the mental as well as communication. It's a time of more involvement with a variety of people and a time for gathering information. There is likely to be an emphasis on reading, writing, studying and all forms of exchanging information with others.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You realize that you are now a responsible adult and you may wonder how it happened. Not too long ago you were asking what it means to be an adult, or when, if ever, you might become one. A major life event may mark the end of a formative period and the signal for more independence. You may feel powerful, but you also feel more compassion for others. This is the start of increased responsibility and accountability. The realization may create a desire to write a bit of poetry. Self-control will show your maturity, and circumstances should work together now to help bring out your ideals-make it easier to make your dreams real. You will be able to make a positive difference in your own life as well as help others to achieve and grow.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

In the workplace today, it may be best to dig in and strengthen your current position rather than expand outward too much. A hunch is worth pursuing this afternoon. Take your creative effort up a level and bring your thoughts out in the open. An open conversation with co-workers may result in the most productive rap session ever. You will find your mind turning to the creative this afternoon. You are concerned with more inward and spiritual ideas now, especially when it comes to healing. Spend some time out-of-doors this afternoon. Shopping with close relatives turns out to be a positive, especially if everyone in your household gives toward the support of the household. If you are planning to lay out big bucks for electronic equipment-now is the time.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Ambition and achievement are qualities you hold in special regard. This could all involve getting ahead by combining business with pleasure. Networking brings positive results. You will soon enjoy the rewards of your hard work. You are at your subtle best today. This afternoon, you may decide to play detective and find the lost ring or watch that was thought to be stolen. You have good results. The support you need for whatever you are planning is also available. Health and work goals take on greater importance for you. Team sports and swimming or walking every day or so with a friend can boost your energy and increase your overall stamina. What better way to enjoy your friends than with an activity that can improve your health!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Every time you get an inferior feeling about yourself cancel it out with positive thoughts. Your self-esteem is only as high as what you think about yourself. You will find an improvement in your conversations and may even see your day turn into a more lighthearted situation. If you are in sales, you could set records today! Your ideas are clear and easy to understand. Customers will be seeking you out to help them. Later you may give some thought to your own affairs. An older person or someone in authority may give you new information this afternoon. Be grateful for this input-it will make a big difference in your earning power. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement now.

COUNTRY CODES

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



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 What On Earth?
02:00 Salvage Hunters
02:50 Todd Sampson's Body Hack
03:40 Misfit Garage
04:30 Garage Gold
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Abandoned Engineering
06:50 You Have Been Warned
07:40 Gold Divers
08:30 What On Earth?
09:20 Rebel Gold
10:10 Todd Sampson's Body Hack
11:00 Marooned With Ed Stafford
11:50 Guy Martin: Fastest Man On Two Wheels
12:40 Heavy Rescue
13:30 Fast N' Loud
14:20 Diesel Brothers
15:10 Fast N' Loud: Demolition
Theatre
16:00 What On Earth?
16:50 What On Earth?
17:40 What On Earth?
18:30 What On Earth?
21:00 Fast N' Loud
21:50 Diesel Brothers
22:40 Fast N' Loud: Demolition
Theatre
23:30 Heavy Rescue



00:00 The First 48
01:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
02:00 Homicide Hunter
03:00 Cold Case Files
04:00 The First 48
05:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
06:00 My Crazy Ex
07:00 My Crazy Ex
08:00 Evil Up Close
09:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 It Takes A Killer
13:00 My Crazy Ex
14:00 Evil Up Close
15:00 Homicide Hunter
16:00 Crime Stories
17:00 It Takes A Killer
19:00 Evil Up Close
20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
21:00 Homicide Hunter
22:00 They Took Our Child, We Got Her Back



00:30 Nextworld
01:20 Secret Space Escapes
02:10 How The Universe Works
03:00 Kids Do The Craziest Things
03:25 Kids Do The Craziest Things
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Storm Chasers
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Kenny The Shark
07:25 Awesome Adventures
07:50 K9 Cops
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Nextworld
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 K9 Cops
12:00 Ultimate Survival
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Storm Chasers
14:30 Kenny The Shark
14:55 Awesome Adventures
15:20 K9 Cops
16:10 Nextworld
17:00 Now That's Funny
17:50 Don't Blink
18:15 Don't Blink
18:40 What Happened Next?
19:05 What Happened Next?
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters
21:10 Now That's Funny
22:00 Don't Blink
22:25 Don't Blink
22:50 What Happened Next?
23:15 What Happened Next?
23:40 Ultimate Survival



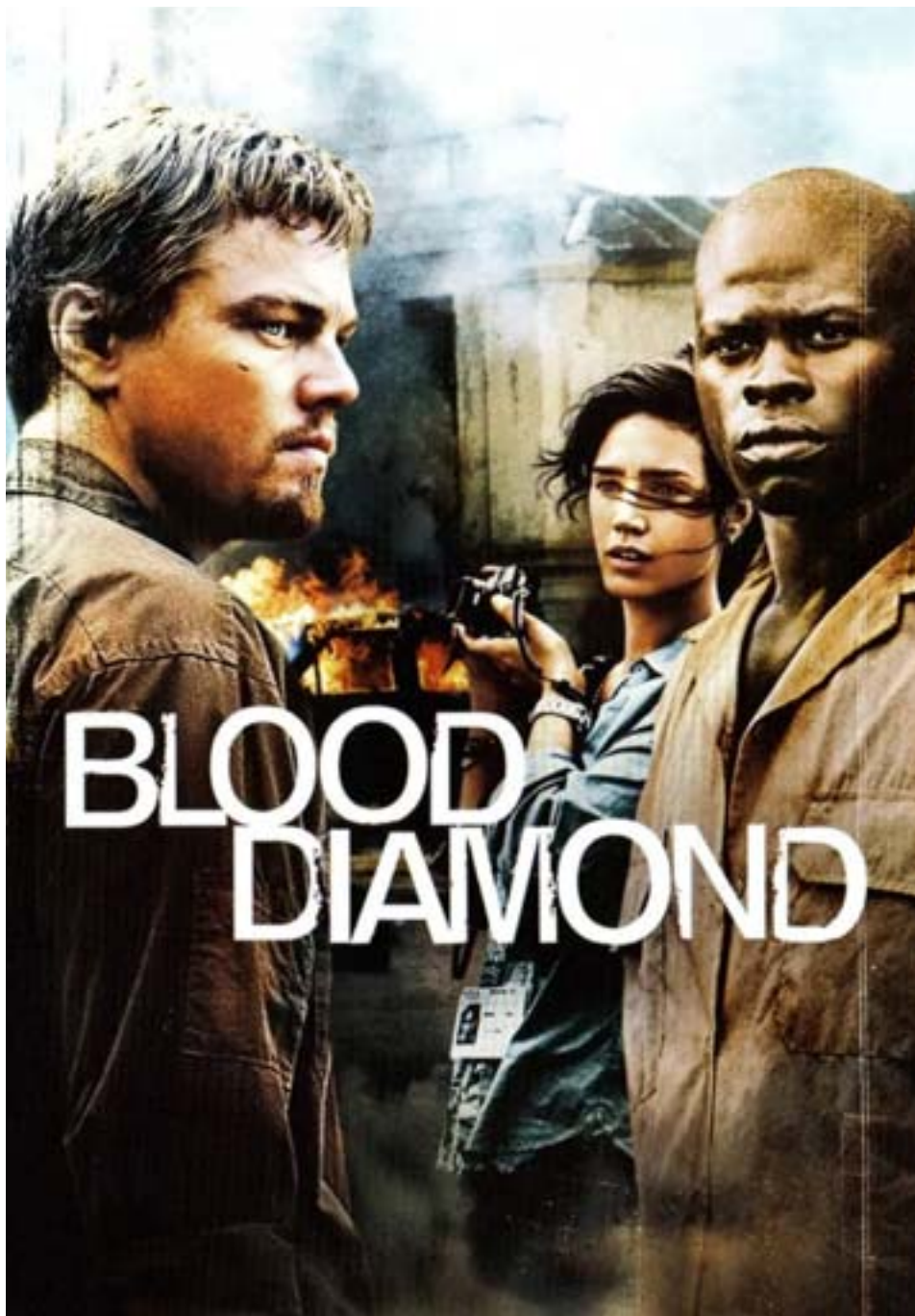
00:00 Binny And The Ghost
00:25 Hank Zipzer
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:25 Hank Zipzer
05:45 The Hive
05:50 The 7D
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Jessie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 The Zhuzhus
07:20 Elena Of Avalor
07:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Stuck In The Middle
08:35 Bizaardvark
09:00 Austin & Ally
09:25 Austin & Ally
09:50 Good Luck Charlie
10:40 Dog With A Blog
11:30 Gravity Falls
11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:00 Welcome To The Ronks
12:15 The Zhuzhus
12:40 Hank Zipzer
13:05 Star Darlings
13:10 Good Luck Charlie
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Jessie
14:25 Hank Zipzer
14:50 Sunny Bunnies

14:55 The Zhuzhus
15:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
15:45 Elena Of Avalor
16:10 Liv And Maddie
16:35 Monsters, Inc
18:10 The 7D
18:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:25 Hank Zipzer
18:50 Alex & Co.
19:15 Best Friends Whenever
19:15 Star Darlings
19:20 Liv And Maddie
19:45 Austin & Ally
20:10 Jessie
20:35 Crackle
20:40 Disney The Lodge
21:05 Bizaardvark
21:30 That's So Raven
21:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
22:00 Shake It Up



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

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



BLOOD DIAMOND ON OSN MOVIES HD



06:00 Gravity Falls
06:25 Disney11
06:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
07:15 Milo Murphy's Law
07:25 Danger Mouse
07:40 Supa Strikas
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Counterfeit Cat
09:00 Lab Rats
09:25 Lab Rats
09:50 Future-Worm!
10:20 Pair Of Kings
10:45 Pair Of Kings
11:10 Danger Mouse
11:35 Supa Strikas
12:00 Supa Strikas
12:30 Gravity Falls
12:55 Annedroids
13:20 I'm In The Band
13:45 I'm In The Band
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 I'm In The Band
14:40 I'm In The Band
15:05 The Return Of Jafar
16:25 K.C. Undercover
16:50 Disney11
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Milo Murphy's Law
18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:10 Gravity Falls
18:35 Mighty Med
19:00 Atomic Puppet
19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
19:55 K.C. Undercover
20:20 Mech-X4
20:45 Disney11
21:10 Walk The Prank
21:35 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
22:35 Boyster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

16:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Animals - India
16:55 Surprise Surprise
17:50 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
20:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
21:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Animals - India
21:55 Surprise Surprise



00:15 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
00:45 Route Awakening
01:10 Poh & Co.
01:40 Croatia's Finest
02:05 What's For Sale?
02:35 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
03:30 What's For Sale?
03:55 Chocolate Covered
04:25 Tom's Istanbul Delight
04:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
05:20 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
05:45 Poh & Co.
06:15 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
07:10 Croatia's Finest
07:35 What's For Sale?
08:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
09:00 What's For Sale?
09:25 Chocolate Covered
09:55 Tom's Istanbul Delight
10:20 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
10:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
11:15 Poh & Co.
11:45 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
12:40 A Is For Apple
13:05 What's For Sale?
13:35 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
14:30 Chocolate Covered
14:55 Chocolate Covered
15:25 Tom's Istanbul Delight
15:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
16:20 Poh & Co.
16:45 Poh & Co.
17:15 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
18:10 The Peninsula: The Making Of A Gala
19:05 Tom's Istanbul Delight
19:30 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
20:00 Poh & Co.
20:30 Poh & Co.



00:05 Second Wives Club
01:50 E! News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 WAGs Miami
04:40 WAGs Miami
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Just Jillian
06:55 E! News
07:10 Just Jillian
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 E! News
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 E! News
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:10 Second Wives Club
17:05 Second Wives Club
18:00 Second Wives Club
19:00 E! News
20:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
21:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
22:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
23:00 E! News
23:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:20 Brutal Killers
01:10 Strangest Bird Alive
02:00 Big Cat Games
02:50 Wild Indochina
03:45 World's Creepiest Killers
04:40 My Life Is A Zoo
05:35 Big Cat Games
06:30 Wild Indochina
07:25 World's Creepiest Killers
08:20 My Life Is A Zoo
09:15 Python Hunters
10:10 Europe's Last Wilderness
11:05 Gorilla Murders
12:00 Shark Eden
12:55 Crococalypse
13:50 Survive The Wild
14:45 Animals Gone Wild
15:40 My Life Is A Zoo
16:35 Python Hunters
17:30 Wild Galapagos
18:25 Animals Of The Year
19:20 Animals Gone Wild
20:10 My Life Is A Zoo
21:00 Python Hunters
21:50 Wild Galapagos
22:40 Animals Of The Year
23:30 Shark Eden



00:10 Alphabetical
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
03:25 Britain's Secrets With Anne Robinson
04:20 5 Star Family Reunion
05:15 Coach Trip
06:10 Alphabetical
07:05 Who's Doing The Dishes?
08:00 Britain's Secrets With Anne Robinson
09:00 5 Star Family Reunion
10:00 Coach Trip
10:30 Coach Trip
10:55 Alphabetical
11:50 Who's Doing The Dishes?
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 Alphabetical
15:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?



00:10 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind
01:00 Street Heat: High Speed Justice
02:00 Locked Up Abroad
03:00 Genius
04:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind
05:00 Yukon Gold
06:00 Helicopter Wars
07:00 Scam City
08:00 Danger Decoded
08:30 Danger Decoded
09:00 Yukon Gold
10:00 Locked Up Abroad

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2017

- 11:00 Border Wars
- 12:00 Route Awakening
- 13:00 Inside
- 14:00 Danger Decoded
- 14:30 Danger Decoded
- 15:00 Scam City
- 16:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 17:00 Border Wars
- 18:00 Underworld, Inc.
- 19:00 Scam City
- 20:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 20:50 Border Wars
- 21:40 Underworld, Inc.
- 22:30 Scam City
- 23:20 Inside



- 00:02 Max & Ruby
- 00:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 00:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 00:46 The Day Henry Met
- 00:51 The Day Henry Met
- 00:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 01:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 01:41 Zack & Quack
- 02:03 Team Umizoomi
- 02:25 Olive The Ostrich
- 02:30 Olive The Ostrich
- 02:35 Paw Patrol
- 02:58 Little Charmers
- 03:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 03:22 Dora The Explorer
- 03:44 Max & Ruby
- 04:08 Bubble Guppies
- 04:31 Shimmer And Shine
- 04:55 Dora And Friends
- 05:17 Zack & Quack
- 05:28 The Day Henry Met
- 05:32 The Day Henry Met
- 05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 06:00 Rusty Rivets
- 06:12 Paw Patrol
- 06:36 Dora The Explorer
- 07:00 Zack & Quack
- 07:21 Dora And Friends
- 07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 08:07 Paw Patrol
- 08:30 Shimmer And Shine
- 08:53 Dora The Explorer
- 09:15 The Day Henry Met
- 09:21 Paw Patrol
- 09:44 Rusty Rivets
- 09:57 Bubble Guppies
- 10:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 10:42 Zack & Quack
- 10:53 Team Umizoomi
- 11:17 Shimmer And Shine
- 11:39 Louie
- 11:46 Louie
- 11:52 Olive The Ostrich
- 11:57 Olive The Ostrich
- 12:02 Max & Ruby
- 12:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 12:35 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 12:46 The Day Henry Met
- 12:51 The Day Henry Met
- 12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 13:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 13:42 Zack & Quack
- 14:03 Team Umizoomi
- 14:26 Olive The Ostrich
- 14:31 Olive The Ostrich
- 14:35 Paw Patrol
- 14:58 Little Charmers
- 15:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 15:22 Dora The Explorer
- 15:44 Max & Ruby
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- 16:31 Shimmer And Shine
- 16:54 Dora And Friends
- 17:17 Zack & Quack
- 17:27 The Day Henry Met
- 17:32 The Day Henry Met
- 17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 18:00 Rusty Rivets
- 18:12 Paw Patrol
- 18:37 Dora The Explorer
- 19:00 Zack & Quack
- 19:22 Dora And Friends
- 19:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 20:07 Paw Patrol
- 20:30 Shimmer And Shine
- 20:53 Dora The Explorer
- 21:15 The Day Henry Met
- 21:21 Paw Patrol
- 21:44 Rusty Rivets
- 21:56 Bubble Guppies
- 22:19 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 22:42 Zack & Quack
- 22:53 Team Umizoomi
- 23:16 Shimmer And Shine
- 23:39 Shimmer And Shine



FANTASTIC FOUR ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



- 01:15 The Lovers
- 03:15 Fantastic Four
- 05:00 Bermuda Tentacles
- 06:30 Compadres
- 08:15 The Lovers
- 10:00 Beyond Redemption
- 11:30 Fantastic Four
- 13:15 Compadres
- 15:00 The Tower
- 17:15 Beyond Redemption
- 18:45 Tekken: Kazuya's Revenge
- 20:15 Die Hard
- 22:30 Rise Of The Legend



- 01:15 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
- 03:00 Brave
- 04:40 Wall-E
- 06:30 Ice Princess
- 08:20 Brave
- 10:00 The Odd Life Of Timothy Green
- 11:50 Wall-E
- 13:35 Gnomeo & Juliet
- 15:00 Minions
- 16:35 Nancy Drew
- 18:15 Underdog
- 19:40 White Fang
- 21:30 Minions
- 23:05 Underdog



- 00:30 A Night At The Roxbury
- 02:00 Goosebumps
- 03:45 The Intern
- 06:00 Just Married
- 08:00 Goosebumps
- 09:45 The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water
- 11:30 The Intern
- 13:45 Last Action Hero
- 16:00 Gridiron Gang
- 18:00 127 Hours
- 19:45 Blood Diamond
- 22:15 Concussion



- 01:15 The Out Of Towners
- 02:45 A Thousand Words
- 04:15 Can't Buy Me Love
- 05:55 Overboard
- 07:50 A Thousand Words
- 09:20 Can't Buy Me Love
- 11:00 Overboard
- 12:55 The Duff
- 14:35 Clifford
- 16:05 Perfect Match



- 01:15 Quiz Show
- 03:30 99 Homes
- 05:30 Land Of Mine
- 07:15 A Birder's Guide To Everything
- 08:45 Quiz Show
- 11:15 We Are Many
- 13:15 Land Of Mine
- 15:15 And Justice For All
- 17:15 WarGames
- 19:15 Hidden Agenda
- 21:15 Lucky Them
- 23:00 Nightcrawler



- 00:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 01:15 Albert
- 02:45 Cher Ami
- 04:15 Blue Elephant 2
- 06:00 The Tale Of Despereaux
- 07:30 Bee Movie
- 09:30 Egon And Donci
- 11:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 12:15 Albert
- 13:45 Winnie The Pooh
- 15:00 Egon And Donci
- 16:30 Mickey, Donald, Goofy: The 3 Musketeers
- 17:45 Ducktales: The Movie
- 19:15 Winnie The Pooh
- 20:30 Bee Movie



- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
- 00:55 Food Factory
- 01:20 Street Science
- 01:45 Street Science
- 02:10 Curiosity: Can You Live Forever?
- 03:00 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 03:48 Mythbusters
- 04:36 How Do They Do It?
- 05:00 Food Factory
- 05:24 Street Science
- 05:48 Street Science
- 06:12 Curiosity: Can You Live Forever?
- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 07:26 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 08:14 Mythbusters
- 09:02 The Big Brain Theory



- 09:50 How Do They Do It?
- 10:14 Food Factory
- 10:38 Street Science
- 11:02 Street Science
- 11:26 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 12:14 Mythbusters
- 13:02 How Do They Do It?
- 13:26 Food Factory
- 13:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 14:38 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 15:26 Street Science
- 15:50 Street Science
- 16:14 Mythbusters
- 17:02 Curiosity: Can You Live Forever?
- 17:50 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 18:40 Mythbusters
- 19:30 Mythbusters
- 20:20 How Do They Do It?



- 00:20 Oprah's Master Class
- 01:10 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?
- 02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 02:25 Say Yes To The Dress
- 02:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 03:15 Cake Boss
- 03:35 Oprah's Master Class
- 04:20 Little People, Big World
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 06:50 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 07:40 Little People, Big World
- 08:30 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 09:20 Little People, Big World
- 10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 11:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 11:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 12:15 Love, Lust Or Run
- 12:40 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:05 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:30 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 14:45 Oprah's Master Class
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Cake Boss
- 17:40 Cake Boss
- 18:05 Cake Boss
- 18:30 How The Rich Live Longer
- 19:20 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 20:10 Little People, Big World
- 21:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 21:50 Little People, Big World
- 22:40 My Extreme Excess Skin
- 23:30 Return To Amish



- 00:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 01:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 02:00 Monster Quest
- 02:50 Ancient Aliens
- 03:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 04:30 The Universe
- 05:20 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 06:10 The Universe
- 07:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 08:00 Monster Quest
- 09:00 Ancient Aliens
- 10:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 11:00 The Universe
- 12:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 13:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 14:00 Monster Quest
- 15:00 Ancient Aliens
- 16:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain



LAND OF MINE ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL HD

- 17:00 The Universe
- 18:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 19:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 20:00 Monster Quest
- 21:00 Ancient Aliens
- 22:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence



- 00:20 Lost Worlds
- 01:10 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 02:00 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Lost Worlds
- 06:50 Time Team
- 07:40 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 08:30 Ax Men
- 09:20 Mountain Men
- 11:00 American Pickers
- 12:40 American Restoration
- 13:30 Swamp People
- 15:10 Football: A Brief History By Alfie Allen
- 16:50 Mummies Alive
- 18:30 Shipping Wars
- 19:20 Lost In Transmission
- 20:10 Mountain Men
- 21:00 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
- 21:50 Ozzy & Jack's World Detour
- 22:40 Forged In Fire



- 00:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 01:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 10:00 Bake With Anna Olson
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Bake With Anna Olson
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Iron Chef America
- 20:00 Paul Hollywood - City Bakes
- 21:00 Reza Spice Prince Of Vietnam
- 22:00 The Big Eat - Middle East
- 23:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

Word Search Puzzles

Comedy Movies 1

Find and circle all of the comedy movies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional comedy movie.

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

- ALL OF ME
- ANNIE HALL
- SABE
- BEING THERE
- BIG
- BOB ROBERTS
- BULL DURHAM
- CARS
- CAT BALLOU
- CITY SLICKERS
- CLERKS
- CLUELESS
- DUCK SOUP
- ELECTION
- FLETCH
- GHOSTBUSTERS
- HAPPY GILMORE
- HARVEY
- HOLIDAY
- HOTSHOTS
- LEGALLY BLONDE
- LIAR LIAR
- LOCAL HERO
- MALLRATS
- MANHATTAN
- MEATBALLS
- MOONSTRUCK
- OH, GOD!
- PLAZA SUITE
- REPO MAN
- RUSHMORE
- SHREK
- SLACKER
- SLAP SHOT
- SLEEPER
- THE RUTLES
- TOOTSIE
- TRADING PLACES
- UNCLE BUCK
- YES MAN

CROSSWORD 1626



ACROSS

1. Type genus of the Amiidae.
5. Painted beauty and red admiral.
12. An oral poliovirus vaccine (containing live but weakened poliovirus) that is given to provide immunity to poliomyelitis.
15. Especially one side of a leaf.
16. Fictitious land described in the novel Erewhon by Samuel Butler.
17. A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
18. A restraint that confines or restricts freedom (especially something used to tie down or restrain a prisoner).
20. Of or relating to the earliest period of the Stone Age (characterized by the use of eoliths).
22. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
23. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
25. Spanish poet and dramatist (1898-1936).
26. A closed sac that develops abnormally in some body structure.
28. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
31. Not far distant in time or space or degree or circumstances.
32. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
34. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
35. Decapod having eyes on short stalks and a broad flattened carapace with a small abdomen folded under the thorax and pincers.
36. 1 species.
39. A unit of information equal to one million (1,048,576) bytes.
40. God of the underworld and judge of the dead.
45. Loud confused noise from many sources.
48. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
49. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
51. Fleshy folds of tissue as those surrounding the mouth.
52. Any of various floor-like platforms built into a vessel.
54. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
55. A soft silvery metallic element.
56. Lower in esteem.
58. (Greek mythology) One of the mountain nymphs.
60. Of or relating to a legal title to something.
63. Informal terms for a mother.
64. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydradiz) used to treat tuberculosis.
67. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
70. The month following January and preceding March.

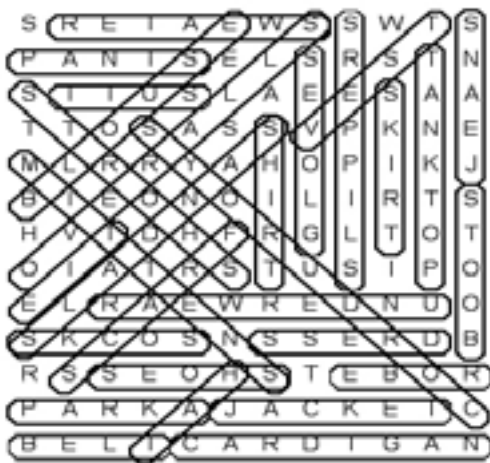
74. The cry made by sheep.
75. Canna grown especially for its edible rootstock from which arrowroot starch is obtained.
78. Jordan's port.
79. The ball-shaped capsule containing the vertebrate eye.
80. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
82. Preserve of crushed fruit.
83. A graphical record of electrical activity of the brain.
84. The capital and largest city of Nepal.
85. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially the east end of a church.
2. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
3. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
4. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
5. Elevated open grassland in southern Africa.
6. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
7. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
8. A member of a people living in southern Benin and Togo and southeastern Ghana.
9. Genus of Indonesian and Malaysian timber trees rich in resin.
10. A colloid that has a continuous liquid phase in which a solid is suspended in a liquid.
11. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
12. Of a moderate orange-yellow color.
13. A folded part (as a fold of skin or muscle).
14. A Roman Catholic priest who acts for another higher-ranking clergyman.
19. The quarter of many North African cities in which the citadel is located.
21. Either of two masses of lymphatic tissue one on each side of the oral pharynx.
24. A member of the Algonquian people formerly inhabiting the Maritime Provinces of Canada.
27. River in eastern Asia.
29. Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
30. Little known Kamarupan languages.
33. The particular occupation for which you are trained.
37. Italian lawn bowling (played on a long narrow dirt court).
38. A small cake leavened with yeast.
41. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
42. The act of relaying something.
43. Goddess of fertility.
44. A rare chronic progressive encephalitis caused by the measles virus and occurring primarily in children and young adults.
46. A republic in the West Indies on the western part of the island of Hispaniola.
47. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
50. Goddess of love and beauty and daughter of Zeus in ancient mythology.
53. God of love and erotic desire.
57. A natural stream of water smaller than a river (and often a tributary of a river).
59. Having a woven pattern.
61. Confined to bed (by illness).
62. 16 ounces.
65. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
66. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
68. The work of caring for or attending to someone or something.
69. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
71. An outlying farm building for storing grain or animal feed and housing farm animals.
72. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
73. A Hindu prince or king in India.
76. An accountant certified by the state.
77. Headdress that protects the head from bad weather.
81. A state in the Rocky Mountains.

Yesterday's Solution

Clothing



- BELT
- BLOUSE
- BOOTS
- CARDIGAN
- CORDUROY
- DRESS
- GLOVES
- HAT
- JACKET
- JEANS
- MITTENS
- OVERALLS
- PANTS
- PARKA
- ROBE
- SANDALS
- SCARF
- SHIRT
- SHOES
- SHORTS
- SKIRT
- SLIPPERS
- ROBE
- SOCKS
- SUIT
- SWEATER
- TANK TOP
- TIE
- UNDERWEAR
- VEST

The hidden clothing item is: SWEATSHIRT

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Yesterday's Solution



CAPE TOWN CUTS BACK TO SURVIVE WORST DROUGHT IN 100 YEARS

BEST STRATEGY TO MANAGE A DROUGHT IS TO MANAGE DEMAND

CAPE TOWN: As Cape Town suffers its worst drought in a century, residents have been told to restrict showers to two minutes and flush toilets only when “absolutely necessary”. The city-South Africa’s biggest tourist hotspot-and the surrounding Western Cape province have been declared a disaster area by the local government, with just 10 percent of usable water left in the dams supplying the area.

Two hours from the city, Theewaterskloof Dam, the main source of water for Cape Town, has been reduced to a flat and sandy desert, with the petrified remains of orchards flooded when the dam was built in the 1970s standing starkly under the sun. At the local watersports club, exposed moorings reveal where sailboats once floated. The long slipway now ends about 30 meters from the water’s edge.

“I’ve worked here for about 20 years and I’ve never ever seen the dam this low,” club secretary Lise Wheeler said. For Cape Town residents, the drought has led to a gradual escalation of restrictions, from the limits on splashing at public pools earlier this year to the current complete ban on topping-up swimming pools or watering gardens.

The newest restrictions limit residents to 100 liters per person per day and rule out its use for anything other than cooking, drinking and essential cleaning.

Last week Virgin Active, a health club operator, said it would close saunas and steam rooms at its gyms across the province. “The best strategy to manage a drought effectively is to manage demand, which is what we are doing,” city councilor for water Xanthea Limberg said.

No easy answers

Earlier this year, the city published a name-and-shame list of the worst water offenders in Cape Town, and it says it is issuing fines and notices to appear in court. But officials themselves have faced criticism for failing to implement usage restrictions sooner, and have been accused of ignoring

warnings by experts in the years before the drought. Some Capetonians have taken to collecting their own water at a natural spring outside a brewery in the city.

Many are convinced that with dam levels so low, the quality of tap water has declined—a rumor that the city has been battling for months. “This is the

only drinkable water I can get,” one resident said. University of Cape Town climate scientist Peter Johnston said officials faced a long-term problem. “What we’ve had now is three seasons in a row where the rainfall has been low, and that’s a one-in-a-hundred-year occurrence,” Johnston said.—AFP



CAPE TOWN: People queue up to collect drinking water from taps that are fed by a spring in Newlands, in Cape Town.—AFP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم

Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY

SHARQIA-1 FIREMAN SAM: Alien Alert! The Movie Abu Shanab (Re-Release)	9:45 PM 11:15 PM	AVENUES-7 FIREMAN SAM: Alien Alert! The Movie Hasan wa Boqloz (Arabic) (Re-Release)	9:30 PM 11:00 PM
SHARQIA-2 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) THE EXCEPTION AL FERAN (KUWAITI) FOOTBALL MATCH- "Real Madrid vs Juventus" AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:30 PM 11:00 PM 1:15 AM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM	AVENUES-8 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL Mantaqh Mahzourah (Re-Releasee)	10:15 PM 12:30 AM
SHARQIA-3 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD Mantaqh Mahzourah (Re-Releasee)	10:00 PM 12:30 AM	AVENUES-9 Abu Shanab (Re-Release) GIFTED	10:00 PM 12:15 AM
MUHALAB-1 Abu Shanab (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:45 PM 12:05 AM	AVENUES-10 THE EXCEPTION Safr 5 Njoom (Kuwaiti Film) (Re-Release)	9:45 PM 12:05 AM
MUHALAB-2 FIREMAN SAM: Alien Alert! The Movie AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:30 PM 11:00 PM 12:30 AM	AVENUES-11 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD- CINESCAPE 11-2D KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD- CINESCAPE 11-2D	10:00 PM 12:30 AM
MUHALAB-3 THE EXCEPTION Hasan wa Boqloz (Arabic) (Re-Release)	10:00 PM 12:15 AM	360°- 1 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD NO SAT FOOTBALL MATCH- "Real Madrid vs Juventus" SAT KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM
FANAR-1 SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS -Hindi Mantaqh Mahzourah (Re-Releasee)	10:00 PM 12:45 AM	360°- 2 THE EXCEPTION THE EXCEPTION	10:15 PM 12:45 AM
FANAR-2 MINIONS (Re Release) Abu Shanab (Re-Release) FOOTBALL MATCH- "Real Madrid vs Juventus" Abu Shanab (Re-Release)	9:30 PM 11:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM	360°- 3 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:30 PM 11:00 PM 12:30 AM
FANAR-3 FIREMAN SAM: Alien Alert! The Movie KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:45 PM 11:15 PM	AL-KOUT.1 THE EXCEPTION Abu Shanab (Re-Release) FOOTBALL MATCH- "Real Madrid vs Juventus" Abu Shanab (Re-Release)	10:00 PM 12:15 AM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM
FANAR-4 THE EXCEPTION FOOTBALL MATCH- "Real Madrid vs Juventus" THE EXCEPTION	10:15 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.2 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:45 PM 11:15 PM 12:45 AM
FANAR-5 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	10:15 PM 11:45 PM 1:15 AM	AL-KOUT.3 Hasan wa Boqloz (Arabic) (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:15 PM 12:30 AM
MARINA-1 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD Abu Shanab (Re-Release)	10:00 PM 12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.4 FIREMAN SAM: Alien Alert! The Movie Safr 5 Njoom (Kuwaiti Film) (Re-Release) Safr 5 Njoom (Kuwaiti Film) (Re-Release)	9:30 PM 11:00 PM 1:00 AM
MARINA-2 FIREMAN SAM: Alien Alert! The Movie Hasan wa Boqloz (Arabic) (Re-Release) Hasan wa Boqloz (Arabic) (Re-Release)	9:30 PM 11:00 PM 1:00 AM	BAIRAQ-1 MINIONS (Re Release) THE BOSS BABY	9:45 PM 11:45 PM
MARINA-3 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL THE EXCEPTION	9:45 PM 11:45 PM	BAIRAQ-2 FIREMAN SAM: Alien Alert! The Movie DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	10:00 PM 11:30 PM
AVENUES-1 MINIONS (Re Release) ALIEN: COVENANT	9:30 PM 11:30 PM	BAIRAQ-3 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:30 PM 12:05 AM
AVENUES-2 MINIONS(Re Release)-3D-4DX KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD (2D-4DX)	10:00 PM 12:05 AM	PLAZA GODHA -Malayalam SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS -Hindi	9:30 PM 12:05 AM
AVENUES-3 THE BOSS BABY FOOTBALL MATCH- "Real Madrid vs Juventus" HERE ALONE	10:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM	LAILA MINIONS (Re Release) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	10:00 PM 12:05 AM
AVENUES-4 ALIEN: COVENANT Safr 5 Njoom (Kuwaiti Film) (Re-Release)	10:15 PM 12:45 AM	AJIAL.1 GODHA -Malayalam GODHA -Malayalam	9:30 PM 12:05 AM
AVENUES-5 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:45 PM 12:15 AM	AJIAL.2 SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS -Hindi SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS -Hindi	9:45 PM 12:30 AM
AVENUES-6 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	10:15 PM 11:45 PM	AJIAL.3 DOBAARA: See Your Evil (Hindi) DOBAARA: See Your Evil (Hindi)	10:00 PM 12:15 AM
		AJIAL.4 RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	9:30 PM 12:15 AM

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PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	03:15
Shorook	04:49
Duhr:	11:46
Asr:	15:20
Maghrib:	18:43
Isha:	20:14

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381

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Berliners laugh and cry over long delayed airport

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VLADIMIR PUTIN HOSTS MODI AT RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC SHOWCASE



FLORIDA: A panorama view from the balcony view from a condo on the 34th floor of the Porsche Design Tower on Sunny Isles Beach, Florida. — AFP photos

HIGH-END LUXURY HOMES ALL THE RAGE IN MIAMI

MIAMI: Property developer Gil Dezer owns 29 cars. And he plans to admire some of them from his couch in a swank Miami high-rise building, with the ocean in the background. Yes, Dezer is planning to park the cars IN his apartment. Miami's 60-floor Porsche Design Tower—the first of its kind in the world has glass-enclosed elevators that bring sports cars up to the plush homes of their owners. The residential skyscraper, which has 132 units and opened in March, is the latest of several super-luxury buildings dotting the Miami coastline.

But what if you don't own a Porsche? "Why wouldn't you have a Porsche?" asked the 42-year-old Dezer, who developed the project at the request of the German automaker. Of course, if you paid between \$5.5 million and \$33 million for your apartment, chances are you own a Porsche. The tower, which was designed by the Sieger Suarez architectural firm, is located on Sunny Isles Beach, a barrier island off Miami. The apartments include balcony pools, all with a glorious view of Miami Bay, high above the pristine sands.

But the building's signature feature is of course the three \$40 million "Dezervators"—named for the developer—that lift the vehicles of the billionaire tenants into their living rooms. "If you love your car and you see it as a piece of art ... this is the kind of place you're going to want," said Dezer, who also played a role in the rise of Trump Palace and Trump Royale on Sunny Isles. "Instead of hanging your art on the wall, you have your art right behind your glass divider in your living room."

How about a private island?

Tennis courts, saunas, gyms—those amenities are banal by Miami standards. In the southern Florida city's uber-luxurious market, "Dezervators" are the kind of thing needed to impress the super-rich. From the balconies of Porsche Design Tower, you can see the twin 16-story towers of Prive, also designed by

Sieger Suarez. The complex is located on a private island connected to the mainland by a members-only bridge.

How much will it cost? A cool \$2-8 million. At The Grove at Grand Bay, designed by Danish architect Bjarke Ingels, two 20-story glass towers twist up into the sky with views over the waters of Coconut Grove. The towers have rooftop pools—and a pet spa.

All about flash

"Generally if you're going to do anything wild and crazy, Miami's the place to do it," Dezer said. "This was a test bed for us, and the market here was always very good for new things." Florida has a history of zany invest-

ments. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, clever developers seduced millionaires with exotic proposals to invest in the mosquito-ridden swamp area. Some of the earliest Florida developments were made by people like oil and railway magnate Henry Flagler, and railroad millionaire Henry Plant.

They entered the Sunshine State's real estate and tourism market "by trying to attract as many of their fellow millionaires that they could," said Craig Pittman, author of "Oh, Florida!" a book about the state's eccentricities. Since then, Miami has been defined by the flashy and ostentatious, people "who want to say, 'Yes, I have a lot of money, and look at all of my possessions,'" Pittman said.

He added: "Miami really is all about flash. The nickname is Magic City. You can't get much flashier than that."

A prime pop culture example is the 1983 movie "Scarface," starring Al Pacino as a Cuban immigrant who becomes a millionaire drug lord. The film "was all about the ostentatious use of ill-gotten wealth, and what happens to you when you do that," Pittman said. "People don't see that as a cautionary tale. They see that as something to emulate." Miami's not-so-secret secret is that it is a safe haven for foreign investments—sometimes shady foreign money. In early May, federal police in Brazil launched a money laundering probe linked to the real estate market in Miami. The investigation was named "Operation Miami Connection."

Safe investments

More than half — 54 percent—of Miami foreign real estate buyers come from Latin America, according to the National Association of Realtors. Another 18 percent are Europeans and 13 percent Canadians. A closer look at the figures show that Canadians were the top buyers of luxury apartments in 2016, followed by Venezuelans and Brazilians. "When people feel like they want to put money into a secure investment, they think of the luxury apartment market in Miami and Miami Beach," said John.

Stuart, a professor at Florida International University's College of Architecture + The Arts. The south Florida real estate market lost steam in 2016 due to the US presidential campaign, but experts predict it will stabilize this year. "Pricing is adjusting to reflect more supply on the market," said Antoine Charvet, corporate communications director at Integra Realty Resources. But for Dezer, the Miami luxury market is in a world of its own, immune to market ups and downs. For Charvet, south Florida is "the French Riviera of the eastern United States, and Miami is Monaco." — AFP



FLORIDA: The Porsche Design Tower has many amenities for residents including all condos having a view of the ocean and the bay as seen in this bedroom on Sunny Isles Beach, Florida.



TOKYO: A man walks past an electronic stock board showing world stock prices at a securities firm in Tokyo. — AP

MOST ASIAN MARKETS HIGHER WHILE STERLING HIT BY VOTE UNCERTAINTY CHINA'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR UNDER GREAT PRESSURE

HONG KONG: Tokyo led broad gains across Asian markets yesterday, boosted by a weaker yen and upbeat economic news, while the pound extended losses on growing uncertainty about the outcome of next week's British election. The advances came as investors brushed off losses on Wall Street that followed an uninspiring report on the economy from the Federal Reserve. Tokyo ended 1.1 percent higher as dealers welcomed a survey showing Japanese firms boosted their capital spending in the first quarter, a sign they are growing more confident and suggesting the economy is picking up.

The figures came a day after separate numbers showed factory output in April climbed at its fastest pace in six years. "There are good stories and bad stories out there for investors, but the market is largely welcoming the upbeat business investment data," Toshihiko Matsuno, chief strategist at SMBC Friend Securities, said. Most other regional markets tracked the Nikkei.

Hong Kong added 0.6 percent and

Sydney put on 0.2 percent, Singapore was 0.5 percent up. Wellington, Taipei, Manila and Bangkok were also comfortably higher. However, Shanghai shed 0.5 percent following the release of the private Caixin purchasing managers index of manufacturing, which showed activity contracted in May for the first time in 11 months. The result disappointed dealers, a day after an official reading pointed to a continued increase, beating forecasts.

"China's manufacturing sector has come under greater pressure in May and the economy is clearly on a downward trajectory," Caixin analyst Zhengsheng Zhong said in a joint statement with data compiler IHS Markit. Seoul lost 0.1 percent, while Mumbai was down 0.2 percent a day after data showed the Indian economy slowed in the past financial year during which the government made the shock move to ban most of the currency in circulation.

Yuan strength

Asia was given a negative lead from

New York after the Fed said in its "beige book" that while sentiment among US firms was broadly upbeat, there were worries in some regions about trade and other government policies. However, it did not provide any suggestion that the central bank would hold off lifting interest rates as expected later this month, providing support to the dollar. Eyes are on the release today of US jobs data, which will provide a better handle on the Fed's rate plans.

The pound stumbled after a fresh opinion poll pointed to a hung parliament at next Thursday's British general election. Sterling had risen in recent weeks on the prospect that Prime Minister Theresa May would win a landslide, giving her a stronger hand in Brexit talks. But the currency has fallen with the government's poll numbers on fears Britain could end up with a bad exit deal. The yuan hit its highest levels in seven months yesterday leading to talk Beijing was propping up the beleaguered unit following last week's credit rating downgrade by Moody's.

Since the downgraded China on May 24 — which cited slowing growth and ballooning debt—the yuan has strengthened sharply and was trading yesterday at around 6.7800 per US dollar, a level not seen since early November. Its offshore rate, which is less controlled by Beijing, was 6.7330, its strongest since mid-October.

China said last week it was considering changing its mechanism for guiding the yuan's value, which was interpreted as a sign Beijing would tighten its grip despite pledges to allow market forces to play a larger role. In early European trade London rose 0.4 percent, Paris added 0.3 percent and Frankfurt was 0.2 percent higher. —AFP

VENEZUELA DEVALUES CURRENCY

CARACAS: Crisis-hit Venezuela devalued its currency by 64 percent in a dollar auction that aimed to stabilize its foreign exchange market, officials said Wednesday. Under an overhauled official exchange system, the government let investors bid for the dollars at a new higher rate in what President Nicolas Maduro said was an effort to undermine the black market. It was the latest in a series of moves to ease a crisis in a country stricken by soaring inflation and shortages of food and medicine.

The US bills sold at a rate of 2,010 bolivars per dollar, said Pedro Maldonado, president of the central bank's Currency Auction Committee. He told reporters the rate was "an unequivocal indication that we are beginning a process of economic recovery." But the rate represented a sharp devaluation compared to 721 bolivars under the previous system—and still far below the black market rate, currently around 6,000 bolivars per dollar.

The central bank sold \$24 million overall, mostly to companies importing foreign goods. "The amount assigned was laughable. It shows the lack of currency," economist Jesus Casique said. The result was announced after an outcry over US bank Goldman Sachs's decision to buy \$2.8 billion in bonds issued by Venezuela state oil company PDVSA. The opposition said that move gave a lifeline to Maduro. Casique said the dollar auction "will not boost productivity that is why they decided to cash in the PDVSA bond with a discount of 69 percent, to give the official exchange rate a breathing space."

Constitutional reform

Essential foods and medicines in Venezuela are priced at a special low fixed dollar exchange rate. But due to shortages, many other items are only available on the black market at a much higher rate. The crisis has prompted deadly unrest in street protests by Maduro's opponents demanding elections to remove him from power. Maduro says the crisis is the result of an "economic war" backed by the United States.

Venezuela's economic collapse has been driven by the fall in prices for its crucial oil exports since 2014. Authorities on Wednesday began signing up candidates for a planned constitutional reform body, a move that has inflamed deadly unrest stemming from anti-government protests. Opponents of socialist President Nicolas Maduro say he aims to keep himself in power by stacking the planned "constituent assembly" with his allies.

The electoral authorities have called on candidates to sign up online on Wednesday and Thursday to seek election to the 545-member assembly, which will be tasked with writing a new constitution. The center right-led opposition coalition, the Democratic Unity Roundtable, has vowed not to take part. "I hope no one will commit treason by taking part in such an absolutely fraudulent process," opposition leader Henrique Capriles said.

Bursting point

Opposition and government supporters meanwhile staged the latest in two months of street protests, with fresh clashes between prosecutors and police. Prosecutors say the unrest has left 60 people dead so far. "The game seems to be deadlocked. The government is becoming more and more repressive and the opposition is continuing its protests in the street," said political analyst Luis Salamanca. "There could be a total, serious confrontation, permanent chaos. Anything could happen here—even a popular uprising." —AFP



CARACAS: This file picture shows Venezuelan opposition activists clashing with the riot police during a rally against the government of President Nicolas Maduro in Caracas. — AFP

UK HOUSE PRICES FALL FOR THREE MONTHS IN A ROW

LONDON: British house prices fell for a third consecutive month in May for the first time since 2009, according to a survey yesterday that underlines the housing market's slowdown since last year's Brexit vote. House prices fell 0.2 percent month-on-month in May, compared with a 0.4 percent drop in April, mortgage lender Nationwide said. A Reuters poll of economists pointed to a drop of 0.1 percent.

Year-on-year, house prices were 2.1 percent higher, slowing sharply from growth of 2.6 percent in April. "It is still early days, but this provides further evidence that the housing market is losing momentum," said Robert Gardner, Nationwide chief economist. "Moreover, this may be indicative of a wider slowdown in the household sector, though data continues to send mixed signals in this regard." —Reuters

IMPACT OF ILLINOIS' 3-YEAR BUDGET IMPASSE

SPRINGFIELD: More than 1 million Illinois residents are feeling the impact of the state's unprecedented budget impasse, a situation that's expected to worsen with the prospect of entering a third straight fiscal year without a spending plan. State legislators adjourned this week without an agreement for the fiscal year that starts July 1, impacting students, small businesses, domestic violence victims and others. Here's a look at some of fallout of the ongoing budget fight between Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner and Democrats controlling the Legislature:

Financial snapshot

Illinois closes out the current fiscal year nearly \$6 billion in the red, a deficit that continues to grow. Spending mandated by court orders and state statute continues at levels set by the last budget lawmakers approved in 2014, when revenues were higher. A 2011 temporary income tax increase has since rolled back.

Adding to the mess is a ballooning backlog of unpaid bills to state contractors and vendors that's reached \$14.5 billion, a worst-in-the-nation credit rating and roughly \$130 billion in unfunded pension liabilities.

Education

Universities and colleges say the standoff threatens enrollment with numerous cutbacks and credit downgrades. This week, Northeastern Illinois University, which has already instituted temporary shutdowns and furloughed employees, announced it'd eliminate 180 full-time jobs. State-funded grants that help some 130,000 low-income students pay tuition are also in limbo. A stopgap budget covered some grants until January. Some schools have been able to front the money in hopes that they'll be reimbursed, but others can't.

Elementary and high schools have also made reductions, offering fewer special education services

and cancelling some buses. Chicago Public Schools announced in early May that it'll have to borrow \$389 million to get through the rest of the year. The nation's second-largest district had banked on \$215 million in pension relief from Springfield, which Rauner vetoed late last year.

Social services

Organizations that provide state social services are waiting six months or more to get paid. Many have drastically scaled back programs or let employees go. In the stopgap budget, funding for domestic violence shelters was left out completely and weren't even told until December, forcing several to cut staff and create waiting lists. The Women's Center, a shelter offering services to domestic violence and sexual assault victims in eight southern Illinois counties, has said that without an infusion of state funds in the coming months they'll have to close their doors. —AP

VIETNAM AND US SIGN DEALS WORTH \$8 BILLION

WASHINGTON: Vietnam and the US have signed \$8 billion in deals, including a massive engine contract with a Vietnamese budget carrier famed for its bikini-clad air hostesses, officials said. The deals were announced during a visit by Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc to the White House Wednesday, a trip aimed at drumming up trade ties after US President Donald Trump pulled out of a massive Asia-Pacific trade pact earlier this year, decrying it as a "job killer".

Vietnam, which stood to gain enormously from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) before the US pullout, has been aggressively courting Washington to bolster business ties, and Phuc is the first Southeast Asian leader to visit Trump's White House. The new deals saw Vietjet sign a 12-year engine contract worth \$3.58 billion with CFM International, a joint venture of General Electric and Safran. The airline also signed a separate deal worth \$1 billion with GE Capital Aviation Services in aircraft financing.

"We strongly believe that this agreement will promote economic and trade exchange between the two countries and create millions (of) jobs for the two peoples," said Vietjet CEO Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, who is the communist country's first and only female billionaire. The country's largest low-cost carrier, Vietjet is best-known for air hostesses sporting bikinis on some of its flights. The company said it raked in \$1.21 billion in revenues last year and its shares have soared since its market debut in February. The other new deals, signed in the sectors of hospitality, science and technology, academia and energy, come as Washington opts for bilateral agreements over sprawling free trade pacts.

Trump has singled out Vietnam as one of the countries allegedly stealing American jobs and has vowed to boost exports to the fast-growing nation to narrow the \$32 billion trade deficit tipped in Hanoi's favor. "The growth of the middle class and the increasing purchasing power in Vietnam are further incentives to strengthening our long-term trade and investment relationship," said US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, according to a statement about the deals, which he said would create 23,000 American jobs. —AFP



HANOI: This file photo shows a VietJet Air plane preparing to take off from Hanoi's Noi Bai International airport. —AFP



SAINT PETERSBURG: Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) in Saint Petersburg yesterday. — AFP

VLADIMIR PUTIN HOSTS MODI AT RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC SHOWCASE 'RUSSOPHOBIA IN THE WEST WON'T LAST FOR LONG'

SAINT PETERSBURG: Russian President Vladimir Putin hosts Indian premier Narendra Modi yesterday on the sidelines of the Kremlin's annual economic forum, as Moscow looks to burnish a fragile recovery despite tensions with the West. Modi and Putin will meet on the third leg of the Indian leader's four-nation tour of Europe with the pair looking to bolster declining trade between the once key partners.

Modi is the guest of honor at this year's three-day Saint Petersburg Economic Forum—Russia's answer to Davos—that Putin wants to use to push the idea that Russia has turned the page on a brutal recession caused by low oil prices and sanctions over Ukraine. Speaking to journalists as the showcase kicked off, the combative Kremlin strongman insisted that measures against Moscow, including economic sanctions, had ended up having "zero effect".

Putin said he hoped "Russophobia" in the West would "not last for too long, not forever, if only because the understanding has to come that it is counterproductive and harms everyone." For the Kremlin, India represents the sort of major emerging market it wants to do more business with as it looks to insulate itself against geopolitical shocks with the unpredictable Donald Trump in the White House.

"It is very clear that there will be a very strong statement that Russia is looking to diversify its political relations, is not looking to have one best friend," analyst Chris Weafer from Macro Advisory said. "Rather than praising China or being critical of Europe, they will try to say 'We are going to be diversified, we are going to be open.'"

Boosting India trade

Russia and India enjoyed a decades-long alliance forged during the Cold War, when the Soviet Union was New Delhi's largest trading partner, diplomatic ally and main arms supplier, providing everything from tanks to aircraft. But the relationship became unmoored following the collapse of the USSR, as India underwent an economic transformation and increasingly sought to build trade ties with Western nations.

That process has accelerated in recent years as New Delhi has orbited closer to Washington, and Russia has fostered relationships with India's chief regional rivals Pakistan and China. Modi and Putin are expected to oversee a number of deals and discuss a framework agreement for Moscow to supply more reactors to a nuclear plant in southern India as the country seeks to reduce its reliance on highly polluting coal. —AFP

PUERTO RICO BUDGET PROMISES TAX BREAKS, PROTECTS PENSIONS

SAN JUAN: Puerto Rico's governor announced a budget Wednesday that promises tax breaks, sets aside more than \$400 million for debt service and guarantees \$2 billion in pension payments amid a deep economic crisis. The proposed \$9.56 billion budget is more than a half million dollars larger than last year's, and Gov. Ricardo Rossello said that for the first time in recent history the budget would be truly balanced. "In the past, money was taken from areas, increasing budgeted spending and hiding debt," he said. "That's over."

The US territory is struggling to emerge from a 10-year recession that has prompted more than a half million Puerto Ricans to flee to the US mainland. Rossello's administration is now in the midst of restructuring a portion of a \$73 billion public debt load through a bankruptcy-like process in federal court after previous administrations borrowed millions of dollars to cover the island's debt for decades.

Despite the economic woes, Rossello said the government's general fund will now ensure that retired government workers keep receiving monthly pensions even as the island's public retirement system that is underfunded by about \$50 billion collapses. To offset the \$2 billion pension payment, Rossello proposes cuts such as eliminating millions of dollars in annual subsidies to Puerto Rico's 78 municipalities, prompting some mayors to start charging for garbage collection and possibly other services.

Lack of transparency

Rossello also said he is setting aside a \$200 million reserve demanded by a federal control board that threatened to furlough tens of thousands of government workers if the reserve is not included in the budget. In addition, the governor said he will soon submit a tax reform bill that will include more than \$200 million in tax breaks and exempt everyone from paying taxes on the first \$12,500 earned. He also said retirees would not pay taxes on the first \$25,000 earned instead of the current \$15,000 if the bill is approved.

A copy of the budget was not immediately available, and Rossello did not provide details on how much money he set aside for education, health and public safety. "The lack of transparency has not allowed the people to understand how the budget is being increased to \$9.5 billion during an economy that is shrinking," said Rep. Rafael Hernandez of the island's main opposition party. Hernandez said he also was concerned about a nearly 50 percent cut to nonprofit organizations. "The weight and sacrifice that the people of Puerto Rico will have to bear in upcoming years will be placed squarely on the back of workers and those who are most in need," he said. Legislators expect to hold public hearings starting Monday and have until June 25 to finalize the budget. The governor's party controls both the House of Representatives and the Senate.—AP

BRAZIL'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLS FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2014

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's sickly economy got an unexpected glimmer of good news Wednesday with unemployment figures showing a slight dip to 13.6 percent rather than yet another record rise. It was the first fall in unemployment figures since 2014 and came amid expectations that Latin America's biggest economy is finally emerging from its worst recession in history.

The IBGE state statistics office said that 14 million people were out of work in the February-April period, or 13.6 percent of the workforce. While still a huge number, the announcement at least put a stop to what had been a relentless series of increases. With the March rate at 13.7 percent, amounting to 14.2 million unemployed, economists had been bracing for another hike to 13.9 percent, according to a forecast from Gradual Investimentos.

The marginally better situation will boost President Michel Temer's attempt to stay in office despite a raging corruption scandal. The conservative leader faces multiple calls for his resignation and a probe in the Supreme Court that could see him stripped of office over charges of obstruction justice and corruption. Temer is attempting to rally political support, saying that his program of restoring fiscal responsibility to Brazil and implementing austerity measures is helping to end a two-year recession—the deepest in the country's history.—AFP



BERLIN: This file photo shows passengers bridge on the tarmac of the Berlin-Brandenburg International airport (BER) during a visit to the building site in Schoenefeld near Berlin.—AFP

WILL IT EVER OPEN? BERLINERS LAUGH AND CRY OVER LONG DELAYED AIRPORT

BER AIRPORT REMAINS UNFINISHED, BYWORD FOR FIASCO

BERLIN: Lufthansa had its planes ready and German Chancellor Angela Merkel was lined up for the ribbon-cutting ceremony—all was in place for the opening of Berlin's state-of-the-art airport on June 3, 2012. Except the airport itself. Five years on, and the BER airport remains unfinished, shuttered and a byword for fiasco in a country usually better known for its engineering prowess and obsession with punctuality.

Construction had begun back in 2006 for the mega-project set to replace the German capital's two ageing and saturated airports—Tegel and Schoenefeld. But the opening of BER, on the southern outskirts of Berlin, was scrapped a month before Merkel was due to inaugurate the site in front of 10,000 guests. The problem related to the fire alarm and smoke extraction system—but it soon emerged that this was far from the only issue.

Besides a litany of technical faults that included a roof twice the authorized weight, there were planning errors, suppliers going bankrupt, and suspicions of corruption. Finally the scandal cost Berlin's former mayor Klaus Wowereit his job. Meanwhile BER's building costs more than tripled from the 1.7 billion euros (\$1.9 billion) initially budgeted to more than 6 billion euros (\$6.7 billion) to date. Authorities are running quirky weekly visits to the airport for a fee, but at 10 euros a head, they are doing little for the bottom line.

No flights

While the airport remains shut, its runways are occasionally being used by neighboring Schoenefeld airport, which was once the air hub of communist East Berlin and is undergoing its own renovation. Other infrastructure linked to BER has to be constantly maintained so it will be ready when the airport finally opens its doors. To ensure that the rail tracks—and

stations built for the airport remain operational and free of mould, an empty regional train circulates on the route two nights a week. The ghost trains will continue their lonely trips until the day the terminal opens, says Deutsche Bahn. At the nearby Hotel Steigenberger, eight housekeepers and technicians maintain empty rooms—even though the hotel "is not expected to open before the actual inauguration of the airport" according to its operator Deutsche Hospitality. Travelers booking flights on websites are already offered the choice of landing at Tegel, Schoenefeld or BER—except that those who pick the third choice find no available flights. On Berlin roads, signs showing the way to the airport are, for now, simply crossed out.

Running joke

Lufthansa spokesman Wolfgang Weber recalled the day the airport was meant to open, with one of the carrier's Airbus jets set to be the first on the tarmac. Germany's largest airline had a "big plan" to bump up the number of direct flights

from Berlin to other destinations from eight to 45. Tickets were sold, planes readied and personnel hired, he said, but "step by step, we cut down this flight plan".

Today, Lufthansa and its subsidiary Eurowings link Berlin to 30 destinations from Tegel airport, and the carrier has kept BER off its flights plans for coming years. "We need a date—and to have that date at least a year in advance," said Weber. But to avoid yet more embarrassment, authorities have not set a new date. Thomas Winkelmann, the boss of Air Berlin, has acknowledged "the limits of Berlin in terms of infrastructure".

In April—despite the carrier's name—he decided to boost the western city of Duesseldorf as a base for its long-haul flights. For now, BER is a running joke among Berliners. Some have suggested the sweeping and deserted site as a possible nuclear waste storage site. Others, picking up on the Internet meme of "Chuck Norris facts", say only the reputedly omnipotent US martial arts film hero can rescue the project now.—AFP

BARCLAYS SLASHES STAKE IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIT

LONDON: British banking giant Barclays said yesterday it has further reduced its stake in its South African operations as part of a global strategic re-think unveiled last year. Barclays said in a statement that it had placed a stake of 33.7 percent in Barclays Africa with institutional investors, raising some £2.224 billion (2.5 billion euros, \$2.9 billion). Barclays, which has decided to focus on its two core markets of Britain and the United States, now holds a stake of just 16.4 percent

in the unit.

It does want to pull out completely, however, and will hold on to a stake of 15 percent, it said. Barclays Africa, which is listed on the Johannesburg stock exchange and is present in around 10 countries, has declined in value in recent months, against the backdrop of the political crisis in South Africa. The British bank was compelled to make a write-down of around £900 million on the unit in its first-quarter accounts.—AFP

UBER HEAD OF FINANCE LEAVING AS COMPANY NARROWS LOSSES

SAN FRANCISCO: Uber confirmed Wednesday that the company's head of finance is leaving, just after the on-demand ride service trimmed its quarterly loss to \$708 million on rising revenue. Gautam Gupta will depart Uber in July to become chief operating officer at a younger startup in San Francisco, according to the company. "Over the last four years, (Gupta) has been indispensable in helping build Uber from an idea into the business it is today," founder and chief executive Travis Kalanick said in a statement.

"We couldn't have done it without him, and I will miss his energy, focus and infectious enthusiasm," Uber said that its revenue during the first three months of

this year rose some 18 percent to \$3.4 billion, but the company logged a loss of \$708 million without taking into account stock compensation for employees. Uber cited the numbers as progress, given that losses in the preceding quarter totaled \$991 million. "These results demonstrate that our business remains healthy and resilient as we focus on improving our culture, management and relationship with drivers," an Uber spokesperson said.

"The narrowing of our losses in the first quarter puts us on a good trajectory towards profitability." Uber has seen a shake-out in its executive ranks as it works through a series of scandals that included disclosures

about a culture of sexism, cut-throat workplace tactics, covert use of law enforcement-evading software, and release of a dash-cam video showing Kalanick berating and cursing at one of Uber's drivers.

Uber said Tuesday that it had fired an engineer accused in a trade secrets suit involving files he purportedly purloined from Alphabet's self-driving car unit Waymo. The case stems from a lawsuit filed in February by Waymo, formerly known as the Google self-driving car unit, which claimed a former manager took a trove of technical data with him when he left to launch a competing venture that went on to become Otto and was later acquired by Uber. — AFP

DAIMLER, VW EYE CHINA'S ELECTRIC CAR MARKET

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German auto giants Daimler and Volkswagen announced plans yesterday to secure pole positions in China's electric car market as the world's second-biggest economy ramps up investment in cleaner energy. Coinciding with a visit to Berlin by Chinese premier Li Keqiang, Daimler and VW were among a string of top German companies to unveil major business deals with China.

China, the world's biggest carbon emitter, has been investing billions in clean energy infrastructure and is building up an e-car industry, as its leaders battle to clear up the notorious choking pollution enveloping its biggest cities, including Beijing. Among the agreements signed in the presence of Li and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the automakers agreed to build electric cars in China, which they described as the world's biggest market for "electromobility".

Daimler said it would take a minority stake in Chinese carmaker BAIC's electric car subsidiary. At the same time, Daimler will also invest in upgrading the current production facilities at its existing joint venture with BAIC, "paving the way for the introduction of New Energy Vehicle production," the German group said. "China today is already the world's largest market for new energy vehicles, and Daimler is committed to contributing to the further development of electric mobility in this country," said Daimler's China chief Hubertus Troska.

As for Volkswagen, it announced it would "develop, produce and market electric vehicles as well as mobility services" in a 50-50 joint venture with carmaker JAC. VW, the world's largest carmaker, aims to sell some 1.5 million electric cars per year in China by 2025, thanks to its deals with JAC and competitors SAIC and FAW. Its first vehicles jointly designed with JAC are scheduled to roll off the production line in 2018.

Trump and trade

Both China and Germany have found themselves under fire recently from US President Donald Trump who lashed out at their massive trade surpluses. The meeting between Merkel and Li appeared much more good-natured, and Li emphatically said that China welcomed foreign goods. "China will continue to provide German companies, particularly automobile firms, with a good environment to sell more cars," he told a news conference after talks with Merkel. — AFP



BREILIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel, center, and Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, left hidden look on as the Chairman of the BAIC Group Xu Heyi, second left, and Hubertus Troska, right, CEO of Daimler Greater China Ltd and board member of the Daimler AG, shake hands after signing an economic agreement at the end of a two-day visit of the Chinese Prime Minister to Germany yesterday in Berlin. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Under construction residential high rise buildings facing a golf course are seen in Noida, a suburb of New Delhi, India, yesterday. — AP

INDIA FINANCE MINISTER DENIES CURRENCY OVERHAUL HURT GROWTH

JAITLEY LAUDS DEMONETIZATION FOR INCREASED BANKING

NEW DELHI: India's finance minister said a massive currency overhaul that disrupted commerce across the country last year had little effect on the economy, a day after India reported a slowdown in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley pointed yesterday to global economic factors as well as banks' debt burdens for the slowing growth in gross domestic product to 6.1 percent in January-March, compared with 7 percent in the previous quarter.

The country's statistics office, meanwhile, blamed weaker expansion in manufacturing, agriculture and construction. Worldwide, "economic growth has slowed, trade has shrunk, and there have been protectionist noises in major economies, along with geopolitical uncertainty," Jaitley told reporters. Two years of poor harvests, due to inadequate rainfall, also hurt the agricultural sector, which accounts for more than 13 percent of the economy and provides work for about half of the country's 1.25 billion people.

The government's growth projection for the fiscal year was left unchanged at 7.1 percent, despite the financial upheaval triggered last Nov 8 when India scrapped most of its currency notes without warning. That was possible because the government revised growth upward in the first quarter, from 7.2 percent to 7.9 percent, as well as the second quarter, from 7.4 percent to 7.5 percent. A growth rate of 7-8 percent "is a fairly

reasonable level of growth and very good by global standards," Jaitley told reporters, while lauding the demonetization drive for having increased banking, online trade and the overall tax base.

Impact of demonetization

"We have set a new normal after demonetization. It is no longer safe to deal in cash. We have shown decisiveness in policy making." Analysts disagreed with Jaitley on the impact of demonetizing 86 percent of India's cash supply. For weeks, Indians were left scrambling for currency notes and waiting in long lines at ATMs that were often empty. Many small businesses in the cash-dependent economy, especially in real estate, tourism, transportation and gold and gems, were hit hard.

"The lower-than-anticipated fourth-quarter GDP number reflects the lingering impact of demonetization," said Shubhada Rao, the chief economist at Yes Bank in Mumbai. The research head of trading firm Angel Broking agreed, and said the slowdown was expected after the currency overhaul. However, "we do not expect demonetization impact to spill over" into fiscal 2017-18 "as multiple sectors are showing signs of recovery as well as a positive thrust from the normal monsoon," Vaibhav Agrawal said in a statement. — AP

NATIONALS OVERPOWER GIANTS 3-1

WASHINGTON: Max Scherzer struck out 11 in a five-hitter and Washington beat San Francisco to complete a three-game sweep. Ryan Zimmerman hit his 15th homer, a three-run shot off Matt Cain (3-4) in the first inning that stood up as Scherzer (6-3) went the distance for the first time this season. The Nationals played without slugger Bryce Harper, who began serving a three-game suspension for his role in Monday's bench-clearing brawl between the teams. Harper initially was suspended four games but had the penalty reduced and agreed to drop his appeal. Scherzer retired 10 straight to begin the game. He didn't walk a batter for the second time this season on the way to his seventh career complete game. Cain lost his third straight.

Astros 17 Twins 6

George Springer reached base in all six plate appearances and hit two of Houston's season-high six home runs to lead the Astros to their seventh straight victory, 17-6 over the Minnesota Twins on Wednesday. Carlos Correa, Alex Bregman, Evan Gattis and Marwin Gonzalez also went deep for the Astros, who scored 40 runs in the three games to set a franchise record for runs in a series of any length. They had 19 hits on Wednesday and 37 in the series. Brian Dozier, Eddie Rosario and Jason Castro homered for the Twins, who have lost four straight. Hector Santiago (4-5) gave up six runs and eight hits and walked three in six innings, three days after he was an emergency fill-in during the 15th inning of a loss to Tampa Bay. Springer's two homers traveled an estimated 900 combined feet, including a moon shot off of Ryan Pressly in the six-run seventh inning that landed just short of the third deck in left-center field.

Padres 2, Cubs 1

Rookie Franchy Cordero tripled in the eighth and scored on Yangervis Solarte's fielder's choice as San Diego handed Chicago its season-high sixth straight loss. Luis Perdomo and two relievers combined to hold the struggling Cubs to three hits. The rebuilding Padres won their season-high fourth straight game and swept the Cubs for the first time since Aug 6-8, 2012. The defending World Series champion Cubs, who were swept at the Dodgers during the weekend, finished their first winless trip of at least six games since Aug. 3-8, 2012, when they also lost three at Los Angeles and three at San Diego. Overall the Cubs have lost seven in a row on the road. Cordero, who made his big league debut on Saturday, tripled to right-center off Koji Uehara (1-3) leading off the eighth.

Orioles 10, Yankees 4

Adam Jones homered and drove in five runs and Chris Davis added a two-run shot as Baltimore beat Masahiro Tanaka and New York. Baltimore took two of three from the AL East leaders after coming in with a seven-game losing streak. The Yankees have lost 11 straight series in Baltimore - the second-longest road skid in franchise history behind a 12-series drought at Oakland from 1985-91. Back in the lineup after missing four straight games with a sore hip, Jones contributed an RBI double to a four-run third inning, hit a three-run homer in the fourth and drove in a run with an infield hit in the eighth. Tanaka (5-5) lost his fourth straight start, extending the longest streak of his career.

Cardinals 2, Dodgers 1

Dexter Fowler hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning to back Carlos Martinez and give St. Louis a victory over Los Angeles. Martinez (4-4) allowed one run and four hits while striking out nine as he pitched eight innings to help St. Louis snap a three-game losing streak. Ross Stripling (0-3) lost for the first time since April 26 as he allowed Fowler's seventh home run of the season, a 429-foot shot to right-center field. The Dodgers had their six-game winning streak end. Seung-Hwan Oh pitched a scoreless ninth for his 12th save in 14 chances.

Diamondbacks 6, Pirates 5, 14 Innings

Chris Owings singled home the go-ahead run in the 14th inning and Arizona outlasted Pittsburgh in a game that took more than 4 1/2 hours to play - plus a 93-minute rain delay. Paul Goldschmidt and Nick Ahmed homered for the Diamondbacks, who led in the ninth and 11th before finally putting away the Pirates. TJ McFarland (3-0) pitched three hitless innings for the win. Ahmed hit a solo shot in the 11th but Jordy Mercer tied the score in the bottom half with a home run of his own as steady showers began to fall.

Blue Jays 5, Reds 4

Devon Travis hit a tiebreaking two-run home run in the seventh inning and Luke Maile also hit a two-run home run as Toronto beat Cincinnati to complete a three-game sweep. Jason Grilli (2-4) pitched one inning for the victory as the Blue Jays won for the eighth time in nine games and finished May at 18-10. Toronto hit 49 home runs in



SAN FRANCISCO: Los Angeles Dodgers' Yasiel Puig swings for a two run single off San Francisco Giants' Johnny Cueto in the sixth inning of a baseball game. —AP

May, going deep in 18 of its final 20 games. Joe Smith worked the eighth and Roberto Osuna survived a shaky ninth for his 11th save. Scott Schebler homered on Osuna's first pitch, his NL-leading 16th.

Brewers 7, Mets 1

Eric Thames hit his first home run in three weeks, Keon Broxton also went deep against an ineffective Jacob deGrom, and Milwaukee beat New York for just its third win in 10 games. Released by the Mets following a 50-game minor league drug suspension in 2009, Junior Guerra (1-0) defeated New York for the first time. He allowed four hits in six scoreless innings, struck out four and walked three, baffling batters with his splitter. In his previous outing, deGrom (4-2) threw 118 pitches and became the first Mets starter this year to reach the ninth inning.

Athletics 3, Indians 1

Sean Manaea allowed three hits in seven innings, Chad Pinder homered twice and drove in all three Oakland runs in a 3-1 win over Cleveland. Manaea (4-3) retired the first 10 hitters before Francisco Lindor homered with one out in the fourth. He gave up singles to Daniel Robertson and Edwin Encarnacion, along with a walk to Jose Ramirez. Pinder, the Athletics' No 9 hitter, hit a solo homer in the third and broke a 1-all tie with a two-run shot in the fifth. Mike Clevinger (2-2) gave up both home runs. Trevor Plouffe drew a lead-off walk in the fifth before Pinder hit a 2-2 pitch into the bleachers in left field to cap the first multi-homer game of his career. Santiago Casilla worked the ninth for his eighth save.

Marlins 10, Phillies 2

Justin Bour hit two home runs, increasing his season total to 15, and Miami completed its first series sweep of the season by beating Philadelphia before a sparse crowd. Marcell Ozuna hit his 14th homer for the Marlins, who have won four games in a row, their longest winning streak since last July. Dan Straily (4-3) struck out 10, allowed one earned run in 6 2/3 innings, and benefited from the offensive support to win his third start in a row. The Phillies (17-34), off to their worst start since 1961, went 6-22 in May. That's their fewest wins in a month since June 1997. Aaron Nola (2-3) lost his third start in a row. He gave up four runs and needed 73 pitches to get through three innings - his shortest outing of the year.

Red Sox 4, White Sox 1

Pablo Sandoval hit a tiebreaking single in Boston's four-run sixth inning and Drew Pomeranz struck out eight in his second straight win, helping the Red Sox beat Chicago. Sandoval went 3 for 4 in his first game since he was activated from the disabled list Tuesday after being sidelined by a sprained right knee. It was an encouraging sign for the Red Sox, in need of some help at the plate with Dustin Pedroia on the DL due to a sprained left wrist. Chicago wasted five scoreless innings from Mike Pelfrey in its second consecutive loss

after winning four of five. Anthony Swarzak (2-1) replaced Pelfrey, and the Red Sox jumped all over him.

Rays 7, Rangers 5, 10 Innings

Logan Morrison and Derek Norris homered in a three-run 10th inning to cap a late Tampa Bay comeback against Texas. Kevin Kiermaier tied the score with two outs in the ninth with a first-pitch homer off closer Matt Bush. The 10th-inning drives came off Sam Dyson (1-6), who began the season as the Rangers' closer. Stephen Souza Jr. hit a two-run homer in the second, his fifth in eight games. It came off Austin Bibens-Dirkx, who made his first major league start at age 32 following 12 seasons in the minors. Austin Pruitt (4-1), just recalled from Triple-A Durham, earned the win with two hitless innings. Alex Colome gave up a run but got his 15th save. Elvis Andrus had three hits and two RBIs for Texas.

Tigers 6, Royals 5

JD Martinez and Justin Upton each hit a two-run double with two outs in the third inning, helping Detroit hold off Kansas City. Royals starter Ian Kennedy (0-5) walked the bases loaded before giving up the doubles on consecutive pitches. Victor Martinez and Alex Avila homered for the Tigers, who completed a 4-7 road trip. Kennedy was pulled after allowing five runs in three innings. He is 0-7 in 13 starts since he last won on Sept 11. Warwick Saupold (1-0) tossed three scoreless innings in relief, and Justin Wilson closed for his fifth save.

Angels 2, Braves 1

Eric Young Jr made his first home run of the season a timely one, hitting a solo shot in the eighth inning to lift Los Angeles over Atlanta. Angels slugger Albert Pujols remained at 599 home runs. He had one single in four at-bats. Matt Kemp hit his 250th career homer for the Braves. Young, called up Monday to replace injured star Mike Trout, connected off reliever Arody Vizcaino (1-1), who had made 12 consecutive scoreless appearances. Blake Parker (1-2) worked a hitless inning in relief, and Bud Norris got two outs for his 10th save.

Mariners 5, Rockies 0

James Paxton and three relievers combined on a four-hitter as Seattle blanked Colorado. Paxton (4-0), activated from the disabled list before the game, retired 16 of his first 17 batters, allowing only a two-out infield single in the third inning. Making his first start since May 2, the left-hander struck out Pat Valaika to open the sixth, then gave up consecutive singles, ending his 74-pitch outing. Paxton had been sidelined with a strained forearm. He struck out six and walked one. Steve Cishek retired all five batters he faced and James Pazos worked the eighth. Nick Vincent finished up. Rockies rookie Antonio Senzatela (7-2) permitted four runs in five innings while striking out seven. He lost for just the second time in 11 starts. Danny Valencia had a two-run double.—AP



RAMADAN DISABLED GAMES TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The ninth Ramadan Disabled Games Tournament organized by Kuwait Disabled Sports Club continued at the club yesterday. The sporting event include; wheelchair basketball, table tennis, fencing, weight lifting, volleyball, and boccia. Deputy Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Disabled Sports Club Nasser Al-Ajmi said the tournament witnessed several competitions Wednesday including volleyball and weight lifting. He lauded the efforts of all members of the tournaments committees. Al-Ajmi said the club has organized several popular games to go along with the tournament such as Dama for KDSC patrons. He thanked the Kuwaiti companies for their support. Al-Ajmi also thanked HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and congratulated him on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan on behalf of club board and members.



BATTERED ARSENE WENGER SEARCHES FOR REDEMPTION

LONDON: With his future finally resolved, Arsene Wenger has one last chance to restore his battered reputation and end the civil war that threatened to tear Arsenal apart. It is 13 years since Wenger's 'Invincibles' won the last of his three Premier League titles, a golden period when the bond between the Arsenal manager and his supporters seemed unbreakable.

Wenger's subsequent travails have turned that relationship increasingly toxic, so it was inevitable that Wednesday's announcement that he has signed a new two-year contract would be greeted with disdain by many fans. Winning the FA Cup for a record seventh time with a dominant display against Premier League champions Chelsea on Saturday was an unexpectedly uplifting coda to the most stressful period of Wenger's 21-year reign.

And as the Frenchman cavorted around Wembley during the lap of honor, the more optimistic Arsenal followers viewed the confetti-strewn celebrations as a renewal of vows between the coach and his army of detractors. But for the previous 10 months, the 67-year-old had been subjected to vitriolic abuse from fans calling for his resignation. The rift between pro and anti Wenger factions clearly affected the team, reaching farcical proportions when two planes—one trailing a message of support and the other demanding he quit—were flown over the Hawthorns during a dismal defeat against West Bromwich Albion.

Frustrated were running so high that even FA Cup glory couldn't win over some disgruntled supporters and, just as significantly, it was reported members of Arsenal's board had their own misgivings about Wenger. Arsenal chief executive Ivan Gazidis admitted it had been an "unsettling time" and while majority shareholder Stan Kroenke remained in Wenger's corner, others pushed for the manager to cede some of his powers to a sporting director and make changes to his long-serving backroom staff.

Wenger appears to have won that power struggle for now, but a poor start to next season would surely fan the flames of discontent. After signing his new deal Wenger tried to heal the wounds. "This is a strong group of players and with some additions we can be even more successful," he said. "We're committed to mounting a sustained league challenge." Kroenke doubled down on that statement of intent, saying: "Our ambition is to win the Premier League and other major trophies in Europe." But to achieve those lofty targets, Wenger must resolve the issues that undermined him this season.

Home runs

For starters, he has to persuade Alexis Sanchez to sign a new contract amid rumors the Chile forward will attract offers from Bayern Munich and Manchester City. Sanchez and team-mate Mesut Ozil are both holding out for weekly wages of around £300,000-per-week and have just one year left on their current deals. Wenger needs to hit some home runs in the transfer market as well after years of mostly average recruitment.

Kroenke is ready to give Wenger £100 million (\$128 million, 114 million euros) to spend, with Leicester's Riyad Mahrez, Monaco's Kylian Mbappe and AC Milan's Carlos Bacca all linked to the Gunners. But with no Champions League action, Wenger may find it hard to improve a team with some fatal flaws. It wasn't by chance that Arsenal failed to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in 20 years and finished 18 points behind Chelsea. Wenger's transfer mishaps have left Arsenal lacking presence in midfield and bereft of a instinctive finisher, while their myriad defensive woes were exposed time and again.

Wenger used to be at the cutting edge of management with his astute scouting, dietary plans and data analysis. However, his methods have been copied and improved by rivals with bigger budgets and he would benefit from a fresh perspective on his coaching staff. A self-confessed football obsessive, Wenger's hunger can't be questioned, but whether he can successfully change his ways this late in his career remains to be seen. Arsenal's club motto is 'Victoria Concordia Crescit'—a latin phrase meaning victory grows through harmony. Making that slogan a reality again will define the final years of the Wenger era. — AFP



A combination of pictures shows Juventus' Argentinean forward Gonzalo Higuain (left) celebrating and Real Madrid's Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo celebrating his second goal during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second leg football match against FC Bayern Munich. Italian champions Juventus face Spanish champions and Champions League trophy holders Real Madrid in the UEFA Champions League final in Cardiff tomorrow. — AFP

BALLON D'OR IN PLAY; RONALDO BEARS DOWN ON MESSI

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo heads to tomorrow's Champions League final against Juventus on the brink of realizing a burning ambition of matching Lionel Messi's record of winning the Ballon d'Or five times. "I want to catch Messi," Ronaldo confessed when collecting his third World Player of the Year crown back in 2015. Now the Portuguese has four to his name, but Messi still remains one step ahead with five.

The two have dominated the award for the past decade in the battle to not just be considered the best of their generation, but among the best of all time. Yet, whilst Juventus's stubborn defense forced Messi to fire blanks in a 3-0 quarter-final aggregate win for the Italians over Barcelona, Ronaldo can complete another stellar season by ensuring Madrid become the first side to retain the Champions League. "I am aware of the fact that what I've done in football

has already left and will continue to leave a mark," Ronaldo told UEFA.com. "I haven't broken so many records by accident. That's not an obsession for me, but I do like breaking them."

Ronaldo has already added his name to more record books during this season's Champions League. His hat-trick against Bayern Munich in the quarter-finals made him the first man to score more than 100 Champions League goals. And he duly added another hat-trick in the semi-finals against Atletico Madrid to carry Real to the final in Cardiff this weekend.

"He has a good opportunity with the season that he has had, above all in the Champions League this year," Predrag Mijatovic, who scored the winning goal when Real last met Juventus in the Champions League final in 1998, told AFP. However, the Montenegrin believes Juventus goalkeeper

Gianluigi Buffon could finally end Messi and Ronaldo's reign if he lifts the Champions League for the first time at 39 to complete the treble for the Italian giants. "I think the next Ballon d'Or will come from the team that wins the Champions League," added Mijatovic. "Cristiano is there, as is Buffon and other great players at Real Madrid like Sergio Ramos that could aspire to it."

RAMOS UNINTERESTED

Ramos more than Ronaldo has been Real's hero in beating Atletico in two of the past three Champions League finals, scoring in both games in Lisbon and Milan. However, the Spanish international doesn't seem interested in depriving his teammate of a fifth Ballon d'Or to tie Messi's record. "If I wanted to win individual awards I would have played tennis," Ramos said on Tuesday. In contrast to Madrid's

previous finals in recent seasons, though, Ronaldo arrives in Cardiff in his best form of the campaign having been spared for a series of league games recently.

Despite Ronaldo missing nine La Liga games in total, Madrid didn't miss a beat, winning every single one to edge out Barcelona and claim a first league title in five years. "It was very intelligent management on the part of the coach because everything had minutes, everyone played and contributed," added Ronaldo on Zinedine Zidane. "I feel better than in recent years. That is why I think this year will be good for me. "I hope to help the team with a good performance and goals if possible." If he adds to his 14 goals in his last nine games against the meanest defense in this season's Champions League, Ronaldo will likely have his name etched on yet another Ballon d'Or.—AFP

CAS UPHOLDS ATLETICO TRANSFER BAN

MADRID: Atletico Madrid will be unable to sign new players until January 2018 after the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) yesterday upheld their transfer ban, a move the club said caused "irreparable damage". Atletico and city rivals Real Madrid were barred from registering new players for two transfer windows in January 2016 for irregularities in the signing of foreign players under 18. CAS said its appeal panel had upheld the Atletico ban, but reduced the fine from 900,000 Swiss francs (827,000 euros, \$927,000) to 550,000 francs. Atletico "remains banned from registering players both nationally and internationally for two complete and consecutive transfer periods", CAS said.

Both Atletico and Real saw initial appeals rejected by FIFA last September. But CAS reduced Real's sanction in December, allowing the European champions to recruit new players as of this summer. Atletico responded immediately, saying: "This ruling is unfair and causes an irreparable damage to our club." "We consider that the decision to support the prohibition of registering players

in a second period, corresponding to the summer of 2017, supposes a comparative disadvantage and discriminatory treatment to our entity, since recently and in a similar case, the penalty was partially lifted, allowing to register players starting on July 1st," the club said.

Atletico, who appealed the ban in April, were reported to be hoping to sell striker Antoine Griezmann to Manchester United and replace him with another Frenchman, Lyon's Alexandre Lacazette. With no new players now coming in, Atletico stressed, however, that it had "full confidence in our current squad, with which we have won direct passage to the Champions League for the fifth year in a row and have reached the semi-finals of the Champions League and the King's Cup".

"The club has the commitment of the players and coaching staff to continue competing at the same level next season, despite this decision that is evidently detrimental to us. "Together, team, club and supporters, we will continue to fight for our goals."—AFP

MAN UTD FEARS MISSING OUT ON TEEN TALENT AFTER BREXIT

LONDON: Manchester United fears it will lose out to Real Madrid and Barcelona when it comes to signing the best young players on the continent after Britain leaves the European Union. Clubs within the EU and European Economic Area receive an exemption from FIFA regulations, allowing them to transfer 16- and 17-year-old players between countries in the region. But after Brexit, British clubs may only be allowed to sign foreign players over the age of 18, like the rest of the world, unless a settlement is agreed before the anticipated March 2019 departure from the EU.

"There's a practical, operational issue around Brexit," United chief financial officer Cliff Baty told a KPMG football finance forum in London on Wednesday, "with regard to bringing in players from Europe and losing competitive advantage from the likes of ourselves against Real Madrid and Barcelona. "If you have 16-year-olds going to play for them and if we have to wait until 18 there are clearly practical issues there. I'm sure that will be discussed. It's certainly something the Premier League are aware of."

United signed a 16-year-old Paul Pogba from French club Le Havre in 2009. The midfielder eventually left but rejoined the 20-time English champions last August for a world record transfer fee of 105 million euros (then \$116 million), becoming one of the club's highest-paid players. Pogba returned at a time when currency fluctuations in

the aftermath of the June 2016 Brexit referendum posed additional challenges for United, with players asking to be paid in euros and United agreeing in un-named cases.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Henrik Mkhitaryan, who share the same agent as Pogba, also joined in the 2016 summer transfer window. "It was a bit difficult last year when you're trying to make signings in the summer and you have players questioning the value of being paid in (pounds) sterling," Baty said. "A lot of European players want to be paid or want to have their value to be underpinned in euros. That's understandable to a degree, but we are not a euro company. We obviously earn most of our income in sterling. "Last year was a bit difficult ... but you aren't going to lose a signing over that. It just makes the finances a bit more complicated."

KPMG ranks United as the world's most valuable club at 3.1 billion euros (\$3.5 billion), followed by Real Madrid (3 billion euros) and Barcelona (2.8 billion euros), according to a list published Wednesday. United this month finished sixth in the Premier League, which it last won in 2013 when Alex Ferguson retired. "We don't have to be winning every year," Baty said. "But we as a club have to be challenging to win every year." United did complete the season with two major trophies, collecting the League Cup and winning the Europa League to secure a return to the Champions League.— AP

JUVENTUS V REAL MADRID - THE WELSH CONNECTION

LONDON: Real Madrid's Welsh star Gareth Bale will hope for a triumphant homecoming in tomorrow's Champions League final against Juventus in Cardiff. Ahead of the game, AFP Sport looks at four Welsh figures who, to greater or lesser degrees, have marked the histories of the two clubs:

John Charles (Juventus, 1957-1962)

One of British football's most successful exports, Charles joined Juventus from Swansea City in 1957 and proved a huge hit, scoring 108 goals in 155 appearances and winning three Serie A titles. An imposing centre-forward, who could also play at centre-back, Charles was never booked or sent off, earning him the nickname 'Il Gigante Buono'-'The Gentle Giant'. Third in the voting for the 1959 Ballon d'Or, he was voted Juve's greatest ever foreign player in a 1997 fan poll. "We mourn a great champion and a great man," said Juve vice-president Roberto Bettega when Charles died in 2004. "He is a person who interpreted the spirit of Juventus in the best possible manner and he represented the sport in the best and purest way."

Ian Rush (Juventus, 1987-1988)

Rush followed in Charles's footsteps when he joined Juve from Liverpool 30 years later, but things did not go nearly as well. The moustachioed North Walian scored only seven league goals in his single season in Turin and returned



CARDIFF: UEFA Ambassador and former Wales, Liverpool and Juventus soccer player Ian Rush (left) and Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones pose with the Champions League Trophy in Cardiff, Wales yesterday ahead of the final between Juventus and Real Madrid tomorrow. — AP

to Liverpool in August 1988. "I went there a boy, I came back a man," Rush told Wales Online recently. "I didn't really enjoy the football because when they'd go a goal ahead, they'd want to defend that 1-0 win. But I learnt a lot and it was a great experience for me. I still have a connection with the club."

John Toshack (Real Madrid, 1989-1990, 1999)

A former Liverpool and Wales striker, Toshack made his name as a manager during a four-year stint with Real Sociedad, which alerted the attention of Real Madrid. He led Madrid to the title in his first season, a swashbuckling team spearheaded by Mexico

great Hugo Sanchez plundering a then-record 107 goals. Sacked the following November after a run of three successive defeats, he returned to the Bernabeu dug-out in 1999, but lasted only eight months. Toshack, who left Moroccan club Wydad Casablanca last September, was famous in Spain for his baffling literal translations of British idioms such as "pigs might fly" and "water off a duck's back".

Gareth Bale (Real Madrid, 2013-date)

Less than four years into his time at the Bernabeu, Bale can become the first British player to have won three Champions League titles at a foreign club. The former Tottenham Hotspur flier joined Madrid in a world-record 100 million euros (\$112.1 million) transfer in 2013. He finished his first season by scoring a famous solo winner in the Copa del Rey final and netting the decisive second goal in a 4-1 extra-time win over Atletico Madrid in the Champions League final. A second European crown arrived last season and he has just won his first La Liga title, but injury problems mean the 27-year-old is likely to start on the bench on Saturday. "It is massively special for me personally, as it is where I was born, where I grew up," said Bale. "Any Champions League final is special, but obviously this is a little bit extra special." — AFP

CARDIFF ON ALERT AFTER MANCHESTER HORROR

LONDON: Tomorrow's Champions League final between Cristiano Ronaldo's Real Madrid and Gianluigi Buffon's Juventus will take place amid taut security following last week's fatal terror attack in Manchester. The suicide attack at Manchester Arena, which left 22 dead and scores injured, means vigilance will be heightened, but unprecedented security measures were already in place for the game. "The security operation for the four-day period covering June 1-4 will be the biggest ever seen for a sporting event in the UK," says the Football Association of Wales (FAW). Most noticeably, the retractable roof of the Principality Stadium will be closed, making it the first Champions League final to be played in indoor conditions. The FAW said security was the "primary factor" in the decision to close the roof, although there is no evidence of a security threat against the final. Fans will not be allowed to bring bags into the stadium, which will have a reduced capacity of 66,000 for the match, and have been encouraged to use left-luggage facilities in the city centre. They have also been urged to arrive no later than two hours before kick-off to allow time for security checks.

Around 1,500 police officers are due to be on duty in the Welsh capital over the weekend, with local units supported by specialist officers from other areas of the United Kingdom. As the Principality Stadium sits slap-bang in the centre of Cardiff, there will be road closures in place around the city centre on the day of the match. There will also be tight security around the four-day 'UEFA Champions Festival', which takes place on the picturesque seafront at Cardiff Bay and is expected to attract over 200,000 people. Events include a match between retired greats on Friday, due to take place on a floating pitch, and a DJ set by former Valencia and Barcelona midfielder Gaizka Mendieta tomorrow.

Threat level downgraded

Restrictions have been placed on water travel in the Cardiff Bay area and on Cardiff's River Taff, which streams right past the stadium. "This will be the biggest security operation undertaken in the city since the (2014) NATO summit," South Wales Police assistant chief constable Richard Lewis said. "The security team has liaised with all concerned partners in relation to these measures, which are deemed an appropriate action in the circumstances." European governing body UEFA says fan zones will remain open under "strict security measures". But as for previous finals, the match will not be shown live on big screens in fan-designated areas. Madrid talisman Ronaldo cancelled a sponsor event in London last Saturday after the UK's terror threat level was temporary upgraded to "critical", meaning an attack may have been imminent.—AFP

REAL AND JUVENTUS, THE BUSINESS PLANS

CARDIFF: On one side, one of the world's most powerful clubs and the reigning champions, Real Madrid. On the other, Juventus, a club without the same financial means, yet. AFP looks at the business models of the two sides who will clash in tomorrow's Champions League final in Cardiff.

Real - rich man's problems

There was a minor earthquake in the Santiago Bernabeu boardroom recently when it emerged that the newly-crowned Spanish champions had been dethroned as the club with the biggest revenue in the world by Manchester United, according to financial analysts Deloitte. Madrid had held the title for the previous 11 years. With a turnover of 620 million euros (\$697m, £540m) last season, Real nevertheless remain in the top three worldwide. And president Florentino Perez assures that the club will remain a leading force financially, despite the fact that like Barcelona they do not belong to a rich investor but to their members, the "socios". Perez returned to the presidency in 2009 after his initial six-year stint ended in 2006, and he is best known for his policy of signing "galacticos".

"I am one of those who thinks that if Real have the best players in the world in every position, our revenues won't be a problem," Perez said in an interview with AFP in December. He will soon stand for re-election and it is therefore likely the club will get the wallet out to seduce voting members, and give their image a boost along with sales of tickets and shirts. However, since buying Gareth Bale in 2013 for around 100 million euros, Real have mainly invested in talented young players, like Marco Asensio or the Norwegian teen Martin Odegaard. Recently, Real agreed a deal worth a reported 40 million euros to sign Brazilian starlet Vinicius Junior, just 16, from Flamengo. Economically, the other big project of the Perez presidency is the modernization of the Bernabeu, approved this week by Madrid's city hall and expected to cost 400 million euros. The 81,000-capacity venue will be fitted with a retractable roof and will also include room for a shopping centre and possibly a hotel, all of which is to be enveloped inside a metallic, undulating facade. The operation will be financed by Abu Dhabi-based sponsor IPIC, who will be given naming rights, and the club's revenues should rise considerably as a result.

Juve not yet on the same level

Juventus are by far and away the richest club in Italy and have easily the healthiest finances, but they are a long way away from competing with Real Madrid. The specialist website Calcio e Finanza states that Juve's turnover in the last five years has risen from 213 million

euros to 387 million at the end of last season. It is in terms of commercial revenue and marketing, as well as income from their stadium—which is barely half the size of the Bernabeu—that the gulf between the two finalists is most pronounced. Inter Milan sporting director Piero Ausilio coldly summed up Juve's power domestically, saying: "After they were relegated (following the Calciopoli scandal in 2006), they worked to a precise business plan...they built their own stadium and worked on their commercial development." He added: "They have managed to do all that with continuity and that is why there is a big difference between them and the rest."

In other words, Juve are becoming one of the biggest European clubs, certain to play in the Champions League every year and with the means to strengthen while weakening their domestic competitors. They are trying to close the gap to the ogres of Madrid, Barcelona and Bayern Munich, and they have also become very astute in the transfer market. They have been able to spend big on players like Gonzalo Higuain and Miralem Pjanic while also making some outstanding signings for nothing, or next to nothing. The likes of Andrea Pirlo, Paul Pogba, Dani Alves, Kingsley Coman and Sami Khedira fall into that category, but will their transfer market savvy help them become champions of Europe? — AFP



A combination of pictures shows Real Madrid's French coach Zinedine Zidane (left) shouting instructions during the Spanish Copa del Rey (King's Cup) and Juventus' Italian coach Massimiliano Allegri reacting during the Italian Serie A football match in Turin. Italian champions Juventus face Spanish champions and Champions League trophy holders Real Madrid in the UEFA Champions League final in Cardiff tomorrow. — AFP

IT'S A GIRL! VENUS LETS SERENA BABY SECRET SLIP

PARIS: Serena Williams will be the mother of a baby girl, if sister Venus is to be believed after she appeared to let the secret slip on Wednesday. Venus, playing at the French Open in Paris, told a TV interviewer: "She's going to call me her favorite aunt." "We all like 'baby V, baby Lyn, baby Isha'. We all want the baby to be named after us," the 36-year-old told Eurosport, referring to the names of Serena's sisters.

Serena, who revealed she was pregnant in April, has refused to discuss the sex of the baby she is expecting with fiancé, Alex Ohanian, the founder of Reddit. She was at Roland Garros on Wednesday watching her older sister defeat Kurumi Nara in the second round on the showpiece Philippe Chatrier

court. "I think it's not easy for her to watch, because, you know, obviously she knows she can do well here," said Venus after the match. Serena is a three-time champion at Roland Garros.

"I think that she's just excited about everything coming up in her life, on and off the court, excited about returning here hopefully next year," added Venus, who turns 37 next month. Serena, who won her 23rd Grand Slam title in January when she defeated Venus in the Australian Open final, is due to give birth in September, the month she turns 36. Earlier this week in Paris, Venus had talked about her anticipation of becoming an aunt. "I'm definitely looking forward to it. I have no idea what the experience will be like, because previously I became

an aunt when I was very young and lived far away, across the country, so it was a completely different experience than it will be this time," she said.

"So I hope that I can live up to this job. I've got to get some confidence that I can do this. It's all new for me. It's a great journey." Venus, who was runner-up to her sister in Paris back in 2002, added: "I think you just have to be ready, aware, and alert. Then have a lot of diaper duty. Yeah. So we'll see." Serena learned she was pregnant just two days before the Australian Open. She has told of being nervous about playing, uncertain whether it would be too dangerous for her or the baby. Kelly Bush Novak, Williams's publicist, said last month that the US star "looks forward to returning in 2018". — AFP



(From left) File photos show Australian tennis great Margaret Court and former Grand Slam champion Martina Navratilova. Martina Navratilova has written an open letter criticizing Margaret Court's comments about same-sex marriage and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, and recommending that tennis officials rename the arena that bears the Australian great's name at Melbourne Park. — AP

NAVRATILOVA BLASTS 'SICK AND DANGEROUS' COURT COMMENTS

SYDNEY: Tennis great Martina Navratilova slammed "sick and dangerous" comments by Australia's Margaret Court that the sport was "full of lesbians" and transgender child were the result of a Nazi-style plot. Navratilova said Melbourne's Margaret Court Arena should be renamed after another Australian great, Evonne Goolagong Cawley, after Court's comments caused a furor in the tennis community. Court, 74, had already been criticized after she said she would avoid using Australian airline Qantas over its support for same-sex marriage, even before her latest salvo over Christian radio. "Linking LGBT to Nazis, communists, the devil? This is not OK," Navratilova, who is gay, wrote in an open letter addressed to Margaret Court Arena and published by Australia's Fairfax newspapers.

"This is in fact sick and it is dangerous. Kids will suffer more because of this continuous bashing and stigmatizing of our LGBT community," Navratilova added: "It is now clear exactly who Court is: an amazing tennis player, and a racist and a

homophobe. "The platform people like Margaret Court use needs to be made smaller, not bigger. "Which is why I think it's time to change your name. And I think the Evonne Goolagong Arena has a great ring to it. "Now there is a person we can all celebrate." By calling Court "racist", Navratilova was referring to her 1970 comments about apartheid, when she said: "South Africans have this thing better organized than any other country."

Hitler and communism

On Wednesday, Court, who is a church pastor, told Vision Christian Radio that she wasn't "against" gay people but wanted to "help them overcome". She also claimed that transgender children had had their minds corrupted, comparing the phenomenon to brain-washing by Hitler and communist countries. "That's all the devil... but that's what Hitler did and that's what communism did-got the mind of the children," said Court. "And there's a whole plot in our nation, and in the nations of the world to get the minds of the children."

Court's comments sparked disbelief among current players with Australia's Sam Stosur describing them as "crazy". Some have called for her name to be stripped from Melbourne's Margaret Court Arena, and there have even been rumblings of a boycott of the stadium at next year's Australian Open. Stosur's fellow Australian Casey Dellacqua has also criticised Court, whose record of 24 major titles still stands, for her "hurtful" views on same-sex relationships.

Dellacqua, who has two children with her partner Amanda Judd, said Court was wrong to claim that her children "have been deprived of a father" and that such youngsters are not "given the best possible start in life". Navratilova said she had "long ago forgiven" Court for her comments 27 years ago that being a lesbian made her a bad role model. But "demonizing" and denying LGBT people rights was unacceptable, the nine-time Wimbledon champion said. "Too many will die by suicide because of this kind of intolerance, this kind of bashing and yes, this kind of bullying. This is not OK," she added. — AFP

CRUSADERS AND HIGHLANDERS TEST WINNING STREAKS IN SUPER RUGBY

WELLINGTON: The Crusaders and Highlanders will put lengthy unbeaten streaks on the line when they meet in a shortened 15th round of Super Rugby that also will feature the first tournament match played in Samoa. The Christchurch-based Crusaders are unbeaten in 13 matches this season - equaling the longest winning run in the team's history - and the Highlanders have won nine straight, also a club record, since their fourth-round loss to the Wellington-based Hurricanes.

The Dunedin-based Highlanders' only other losses this season were to the Chiefs in round one and the Crusaders in round two, when they gave up a 27-6 lead in the second half to lose 30-27. The Highlanders' form upswing since then has been pronounced and included wins over the New South Wales Waratahs, ACT Brumbies, Melbourne Rebels and Western Force from Australia, South Africa's Stormers, Cheetahs and Bulls and Japan's Sunwolves.

However, their only win over a New Zealand opponent came at the expense of the Auckland based Blues who are in last place in the domestic conference. The Highlanders are in third place in New Zealand, three points behind the Hurricanes and 14 points behind the Crusaders, who have likely already clinched first place and home advantage through the playoffs. Highlanders coach Tony Brown has described the challenge that his team faces against the Crusaders on Saturday as "massive."

"To go and play the Crusaders in Christchurch in front of a full stadium where both teams are going to go hell for leather and throw the ball around and be really physical," Brown said, "it's going to be an intense match. There's no better way to finish before the (international) break." Super Rugby breaks for four weeks to give room to New Zealand's test series against the British and Irish Lions and for Australia and South Africa's mid-year test matches. The tournament goes into that break with a history-making match on Friday between the Queensland Reds and the Blues in the Samoa capital Apia which forms part of 55th anniversary celebrations of Samoa's independence.

The match is Super Rugby's latest venture into the Pacific Islands after the Crusaders and Chiefs played in Fiji in each of the last two years. Both the Blues and Reds have substantial Samoa contingents within their squads and the match helps recognize the massive contribution of all Polynesian players to New Zealand and Australian rugby. The Reds hope the match at a neutral venue will also allow them to improve their recent poor form which included a loss last week to the Western Force. Australian teams have lost all 19 matches against New Zealand opponents so far this season.

"We know the strength of the New Zealand conference," Reds coach Nick Stiles said. "It's been a tough year for Australian sides but hopefully over here in Samoa of all places we can be the first Australian side to beat a New Zealand side in 2017." All Blacks flanker Jerome Kaino, who was born in American Samoa, arrived in Apia in advance of the remainder of the Blues squad and said the town is buzzing and showing support for the Auckland team. "It's all starting to get a good vibe here in Apia and everyone is starting to get excited," Kaino said. "You see the Blues flags flying in town, flying on cars so it's all exciting as we draw nearer to the game. — AP

CHASING GREATNESS UNITES FRIENDLY FOES DURANT, JAMES

OAKLAND: Cleveland playmaker LeBron James and Golden State star Kevin Durant have been chasing greatness as friendly rivals throughout their NBA careers, but now they are on a collision course. Defending champion Cleveland meets Golden State for an unprecedented third consecutive NBA Finals game, with James seeking his fourth crown in his seventh consecutive finals appearance and eighth overall, and Durant still yearning for his first crown.

"Our relationship is very good," James said of Durant. "Our relationship consists of if someone needed something, we can always reach out to one another. We've always had a mutual respect, being competitors. So all over the course of the years throughout his journey, I've always had an open-door policy with

KD." James is 3-4 overall in the best-of-seven series, losing his first appearance 10 years ago, but has become the only man to lead two different clubs into the finals four times. "He's special in so many ways.

We see that every day," Cavaliers forward Kevin Love said of James. "His approach, his routine and just his relentlessness in chasing that greatness is special to watch. We talk about guys setting the tone. He's the best to do it. He's our leader and we follow him at all costs... LeBron James is very special in so many ways, but probably number one is his pursuit of being great." Durant, whose Oklahoma City Thunder fell to the James-led Miami Heat in the 2012 finals, left the Thunder last July for the Warriors and while he hungers to become a champion, he shrugs off any

notion of extra pressure. "I'm just trying to be the best me I can be.

That's the only pressure I worry about," Durant said. "If I don't play up to my standards, that's when I get upset. I'll just approach basketball like I always have, which is with love and care and hard work and we'll see what happens." Adding Durant to a club that was one win shy of consecutive crowns offers James a formidable challenge in order to earn his own repeat title. "He's one of the most dangerous guys we have in the (basketball) world already so it makes it even more dangerous when you equip that talent, that skill, with those guys," James said of Durant joining such stars as Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and Draymond Green. — AFP

CAN LOVE CONQUER ALL FOR CLEVELAND IN NBA FINALS?

OAKLAND: Confident and assertive, Cleveland Cavaliers forward Kevin Love has found his scoring touch just when the defending NBA champions need it most—in an NBA Finals rematch with Golden State. Cleveland superstars LeBron James and Kyrie Irving will go head-to-head against Golden State's Kevin Durant and Stephen Curry in much-anticipated head-to-head matchups in the best-of-seven showdown that started yesterday.

But Love figures to be a key player in the third consecutive NBA Finals between the Warriors and Cavaliers if he can keep his hot hand. "Just be assertive," Love said. "Picking my spots and just filling in the gaps where we know that LeBron, being our leader, and Kyrie are going to be special." Love is averaging 17.2 points and 10.4 rebounds a game in the Cavaliers' 12-1 playoff run, and had a starring role in downing Boston in the Eastern Conference final. "He was always in the right spot at the right time," said Warriors guard Stephen Curry. "He showed an ability to obviously catch and shoot really well and consistently."

"Assertiveness is big"

James has told Love he wants to see "Minnesota Kevin," the playmaker who often had to seize command of games while playing for the Timberwolves. "He just means being assertive and very confident on both sides of the ball and in my movements," Love said. "Assertiveness is big, just continuing to have a can-do mindset throughout and confidence in each and everyone of us."

The task of shutting down Love falls to Draymond Green, who says Love "is playing more confident" but plans to throw him off his game and out of his comfort zone. "Just do what we do—not give up easy shots, make him take tough shots, and live with the result," Green said. "Everybody's susceptible to (trash talk). I don't care who you are. I just try to use my speed to my advantage, take him out of spots where he's comfortable, make him do some things maybe he don't want to do," Green said.

"Just got to stay locked in, try to minimize him as much as possible." Love respects Green as the lynchpin of Golden State's defensive schemes. "Defensively he sets the tone for them," Love said of Green. "He's one of the best in the game at being a trash talker. He's a guy that is making sure that everybody's playing, a very vocal leader for them, and a guy that brings it every single night. So we're going to have to match that." That could see Cavs big man Tristan Thompson helping to frustrate Green and free Love. "He's their motor," Thompson said of Green. "He gets them going." — AFP



Cleveland Cavaliers' Kevin Love smiles as he fields questions before an NBA basketball practice, in Oakland, Calif. — AP



CALIFORNIA: LeBron James #23 of the Cleveland Cavaliers works out during a practice for the 2017 NBA Finals at ORACLE Arena in Oakland, California. — AFP

RACISM 'PART OF AMERICA'

NBA SUPERSTAR LEBRON TAKES AIM AT US RACISM

LOS ANGELES: NBA superstar LeBron James took aim at racism in America on Wednesday after police said a racial slur was painted on a gate of the home he owns in Los Angeles. The incident came on the eve of Game One of the NBA Finals, which pits James's reigning champion Cleveland Cavaliers against the Golden State Warriors. "No matter how much money you have, no matter how famous you are, no matter how many people admire you, being black in America—it's tough," James told reporters in Oakland, California, where Game One will take place.

"It just goes to show that racism will always be a part of the world, a part of America." Los Angeles Police Department spokesman Aareon Jefferson said the offensive graffiti was painted on an outer gate of the \$20 million home James purchased in 2015 in the city's upscale Brentwood neighborhood. Police were notified around 6:45 am, and the graffiti was quickly covered by property management staff, Aareon said.

Hours later, an emotional James addressed the matter. "Hate in America, especially for African-Americans, is living every day," added James, who said that when he was told of the incident, he thought of the mother of Emmett Till, a black American who was lynched in 1955 at the age of 14. Till's mother insisted her son's casket be left open at his funeral so the brutality of his death could be seen. James said he hoped Wednesday's incident "can keep the conversation going and

can shed light on us trying to figure out a way to keep progressing and not regressing."

"Killing me inside"

The 32-year-old James has spoken out before on social and political issues. He denounced fatal police shootings of unarmed black men and endorsed Hillary Clinton for president. But he said it was "killing me inside" that he would not be able to discuss the vandalism with his two young sons, who were with the rest of the family at their Ohio home. "My little girl's too young to actually understand it right now," he said. "But I can't sit in front of my boys right now and I won't be home until next week, so this is kind of killing me inside right now. "But my wife is unbelievable ... she said everything's fine, so that helps me out a lot." James admitted the incident had left him feeling less than his "normal energetic self."

He vowed he wouldn't let it throw him off as the Cavaliers try to defend their crown in the best-of-seven final—but it was a reminder of where basketball fits in the broader scheme of life. "I'll be focused tomorrow on our game plan and focused on these games," James vowed. "I will be as focused as I can be on the job at hand tomorrow, but this is a situation where it just puts me back in place of what's actually more important—and basketball's not the most important thing in my life." — AFP

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Photo shows a giant Champions League Trophy in Cardiff Wales ahead of the Women's Champions League Final Thursday evening and the men's final tomorrow. — AP

Cardiff on alert after Manchester horror

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