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Heavy rain, landslides kill at least 92 in Bangladesh

Rain-triggered landslides bury homes; 7 missing

Min 31°
Max 49°
High Tide 03:05 &13:10
Low Tide 07:59 & 20:55

CHITTAGONG: Heavy monsoon rains and landslides have killed at least 92 people in southeast Bangladesh, burying many in their homes as they slept, authorities said yesterday. Three young children from the same family were among those killed in the disaster, which comes just weeks after a cyclone battered the region and destroyed camps housing thousands of Rohingya refugees.

Police warned that the death toll would likely rise as emergency workers reached remote parts of the Chittagong Hills, where telephone and transport links had been cut. Many of the victims were from poor tribal communities in the remote hill district of Rangamati, close to the Indian border, where 60 people were killed when mudslides buried their homes. One woman described the ground sliding from beneath their family home in the dead of night, sending them fleeing to a house next door.

"A few other families also took shelter there, but just after dawn a section of hill fell on the house. Six people are still missing," Khatiza Begum told local news website Bangla Tribune at Rangamati hospital.

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BANDARBAN: Bangladeshi fire fighters search for bodies after a landslide in Bandarban yesterday. — AFP

Jordanian King in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Jordanian King Abdullah II and an accompanying delegation arrived in Kuwait yesterday on a brotherly visit to offer congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the fasting month of Ramadan. On arrival, the Jordanian Monarch was received by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and other top officials. — KUNA

Eid holidays

KUWAIT: The State Minister for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah has announced that Eid Al-Fitr holidays will be three days if the first day of Eid falls on Sunday, June 25. This indicates that June 26 and June 27 will be holidays and work will resume on June 28. However, if it falls on Monday, June 26, Sunday June 25 will be a rest day and Monday June 26 will be declared the first day of Eid. In that case, Tuesday and Wednesday will be official holidays and Thursday will be another rest day, as it falls between two working days. Work will officially resume on Sunday, July 2.

Mass food poisoning in Iraq

AL-KHAZIR: Iraqis staying at the Al-Khazir camp swim in a river near the camp for internally displaced people, located between Arbil and Mosul. —AFP

HASSAN SHAM U2 CAMP, Iraq: A mass food poisoning at a camp for the displaced near the northern city of Mosul killed at least two people and sickened over 700, Iraq's health minister said yesterday, becoming the latest battleground in the crisis engulfing Qatar and a string of other Arab nations. A woman and a girl died and at least 200 people were rushed from the desert tent camp to hospitals in the nearby city of Irbil.

An Iraqi lawmaker who visited the camp overnight and Saudi state television quickly accused a charity from Qatar of providing the tainted food. The claims could not be independently confirmed and Qatari officials did not immediately answer calls for comment. In Baghdad, Health Minister Adila Hamoud told The Associated Press that 752 people became ill after a meal the previous evening at the Hassan Sham U2 camp, about 20 kilometers east of Mosul.

The food was meant for an iftar, a meal with which Muslims break their dawn-to-dusk fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. Hamoud said at least 300 people remain in serious condition. She refused to speculate whether the poisoning might have been intentional. Amira Abdulhaliq, from the United Nations' refugee agency, said it remains unclear at which point in preparing, packaging, transporting or distributing the meals, the food became contaminated. "So far, we have received around 800 cases, around 200 have been transported to the hospitals in Irbil," she said.

At midday yesterday, medics were treating patients in a large tent at the edge of the camp. About 20 to 30 patients, mostly small children, lay on blankets on the floor as several more

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Avoid hypocrisy

By Hassan Twaha Bwambale

One of the aspects of hypocrisy is to be double-faced. When a double-faced person is with you, he praises you, but when he departs from you, he criticizes and backbites you. This behavior is abhorred in all faiths. During the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), there were some people who would claim to be Muslims yet actually they were not. They employed their hypocrisy to maliciously tarnish the reputation of Islam.

Allah Almighty made Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) aware of their dirty motives and vile actions. He said what can be translated as, "And when they meet those who believe, they say, 'We believe,' but when they turn back to their supporters (among polytheists and hypocrites), they say, 'truly, we are with you, verily, we were but mocking.' Allah will punish them for their mockery and give them increase in their wrongdoing to wander blindly." (Quran 2:14-15)

The hypocrites in whose hearts is a disease are chronically fearful. Their disease is manifested in disloyalty to any legitimate cause, lack of courage, low self-confidence, dislike of team-work, and closed-mindedness. In our daily lives, we see a lot of people who approach us and flatter us because they need something from us. But after they leave, they cast aspersions on us and call us all sorts of names.

Abu Huraira narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "You will find people like minerals (some are more valuable than others). Those who were the best in the era before my advent (jahiliyya) will be the best after reverting to Islam if they learn about their religion properly. You will also find out that among the best people in Islam are those who used to be staunch enemies of Islam. You will also discover that the worst person is the one who is double-faced, who approaches some people with one face and approaches others with another." (Reported by Al-Bukhari # 3,493 and Muslim # 2,526 and # 199)

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Trump sued over 'benefits'

WASHINGTON: Maryland and the US capital sued President Donald Trump yesterday, saying he is breaking laws by raking in money from foreign governments and businesses at his luxury hotels and office towers.

The lawsuit said heavy spending by foreign diplomats and embassies at the Trump International Hotel just a few blocks from the White House, payments by foreign entities at his Trump Tower and Trump International Tower in New York, and other business operations effectively violate the US Constitution's ban on presidents enriching themselves while in office. "The suit alleges that president Trump is flagrantly violating the constitution, which explicitly bars presidents from receiving gifts or inducements from foreign or domestic government entities," said Washington Attorney General Karl Racine. "Never in the history of this country have we had a president with these kinds of extensive business entanglements. Or a president who refused to adequately distance themselves from their holdings," Racine said.

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KUWAIT: A cannon shot is fired at Nayef Palace in Kuwait City, signaling the end of the long fasting day. Muslims throughout the world are marking the month of Ramadan, the holiest month in the Islamic calendar during which devotees fast from dawn until dusk. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

IS wages fierce battles in Raqa

BEIRUT: Islamic State group jihadists waged fierce battles yesterday in their Syrian stronghold Raqa in a bid to repel US-backed fighters advancing towards the walls of the Old City. The Kurdish and Arab fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) entered Raqa a week ago, after months of fighting to encircle the northern city that has become a jihadist bastion. Since then, they have seized one neighborhood in western Raqa and another in the east, where they are now battling to secure control of the Al-Senaa district that leads to the Old City.

Jihan Sheikh Ahmed, spokeswoman for the SDF campaign for Raqa, said the jihadist group was putting up stiff resistance. "There is fierce fighting against Daesh which is making heavy use of mines and snipers and sometimes car bombs," she said, using the Arabic acronym for IS. She said clashes in Al-Senaa were continuing yesterday. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor also reported heavy IS attacks against SDF fighters in the area. "The district is not yet completely secured because of the repeated jihadist attacks," the Britain-based group said.

Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman said the capture of Al-Senaa would be the SDF's "most important advance in the battle for Raqa because it brings them to the centre of the city." "The main battle for Raqa will take place in the city centre," he said. He added that a large number of IS fighters were holed up in the Old City, where the jihadist group is also believed to have dug tunnels to facilitate their defense of the area. Since entering Raqa on June 6, the SDF has captured the eastern neighborhood of Al-Meshleb, as well as Al-Rumaniya in the city's west. It is now battling to push from Al-Rumaniya into neighboring Hatin district. — AFP

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of the Arab and International Relations Council Mohammad Al-Sagr.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita.
—Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos

His Highness the Premier Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Chairman and members of the Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Journalism Excellence Award's Higher Organizing Committee.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Amir vows to carry on with mediation efforts

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has pledged to continue his mediation efforts to reconcile GCC member states. His Highness the Amir made the pledge in remarks during reception of Chairman of the Arab and International Relations Council Mohammad Al-Sagr at Bayan Palace.

His Highness the Amir pledged that he would not hampered by fatigue or any difficulties in his quest to re-establish the bonds and tackle the differences among the GCC States. "It is very difficult for us, we the generation that established the GCC 34 years ago, to see some members engage in disputes that may lead to dire consequences," His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad said. "This a duty that I will not abandon," he stressed, pledging to continue the efforts to tackle inter-GCC differences. His Highness the Amir, in the efforts to reconcile the GCC countries, had visited Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar, holding talks with the top leaders that drew much applause from various quarters.

Amir receives message from Moroccan King

His Highness the Amir received at Bayan Palace yesterday Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita. Bourita delivered a verbal message to His Highness the Amir from King of Morocco Mohammed VI. The Moroccan Monarch expressed his full support to His Highness the Amir's efforts in defusing tension amongst Gulf countries. The meeting was attended by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Nasser, as well as Mohammad Al-Sagr.

In other news, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Chairman and members of the Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Journalism Excellence Award's Higher Organizing Committee. The reception came on the occasion of the award's 10th anniversary.

Amir congratulates Sheikha

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Sheikha Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah after Dartmouth College awarded her with Doctorate of Humane Letters. His Highness the Amir commended Sheikha Dana for award, wishing her success in the service of Kuwait at regional and international levels. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim also sent cables of congratulations to Sheikha Dana Al-Sabah. —KUNA

Materializing 2035 vision inevitable: Diwan Minister

KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah speaks during the public panel .

Adnan Al-Bahar speaks during the panel.

A general view of people attending the public panel on 'New Kuwait 2035.' —KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah underlined inevitability of materializing vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the New Kuwait 2035, especially in regards to islands and Silk City projects. This came during a public panel organized by Kuwait Journalists' Association at Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah last night.

Highlighting vitality of both projects to local economy, opening vistas of cooperation with world countries and maintaining regional security, Sheikh Nasser, also head of the team tasked with activating the 2035 vision, said the islands' project stemmed from the region's geography and strategic position.

This project would also contribute to helping other countries improve their respective infrastructure and facilities, as well as sea trade, he said, signaling out Iran and Iraq as important regional countries to Kuwait. The north of the Gulf area would turn into an exceptional free trade zone; a fertile environment to attract investments, he noted, pointing out that that Kuwait was, and still, enjoys a "port culture" all the way back when it was a stop for mail delivery to Basra in 1775.

He added that Kuwait is fully ready to cooperate with Iraq and Iran on all levels with a view to developing regional economy and trade, as well as achieving peace. In this vein, Sheikh Nasser pointed out, "We are in good terms with our brothers in Iraq in this regard," adding that Kuwait's Mubarak Port and Iraq's Faw Port would "cooperate not compete." He also revealed that he recently met with Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Enayati, during which the possibility of Tehran's contribution to the islands' project was discussed.

Meanwhile, member of general policies and administrative development committee at the Supreme Council for Planning Adnan Al-Bahar said the Hong Kong-simulated islands' project will be under Kuwait's sovereignty, yet legislatively, financially and administratively independent.

The ambitious projects are anticipated to bring about an economic and trade shift in Kuwait that will in turn would contribute to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision of transforming Kuwait into an international financial and trade hub. The projects are also part of the state's 2017 developmental plan of five objectives and seven pillars through 164 projects, 30 of which deemed strategic. —KUNA

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Russian Ambassador to the country Alexey Solomatin. —KUNA

Speaker meets with Russian envoy

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem met yesterday with Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Alexey Solomatin. During the meeting, the Russian ambassador conveyed the willingness of the Russian parliament to coordinate with the Kuwaiti National Assembly regarding issues and subjects to be addressed during the 137th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) due in Saint Petersburg in October. MP Salah Khurshid was present at the meeting. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah and ministry officials pose for a group photo during a visit to the Special Forces Camp. —KUNA

Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah greets officers during the visit.

Interior Minister urges officers to be vigilant against regional circumstances

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah called on senior officials Monday to be vigilant vis-a-vis circumstances facing the region. Sheikh Khaled made the remarks during a visit to the Special Forces Camp, where he had an iftar meal with the personnel, a usual gesture among leadership and officers of the ministry aimed at strengthening social bonds, the ministry said in a statement.

Sheikh Khaled commended the special forces for their dedication, and said their achievements were attributed to instructions and vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The minister expressed gratitude for His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for their support of the Ministry's personnel, and appreciation of their sacrifices. —KUNA

Smart devices, apps help disabled children to overcome challenges

KUWAIT: Smart electronic devices and applications could be a curse for children, but they are a blessing for peers with special needs. Numerous studies have shed lights on the grave impacts of electronic devices, smart phones and tablets, on children's health and behavior, but for children with special needs, they have proved to be instrumental in helping them better communicate and integrate into the society.

When Mohammad Omar, a 10-year-old Kuwaiti boy, was two years and eight months, he was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, ASD, which includes a wide range, "a spectrum," of symptoms, skills, and levels of disability such as difficulty communicating and interacting with others; and repetitive behaviors as well as limited interests or activities. Directly after the diagnosis, his family started a long treatment journey at home and abroad.

Firstly, Omar was sent to the United States where he stayed for two years receiving intensified therapy sessions, each takes up to eight hours a day. Then he was transferred to a specialized medical center in the United Arab Emirates to complete treatment. Upon returning home, his family employed to a special doctor to help the child develop required skills for his everyday life.

"Since his conceptions 10 years ago, I have never heard the voice of my son," tearful mother Sara Jarragh said. "To communicate with him, we restored to sign language and then moved to photo cards. But when he was in the United Arab Emirates, one of his doctors advised us to use a smart application to help Omar express himself, his needs and communicate with others."

She pointed out that the application can be downloaded and installed on smart phones and other electronic devices such as tablets. This application includes many sections which cover different aspects of life such as colors, shapes, animals, plants, and people, from which Omar chooses what he wants to build a sentence which the app loudly utters on his behalf. "This app has become the voice of voiceless people," Jarragh said, describing the app as "a major breakthrough."

Jarragh said that she has read about the negative impacts of electronic devices on children, but the use of electronic devices was a blessing for the case of her son. "I would continue using such kind of apps till I hear the voice of my son," she stressed.

Spina Bifida

Ali Al-Hadi has a bit different story from that of Omar. Hadi, two years and a half Kuwaiti boy, was diagnosed with Spina Bifida which is a birth defect where there is incomplete closing of the backbone and membranes around the spinal cord.

His mother, Ghadeer Baqer, uses smart devices applications and social networking sites to spread awareness about Spina Bifida which few people know anything about and offer counseling and help to pregnant mothers whose fetus was diagnosed as having the same illness.

"These applications and sites have also helped me create a community for families with Spina Bifida children to support each other," Baqer said. She has also used the electronic devices to show Al-Hadi video clips of other Spina Bifida peers and how they take their medications and use assistive devices to help them walk and live their daily life.

"I wanted to ease some of his emotional suffering and to show him that he is not the sole child going through this difficult situation," she said. Baqer, however, said that she is not for using electronic devices for playing and entertainment at this age.

"At this age, real-world playing, talking with family members and acquiring cognitive and physical skills are greatly better than being glued in front of screens of electronic devices," she said. "He is fond of cars and knew the Arabic and English names of different vehicles, cars and trucks. He also loves animals and dinosaurs and likes making shapes with clay."

To blame

But Pediatrics and Emergency Consultant Dr Abdullah Shamsah begged to differ. Despite some positive and useful usage of electronic devices, he believes that these devices are to blame for the steadily growth children's learning difficulties, hypertension, speech delay, isolation, obesity, lethargy, nervousness, and a heap of other psychological, physical and behavioral disorders.

"Taking into account the graveness of the problem, I have recently written a post (on social networking sites) about my plan to hold a symposium for parents to raise awareness and warn them about the negative impacts of such devices and how work out solutions and create alternatives," he said.

"The idea was greatly welcomed by a huge number of followers, many of whom expressed willingness to volunteer to help organize this symposium and provide more advices and specialized information about the psychological and social effects of the electronic devices on children."

He went on to say "after my first meeting with volunteers, the idea evolved from a one-time symposium to an integrated campaign, themed device-free time." The campaign attracted a slew of doctors, specialists, technicians and administrators and parents and sets set of goals and executive plans, he said. "These people are eager to work to educate parents, educators and raise children awareness about the dangers and negative impacts of the excessive use of smart devices on both children and their families," he clarified.

He pointed out that the campaigners seek to spread awareness through social networking sites, seminars, workshops, courses as well as visits to schools and civil societies. He noted that the success achieved by the campaign in its first activity last month, which included lectures for a number of specialists and workshops for children to learn how to enjoy their time away from smart devices. —KUNA

News in brief

France supports Kuwait's efforts

PARIS: France affirmed yesterday its support to Kuwait's efforts in defusing tension amongst Gulf countries. A statement by the French Foreign Ministry stated that France has close relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and all other partners in the region. It stressed that it is necessary to deescalate Gulf tensions and to meet hopes and expectations of the Gulf people. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah discussed with France's President Emmanuel Macron on Monday by phone bilateral ties, issues of common interest and latest regional developments. —KUNA

Israeli schemes

CAIRO: Kuwait on Monday called on Arab and African nations to work together and stand in face of Israel nomination for membership in the UN Security Council (2019-2020). This came in a statement by the advisor at the Kuwaiti permanent mission at the Arab League, Mohammad Nahi Al-Alati, following an extraordinary session of the Council of the Arab League. It was dedicated for discussing the Palestinian cause an Israel's mounting infiltration in Africa. The meeting was held upon a request by the State of Palestine, with support from the Arab States including Kuwait, Alati confirmed, indicating that mechanisms were being worked out for joint Arab-African action against the Israeli schemes to occupy a seat in the UNSC, in elections due in 2018. He also confirmed that the conferees discussed Israel's schemes in Africa and prospected consequences in the event Israel has won a UNSC seat. —-KUNA

Plane damaged

KUWAIT: A Kuwait Airways plane suffered minor damage when the tow bar from a push-back tractor snapped causing the vehicle to hit the aircraft, the company said in a statement. No one was hurt. "All passengers were safely offloaded" and are all safe, the company added. Kuwait Airways Airbus 320, which was bound to Trivandrum, India, suffered some minor damage to its underside area, it added. An investigation is underway to know cause of the break in the tow bar, it added. Kuwait Airways remains committed to safety is fully compliant with Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and international safety regulations, it affirmed. —KUNA

Local animal shelter K'S PATH announces closure

KUWAIT: Local animal welfare organization K'S PATH announced yesterday that it will be closing down as of December 2017. In a statement sent to the media, Sheikha Fatima Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Chairperson of Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and Their Habitat (K'S PATH) announced the decision, noting that all the remaining animals in the K'S PATH shelter in Wafra will be either adopted out in Kuwait or rehomed abroad and that no animals would be put to death.

No specific details were given for the closure or information on what will happen to the shelter in Wafra. In the statement, Sheikha Fatima indicated that the decision "was made based on the knowledge that Kuwait's animals and environment will be cared for by compassionate people in the community" and referenced the new animal protection and environment laws.

K'S PATH has provided welfare services for thousands of animals, organized beach cleanups, provided volunteer opportunities and educational programs and initiatives to reduce feral street cat and stray dog populations.

Sheikha Fatima Mubarak Al-Sabah

Crime Report

Child molester arrested

KUWAIT: A bedoon in his twenties was arrested for molesting three children after luring them from schools and in front of their homes. Farwaniya detectives moved after crimes were committed against three Egyptian girls, and were able to arrest him. The crimes took place at the end of the school year, and were discovered when an Egyptian man took his 12-year-old daughter to Andalus police station and told them she was kidnapped and raped by a man she does not know, who brought her back to school and then escaped. Few days later, another Egyptian complained against a man who raped his daughter in front of the building where she lives, while a third Egyptian said his 11-year-old daughter was raped by a man, and he could not catch him, though he was able to determine his features. Detectives moved swiftly and were able to arrest him, and he was identified by the father who saw him. Investigations are underway.

Prince kidnaps children

A Gulf prince is wanted by the Interpol after he kidnapped his son and daughter from his Kuwaiti ex-wife, and escaped to a Gulf country. A source said the citizen who was divorced by the prince after having two children from him, and has custody for both, allowed her husband to take them out and bring them back at the end of the day but he did not, so she informed police. Police investigations revealed that the prince had left the country with the children, so he was charged with kidnapping. The Interpol was asked to arrest him and bring the two children back.

Homicide investigation

Farwaniya prosecution placed the name of an Indian man on the wanted list, as there have doubts that he may have killed his wife. A security source said the reason behind the crime may be his wife's infidelity, as the apartment they lived in is shared by another man. There were signs of violence on the woman's body which suggests a fight had taken place. The roommate called police after finding the woman's dead body in the house which was recovered by the coroner.

—Translated from Arabic press

New services included in retirees health insurance

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Presided by minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi, the Ministry of Health's undersecretaries council held a meeting yesterday where they decided to include cardiac services, tumors, dental fittings and knee surgeries in the new tender for the retirees health insurance project 'Afya.' The council's secretary general and assistant undersecretary for services affairs Dr Mahmoud Al-Abdul Hadi said that the new tender will be offered for public bidding soon. Commenting on plans to increase expats health services' fees, Abdul Hadi re-affirmed the statements made by minister Harbi about imposing the increase on visiting expats first.

KAC board

Chairman of the parliament's committee formed to investigate the resignation of Kuwait Airway's former board chairperson Rasha Al-Roumi, MP Khalil Al-Saleh said that the committee will meet again today in order to continue the investigation in the presence of Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh.

Geographical limitations

Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Mohammed Al-Fares said that the ministry failed to hire more than 105 Palestinian teachers for the coming school year due to what he described as 'geographical limitations'. Fares added that many of the applicants rejected the contracts on grounds that the salaries paid to expatriate teachers were way below bar. Fares said that a future plan will be set to provide learning opportunities for all high school graduates in higher education facilities and institutions. Academically, Fares stressed that the ministry was currently consulting with Saudi Arabia's national center for educational development to make use of the kingdom's experience.

Connection

The private education directorate seeks to become electronically connected and to automate all transactions and procedures done with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Manpower Public Authority, said informed sources noting that all Arab, foreign and bilingual private schools were urged to provide the directorate with full data about their staffs. The sources said that the schools received letters from the directorate's director Sanad Al-Mutairi demanding the data to be sent in hard copies as well as electronic ones.

Penal measures

The Public Authority for the Disabled Affairs' deputy director for educational and rehabilitation services Majed Al-Saleh said that all Arab and foreign schools, nurseries and other institutions certified by the authority had been notified to correct remarks made by inspection teams within a month in order to avoid further penal measures that might go as far as license withdrawal. Saleh explained that some of the remarks were made about the location and suggested finding alternative ones.

Dozen evacuated from burning house

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A fire broke out in a house in Al-Qurain, said security sources noting that firemen from Qurain and Mubarak Al-Kabeer rushed to the scene and rescued 12 people who were trapped by the flames. The fire, which had started in the first floor, was controlled. A fireman was injured in the process.

Fatal crash

A stateless person died when his vehicle collided into a light post along the Fifth Ring Road, said security sources. A case was filed to determine the circumstances which led to the accident.

Sorcery

Criminal investigation detectives arrested an expat for practicing fraud, sorcery and vice, said security sources. Case papers indicate that detectives had been tipped off concerning the suspect's activities. When they raided his house, detectives found large sums of money he admitted to collecting from women he had lured into his house to get sorcery services.

Expired food

Hawally municipality inspection teams raided an unlicensed warehouse in Salmiya where expired food items were stored. Team leader Riyadh Al-Rabee noted that 5,663 kilograms of expired dairy products and juices were confiscated and destroyed. Rabee added that the store was also fined for dealing in expired food and for operating without a license.

Court adjourns case of woman accused of joining IS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The criminal court yesterday rejected a request to release a Kuwaiti young woman accused of joining the Islamic State (IS) in Sinai, Egypt. Security sources said that the girl's case was adjourned to hear the defense final argument. During an earlier hearing, the 21-year-old woman pled not guilty to the accusations, claiming that she was 'deceived' into going to Egypt where she was promised a happy life, but instead was kept hostage inside a house where its keepers called her father and demanded a ransom for her release.

Mobile trucks

Head of the Municipal Council's legal and financial affairs committee Ali Al-Moussa extended his congratulations to all citizens on passing the mobile trucks regulations chart. "This chart was jointly approved by the council and Kuwait Municipality's executive body to support young people wishing to start their own businesses," he underlined. Moussa said that the chart included only 11 activities for which those trucks could be licensed. The chart also limited the locations of these trucks in parks, seafronts, beaches, festivity areas, camping and chalet areas, sports clubs, agricultural areas, highways, border centers, the scrap and the used cars markets. Meanwhile, Chairman of the board of the food public authority Essa Al-Kandari stressed that the authority will be responsible for issuing the health licenses and setting the conditions of those trucks. Kandari also stressed that the authority will be responsible for issuing health certificates for the owners and operators.

Ooredoo with Day Out summer camp for kids celebrates gergian

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, celebrated gergian with hundreds of kids in collaboration with Day Out summer and a musical performance by Sons of Yusuf music band in Jumeirah Hotel. The celebration included a performance by the band which gained popularity for its Kuwaiti-infused hip-hop tunes that are popular with the young generation. Ooredoo reiterated its commitment to celebrating events that matter to different segments of community, noting that the choice to collaborate with Sons of Yusuf comes in alignment with its deep-rooted values of supporting local talent.

Ooredoo also distributed gergian boxes which were assembled by children and volunteers during the company's volunteer program gergian assembly event which took place last week. A big portion of the boxes was distributed in children's hospital wards across Kuwait over the weekend. Earlier this month, Ooredoo kicked off its Ramadan program of activities with distributing hundreds of meals to the needy workers across Kuwait City with Ooredoo's volunteer program truck. This is in addition to a distribution center in the company's Ramadan tent, located across the head office on Soor Street. The initiatives were executed by Ooredoo's own volunteer program members, led by the company's Corporate Communications department.

Additionally, Ooredoo held an Iftar feast for the children of the Kuwait Down Syndrome Center and their parents and the attending staff as part of its community outreach and corporate social responsibility, sharing the festive spirits of the holy month. Ooredoo has previously collaborated with a number of entities in Kuwait, such as Abdullah Al Nouri institution to aid Syrian refugees in different part of the world, in addition its collaboration with the 'Kiswat Al Khair' campaign to distribute clothes for needy families during the holy month.

Also Ooredoo representatives has conducted a visit to 'Yadawi' centre to give the volunteers a comprehensive idea about how to recycle waste, sort, and reuse it in manufacturing children toys to be donated to children in need. The program will include participation from similar groups. Ooredoo reiterated its commitment to empowering youth and supporting groups that focus on volunteer work, and expressed its pride in partnering with reputable organizations throughout the month of Ramadan to encourage volunteer work.Empowering youth is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy.

ABK staff during the ghabqa.

ABK holds ghabqa for employees in celebration of the Holy Month and marking its 50th anniversary

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan and the bank's 50th anniversary, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held a ghabqa for its employees to celebrate these two joyous events in the midst of a fun-filled atmosphere. The ghabqa was held on June 7, 2017 at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel with Group CEO Michel Accad opening the evening with a warm message to all staff.

The event was set up to reflect a 50th anniversary theme, and featured delightful entertainment with a Jazz band followed by a gergian band, along with a selfie stand, and a sketch artist, provided for ABK staff and management to take home pictures as keepsakes.

The bank also held a series of exciting draws as a means of rewarding its staff members. Prizes included travel tickets to top destinations such as Paris, London, Barcelona, Egypt, India and Dubai, in addition to the latest TV's and mobile phones. The highlight of the evening was the grand draw for a GMC car, where Ahmad Fadel, a member of the Retail Banking Division team was announced the winner of the grand prize. The employee ghabqa is one of a series of events rolled out by the Bank in recognition of the Holy month. A few of the Bank's main initiatives this month was the provision of the Holy Quran in braille to the visually impaired, the distribution of food packages to the underprivileged, gergian celebration with Down Syndrome children, and sponsorship of the Kuwait Youth Basketball Ramadan Tournament.

Grand prize winner Ahmed Fadel with ABK's Executive Management.

Ghabqa MC Humood Adel.

ABK staff during the ghabqa.

Traditional Band at the ghabqa.

Organizers of the ghabqa with Michel Accad (ABK Group CEO) and Fawzy Al-Thunayan (GM Board Affairs at ABK).

ABK staff during the ghabqa.

OPENING TODAY

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12.00 noon, Wednesday, 14th June 2017

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Photo of the day

KUWAIT: Kuwaitis shop at a market during the holy month of Ramadan in downtown Kuwait City on June 12, 2017. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: KFH officials pose with the honorees and their parents.

KFH honors top high school grads in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held a ceremony to honor top high school graduates in Kuwait for the year 2016-2017 in the scientific, arts, special needs divisions in addition to the Students of the Institute of Religious Studies. This honoring emanates from KFH's endeavors to recognize the distinguished students while part of the bank's social responsibility, since education plays a prominent role in the comprehensive development.

KFH congratulated the top students and their parents for this success urging the students to continue their achievement and to deliberately choose the specialization that suits them while contributes in achieving the goal of working towards development, prosperity and a knowledge-based society. The honoring encompassed 11 male and female students who were awarded appreciation certificates and cash prizes to be deposited in their bank accounts.

The honorees are: Wafaa Saed, top student in Kuwait-science division, Munerah Mubarak Al-Ghareeb, top Kuwaiti student- science division, Raghad Abu Raya, top student in Kuwait-arts division, Hussa Aosaimi, top Kuwaiti student-arts division, Ali Othman Al-Ali, top student in Kuwait- the Institute of Religious Studies, Shaymaa Al-Asaousi and Heba Al-Ali, top Kuwaiti student- the Institute of Religious Studies, Basma Al-Saeidi, top student in Kuwait- special needs/ arts division, and Rashed Al-Ajmi, Reem Sultan, Abdulwahhab Abo Shaiba, top Kuwaiti students- special needs/science division. The students and their parents hailed KFH initiative indicating this reflects the pioneering role of the bank in assuming the social responsibility.

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) participated in a gergian ceremony organized by the Farwaniya Governorate recently by the Farah nursing home as part of its activities during the holy month of Ramadan.

Al-Sayer Group Holding celebrates gergian

Initiative to spread happiness and care

KUWAIT: In line with its social initiatives during Ramadan to promote the spirit of giving during this holy month in accordance with the Kuwait tradition Al-Sayer Group Holding celebrated gergian with the children. As part of the ongoing CSR efforts Al-Sayer visited Kuwait Palliative Care Centre to share the happiness and blessings of Ramadan with different segments of the society such as the patients who suffer from chronic and non-curable diseases.

Al-Sayer Group Corporate Excellence Department on this occasion conducted many fun activities including games, quiz sessions, traditional dancing, a face painting, and henna sessions with the children and their families and distributed gifts among joyful audience. The team from Al-Sayer consisted of representatives from CSR, Employee Events, Occupational Health and Safety along with the event organizer First Step a nonprofit organization, who shared quality time with the children and their parents at the hospital and also engaged with elderly citizens to create positive and relaxed atmosphere.

KUWAIT: Team members from Al-Sayer, First Step, Kuwait Palliative Care Centre pose for a group picture.

Children engage in fun activities.

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Erdogan slams 'inhumane' isolation of Qatar

US envoy to Qatar to step down • Saudis offer 'aid' to Qatar

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday slammed the economic and political isolation of Qatar as inhumane and contrary to Islamic values after key Gulf states broke off ties with Ankara's ally. "Taking action to isolate a country in all areas is inhumane and un-Islamic," Erdogan said in televised comments to his party in Ankara, after Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain broke off relations with Qatar on June 5, accusing it of supporting "terrorism".

In his strongest comments yet on the crisis, Erdogan added that Qatar was a country "on which a death sentenced had in some way been pronounced". The crisis has put Turkey in a delicate position as Ankara regards Qatar as its chief ally in the Gulf but is also keen to maintain its improving relations with the key regional power Saudi Arabia. Turkey also is eager to maintain workable relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia's foe with whom Doha's critics say Qatar maintained excessively close ties. Erdogan added he would hold three-way phone talks on the crisis later with French President Emmanuel Macron and Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. The move by Saudi and its allies came shortly after US President Donald Trump visited Riyadh, with some analysts saying the US leader had emboldened the Saudi leadership. Earlier, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that Erdogan would hold talks on the crisis with Trump in the coming days.

Erdogan vehemently rejected the accusations - already strongly denied by Doha - that Qatar supports terrorism, arguing the country had been a staunch opponent of Islamic State (IS) jihadists. "Qatar is a country which, like Turkey, has adopted the most resolute stance against Daesh (IS)," said Erdogan. "Let's stop fooling ourselves." Striking a careful balance, Erdogan stopped short of directly criticizing Saudi Arabia's actions but called on Saudi King Salman to show leadership by solving the crisis. "I think that as the elder statesman of the Gulf, the king of Saudi Arabia should solve this affair and show leadership," said Erdogan.

Turkey's parliament last week approved deploying troops to a Turkish base in Qatar in what was seen as a show of support for its embattled ally. The agreement does not contain any specific number of troops to be stationed in the base, or when. The curbs placed on gas-rich Qatar have ranged from bans on flag-carrier Qatar Airways using airspace of the countries involved to Saudi Arabia suspending subscription sales and renewals to a Qatar-linked sports broadcaster.

US ambassador quits

Meanwhile, the US ambassador to Qatar said yesterday she is leaving her post in Doha, in the midst of the worst diplomatic crisis involving America's Gulf allies in years. "This month, I end my 3 years as US Ambassador to #Qatar. It has been the greatest honor of my life and I'll miss this great country," Dana Shell Smith said on Twitter yesterday. Shell Smith did not say why she was stepping down, if she was staying within the diplomatic service or who would replace her. Many US ambassadors leave their posts after serving around three years. Shell Smith was appointed ambassador to the Gulf emirate by Barack Obama in 2014. Last month she appeared to express dissatisfaction with political events back home in another message posted on social media. She took to Twitter in the hours after Trump's dramatic sacking of FBI director James Comey, tweeting: "Increasingly difficult to wake up overseas to news from home, knowing I will spend today explaining our democracy and institutions." Qatar is home to Al-Udeid, the largest US airbase in the region, which houses around 10,000 troops.

In Washington, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister insisted there's no blockade on Qatar and said his country will provide food and medical aid if needed. Adel Al-Jubeir said yesterday before a meeting with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that Qatar's ports and airports are open. He said Saudi Arabia has merely denied Qatar use of its airspace, which he said is his country's sovereign right.

ANKARA: Turkish President and Chairman of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) Recep Tayyip Erdogan delivers a speech during AK Party's group meeting at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey yesterday. —AFP Photos

Jubeir said Qatar can move goods in and out "whenever they want". He says Saudi Arabia has allowed families to move between countries. Still, Jubeir says Saudi Arabia is willing to provide food and medical supplies through the King Salman Center, a Saudi humanitarian agency. Saudi Arabia has closed Qatar's sole land border and joined other countries in cutting off sea traffic, leading panicked residents to stockpile food. On Monday, Qatar denounced the sanctions imposed against Doha by Saudi Arabia and its allies as "unfair" and "illegal", as Britain announced talks to try to resolve the crisis. "Whatever relates to our foreign affairs... no one has the right to discuss," Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani told reporters during a visit to Paris. He called for "dialogue based on clear foundations" over accusations that Qatar supports extremist groups. "Qatar is willing to sit and negotiate about whatever is related to Gulf security," he added.

In London, British foreign minister Boris Johnson called for calm and said he would meet this week with his counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE. "I have urged all sides to refrain from any further escalation and to engage in mediation efforts," he said. While praising Qatar's restraint during the crisis, he added: "In finding a resolution, I call on Qatar to take seriously their neighbors' concerns. Qatar is a partner of the UK in the fight against terrorism but they urgently need to do more to address support for extremist groups, building on the steps they have already taken to tackle funding to those groups." In Paris, Sheikh Mohammed, who is on a European tour to drum up support for Qatar, said his country had no idea what had provoked the move against it. "It's not about Iran or Al-Jazeera," he said, referring to the Qatar-based broadcaster. "We have no clue about the real reasons." But he supported moves by Kuwait to act as a mediator in the dispute "with the help of friendly countries such as the United States," he added. Sheikh Mohammed's courting of Europe - he has also visited Germany and Russia in recent days - though did not go down well in parts of the Gulf.

UAE's foreign minister Anwar Gargash took to Twitter on Monday to claim Qatar had sought to "internationalize the crisis with its brothers". And in Kuwait, which has not joined its neighbors in acting against Qatar, foreign minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah warned that the crisis "may lead to undesirable consequences," according to a quote on state news agency Kuna.

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson shake hands with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir yesterday, shortly before their private meeting at the US Department of State.

'Illegal blockade'

In Doha, Qatar Airways called on the UN's aviation body to declare the Gulf boycott against the carrier "illegal" and a violation of a 1944 convention on international air transport. In televised interviews on Monday, Qatar Airways outspoken CEO Akbar Al-Baker called the move an "illegal blockade" and urged the United Nations' civil aviation branch to intervene. Qatar Airways has made Doha a global hub in just a few years, but industry analysts say banning it from Gulf states' airspace could threaten its position as a major transcontinental carrier.

Al-Baker also criticized US President Donald Trump for comments he has made linking Qatar to supporting terror. "I think that President Trump's comment about my country is ill-placed, ill-informed, and I can again repeat that I'm very disappointed in him." Qatar announced Monday that it had launched direct shipping services to ports in Oman in a bid to bypass the Gulf "blockade". Saudi Arabia has closed the Qatari peninsula's only land border, threatening imports of both fresh food and raw materials needed to complete a $200 billion infrastructure project for the 2022 football World Cup. However, one source told AFP on Monday that Qatar's World Cup preparations continue "as normal". Yesterday, Morocco announced it would send food by plane to Qatar. —Agencies

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump laughs during a Cabinet meeting on Monday in the Cabinet Room of the White House. —AP

At Trump's Cabinet meeting, flattery is flavor of the day

WASHINGTON: They came to praise President Donald Trump, not focus on the controversies engulfing him. One by one, Trump's Cabinet members assembled around the table spoke effusively about the president as he sat beaming, soaking it all in at the first formal gathering of his most senior officials at the White House on Monday. The lavishing of praise and adulation contrasted with the storm enveloping the president as he struggles with myriad crises, including an investigation into possible ties between his election campaign and Russian meddling in the race.

For him, the meeting was a welcome rendering of what he feels are major accomplishments ignored by his detractors, even though major legislative achievements have eluded him thus far. There was no one more gushing than White House chief of staff Reince Priebus, who is frequently the target of criticism from long-time Trump advisers and is often see as just one misstep away from being ousted, even though rumors of his departure have all proved to be premature. "On behalf of the entire senior staff around you, Mr. President, we thank you for the honor and the blessing that you've given us to serve your agenda and the American people and we're continuing to work very hard every day to accomplish those goals," Priebus said.

Trump used the meeting to try to show a sense of momentum for his agenda after weeks of being engulfed in controversy over his May 9 firing of FBI Director James Comey, who was heading the Russia investigation. "We've been about as active as you can possibly be and at a just about record pace," he said. "In just a very short time we are seeing amazing results. People are surprised. It's kicking in very fast."

But one of his greatest adversaries, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, put together a mock video of a meeting with his staff with aides praising Schumer. "Michelle, how'd my hair look coming out of the gym this morning?" Schumer asks, turning to one staffer. "You have great hair. Nobody has better hair than you," Michelle said.

Priebus was not alone in using the opportunity to praise Trump. "It is the greatest privilege of my life to serve as vice president. The president is keeping his word to the American people," said Vice President Mike Pence. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, noting the comments from other officials who said they had recently been abroad, noted wryly: "While we are bragging about international travel I just got back from Mississippi and they like you there."

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, who as governor of South Carolina had endorsed Trump opponent Marco Rubio last year, called it "a new day at the United Nations" with Trump in power. "We now have a very strong voice. People know what the United States is for. They know what we are against. And they see us in a new way across the board. I think the international community knows we are back," she said. —Reuters

Migrant influx shifting but no let-up: Frontex

WARSAW: The migrants pouring into Europe have changed routes: The crossing between Turkey and Greece is practically closed, but ever greater numbers are risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean between Libya and Italy. A criminal industry has flourished, while the European Union has beefed up its border agency Frontex to try to check the mass migration. Frontex is at once both good cop and bad cop, rescuing migrants from sinking boats but also dropping them off at welcome centres where they risk being sent back home. Frontex head Fabrice Leggeri summed up the situation in an interview with AFP.

Who are the migrants?

On the shores of Greece there are now "80 or 100 people who arrive every day, whereas we had 2,500 a day" before the agreement with Turkey, said Leggeri. Among those who arrive from Africa via the central Mediterranean and Libya, whose number is up by more than 40 percent, most come from west Africa. They are Senegalese, Guineans, Nigerians. In 2016 they totalled 180,000. They are mainly economic migrants and include many young men but also families and young women. Nigerian women are often exploited as prostitutes in Europe. "It's not the poorest who leave, because they have to be able to pay the smugglers," said Leggeri.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), of the more than one million people who made it to Europe in 2015, 850,000 crossed into Greece via the Aegean Sea. More than half came from Syria and most of the rest from Afghanistan and Iraq. Following a landmark EU-Turkey accord in March 2016, the total number arriving in Europe by sea fell that year to around 363,000, IOM figures show. But as the number of arrivals in Greece dropped, the figures arriving from north Africa started to grow. By mid-April 2017, "some 36,000 migrants had arrived in Italy since the beginning of the year, or an increase of 43 percent over the same period last year," according to Frontex.

Who are the smugglers?

At the beginning of the most dangerous leg of the trip across the Sahara, the migrants are transported by Tuareg or Tebu nomads, for whom it is a traditional commercial activity, Leggeri said. The Mediterranean crossing however is run by criminal networks, both big and small, as well as lone smugglers. At the bottom of the ladder there are petty crooks, sometimes migrants themselves, who become the skippers of the small overloaded boats to pay for their own crossing, according to Leggeri. Then there are the middlemen who collect the money and organize the trip but who do not board. Their bosses are the network chiefs who "likely include people who previously worked in the police force" in Libya, Leggeri said.

How much money is involved?

Coming up with an estimate is not easy but according to a recent report by the EU's law enforcement agency Europol, gangs smuggling migrants to or within Europe raked in €4.7 billion-5.7 billion in 2015. But those profits dropped by nearly two billion euros last year. The major traffickers use money earned smuggling migrants to undertake other criminal activities that require an initial investment, "be it drug trafficking, arms trafficking, or even terrorism financing - we can't exclude it," Leggeri said. The funds are sometimes moved openly through money transfer service Western Union, especially in west Africa. In east Africa, traffickers more often use "hawala", an informal system of payment based on trust that is far more difficult to trace than bank transfers.

What are the main routes?

Migrants from west Africa begin by taking the bus, Leggeri said. The territory of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is somewhat similar to the visa-free Schengen zone, as individuals can travel freely within it for a modest fee of around €20. Once the migrants arrive in Niamey, capital of Niger, the illegal activity begins and they must fork out up to 150 euros each to reach the north of the country and the Libyan border.

Then comes the crossing which can cost up to €1,000, depending on the boat. Individuals can, for example, pay €300 for a place on an inflatable boat, but those journeys are particularly risky. The east Africa route - which originates from the Horn of Africa and is taken by Eritreans, Somalis and Ethiopians - is more expensive. The journey is organized by national criminal gangs that work together, so a Sudanese network, for example, will hand over its clients to a Libyan network at the border. "There, the fee can run to 3,000 euros, from the Horn of Africa all the way to Italy," Leggeri said. — AFP

African migrants aim for Europe, whatever the risk

KANO, Nigeria: Uche's real journey had yet to begin but he had already spent four days in the northern Nigerian city of Kano after travelling on public buses and potholed roads from Imo state in the southeast. He planned to go to Agadez, a transit town on the southern edge of the Sahara desert in central Niger, take a truck to Sebha, in southwestern Libya, and from there to the capital Tripoli, and then to Italy or Spain.

But his contact, who was supposed to drive him and three women across Nigeria's northern border, was arrested on suspicion of people smuggling. "His house had been under surveillance," explains the 38-year-old electrician in Kano's bustling Sabon Gari district. "The movement of the three women in and out of the house heightened the suspicion of the security agents who raided the house." Uche, a stocky man in faded jeans, white sneakers and a white and blue striped T-shirt, appears unfazed by the setback. "I'll hang around in Kano until I find another facilitator who can link me up with a contact in Agadez," he says.

Little deterrent

With its market, blocks of overcrowded flats, beer parlors and brothels, Sabon Gari is a chaotic place that is becoming a frequent target for raids against smugglers who transport human cargo to the Mediterranean Sea that laps Africa's northern shores. Europe, though, is pushing back against undocumented economic migrants from west Africa like Uche, or the young women trafficked to sell sex in its major cities. Numbers are down on 2015, when more than a million irregular migrants and refugees, most of them fleeing Syria's brutal civil war, risked their lives at sea to reach Europe.

From Jan 1 to May 24 last year, 193,333 people crossed to Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Spain in rickety fishing boats and overloaded inflatable dinghies, the International Organization for Migration says. This year, only 60,521 have made the journey in the same period. But the central Mediterranean smuggling route from Libya is now the busiest after a 2016 deal with Turkey to tackle the Aegean route. A total of 50,267 have made it to Italy, up from 36,184 last year, the IOM says.

The route has also become more deadly: 1,442 people have been lost at sea so far compared with 982 in the same period in 2016. "There's no longer a 'migration season'," says Fathi Al-Far, who runs a reception center in the Libyan coastal town of Zawiya. "People are now leaving at any time, even in winter."

Speaking out

Africa has long viewed irregular migration as Europe's problem and acceptable as long as remittances flowed. But Africa's leaders are increasingly speaking out, as Europe's diplomats and politicians try to stop the boats from coming. There has been talk of deals with the nomadic tribes policing Libya's lawless desert frontiers and plans to build holding centers for Africans sent back after reaching Europe. Nigeria has announced a crackdown on illegal immigration and people smuggling; Niger has threatened smugglers with 30 years in jail and raided "connection houses" in Agadez.

Some see a link with a European Union offer of €1.8 billion ($2 billion) in economic development funding for countries that show they are tackling irregular migration. For Richard Danziger, the IOM's regional director for west and central Africa, the "large shift in attitude and policies" among African governments has been significant. "Now there's a real realization that the human cost is not something that's acceptable, whether it's drowning in the Mediterranean or dying in the desert," he says.

Security threat

Last year, 37,724 undocumented migrants registered in Italy and Greece were Nigerian, nearly three times more than the next biggest group from Guinea. Uche's profile is typical: he wants a better life, away from an economy deep in recession and where decades of oil profits and corruption have benefited few. The flow of migrants, undeterred by the arduous journey and risks involved, is unlikely to stop unless conflict, poverty and other root causes such as population pressures are addressed.

Many of those who end up in Agadez in Niger, either bound for Libya and dangerous sea crossings, or after aborted attempts to reach Europe, are physically exhausted, sick from malaria and hunger, and suffering psychological problems. Law enforcement agencies see irregular migration and people smuggling as a security threat because of the increasing involvement of criminal networks, and the money at stake.

The EU law enforcement agency Europol has said criminal networks made between 3 and 6 billion euros from migrant smuggling in 2015. But revenue dropped by nearly €2 billion in 2016 because of the drop in numbers of irregular migrants arriving in the EU and a fall in fees paid to smugglers. The head of the EU's border and coastguard agency Frontex, Fabrice Leggeri, believes communication is key to debunking the myths that smugglers tell migrants about a new life in Europe. "Either you die in the Mediterranean or you arrive in Europe under extremely deplorable conditions," he tells AFP. "It's not the El Dorado that the smugglers describe."

But despite the increased efforts, from border police to maritime patrols, there is concern that not enough is being done. The sea crossing is now even seen as the least risky part of the journey given the number of EU vessels on patrol, which pick up migrants and take them to Europe to be processed. Migrants are being sent back to their home countries from Libya as part of a more regular, assisted-return program but officials concede many of them will try again.

At the same time, there is recognition that where it exists, there is poor enforcement of anti-trafficking legislation and little deterrent in source countries. Conviction rates are low and agencies such as Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons are underfunded and under-staffed. Africa's priorities are often elsewhere.

'Delivery men'

Ahmad used to drive migrants in his truck in the searing heat across the dunes from Agadez to Sebha twice every month. The 30 passengers each paid him 50,000 naira (about €150). "I have made good money from the business. I own a house and other possessions. But in recent times things have changed. The authorities have come down hard," he says. Drivers now risk being spotted by aerial patrols, having their vehicle impounded and going to jail, he says. But he maintains he has not done anything wrong. "We are just delivery men paid for our service," he says.

Others involved in smuggling along this route do it out of necessity in a desperately poor, remote region where there is little or no alternative employment. The bribes paid to the military escorts of the convoys that leave Agadez, as well as to police and army checkpoints through the desert, boost meagre or non-existent salaries. In Libya, where law and order has broken down since dictator Muammar Gaddafi was toppled in 2011, former policemen have skippered migrant boats.

Gritty determination

Security analysts who study the Sahel say people are just another commodity for those who have long been involved in smuggling drugs, weapons and other goods. But while there is no clear evidence that extends to any of the violent extremists, there are fears about what may happen if peoples' only source of income is taken away. Poverty is a major factor in radicalization and Islamist groups operating in the region, such as Boko Haram or Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, willingly accept the disaffected.

Above all, the biggest fight is against the determination of desperate people with nothing to lose. "Maybe I'll die but it's better to try to cross (the desert) than to stay in the Gambia," says Ibrahim Kamara, recovering in Agadez after breaking his leg in a road accident on a previous attempt. "I've got no job there and no wife because I've got no money," the 37-year-old adds. For Uche, in Kano, the rewards are worth the risk. "People keep saying it (the route) is dangerous but I'm ready to try my luck," he says. — AFP

KASSALA, Sudan: Members of the Sudanese border security patrol the Sudan-Eritrea border for smugglers and illegal migrants near this eastern Sudanese border town on May 2, 2017. — AFP

Sudan boosts border patrols to curb people smuggling

AL-LAFFA, Sudan: It was Efrem Desta's yearning for freedom that made him flee his home country of Eritrea and enter Sudan illegally, hoping that he could later make it to Europe. But he and a group of fellow migrants were abducted by Sudanese Bedouin Rashaida tribesmen after they crossed into east Sudan near Al-Laffa village. "We fled Eritrea because we wanted freedom, but when we got here we were captured by Rashaida," said Desta, 20, speaking in his native Tigrinya language. "After five days in captivity, we were rescued."

Sudanese security forces, who have stepped up their patrols along the 600-km frontier with Eritrea in a bid to curb migrant smuggling, freed the group. They were found handcuffed and in chains, security officers said, and have now joined nearly 30,000 other refugees in Wadi Sherifay camp, a vast conglomerate of thatched huts and dusty tracks near the border.

Most of the rescued Eritreans say they fled their country to escape military conscription, but some do admit leaving to seek better jobs abroad. Sudanese police and agents of the powerful National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) say dozens of Eritreans try to enter Sudan illegally every day. "There are many ways they enter, including walking along the river Gash," one security officer told an AFP correspondent who toured border areas of Kasala state at the beginning of May. The migrants cross into Sudan on foot after walking for days or in some cases even weeks.

Key transit point

"They usually travel at night and hide out during the day in farms, plantations and forests," the officer said, pointing to a patch of trees lining the dry riverbed. Although Syrians fleeing their brutal civil war fuel the current migration crisis, experts say there are also many Eritreans trying to reach Europe. "An estimated 100,000 migrants travelled across Sudan in 2016, the bulk of them being Eritreans," said Asfand Waqar, analyst at the International Organization of Migration (IOM).

Sudan, in the Horn of Africa, is a key transit point on the migrant route to Europe. From Kasala the Eritreans travel across Sudan to Libya or Egypt. Smugglers then cram them aboard rickety boats for perilous Mediterranean voyages aimed at reaching landfall in Europe. In summer, the long windswept cross-border Gash riverbed comes alive at night with the march of migrants. "We still don't do night patrols, so it's easy for them to move during the hours of darkness," the security officer said.

Behind him under the scorching midday sun, a group of machinegun-toting border guards crossed the riverbed in pick-up trucks to begin a patrol. Officers say that their boosted presence along the border had also helped them catch several people smugglers. "The smugglers, who are mostly Eritrean, have excellent networks and high-tech communications gear," another security officer said. "They know more about us than we know about them." — AFP

Migrants power Niger football club

AGADEZ, Niger: As Africa's smuggling capital, a dusty city in central Niger has found its local football team boosted by an unexpected influx of new players: Migrants in limbo awaiting passage to Europe. Located on the edge of the Sahara, Agadez is a major transit point for migrants hoping to travel north to seek work in either Libya or Algeria or to try to risk the hazardous boat journey to Europe. But hundreds have been stuck here after running out of money, or have returned after a first failed attempt to get to Europe. Cooling their heels, many of them turn to what they know best - playing football. And here that means playing for Nassara Agadez, a team in Niger's second division. "The president of the club promised me that he will get me to Europe," said 16-year-old Mohamed Diaby, a talented Ivorian who trained with a leading football institute in Abidjan, Ivory Coast's main city. "I didn't want to stay on in Ivory Coast, there are too many people" there trying to earn a living through football, he said. "I told myself: I will make my life elsewhere."

AGADEZ, Niger: Ivory Coast's Mohamed Diaby, 16, who left Abidjan for Agadez in Niger, trains with players of the Nassara Agadez football club during a session on May 4, 2017. — AFP

Salary and accommodation

The club's president Bachir Ama, a one-time fixer who used to transport migrants to Libya, promised to pay Diaby's passage to Europe if he played for the club for one season. And Diaby is not the only one making the most of his skills in this arid transport hub. There are eight migrants on the team: four Nigerians and four Ivorians, who earn salaries of up to 100,000 CFA francs ($170) and also get accommodation. At the local stadium, around 30 players are training on a brand-new Astroturf pitch, a gift from the government to mark Niger's national day.

"These are people who came on the way to Libya or Algeria but were stranded here," Ama says. "They need work and as football is their profession, so they have come to us to play." And in Agadez, they have a wide pool to choose from given the huge numbers crossing Niger: In 2016, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) counted some 335,000 migrants heading north and another 111,000 going the other way.

A footballing odyssey

The club is one of the best in the Agadez region and players hoping to join must pass a trial. Recruiting only "the best", Nassara have beaten all of their regional rivals and entered the final 16 of the Niger Cup. Many youngsters are keen to try their luck, one of whom is 16-year-old Toya-se Tunchi Bondo from Liberia. He spent a day training with the club but was not taken on as the season's transfer and recruitment window had already closed. "It feels good to play," says Bondo, a defensive midfielder who has been taken in by the IOM. "All I do is sleep and wait." — AFP

Ticket to Europe? Nigeria girls lured into sex slavery

BENIN CITY, Nigeria: In Benin City, Nigeria's capital of illegal migration, no one says the word "prostitution". The word on the street for the young girls who leave for Italy or France is "hustling". About 37,500 Nigerians arrived in Italy by boat in 2016, more than from any other African country, and most of them were from the southern city, the capital of Edo state. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recorded an explosion in the number of Nigerian women trafficked into Europe.

In 2013, there were 433 but the following year, it rose to nearly 5,000. There was a "substantial increase" in "more easily-manipulated" under-age victims, the IOM says. Most are destined for sexual slavery. "Why Edo? Why Benin City? I am trying to understand and it gives me a headache," says Sister Bibiana, who helps young women when they return from Europe, voluntarily or otherwise. "But they're itching to go back."

'Like Jesus'

The benevolent smile of Jesus radiates down on the meeting room of Sister Bibiana's small charity in Benin City. "In Europe, people are good people. They are like Jesus," says one woman, Miracle, explaining why she left Nigeria in 2012. "I pray to God every day. I ask him to find me a way to go back." Miracle returned from Italy two years ago. The story she tells is sketchy. She claims only to have been a sex worker for a few weeks before being rescued. But the nun who knows her background insists Miracle was a prostitute from when she arrived in Europe until the time she left.

The women, who come from poor backgrounds with little education, do not have the means to get to Italy. But in Benin City, "cartels" of human traffickers are everywhere. Women need only find a "madame" to organize the trip and get false papers, with the promise of a job. Some believe they will become hairdressers, others that they will be high-class prostitutes in big hotels. Few ask questions.

Once in Europe, they find themselves on the streets of Palermo or Paris, selling sex for between five and 10 euros ($5.50-$11) a time to pay back a debt of €50,000-60,000 ($55,000-$66,000). Divinity went to Dubai rather than Italy. She says her debt was "only" €15,000 and going overseas had been a long-held dream. "All my life, I've dreamt to travel abroad and see the world," says Divinity, who was 18 when she left.

But she later realized she would never be free of the people who trafficked her and decided to go to the police. The authorities didn't want to know. She's now back on the streets of Benin City, where poverty and evangelical churches mix with Western Union money transfer bureaus, where parents pick up money sent by children who left to "hustle" abroad. Among those who "failed" to make it in Europe, many go back onto the streets when they get home with traumatic tales about seeing dozens of clients per night along country roads, the "sexual practices of white people" and sleeping rough in railway stations. —AFP

Venezuelans watch news bulletins acted live on bus

CARACAS: Short of newspapers, Venezuelans are getting updates about their country's deadly political crisis live - acted out by reporters on the bus to work. Maria Gabriela Fernandez and Dereck Blanco stand on board inside a black frame. "El Bus TV," reads a sign over their heads. "Good morning everyone. First, the news." It's less comfortable than a TV studio - they have to hold onto the rail with one hand to stop themselves from falling when the dilapidated bus brakes.

But it's one way of escaping government censorship. "The idea came from the need to break away from the news circus in this country," the group's creative editor Claudia Lizardo told AFP. "To bring people truthful news through a mass transport system: the bus."

Crisis in three minutes

In three minutes, Fernandez and Blanco deliver news on health, safety, sports, entertainment and, naturally, economics and politics in a country stricken by food shortages and deadly riots. Clashes at daily protests by demonstrators calling for President Nicolas Maduro to quit have left 66 people dead since April 1, prosecutors say. Police fire tear gas and water cannons at protesters who hurl rocks and petrol bombs. The Bus TV team digs out original angles to bring home the drama of the protests, which are not broadcast on state television.

"Each tear gas canister costs $40. At the black market exchange rate, that is 200,000 bolivars, or a whole month's salary," Blanco tells the audience of passengers. "Economic news now: a kilo of chicken wings costs 9,700 bolivars. A Venezuelan on a minimum wage must work a day and a half to buy it."

Opening people's eyes

Blanco is a presenter on a national television channel but also does Bus TV out of frustration at being under official "pressure" not to cover certain subjects on air. "It is a challenge," he says. "Journalists have to reinvent themselves so that the news can reach the people." The team hop on and off buses around Caracas, with the permission of the drivers who often let them on without paying a fare. Bus TV is spreading, says Laura Castillo, the show's producer. There is a team working in the western industrial city of Valencia and another in Puerto La Cruz in the east. "It is a marvelous idea. I like it when things are said clearly, without aggression," said passenger Glenda Guerrero, a 68-year-old housewife. "I think it is important for them to report to us what it is happening, to open our eyes."

State censorship

The six-member Bus TV group of journalists and performing artists started its shows on May 28 - the 10th anniversary of a dark day for Venezuela's independent media. On that day in 2007, Maduro's late predecessor Hugo Chavez shut down the country's oldest broadcaster, Radio Caracas Television, for its critical coverage of him. Like Chavez before him, Maduro - himself a former bus driver - accuses the private media of being part of a capitalist conspiracy against his socialist leadership.

The Venezuelan media rights group Espacio Publico and the National Journalists' Union accuse the government of censoring media that carry coverage critical of it. The government took the Spanish-language edition of CNN television news off air this year. The groups say scores of newspapers have shut down because the authorities are denying them paper to print on. The country's leading newspaper El Nacional and prominent news website La Patilla have been sued. Others have been bought up by businesses loyal to the government, Espacio Publico says. "The government has won the arm-wrestle over controlling the media," says Castillo. "You can get news on social media, but not everyone has access to those and a lot of what you find there is just rumors."

Attacks on reporters

Media rights group Reporters Without Borders ranks Venezuela a dismal 137th out of 180 countries for press freedom. The journalists' union has counted more than 200 attacks against reporters during the past two and a half months of protests. Maduro has fanned the protests by proposing to reform the constitution, "without consulting Venezuelans in a referendum," Blanco and Fernandez report, wrapping up their bulletin. Passengers applaud as the presenters sign off. "Meanwhile, the bakeries still have no bread. Thank you for watching, this is Bus TV." —AFP

CARACAS: Laura Castillo (left), Maria Gabriela Fernandez (center) and Dereck Blanco (right) give a presentation of Bus TV news on June 6, 2017. —AFP

CHILPANCINGO, Mexico: A Mexican photojournalist works during a protest by police officers in Guerrero state on May 31, 2017. —AFP

Journalists bear invisible scars of Mexico drug war

CHILPANCINGO, Mexico: After drug cartel thugs kidnapped him and threatened to burn him alive, Mexican journalist Jorge Martinez was so traumatized he couldn't leave the house. He and six colleagues were returning home after covering a police operation in the violent southern state of Guerrero on May 13 when some 100 masked gunmen from La Familia cartel hijacked their cars. The narcos ended up letting them go after about 15 minutes. But it took Martinez, 44, two weeks to go outside again.

"Maybe it's just nerves, but I feel like people are following me," he almost whispered into the phone at the time, afraid to come out for an interview. Two days after the kidnapping, another journalist - noted crime reporter and AFP contributor Javier Valdez - was shot dead in broad daylight in the state of Sinaloa, scene of some of Mexico's most brutal drug violence. It was one of the highest-profile attacks targeting journalists in Mexico - a country where the phenomenon has become almost banal.

Journalists face harrowing risks to cover the bloody wars between Mexico's rival cartels and the army, which have left a trail of tens of thousands of mangled bodies and hundreds of mass graves in their wake. Reporters take their lives in their hands when they write anything that could be perceived as threatening, or even unflattering, by narcos or the corrupt government officials in bed with them. Watchdog group Reporters Without Borders ranks Mexico as the most dangerous country in the world for journalists after Syria and Afghanistan.

Since 2006, when the government first sent the military to fight the cartels, nearly 100 journalists have been killed, more than 20 have disappeared and more than 200 have been assaulted by drug traffickers. For survivors, the scars are not always visible. Many Mexican crime reporters suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD. For some, it is because they have been victims of the violence. For others, it is the impact of bearing daily witness to it. A study last year involving 246 journalists found that 41 percent had PTSD symptoms. Seventy-seven percent had symptoms of anxiety, and 42 percent of depression.

Flawed protection program

Alejandro Ortiz is a 26-year-old reporter for W Radio in Chilpancingo, the capital of Guerrero and a hot spot in Mexico's war on drugs. Dark and muscular, he smiles nervously as he tells stories about the four times he has been attacked by cartel thugs. He's been kidnapped, tied up, beaten and had a gun put to his head. He suffers recurring nightmares and anxiety. But he says he's determined not to let the narcos win. "We all know being a journalist is a high-risk profession in Mexico. Being one in Guerrero is that much worse," he told AFP. Reporters here earn as little as $150 a month.

Eric Chavelas, the leader of a local journalists' association, estimates 30 percent of his colleagues suffer from PTSD. "We've been sounding the alarm for years. We don't know where to turn" for psychological help, he said. Experts say most journalists with PTSD do not get treatment. Ezequiel Flores, a 40-year-old correspondent for the newsweekly Proceso, had to stop reporting on the ground after being roughed up and receiving death threats.

He used to cover the region around Iguala, where 43 students were abducted in 2014 by corrupt police who are accused of handing them over to drug gang thugs who allegedly massacred them. "Every day you document tragedy after tragedy after tragedy, and you can't or don't know how to evacuate all this stuff that you accumulate," he said. The government has created a protection program for threatened journalists, but it has failed to stop the violence. Five journalists have been killed this year.

Venezuela attorney general says officials threatened her family

Opposition leaders calling for return to streets

CARACAS: Venezuela's attorney general on Monday said intelligence officials had threatened and harassed her family after she openly challenged President Nicolas Maduro over the country's political crisis. A staunch figure of the ruling party, Attorney General Luisa Ortega has been branded a traitor for becoming the highest public official to break ranks with Maduro. She has accused him and his allies of acting unconstitutionally in their standoff against the opposition in recent months of deadly anti-government protests.

Last week, she filed a challenge against his effort to rewrite the constitution, branding it undemocratic. The court dismissed the appeal on Monday. Ortega said members of her family had received threatening telephone calls and had been harassed and pursued. "I hold the executive responsible for any injury or attack that my family might suffer," she said in an interview with Union Radio. "This is a matter that must be resolved with me, not with my family," she said. "They are being pursued by patrols that appear to be from SEBIN," she added about the state intelligence service. "They are sending them messages directly from SEBIN, which answers to the government." Although Ortega, 59, said she herself had not received threats, some government officials have said on television that she should be imprisoned.

Constitutional struggle

Maduro is accused of controlling the Supreme Court, which has fended off numerous legal and legislative moves against him over the past year and a half. Clashes at daily protests by demonstrators calling for Maduro to quit have left 67 people dead since April 1, prosecutors say. The latest casualty was a 49-year-old man who died Monday night in the Caribbean city of La Guaira, prosecutors said, without clarifying the circumstances. The opposition deputy Jose Manuel Olivares said he died after being suffocated by tear gas.

Violent riots also occurred in the afternoon in Caracas, where hooded protesters partially set off an administrative building of the TSJ. Protesters blame Maduro for an economic crisis that has caused desperate shortages of food and medicine in the oil-rich country. Maduro says the crisis is a US-backed conspiracy. He has launched moves to set up an elected assembly to reform the constitution in response to the protests, but his opponents say that is a ploy to cling to power. A survey by pollster Datanalisis indicated that 85 percent of Venezuelans opposed that plan. The president retains the public backing of the military.

Legal battles

Analysts said last week that Ortega's suit could build bridges between the opposition and disgruntled officials and widen divisions in Maduro's camp, making it harder for him to stay in power. But the court on Monday rejected her appeal as "incompetent". That ruling "removes any doubt about the absence of judicial remedies" for the political crisis, said constitutional law expert Jose Ignacio Hernandez. "It is a clear attempt to discredit the attorney general."

Ortega responded to the ruling by upping the ante - and the political tension. She presented a further legal challenge aiming to fire 13 of the court's judges, who she argued were named without her approval. Her motion challenges a controversial decision in 2015 to name the judges, whom the opposition says are biased in favor of Maduro. A dozen countries expressed "deep concern" about Ortega's "harassment", prosecutors said, including Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Portugal and Paraguay.

Scuffles outside court

The president is resisting calls for elections to replace him, vowing to continue the "socialist revolution" of his late predecessor Hugo Chavez. Opponents of Maduro had gone to the court earlier to try to add their names to the list of plaintiffs in Ortega's lawsuit, but were kept away by military police. Anti- and pro-government activists exchanged blows outside the court in the latest in more than two months of street unrest.

Parliament was set to discuss procedures for appointing new judges to the Supreme Court yesterday, while opposition leaders are calling for a return to the streets today. "They do not want the people to demonstrate against the constitutional assembly. Look at how many people reject it," said one young demonstrator, Maria Rodriguez. "Get away, the streets belong to the people, not to the bourgeoisie," yelled a rival supporter dressed in the traditional red of Chavez supporters and holding a copy of the constitution in his hand. "What there is here is revolution." —AFP

CARACAS: Anti-government demonstrators attack the administration headquarters of the Supreme Court of Justice as part of protests against President Nicolas Maduro on Monday. —AFP

Secret Service doesn't have White House tapes

WASHINGTON: The US Secret Service said Monday it does not have any audio recordings or transcripts of US President Donald Trump's White House conversations. After Trump again intimated last week that he could have recorded his controversial discussions with fired FBI director James Comey, it remained unclear if that claim was true. The issue could be crucial for the president amid allegations - though not formal accusations - that he has sought to obstruct the investigation into possible collusion by his advisors in Russian interference in last year's presidential election.

The Secret Service, which protects the president and his family, maintained a secret taping system for the White House in the eras of John F Kennedy and Richard Nixon. But in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from The Wall Street Journal, the agency said it did not have any such records for the Trump administration. "It appears, from a review of Secret Service's main indices, that there are not records pertaining to your request," the agency told the Journal in a letter.

On May 12, three days after he fired Comey, Trump suggested in a tweet that he had recorded their private discussions with Comey. The claim came in response to reports, since confirmed, that Comey himself had kept detailed notes on those discussions in which, he alleges, Trump demanded a pledge of loyalty and pressed the then-FBI director to pull off on an investigation into Trump's former national security advisor Michael Flynn. "James Comey better hope that there are no 'tapes' of our conversations before he starts leaking to the press!" Trump wrote.

On Friday, after explosive testimony from Comey in Congress repeated the claims that Trump pressured him over Flynn, Trump responded angrily, calling Comey a liar. Asked by reporters if he had tapes of their conversations to support his claim, Trump replied demurely, "I'll tell you about that maybe in the very near future." That left open the possibility that other White House staff, or Trump himself, could have been involved in recording their talks, if anyone. Members of Congressional committees investigating Russian meddling in the election have shown interest in whether Trump did tape his White House conversations with Comey or anyone else. —AFP

US COVFEFE Act would preserve Trump tweets

WASHINGTON: From the incomprehensible "covfefe" to a post labeling fired FBI director James Comey a "leaker," President Donald Trump's tweets would be preserved as presidential records if a Democratic lawmaker's proposed COVFEFE Act becomes law. Representative Mike Quigley of Illinois introduced on Monday the "Communications Over Various Feeds Electronically For Engagement" Act that would amend the Presidential Records Act and require the National Archives to store presidential tweets and other social media interactions.

"If the president is going to take to social media to make sudden public policy proclamations, we must ensure that these statements are documented and preserved for future reference," Quigley, a member of the House intelligence committee, said in a statement. "Tweets are powerful, and the president must be held accountable for every post." The law would bar the prolifically tweeting president from deleting his posts, as he has sometimes done. This has inspired websites archiving his erased tweets.

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said last week that Trump's tweets "are considered official statements by the president of the United States." The White House did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the proposed legislation. Trump, who has more than 32 million followers on Twitter for his 8-year-old personal @realDonaldTrump profile, is known for messages on the social media site that are sometimes riddled with spelling and grammar mistakes.

Trump famously sent a tweet at 12:06 a.m. ET (0406 GMT) on May 31 that said: "Despite the constant negative press covfefe." The message remained on the Internet for hours, spurring a wave of speculation about what Trump intended to say. The message was later deleted. Trump's next communication that day at 6:09 a.m. ET (1009 GMT) made light of the tweet, saying: "Who can figure out the true meaning of "covfefe"??? Enjoy!" Spicer, asked at a news briefing at the time whether people should be concerned about the covfefe tweet, said, "no" and added, "I think the president and a small group of people know exactly what he meant." —Reuters

Gaza Strip in peril as Hamas marks decade in power

GAZA CITY: Hamas this week marks 10 years since taking power in Gaza with the Palestinian enclave at risk of conflict and facing electricity blackouts, poverty and Israel's blockade, analysts and officials say. The situation is likely to be further complicated by the Saudi-led diplomatic row with Qatar, which has been a major donor to the Gaza Strip but may be forced to reduce its support due to the dispute. Divisions remain deep between the Islamist movement Hamas and Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah, based in the occupied West Bank, with reconciliation between the two rivals seemingly a long way off.

"It's the Gazans who pay the price," said rights activist Hamdi Shaqura, with nearly half of the population unemployed and more than three-quarters dependent on humanitarian aid. Hamas has run Gaza since June 15, 2007, having seized it in a near civil war from Fatah following a dispute over parliamentary elections won by the Islamist movement. Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in Gaza have since fought three wars with Israel. Israel's blockade of the strip, now more than a decade old, has heavily damaged Gaza's economy, while the enclave's crossing with Egypt has remained largely closed in recent years as well. Egypt has also destroyed most of the tunnels Gazans used for smuggling to and from the Sinai peninsula. Adding to those woes, Abbas' Palestinian Authority has taken steps many analysts say are designed to pressure Hamas, including salary cuts for PA employees in Gaza and slashed electricity payments, further worsening an already severe power shortage.

'Big loser is us'

Those moves have come as Gazans observe the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and as the summer heat sets in. "People can no longer buy or sell," said Nahed Abu Salem, who runs a candy shop in the Jabalia refugee camp, with cuts to civil servants' salaries taking a hit on the economy. Ayed Hassouna, a 34-year-old coffee seller, says he spends 300 shekels ($85) every day on a generator to operate a bean-grinding machine, making his business unprofitable. "In any case, we can't produce anything without electricity," he said.

Many analysts say the situation could further worsen in the enclave of some two million people squeezed between Egypt, Israel and the Mediterranean Sea. In the past, Hamas backer Qatar has regularly stepped in with financial assistance. But Qatar now faces a diplomatic crisis, with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and others cutting ties after accusing it of supporting extremist groups.

"The big loser is us," said Ahmed Yousef, a senior Hamas member who has been a pragmatic voice within the Islamist movement labelled a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and the European Union. "It is us who are going to pay the price." Hamas has sought to soften its image in recent months with a new policy document somewhat easing its stance on Israel while still not recognizing the country.

But it has also faced increasing isolation. Relations with Egypt deteriorated after the 2013 ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi by Egypt's then army chief and now President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. It also lost Syria's support during the Arab Spring uprisings.

'It has to decide'

Gazans are left to endure the fallout. They have been receiving three to four hours of electricity per day, but Abbas' reported decision to slash payments has led Israel to reduce supplies. When that takes effect, the strip will be left with around two or three hours per day. Concerns have been raised for hospitals and infrastructure such as water treatment facilities - already at risk. The International Committee of the Red Cross has warned of the possibility of a "systemic collapse".

For Yousef, it amounts to a situation where, for many young people, "it's better to die than live". Young people came together for protests against electricity shortages in January, including one in which thousands in northern Gaza walked to the local headquarters of the electricity company. Hamas security forces fired warning shots and made arrests as they dispersed the protesters. Whether the tensions will lead to another escalation between Hamas and Israel is a question constantly being posed.

While UN officials have called for Israel to lift its blockade, citing deteriorating conditions, Israel says it is needed to stop Hamas from obtaining weapons or materials used to make them. "It cannot be that Hamas collects taxes from the residents of Gaza, and these taxes go to tunnels, to rockets, not to the development of Gaza, to the development of the electricity sector, to the water sector, and now it has to decide what it wants," Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Monday.

Hamas says it must defend itself in the face of Israel's overwhelming power and that the blockade stops it from importing needed material while stifling its economy. Mukhaimer Abu Saada, a political scientist in Gaza, said he does not see the blockade being lifted until Hamas gives up power in the strip. But, for him, Hamas agreeing to do so could "avoid more catastrophes". — AFP

Under pressure over Brexit, May meets 'kingmakers' DUP

PM to travel to France, meet Macron

LONDON: Prime Minister Theresa May sought to strike a deal with a Northern Irish Protestant party to save her premiership yesterday as she came under intense pressure to soften her approach to Brexit days before formal EU divorce talks. May's botched election gamble, which saw her lose her parliamentary majority, left her so weakened that supporters of closer ties with the European Union publicly demanded she take a more consensual and business friendly approach to Brexit.

In an attempt to avoid a second election that could deepen the worst political turmoil in Britain since last June's shock vote to leave the European Union, May apologized to her Conservative Party's lawmakers, who said they would leave her in power - for now. "She said: 'I'm the person who got us into this mess and I'm the one who is going to get us out of it'," said one Conservative lawmaker who attended Monday's meeting. "She said she will serve us as long as we want her."

To stay in government, May must strike a deal with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), a small eurosceptic Northern Irish party with 10 parliamentary seats. DUP leader Arlene Foster arrived for talks with May. She waved but did not say anything as she went into Downing Street. She looked at her watch and ignored a question from a reporter who asked: "What is your price?"

"The deal will be done," said Jon Tonge, professor of politics at Liverpool University. "Basically it will be Theresa May signing cheques for the foreseeable future or a monthly direct debit, as it were, into Northern Ireland's coffers." "The DUP may never have the political arithmetic so favorable again so like the Conservatives, the DUP will want to avoid another election and will want to keep drinking in the political free bar that is available to it," Tonge said.

But a deal with the DUP would risk destabilizing the political balance in Northern Ireland by increasing the influence of pro-British unionists who have struggled for years with Irish Catholic nationalists who want Northern Ireland to join a united Ireland. While the DUP are deeply eurosceptic, they have balked at some of the practical implications of a so-call hard Brexit - including a potential loss of a "frictionless border" with the Republic of Ireland - and talks will touch on efforts to minimize the potential damage to Northern Ireland.

With formal EU divorce talks due next week, May headed to France yesterday to meet Emmanuel Macron, who last month swept to victory in the presidential election. During the campaign, May cast herself as the only leader competent enough to navigate the tortuous Brexit negotiations that will shape the future of the United Kingdom and its $2.5 trillion economy. Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the opposition Labour Party, which saw its number of parliamentary seats and share of the vote increase, said there could be another election this year or early in 2018 after Thursday's vote produced no clear winner.

Brexit Civil War?

May, who ahead of the June referendum supported remaining in the EU, has promised to start the formal Brexit talks next week but opponents of a sharp break with the EU took her woes as a chance to push back against her strategy. Before the election, May proposed a clean break from the EU, involving withdrawal from Europe's single market, limits on immigration and a bespoke customs deal with the EU.

Brexit minister David Davis has insisted the approach to the EU divorce had not changed, but at the meeting with lawmakers on Monday, May recognised that a broader consensus needed to be built for Brexit and made clear she would listen to all wings of the party on the issue. Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said the government should put economic growth at the heart of its Brexit strategy, while some senior ministers have pushed for less focus on immigration and more on jobs.

The Daily Telegraph reported cabinet ministers have opened back-channel talks to senior Labour lawmakers to secure a cross-party agreement on Brexit. When asked about the Daily Telegraph article, Michael Gove, a minister who campaigned for Brexit, told ITV: "This is news to me." William Hague, a former leader of the Conservative Party, called for business groups and lawmakers from all parties to be brought in to agree a national position on Brexit.

May's weakness means she must now listen to all shades of opinion on Brexit as she goes into Britain's most complex negotiations since World War Two. But May faces a difficult balancing act: Divisions over Europe helped sink the premierships of Margaret Thatcher, John Major and David Cameron, and many of her lawmakers and party membership support a sharp break with the EU. "The Tory civil war on the EU which has ripped it apart since the Maastricht rebellions of the early 1990s, and which the referendum was supposed to solve, is now raging again," said Chris Grey, an academic who specializes in Brexit at Royal Holloway in London. — Reuters

LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May leaves 10 Downing Street in central London yesterday, ahead of a planned trip to Paris to meet the French president and following a meeting with the leadership of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). — AFP

THE HAGUE: Former Serbian intelligence chiefs, Jovica Stanisic (left) and Franko Simatovic (right) appear in court as they go back on trial yesterday before the United Nations Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunal. — AFP

Serbian ex-spy chiefs had 'key role in Balkans wars'

THE HAGUE: Two former Serbian intelligence chiefs played a major role in running death squads that terrorized Bosnia and Croatia in the bloody 1990s Balkans wars, a UN court heard yesterday. Jovica Stanisic, 66, and Franko Simatovic, 67, are back in court on four charges of crimes against humanity and a war crimes charge after their acquittal in 2013 was overturned. "These accused made these crimes happen through their direction and unflagging support to the Serb forces who committed them," UN prosecutor Douglas Stringer told judges in The Hague.

Stringer said the accused "repeatedly deployed their... units in attack operations in Croatia and Bosnia where many crimes of persecution, murder and expulsion were committed." "The evidence will show that this relentless pattern continued for over four years and that the accused supported and advanced it every step along the way," he said, as the two men listened attentively, with Stanisic occasionally shaking his head.

Stanisic and Simatovic's acquittal before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) unleashed a storm of protest and was overturned in 2015 after prosecutors appealed. The two men were ordered to return to the tribunal in The Hague to face a retrial on the same charges.

Death squads

Stanisic, the former head of Serbia's old state security service and a key figure in the regime of Slobodan Milosevic, and his deputy Simatovic now stand accused once again of organising, financing and supplying paramilitary groups. These groups cut a swathe of terror and destruction across Croatia and Bosnia during the conflicts that erupted amid the collapse of Yugoslavia. They included an elite unit dubbed the "Red Berets" and the feared paramilitary outfit run by Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic, called "Arkan's Tigers".

The death squads attacked towns and murdered Croats, Muslims and other non-Serbs to force them out of large areas, seeking to establish a Serb-run state, prosecutors alleged, seeking life sentences for both men in the original trial which opened in 2008. UN prosecutors maintain that Stanisic and Simatovic were part of a joint criminal enterprise that included the late Serbian president Milosevic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

Stringer on Tuesday made a pointed reference to Milosevic - who died in 2006 during his own genocide and warcrimes trial in the ICTY's custody. "The substantial powers and authority wielded by Stanisic emanated not only from his position as head of the Serbian (security service) but also from the trust and confidence placed in him by Milosevic," the prosecutor said. — AFP

Journey to statehood long for Iraq Kurds

BAGHDAD: Many Iraqi Kurds hailed last week's announcement of a September referendum on independence as historic, but major obstacles will remain on the path to statehood after an expected landslide "yes". The autonomous region is still at war with the Islamic State group, it hosts a displaced population of more than a million and its once promising economy has taken a double hit from conflict and low oil prices. The northern region's leader, Massud Barzani, announced on June 7 that a referendum would be held in Kurdish areas of Iraq on Sept 25 to ask voters if they want a separate state.

The vote is non-binding, but sets the wheels in motion for an independent state that has been gestating since Iraq's Kurds gained autonomy from Baghdad on the back of the 1991 Gulf War. Hoshyar Zebari, a former foreign minister of Iraq and a senior negotiator in Kurdistan's independence process, described the decision as signifying that the Kurds had "crossed the Rubicon", the point of no return. Besides obvious security and economic challenges that need to be overcome for any viable state project, the other necessary conditions are internal unity and external assent.

Neither is guaranteed. "The two biggest obstacles to Kurdistan's independence are the question of its boundaries with Iraq and international recognition," analyst Nathaniel Ribkin said. "If no agreement is reached with Baghdad on borders, many countries will be reluctant to recognize a unilateral declaration of independence," said Ribkin, managing editor of the Inside Iraqi Politics newsletter. Iraqi Kurdistan's most powerful neighbors Turkey and Iran, which have their own Kurdish minorities and support one of the autonomous region's two main rival parties, have spoken against the referendum.

US guarantees

Tehran warned it could "only lead to new problems" while Turkey, through which Iraqi Kurdish oil is being exported, called the decision to organize the referendum "irresponsible" and a "grave mistake". Baghdad, much like the Kurdish region's key US ally, has reacted relatively tamely by stressing the need to comply with the constitution and reaffirming its commitment to Iraq's territorial integrity. The official reactions are as predictable as the referendum itself, which the Kurdish administration had promised would be held after Mosul is retaken, but the more distant prospect of secession is already being discussed by all sides.

The federal government has already set up a committee to discuss the shape of relations between Baghdad and a future, independent Kurdistan. Turkey has expressed strong displeasure at the date of the referendum but may ultimately not be completely hostile to Kurdish independence in Iraq if this can help it contain Kurdish separatism at home. Washington also objected to the timing of the vote, but has repeatedly expressed its support for the principle of self-determination.

"Without ironclad US security guarantees, an independent Kurdistan is unlikely to survive," Amberin Zaman, a fellow at the US-based Wilson Center, wrote in a recent paper on the issue. Iraqi Kurdish leaders enjoy strong support in Congress and appear to be taking the bet that Washington will be pragmatic and endorse a fait accompli, as it did a quarter of a century ago when the Kurds used a US-enforced no-fly zone to start building their institutions.

Ready or not

But Iraq's roughly five million Kurds do not all agree between themselves on the referendum, whose announcement prompted some suspicious reactions internally. The region is in political limbo. Barzani's mandate as regional president expired nearly two years ago and parliament was suspended a few weeks later. The administration run by the Barzani clan is struggling to pay salaries and faces strong opposition, including from two parties that argued that a referendum should come after parliamentary and presidential polls.

"The referendum could serve as a lifeboat for ruling Kurdish parties that have failed to govern effectively," said Yerevan Saeed, an analyst and research associate at the DC-based Arab Gulf Institute. "Unless there is a form of Kurdish unity, I don't see any viable path towards Kurdish independence," he said. While both the internal and broader context seem far from propitious, the ideal moment may never come, and some argue that the prospect of independence might be what the Kurds need to overcome their current difficulties. "It is up to their leaders to bury the hatchet and to ensure that this dream for which so many Kurds have laid down their lives is finally translated into reality," Zaman said. —AFP

MUNICH: Police officers secure the area around a commuter rail station in Unterfoehring, where shots were fired yesterday. — AFP

Gunman injures three at German rail station

MUNICH: A German police officer was critically wounded and two passers-by hurt yesterday when a lone gunman fired shots at a commuter rail station near the German city of Munich before being injured himself and detained, police said. A Munich police spokesman told reporters there was no indication of a "political or religious" motive behind the morning rush hour incident. "The sole male perpetrator was motivated by personal reasons," said spokesman Marcus da Gloria Martins.

Police identified the gunman as a 37-year-old German national, whose criminal record showed only one charge for possession of a small quantity of marijuana in 2014. Martins said the man had tried to push at least one police officer in front of an incoming train at an S-Bahn station in Unterfoehring, a northeastern suburb of the Bavarian city. A scuffle ensued during which the assailant snatched an officer's gun and fired. "The police officer was shot in the head and critically injured," Martins said. She is 26 years old.

Two other people at the station, one German and one Romanian, were seriously wounded and are being treated in local hospitals but their lives were not believed to be in danger. "The assailant was arrested. He was also injured. There are no indications of further perpetrators," police tweeted. The officers had been called to the scene when a fight broke out among several people on a train, witnesses said.

The train was stopped at the Unterfoehring station and the brawlers were hauled out by police, leading to the escalation. The station is on a busy line leading to and from Munich's main international airport. Travellers were diverted to another rail line after the shooting. — AFP

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Rodman returns to N Korea, hoping 'to open door'

SEOUL: Flamboyant former NBA star Dennis Rodman arrived in North Korea yesterday after saying he wants to "open the door" to the regime and claiming that US President Donald Trump would be pleased with his mission. Sporting a baseball cap, sunglasses, multiple facial piercings and a black t-shirt emblazoned with the logo of sponsor PotCoin - a cryptocurrency for the legal cannabis industry - Rodman was greeted at Pyongyang airport by sports vice-minister Son Kwang Ho and journalists.

"I'm just trying to open the door," the eccentric ex-Chicago Bulls power forward told reporters at Beijing airport before boarding his Air Koryo flight. Asked whether he had spoken with Trump about his trip, Rodman said: "I'm pretty sure he's pretty much happy with the fact that I'm over here trying to accomplish something that we both need." Rodman's trip to North Korea is at least his fifth. Most recently in 2014 he attracted a deluge of criticism after being filmed singing happy birthday to his "friend for life", leader Kim Jong-Un. The latest visit comes amid high tensions between Washington and Pyongyang which is currently holding four Americans - following a series of missile tests by the North, which have triggered tightened UN sanctions. The 56-year-old NBA Hall of Famer, who was heavily criticized for failing to raise the plight of a jailed US missionary on a previous trip, said discussing detained US citizens was "not my purpose right now".

The player nicknamed "The Worm" is one of the few Westerners to have met Kim, who took over following the death of his father Kim Jong-Il in 2011. It is not clear whether Rodman, who once dated Madonna and was married to model and actress Carmen Electra, will be meeting Kim Jong-Un during the current trip or what its exact purpose is. He said in Beijing his aim is to try to "bring sports to North Korea". Rodman has met Kim on some but not all of his previous trips. He has previously described his visits - including one in 2013 with the Harlem Globetrotters - as "basketball diplomacy" but has been roundly criticised for failing to raise human rights issues. A senior Trump administration official told Fox News Rodman was going to the North "as a private citizen".

Unlikely relationship

Rodman, who is known as much for his piercings, ever-changing hair colors and off-court antics as his basketball skills, has developed an unlikely relationship with the North Korean leader since making his first trip there in 2013. The bombastic player - who once wore a wedding dress to promote one of his books - also knows Trump, having appeared as a contestant on his reality television show "Celebrity Apprentice". Trump called Rodman "smart" for his 2013 trip to North Korea, Politico reported at the time. "The world is blowing up around us. Maybe Dennis is a lot better than what we have," Trump was quoted as saying. "Dennis is not a stupid guy. He's smart in many ways; he's very street-wise." — AFP

PYONGYANG: Former NBA basketball star Dennis Rodman (center) poses with his entourage upon arrival at Sunan International Airport yesterday. — AFP

Mattis 'shocked' by state of US military readiness

Pentagon chief warns on North Korea

WASHINGTON: Pentagon chief Jim Mattis told lawmakers yesterday he was "shocked" by the state of the US military's readiness, blaming legal budget caps and the grind of 16 years of constant war. The defense secretary also warned that North Korea has become the most urgent threat to peace and security, and said - without giving details - that America must do things differently in Afghanistan.

WASHINGTON: Defense Secretary Jim Mattis listens on Capitol Hill yesterday while testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the Pentagon's budget. — AP

Pointing to Obama-era budget caps known as sequestration, Mattis said limits on military spending have left troops at greater risk and blocked important new programs - even though the defense budget is already greater than that of the next seven countries combined. "I retired from military service three months after sequestration took effect," Mattis, a former Marine general, told the House Armed Services Committee.

"Four years later, I returned to the Department (of Defense), and I have been shocked by what I've seen about our readiness to fight... No enemy in the field has done more to harm the readiness of our military than sequestration." Mattis was addressing lawmakers seeking additional information about President Donald Trump's proposed 2018 budget. He wants to slash State Department spending but give a significant boost to the Pentagon's vast budget, although it falls short of the historic spending bonanza sought by more hawkish Republicans.

The Pentagon has called for $574 billion in general defense funding, with an additional $65 billion for supplemental wartime spending - for a total of $639 billion. That represents a more than $50 billion increase - about 10 percent - over 2017 funding levels for the base budget, although it amounts to only about three percent over projections previously envisioned by the Obama administration.

Committee Chairman Congressman Mac Thornberry and other Republicans bemoaned the increase as insufficient. "We have spent six years just getting by, asking more and more of those who serve, and putting off the choices that have to be made. We cannot keep piling missions on our service members without ensuring they have all they need to succeed," Thornberry said. Although many Democrats on the committee agree, they worry where the money will come from, given the Trump administration's pressure to cut taxes.

Afghanistan and N Korea

Mattis pointed to the war in Afghanistan, which has dragged on since late 2001 with no end in sight, as exacting a heavy price. Such campaigns have "exhausted our equipment faster than planned. Congress and the Department (of Defense) could not anticipate the accumulated wear and tear of years of continuous combat use," he said. Lawmakers repeatedly asked Mattis for an update on Afghanistan, and about whether Trump will deploy thousands more troops to help Afghan partners reverse a stalemate against the resurgent Taleban.

"We've got to do things differently," Mattis acknowledged, noting only that any Afghanistan decision would come "soon". Ahead of the four-hour hearing, Mattis also warned that North Korea poses the most urgent threat to international peace and security, calling the regime's weapons program a "clear and present danger" to all. In written testimony, he said Pyongyang is increasing the pace and scope of its nuclear weapons program that leader Kim Jong-Un wants to be capable of delivering a bomb on the United States.

"The regime's provocative actions, manifestly illegal under international law, have not abated despite United Nations' censure and sanctions," Mattis said. The defense secretary also warned of a return to "Great Power competition," where countries like Russia and China gain military assertiveness and place long-held global security protocol at risk. "Both Russia and China object to key aspects of the international order so painstakingly built since the end of World War II," he said.

Pyongyang has test-fired a string of missiles this year, building on launches and nuclear tests that have ratcheted up tensions over its quest to develop weapons capable of hitting the United States - something Trump has vowed "won't happen". But Mattis and his top military officer, General Joe Dunford, said any military action against North Korea would have disastrous consequences for the peninsula. "It would be a war like nothing we have seen since 1953," Mattis said about the end of the Korean War. — AFP

BEIJING: Panama's Vice President and Foreign Minister Isabel de Saint Malo shakes hands with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during a joint press briefing after the two signed a joint communique agreeing to establish diplomatic relations yesterday. — AFP

China delivers diplomatic punch to Taiwan by winning over Panama

BEIJING: China delivered another diplomatic punch to Taiwan yesterday by establishing relations with Panama at the expense of Taipei, further isolating the island's Beijing-sceptic government. China, which considers self-ruled Taiwan a renegade province waiting to be reunited with the mainland, has been infuriated by President Tsai Ing-wen's refusal to acknowledge the island is part of "one China", unlike her predecessor Ma Ying-jeou. Panama is the third country to switch allegiances to China since Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party was swept to power last year, China's nationalistic Global Times reported, warning more would follow in a "domino effect". "This is the cost the Tsai administration needs to pay," the newspaper said in an editorial.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Panamanian counterpart Isabel Saint Malo de Alvarado toasted with champagne in Beijing after signing a communique formalizing the establishment of diplomatic relations while angering Taiwan. "This is a historic moment, China-Panama relations have opened a new chapter," Wang said, adding that Panama's decision was in "complete accordance" with its people's interests and "in keeping with the times".

Saint Malo said Panama and China had made an "important step" and started a "new page in our strategic relations". After decades of siding with Taiwan, Panama now "recognizes that there is only one China in the world" and that Taiwan is part of Chinese territory, said the joint communique. While the Central American country is small, the Panama Canal is a crucial gateway for global trade between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

'Teach a lesson'

The latest move infuriated Taiwan, which is still recognized by around 20 mostly small and economically weak countries, including Haiti, Tuvalu and Burkina Faso. "Beijing's action has impacted the stable cross-strait status quo. This is unacceptable for the Taiwanese people and we will not sit back and watch our country's interests being repeatedly threatened and challenged," Tsai told reporters in Taipei. "As the president, maintaining national sovereignty is my biggest responsibility. Greater challenge will bring stronger will. Taiwanese people's faith should not and will not be defeated easily. We will not be shaken."

Diplomatic tussles between Taiwan and Beijing eased under the island's previous Beijing-friendly government, but relations have deteriorated since Tsai took office. China "is seeking to undermine President Tsai while intimidating Taiwan by narrowing its international space," said Michael Cole, Taipei-based senior fellow with the China Policy Institute at the University of Nottingham.Cross-strait tensions have been further exacerbated by a highly unusual call from Tsai to congratulate then US President-elect Donald Trump. Trump questioned Washington's policy towards the island, including its decision to not formally recognize its government, but later reiterated Washington's One China policy. "I think the phone call has reinforced Beijing's determination to teach Taiwan a lesson," said Willy Lam, an expert on politics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. — AFP

B'desh diplomat in NY charged with labor trafficking, assault

WASHINGTON: Bangladesh's deputy consul general in New York was indicted on Monday on charges of labor trafficking and assault for forcing his servant to work without pay through threats and intimidation, a New York City prosecutor said. Mohammed Shaheldul Islam has limited diplomatic immunity and was ordered to surrender his passport when he appeared before Queens Supreme Court Justice Daniel Lewis, said Queens District Attorney Richard Brown in a statement. Bail was set at $50,000 bond or $25,000 cash. He faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted.

According to the indictment, Islam brought another Bangladeshi, Mohammed Amin, to New York between 2012 and 2013 to work as a household help for Islam and his family. "Soon after Mr. Amin's arrival, the defendant allegedly took his passport and required the man to work 18 hours a day ... Even though Mr. Amin had a contract which outlines his compensation, it is alleged he was never paid for his work," the statement said. "If the victim disobeyed the defendant's orders, Mr. Amin was allegedly physically assaulted by the defendant, who either struck him with his hand or sometimes with a wooden shoe," it said.

A spokesman for the Bangladesh embassy in Washington said it believed Amin had filed the case in bad faith and the allegations were "fabricated" and "baseless". "It may be noted that Mr. Islam decided to cancel Mr. Amin's contract and was preparing to send him back to Bangladesh due to his irresponsible acts," Shamim Ahmad, the spokesman, said. "We hope the court will give its verdict in the matter judiciously," he said.

Shameem Ahsan, the consul general of Bangladesh, told Reuters over the telephone from New York that Amin disappeared on May 17, 2016 and the very next day the consulate informed the U.S. state department office in New York. "It is surprising for us that after 13 months he has appeared with these allegations, why did he not raise this issue earlier," he said.

According to the charges, Amin's only form of income came from tips from guests at parties and a "miniscule" amount of money Islam sent to Amin's family in Bangladesh. On several occasions when Amin sought to leave, Islam hit him and threatened to harm his mother and young son in Bangladesh, the statement said. On occasion, Islam also stated that he would have Amin's college-age daughter "shamed" if he did not continue to work as his servant, the statement said. The statement did not make clear what Islam meant by shaming.

The statement also said that in 2014, shortly after an Indian diplomat in New York was charged with labor trafficking, Islam wrote a check for Amin's cash-tip earnings that the latter then had to deposit in a bank account to create the appearance of a paycheck. — Reuters

Philippines army struggles as city siege enters fourth week

Military rejects IS claim it occupies 2/3 of Marawi

MARAWI CITY, Philippines: Fighting in Marawi City in the southern Philippines entered its fourth week yesterday with military officials conceding that troops were struggling to loosen the grip of Islamist fighters on downtown precincts despite relentless bombing. Military spokesman Brigadier General Restituto Padilla said the urban terrain was hampering the army's progress because the rebels had hunkered down in built-up neighborhoods, many of them with civilians they had taken as human shields.

Hundreds of other civilians were still trapped in the ruins of the town and - facing capture, starvation or bombardment from above - several have braved sniper fire to dash across a bridge to safety. Some were shot dead, a few made it alive. Asked when the fighting would end, Padilla said: "I can't give you an estimate because of compounding developments faced by ground commanders."

MARAWI, Philippines: Philippine soldiers patrol a deserted street in this city on the southern island of Mindanao yesterday. — AFP

The military had set Monday, the Philippines' independence day, as a target date to flush out the militants, both local and foreign fighters who have pledged allegiance to Islamic State. Flags were raised at ceremony in the town on the insurgency-plagued island of Mindanao, but heavy gunfire resumed early on Tuesday, and the military continued to target the militants with mortars and helicopter-mounted machineguns.

President Rodrigo Duterte, who declared martial law in Mindanao on May 23 - hours after several hundred fighters overran parts of the town and tried to seal it off to create an Islamic caliphate - did not show at any independence day events. Duterte is best known for a brutal war on drugs since he took office a year ago, and he has suggested that funding for the Islamist militants came from the narcotics trade. Some media reports highlighted the absence of the president at a time of serious conflict, but a spokesman said he was tired and needed to rest.

The Philippines has been fighting twin insurgencies from Maoist-led rebels and Muslim separatists in the south for nearly 50 years. Critics say military action is not enough to bring peace to a region that has long suffered from political neglect and poverty. — Reuters

Heavy rain, landslides kill at least 92...

Continued from Page 1

District police chief Sayed Tariqul Hasan said most of the landslides happened before dawn yesterday. "Some of them were sleeping in their houses on hillsides when the landslides occurred," he said. Police and local authorities ordered the evacuation of thousands of people living in slums at the base of hills in the neighboring district of Chittagong, where 26 people have been confirmed dead.

At least 126 people were killed in that district when a massive landslide buried a village a decade ago. In the latest incident six people were killed in the nearby district of Bandarban, among them three children buried by a landslide as they slept in their home. Authorities have opened 18 shelters in the worst-hit hill districts, where 4,500 people have been evacuated, disaster management and relief minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya told reporters.

'Constant fear'

Reaz Ahmed, head of the Department of Disaster Management, said disaster response teams had been deployed but had not yet been able to reach all the affected areas. "Once the rains are over, we'll get a full picture of the damage and get the recovery work in full swing," he added. The monsoon rains came two weeks after Cyclone Mora smashed into Bangladesh's southeast, killing at least eight people and damaging tens of thousands of homes. Rohingya leader Mohammad Anam said the latest rains had further worsened conditions in camps that were badly hit by the cyclone. "We're living in constant fear of landslides," he said.

Around 300,000 Rohingya, a mainly Muslim stateless ethnic minority, are living in camps in southeastern Bangladesh after fleeing persecution in Myanmar. Heavy monsoon rains also pounded the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chittagong in the district of the same name, disrupting traffic for hours and flooding key roads and business districts. A ferry sank in the River Buriganga in Dhaka on Monday evening with an estimated 100 passengers aboard, police said, adding all the passengers had managed to swim ashore.

Among the victims in Rangamati district were at least four soldiers who had been sent to clear roads after an earlier landslide. Thousands of troops are stationed in Rangamati, where a tribal insurgency raged for two decades, and which still suffers sporadic violence. "The soldiers were sent to clear roads hit by landslide in Manikchhari town when they were themselves buried by a second landslide," armed forces spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Rashidul Hassan said. "They fell 30 feet from the main road," he said, adding one soldier was missing and 10 injured, five critically. — AFP

Trump sued over 'benefits'

Continued from Page 1

The suit says that despite billionaire Trump having placed his extensive business holdings in a trust after he was elected president, he still owns the properties and is well-aware of the money they are earning him. "Although he formed a trust to hold his business assets, he may obtain distributions from his trust at any time," it said.

Corruption 'firewall'

The suit detailed the popularity of the opulent Trump International Hotel with foreign officials since his January 20 inauguration, alleging that the hotel "has specifically marketed itself to the diplomatic community." It pointed to news reports of Asian and Middle Eastern diplomats saying they will go there to impress the president. Kuwait held its national day celebration at the hotel, and Saudi Arabia has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars there, the suit claims.

In New York, Trump Tower leases space to the Chinese government-controlled bank ICBC and Trump World Tower and other properties also focus on foreign clients, including Russians, it said. The suit also alleged that Trump benefits from foreign distribution payments for his "The Apprentice" reality TV show and generally from the international real estate projects of the Trump Organization. Those benefits violate the US Constitution's "emoluments clauses", which ban US officials from taking gifts or other benefits from foreign governments, the suit argues.

"The emolument clauses are a firewall against presidential corruption," said Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh. "He's going to have to answer in court." The focus on Trump International Hotel stems in part from businesses in Washington and Maryland, some partly owned by the local governments, complaining that its link to the president effectively gives it an unfair competitive advantage. The lawsuit followed an earlier similar complaint by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, filed on January 23 in New York federal district court. On Friday the Justice Department asked the court to drop that complaint, saying Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington had no grounds to sue because it had not experienced any loss in relation to Trump. — AFP

Avoid hypocrisy

Continued from Page 1

Muhammad Bin Zaid narrated that some people admitted in front of his grandfather, Abdullah Bin Amru (one of Prophet Muhammad's companions), that whenever they entered in the palaces of their kings and rulers they would praise them, but once they were out of their palaces, they would criticize and sometimes abuse them. Abdullah Bin Amru informed him that dissemblance and flattery were regarded as hypocrisy during the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)." (Reported by Imam Al-Bukhari # 7,178 and Ibn Maajah in his Saheeh # 3, 975)

Whoever wants to be successful on earth and ultimately gain felicity in the hereafter should be honest about his beliefs and opinions. If you meet a ruler or any person holding an influential position, don't praise him insincerely, only to abuse and accuse him after you leave his presence. Unfortunately, some people cheaply and dishonestly flatter rulers in anticipation of employment, positions or some sort of benefit. Deceiving people in anticipation of getting some benefits from them is an indication of disbelief in Allah's power and belief that humans can single-handedly confer benefits and avert evil, regardless of Allah's will.

We should understand that everything is in the hands of Allah. True believers are not sycophants and opportunists, but have strong and confident personalities. They are virtuous and righteous regardless of what people think of and say about them. Hudhaifa (Prophet Muhammad's companion and confidante) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Do not be a minion, in that you would say, 'If people do good deeds we will do like them and if they treat others unjustly we will do the same.'

But rather settle yourselves (on righteousness and virtue); when people do good deeds, do like them. But when they go astray, do not follow them. Likewise, avoid injustice and wrongdoing." (Reported by Imam At-Tirmidhi # 2,007). As we strive to our utmost to be sincere in Ramadan, avoiding dissemblance and all vices, we should try our best to quit hypocrisy and uphold these lessons until we die - with the help of Allah.

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Mass food poisoning in Iraq

Continued from Page 1

serious cases were being ferried away by ambulances. At least one new patient was brought in during the day. Most of those afflicted were suffering from stomach cramps and dehydration, resulting from vomiting and diarrhea. Iraqi lawmaker Raad Al-Dahlaki, who chairs the parliament's immigration and displacement committee and who visited the camp overnight, said the meal contained rice, a bean sauce, meat, yoghurt and water. He put the number of sickened people at 850.

Al-Dahlaki said the food was distributed by a Qatari non-governmental organization, a charity known as RAF. He added that Iraqi officials were to meet those from the organization later. The Doha-based charity did not immediately respond to requests for comment. At a joint press conference later in the camp, Irbil police chief Abdulhaleq Talaat said seven people were arrested in connection with the incident. Irbil Governor Nawzad Hadi said only one person a child - had died. The different death tolls could not immediately be reconciled.

Talaat and Hadi said the food was prepared in an Irbil restaurant by a local NGO, Ain El Muhtajeen, under a donation by RAF. Dr Sabur Ahmed, head of Irbil children's hospital, said 22 children remained in hospital while the rest have been discharged. On Twitter, Saudi state television accused RAF of supplying the tainted meals and posted images it said showed the camp's children "poisoned by the terrorist Qatari RAF organization." Since a diplomatic crisis between Qatar and other Arab nations led by Saudi Arabia began June 5, Arab media across the greater Persian Gulf have daily unleashed a series of highly critical reports on Qatar.

Those reports include highly provocative stories about Qatar allegedly trying to undermine regional security, often presented without attribution or evidence. RAF is the acronym for the Qatar-based Thani Bin Abdullah Al Thani Foundation for Humanitarian Services, a charity that collects donations to do aid work around the world, including providing meals to needy families during the holy fasting month of Ramadan. Qatari government officials also did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

RAF is also among 12 organizations and 59 people put on what Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini officials described as a list of terror entities and individuals on Friday. On Qatari state television meanwhile, a repeatedly aired program has discussed how the ongoing diplomatic dispute has stopped it from providing meals to Syrian refugees at a major camp in Jordan. The Hassan Sham U2 camp houses thousands who have fled their homes in and around Mosul after a US-backed Iraqi offensive was launched to dislodge the Islamic State group from the city last October. According to the UN refugee agency, it is home to 6,235 people.

Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, fell to IS in the summer of 2014 as the militants swept over much of the country's northern and western areas. Weeks later, the head of the Sunni extremist group, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, announced the formation of a self-styled caliphate in Iraq and Syria from the pulpit of a Mosul mosque. Months after the start of the Iraqi offensive, IS militants now only control a handful of neighborhoods in and around the Old City, located west of the Tigris River, which divides Mosul into its western and eastern sector. — AP

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Focus

Gaza, Palestinian territory ravaged by wars, poverty

The Gaza Strip, run by Islamist movement Hamas for the past 10 years, is a poverty-stricken and overcrowded Palestinian coastal enclave. It is facing a strict Israeli blockade, while its border with Egypt has also been largely closed in recent years. Hamas is considered a terrorist group by Israel, the United States and the European Union.

Cramped enclave

Situated on the Mediterranean coast, between Israel and Egypt, the Gaza Strip is home to around two million Palestinians. They live in a cramped area of just 362 square kilometers, making it one of the most densely populated territories on the planet. After the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949 and the formation of the Jewish state of Israel, Gaza came under Egyptian administration, but was never annexed. Israel seized the territory from Egypt during the June 1967 Six-Day War.

Shut-in

On September 12, 2005, Israel pulled out all of its soldiers and settlers from Gaza in a unilateral move which ended 38 years of occupation. In the summer of 2006, following the capture of a soldier by militants from Hamas, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza which was tightened a year later after the Islamists forcibly ousted troops loyal to Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah faction. Since the ousting of Egypt's Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013, the only entrance to Gaza not controlled by Israel, Rafah, has been almost completely closed by Cairo.

45 percent unemployment

According to the World Bank, Gaza's GDP losses caused by the blockade are estimated at more than 50 percent. The Gaza Strip has almost no industry, and it suffers from a chronic lack of water and fuel. Unemployment stands at 45 percent and more than two thirds of the population depends on humanitarian aid.

String of Israeli operations

On February 27-March 3, 2008, Israel carried out operation "Hot Winter" following the death of an Israeli from rocket fire from Gaza. More than 120 Palestinians were killed. Unrest continued-Gaza rocket fire and Israeli attacks-in which hundreds of Palestinians were killed until a truce was concluded in June. On December 27, Israel launched a vast air offensive-"Operation Cast Lead"-in a bid to put an end to Palestinian rocket fire. On January 18, 2009 a ceasefire came into force to end the Israeli operation, in which 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed. Beginning November 14, 2012, Israel's "Operation Pillar of Defence" was launched with a missile strike that kills top Hamas commander Ahmed Jaabari. In the ensuring eight-day flare-up, 177 Palestinians and six Israelis were killed before an Egypt-brokered truce takes effect. On July 8, 2014, Israel launched "Operation Protective Edge" against Gaza with the aim of ending rocket fire and destroying smuggling and militant tunnels dug from the enclave. The war left 2,251 dead on the Palestinian side and 74 on the Israeli side.

Islamic Jihad

The radical Palestinian movement Islamic Jihad is the enclave's second biggest force after Hamas. Founded early in the 1980s in the wake of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, a close ally and ideological inspiration, it is devoted to armed action. In May, Islamic Jihad rejected Hamas's new policy of somewhat easing its stand on Israel and accepting the establishment of a Palestinian state limited to the 1967 borders.—AFP

GAZA: A Palestinian family eats dinner by candlelight at their makeshift home in the Rafah refugee camp, in the southern Gaza Strip, during a power outage. — AFP

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Friend or foe? Taiwan's disappearing allies

Panama walking out on its relationship with Taiwan to establish ties with rival China is the latest in a spate of diplomatic dumping that is leaving Taipei increasingly isolated. Beijing still sees self-ruling Taiwan as part of its territory to be reunified, while the democratic island views itself as a sovereign country, although it has never formally declared independence. The governments in Taipei and Beijing insist that countries can only recognize one of them as legitimate and for years they have kept a tally of their supporters.

Most states have sided with Beijing, and the numbers doing so have swelled as China's global financial and political clout has grown. But a dwindling band of nations still formally recognize Taiwan-mainly developing countries in Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and the Caribbean. The diplomatic tug-of-war enjoyed a hiatus between 2008 and 2016, when Taiwan's then-president Ma Ying-jeou called off the competition and nurtured closer ties with the mainland. But since China-sceptic leader Tsai Ing-wen came to power last year, cross-strait relations have worsened dramatically and erstwhile friends have started to jump ship. Only 20 states, including the Vatican, now officially recognize Taiwan, with predictions that number will shrink further.

Recent departures

In December 2016 the small African nation of Sao Tome and Principe severed ties with Taiwan, acknowledging China's "increasingly important" international role, as Beijing pumped billions of dollars into the continent. In March that year, China announced it was to resume ties with Gambia, after the West African country broke off relations with Taiwan in 2013 citing "strategic national interest".

Prior to that, Malawi had been the last ally to jump ship, in 2008, one of nine that switched under former Taiwan president Chen Shui-bian. After Chen took the helm in 2000, cross-strait relations hit rock bottom because of his promotion of the island's independence. The other allies lost during his eight-year term were Macedonia, Liberia, Dominica, Vanuatu, Grenada, Senegal, Chad and Costa Rica. Chen established new ties with three small countries-Kiribati, Nauru and St Lucia-bringing the total number of formal friends to 23 by the time Ma took office in 2008.

Forever friends?

Taiwan now has just two allies in Africa-Burkina Faso and Swaziland. In central and south America, Taiwan counts Belize, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay as official allies. Chen's ties with Kiribati, Nauru and St Lucia still stand, along with the Marshall Islands, Palau, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu in the Pacific. The Caribbean nations of St Kitts and Nevis and St Vincent also still have formal ties.

Partnerships in question

The Vatican is widely seen as Taiwan's most powerful remaining ally-its only one in Europe-but there have been signs Beijing is working towards resuming relations with the Holy See. Although there are an estimated 12 million Catholics in China, there have been no diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Beijing since 1951. China is suspicious of religion and the "official" Catholic Church is run by the government-controlled Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association-but there is also an "underground" Church which swears allegiance only to the pope.

State-sanctioned bishops in China are chosen by the association, while the Vatican insists on its right to appoint all the Catholic Church's bishops. However, the head of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong said last year the Chinese government was willing to reach an "understanding" with the Vatican over the issue, although it is expected to be a lengthy process. According to Taiwan's local media and some of the island's lawmakers, other allies rumored to be considering switching ties are El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay. — AFP

Tired, traumatized Iraqi mothers unable to breastfeed

By Layal Abou Rahal

Wazira rocks her tiny baby pleadingly but he is inconsolable, crying for the milk his mother can neither produce herself nor buy in a camp near the Iraqi battleground city of Mosul. "He's been crying since the moment he was born. He only stops when he's so exhausted that he falls asleep," the 24-year-old Iraqi mother said, sheltering her baby Rakan from the scorching sun with a piece of white cloth. "I cannot breastfeed him and I feel he's never satisfied. There's no good food to eat and no money to buy baby formula," she said, sitting outside one of the clinics in Khazir camp.

The camp southeast of Mosul, where Iraqi forces are deep into the eighth month of a massive operation against the Islamic State jihadist group, is crammed with around 32,000 people displaced from the war-torn city.Conditions in Khazir, one of the largest-but not the worst-displacement camps around Mosul are difficult. Temperatures soaring past the 110-Fahrenheit mark add to Rakan's discomfort. "Sometimes I pound the biscuits they give us at the camp into powder and mix them with water to try to feed him by force," said the young mother, her face partly covered by a black veil.

A few yards down the queue, Marwa is also waiting for her turn to take her eight-month-old daughter to a doctor. The 25-year-old mother, who fled west Mosul with her family two weeks earlier, already had no maternal milk to give Maryam five months ago."These past few months made me very tired, we kept moving from house to house until we finally managed to get out," she said. "I was sick and couldn't feed her anymore."

As elite forces retake the city one neighborhood at a time, civilians often used as human shields by the jihadists stay cooped up in their homes-at risk from shelling and dwindling food supplies-until their area is retaken. The line of haggard-looking mothers holding their wailing babies curled around the clinic run by the International Medical Corps, a US-based charity.

Stress

Neshmeel Diller, one of the doctors at the clinic, said she examined up to 80 women in a single day. "Seventy percent of them complain of their inability to breastfeed and of their children always being hungry and crying all the time," she said. "The psychological condition of these mothers and the hormonal changes caused by anxiety and depression, the lack of privacy and physical comfort as well as of balanced nutrition... all these factors converge to affect their ability to breastfeed," Diller said.

She added that the pressure of life in the camp often meant that mothers would lose the patience to repeat their attempts. Doctors Without Borders (MSF), another medical charity, said it was also monitoring the impact of high lactation failure rates on nutrition among the displaced child population. More than 800,000 people have been forced from their homes since the start of the Mosul operation last October. Most experienced traumatizing living conditions under the ruthless rule of IS for close to three years, risked their lives trying to flee and now face a very uncertain future.

"Stress is a major factor affecting the mothers of our little patients. Stress affects breastfeeding more than a mother's own nutritional status or physical health," MSF's medical coordinator in Iraq, Evgenia Zelikova said. "We do notice an increase in malnutrition among babies whose mothers are no longer able to breastfeed," she said. "This is because formula milk is often hard to come by or extremely expensive in besieged areas of Mosul and in the camps." The UN Children's Fund said it had noticed a spike in malnutrition among the most recently displaced children and had begun distributing a peanut-based supplement among affected populations. — AFP

HASAN SHAM, Iraq: An Iraqi woman carries a child at the Hasan Sham camp for internally displaced people. Tired and traumatized, Iraqi mothers who fled Mosul struggle to breastfeed or buy baby formula milk for their babies. — AFP

Federer done resting, begins Wimbledon prep

STUTTGART: Roger Federer will begin his grasscourt campaign and bid for an eighth Wimbledon crown at Stuttgart on Wednesday insisting that he's rested enough. The Swiss veteran has taken the last two months off after what he described as a surprisingly successful start to the year that resulted in victory at the Australian Open and then the Indian Wells-Miami Masters double. "I was terribly surprised to win the Australian Open and to back it up and win the sunshine double in Indian Wells and Miami was a complete surprise to me," Federer said. Although 35, he has been in fine form during his limited activity this year, losing only once-a shock reverse to Russian Evgeny Donskoy, then ranked 116, in Dubai. And while his own resurgence this year has taken him aback, Federer insists that Rafael Nadal's return to claycourt dominance was not so unexpected. "I think Rafa winning the French Open is less of a surprise because he'd done it nine times before," he said.—AFP

IOC confident Beijing will be ready for 2022 Games

BEIJING: International Olympic Committee officials voiced confidence on Tuesday that Beijing's venues for the 2022 Winter Games will be ready on time after they inspected some sites. IOC coordination commission chairman Alexander Zhukov said after a two-day visit that organisers had made "good progress" in preparations. Committee members inspected four different sites, including existing venues such as the Wukesong Sports Centre and the location of the new National Speed Skating Oval expected to be completed by 2019. While they did not visit all the venues, Zhukov said: "We know that their level of maintenance is high, and we are confident in their ability to host events." China sealed its place on the world stage as an emerging superpower with the 2008 summer Games, which were estimated to have cost the country around $40 billion. Beijing's willingness to spend big helped it win its bid to host the 2022 Winter Games, beating European cities that withdrew due to cost concerns. The executive vice president of the Beijing 2022 committee, Zhang Jiandong, said ground levelling work has begun for the speed skating venue. —AFP

Di Francesco edges towards Roma post

MILAN: Sassuolo coach Eusebio Di Francesco moved a step closer to taking over at Roma after the clubs agreed a compensation package, reports yesterday said. Roma have been looking for a new coach since Luciano Spalletti left last week to join fellow Serie A outfit Inter Milan. But Di Francesco, a former midfielder with Roma, has been a long-time target for the capital club and, according to reports, could be officially appointed today. Last year, Di Franceso extended his Sassuolo contract to 2019 but Sky Sport claim a compensation deal now has been agreed with Roma. Di Francesco joined Sassuaolo in 2012 and steered them to the 2013 Serie B title. Although he was sacked in January 2014 following a run of poor results, Di Francesco was brought back just two months later and has since kept Sassuolo in Serie A. He made 168 appearances for Roma before taking a role as team manager at the club following his playing retirement, before embarking on his coaching career in 2008 with Virtus Lanciano in the Italian third tier. —AFP

KUWAIT: Sheikh Salman cutting the ribbon to open the diwaniya named after him.

Sheikh Salman being awarded the first KOC medal.

Kuwait Olympic Committee honours Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of the Civil Aviation Directorate General Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah was honored by the Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) on Sunday evening. The event was attended by KOC President Sheikh Fahad Al-Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, KOC Vice-president Sheikh Fawaz Al-Mishal Al-Sabah, Secretary Shafi Al-Hajiri, President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi along with a number of member federations.

The honoring that took place at the committee premises was in recognition of Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud's efforts in serving the sports movement and was handed the Olympic Committee medal, which is given for the first time. The committee's former Vice-president Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi was also honored in the diwaniya that was named after Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Salman thanked Kuwait Olympic Committee president and members for this move. He lauded the major support given by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Youth and Athletes. He also called for consolidating efforts for the sake of Kuwait sports and getting over struggles and differences, and having Kuwait interest on top.

Sheikh Salman lauded the role of Commerce and Industry Minister, Acting State Minister for Youth Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan, and Public Authority for Sports Director General Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour in advancing the sports movement.

Al-Humoud said "success in sports depends on the state's strategy success in supporting schools and universities activities in all areas so that we can reach our goals." He said the state spares no effort in supporting sports through building facilities or participating in international events. He called for closing the files of the sports crises the country had suffered during recent years and led to the international suspension of Kuwait sports.

Al-Humoud said "I was honored to have participated in the achievements the sport of shooting had made at all levels and having Kuwait flag high in all arenas be it local, regional or international.

Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud said Kuwait is among the most countries spending on sports under the directions of HH the Amir and political leadership to remove all obstacles that face Kuwait athletes.

Meanwhile, President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi wished Commerce and Industry Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs in lifting the Kuwait sports suspension at the international level.

He said as for the sport of shooting "we were able to remove the suspension through a ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), and we are participating under the flag of the state of Kuwait.

Al-Otaibi lauded the support of HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince and HH the Prime Minister, who despite the suspension, we are still receiving support that is unmatched by many international federations be it at the level of facilities, trainers, and training camps.

He also lauded the efforts of PAS Director General Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his support to the sport of shooting. He said the honoring of Sheikh Salman is actually an honoring of the shooting sport community, as he is the founder of the shooting sport in Kuwait.

Duaij Al-Otaibi is honored.

Shafi Al-Hajiri being honored.

Sheikh Salman with Sheikh Fahad Al-Jaber (R) and Shafi Al-Hajiri (L).

Kiwis clinch spot against Oracle Team in America's Cup

It's on again, mates. The 35th America's Cup match will be another showdown between Oracle Team USA and Emirates Team New Zealand, a rematch of the epic 2013 regatta that was decided by one of the greatest comebacks - and collapses - in sports.

Emirates Team New Zealand earned its spot in the finals of sailing's marquee regatta when it sped away from Sweden's Artemis Racing on Bermuda's Great Sound on Monday to clinch the challenger finals at 5-2.

It's almost as if it were preordained that the scrappy Kiwis, now led by unflappable 26-year-old helmsman Peter Burling, would once again face the powerhouse US squad owned by Silicon Valley maverick Larry Ellison, skippered by nails-tough Australian Jimmy Spithill and featuring few Americans on the race crew.

"We definitely feel like we're in great shape to take on Oracle now," Burling said.

The match starts Saturday with Races 1 and 2. Oracle Team USA needs to win seven races to keep the oldest trophy in international sports. Because Oracle won a bonus point by winning the qualifiers, Team New Zealand must win eight races.

In 2013, Oracle Team USA started at minus-2 after being penalized in the biggest cheating scandal in America's Cup history. It still won. Emirates Team New Zealand reached match point at 8-1 on San Francisco Bay. It had a big lead in what could have been the clinching race, but the breeze died and the time limit expired. Later that day, Oracle Team USA began an eight-race winning streak that allowed it to retain the Auld Mug.

On Monday in the challenger finals, a first attempt at Race 7 was abandoned at the 25-minute time limit with the boats crawling in barely a knot of wind. In freshening breeze a few hours later, the Kiwis dominated. They finally won a start against Artemis skipper Nathan Outteridge. Their 50-foot catamaran rose up on hydrofoils and showed its incredible speed in a 56-second, wire-to-wire victory. There were subdued celebrations aboard the Kiwi cat until a magnum of champagne arrived . Grinder-trimmer Blair Tuke, who teamed with Burling to win Olympic gold and silver medals, popped the cork and sprayed his mates.

Their focus has to shift immediately to trying to atone for the mind-blowing loss in 2013. "That's why we came to Bermuda, that's what we're here to do is bring that Cup back home to New Zealand," said Burling, who replaced the fired Dean Barker after the 2013 collapse. "We feel like we've had an incredibly tough road to get here. We've gone through a lot of adversity with the things like the capsize and some tough races here and there. But one thing about this team is they've dug super deep to get us to this point, keep making the boat go faster while fixing the things that we've broken."

The Kiwis capsized last Tuesday, throwing three sailors into the water and extensively damaging their catamaran. They came back two days later and clinched their semifinal against Britain. Oracle Team USA beat Team New Zealand twice in the round-robins.

Artemis, led by Olympic gold medalists Outteridge of Australia and Iain Percy of Britain, looked good in practice races earlier this spring but didn't find its stride until late in the trials. It rebounded from a 3-1 deficit to win four straight races against SoftBankTeam Japan to win its challenger semifinal, but too many unforced errors cost it against the Kiwis. Among them was Outteridge falling overboard in Race 3 on Saturday.

It's a bittersweet departure for Artemis. It had to regroup after the tragic death of Andrew "Bart" Simpson - Percy's partner in winning Olympic gold and silver medals - when its 72-foot catamaran broke apart on San Francisco Bay in May 2013.

Percy said the sailors were "hugely disappointed. We felt we could go all the way this time, and we haven't." But, he added, "We have climbed a huge, huge mountain together and got ourselves to a point where I think everyone can see undeniably we are right up there with the best of this great sport of sailing. So we do take pride from that."

Team New Zealand first won the America's Cup in 1995, with Russell Coutts skippering a 5-0 victory against Dennis Conner off San Diego. It defended in 2000, lost it in 2003 and reached the match again in 2007 before losing. —AP

Nissan powers Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge for 14th consecutive year.

Nissan's commitment to ME off-road motorsport remains unrivalled

TOKYO: 'Build it and they will come.' At least that's the theory, according to the movie, Field of Dreams. But when your "field" is thousands of square miles of inhospitable desert terrain and your potential competitors are scattered far and wide across the globe and there is a vanishingly small local fanbase, just how do you "build" a sport? And even if you could answer those questions there remains one last problem: who will do the building?

In terms of building a platform foroff-road motorsport within the Middle East, many independent observers agree that Nissan deserves the credit for undertaking the heavy lifting. Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of this commitment is Nissan's longstanding sponsorship of the event now known as the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge Powered by Nissan. The company's support for this iconic race goes all the way back to its early years as the UAE Desert Challenge. Nissan, however has been involved in motorsport in the Middle East region since before the inception of this gruelling test of man and machine and indeed the company's global motorsport heritage can be traced back to the 1930s, the decade in which it was created.

IN THE BEGINNING

It was in 1936 that Japan's first purpose built motor racing circuit was created, the short-lived Tamagawa Speedway. Nissan entered its first ever motorsport event in the first race meeting held there using a car built out-of-hours by employees and based on a production vehicle. In the race, they were beaten by a car built in a local machine shop, a situation that did not sit well with Nissan's founding President YoshisukeAikawa who was in attendance. His disapproval of the defeat led to the creation of the Datsun Sorts NL75, fitted with a 750cc DOHC engine complete with supercharger. This car, which triumphed at the next race meeting held at Tamagawa, is now considered to have been Nissan's first "works" competition vehicle.

AN INTERNATIONAL DEBUT

The advent of the second world war signalled the start of a two decades long hiatus for Nissan from competitive motorsport, but the company came back with a bang in 1958. In that year, two Datsun 210s named nicknamed 'Fuji' and 'Sakura' were entered into an event in Australia, which at the time was dubbed"the world's cruellest rally." The MobilgasTrial was a 16,000km event that took competitors around the circumference of Australia at a time before the continent's surfaced road network had been completed. This fact, combined with unseasonal rains which turned the dirt roads into muddy tracks, effectively made it, in part, an off-road event. These factorsperhaps account for the 50% attrition rate among a field that included works entries from Volkswagen, Skoda and Toyota among others. BothDatsuns, however, completed the trial in 19 days and took a first and a fourth place in the up-to 1000cc class. You could say this was Nissan's first desert rally, as the route took drivers across stretches of the unforgiving and unsurfaced Nulaboor desert. The fact that both cars completed the event, suggests that there really is something in the DNA of Nissan that has always produced rugged, durable cars capable of soaking up tremendous punishment.

BLUEBIRD TAKES FIRST OUTRIGHT WIN

Thepublicity and resulting sales benefits of motorsport were made clear to Nissan through its successful participation in the 1958 Mobilgas Trial and slowly but surely the carmaker began to ramp up its presence on the international motorsport scene. A first appearance in 1963 at the East AfricanSafari Rally - then one of the "Big Three" along with the British RAC and Monte Carlorallies - did not produce instant success. However, before the decade was finished Nissan would triumph in its classat the Safari Rally, which at the time was considered the ultimate off road test of a vehicle. In 1970, Nissan fully established its presence as a formidable force on the international rallying scene by winning the Safari Rally outright in the by-now fully developed Datsun Bluebird 1600 SSS.The following year Nissan consolidated that position, winning the event outright again, but this time with aDatsun 240Z. By the mid-1970s it was the Nissan Violet that carried the flag for the company in international rallies, achieving major successes, especially in the Safari Rally which it won outright five times.

NISMO CONSOLIDATES NISSAN'S MOTORSPORT DNA

Since that those first heady days of off-road success , Nissan has kept its foot firmly planted on the accelerator in terms of both circuit racing and rallying participation, helped in no small part by the creation of its NISMO division in 1984.

The genesis of NISMO was a small Japanese carmaker named Prince. In 1964, two years before it was acquired by Nissan, Prince like many of its competitors wanted to exploit the established connection between success in motorsport and success in retail sales. Consequently, its engineers were given the task of somehow fitting a 2.0 litre, in-line 6-cylinder engine from its large Gloria sedan into its much smaller Skyline model. Somehow, they managed it, which immediately vastly increased the power-to-weight ratio of the little car. The engineers quickly realised they had created something with huge motorsport potential. They gave it the name Prince Skyline 2000GT (S54) but in order for it to be eligible to compete in the GT II race at the 1964 Japanese Grand Prix meeting at Suzuka, they needed to build 100 production examples in advance of the race. That meant burning the midnight oil to get all the cars ready in time, but they made it with only a day or so to spare.

On it first outing at that race, this apparently ordinary little 4 door family car earned itself a place in the hearts of all Japanese motorsport enthusiasts by pluckily taking on the might of a fully race-bred and already highly developed Porsche 904 Carrera GTS. It was a David and Goliath battle which the German contender ultimately won but not before a Skyline briefly held the lead, and with Skylines taking all the places from 2nd to 6th.

In 1966 Nissan acquired Prince and the Skyline model was absorbed into its line-up. Over the following two decades Nissan steadily developed its motorsport abilities in the fields of rallying, touring cars and endurance racing, with operations split into two departments, one handling the development and building of "works" or factory cars and the other building cars for private customers.

In 1984, the decision was taken to merge these two operations, which resulted in the creation of the wholly owned, but separate Nissan subsidiary, Nissan Motorsports International Co. Ltd, abbreviated to NISMO.

NISMO got involved at Le Mans soon after the company was created, and has at different times continued the pursuit of this most elusive of crowns, adopting novel technical approaches including different drivetrain configurations and radical aerodynamic solutions in the various GT and Prototype cars it has entered. This approach - creative, innovative, helping shape the very future of motorsport - is fundamental to NISMO's DNA.

MIDDLE EAST'S OFF-ROAD SCENE TAKES FLIGHT

Here in the Middle East, Nissan has been on the scene selling cars since the 1950s - a time when there simply was no motorsport to speak of in the Gulf region. Little by little, however, an embryonic off-road scene grew out of the fun drivers were having taking their four wheel drive vehiclesinto the desert and eventually an FIA sanctionedMiddle East Rally Championship was created in 1984. It was through this championship that Mohammed Ben Sulayem enjoyed the huge success which allowed him to found the UAE Desert Challenge in 1991. As chairman of the organising committee he has steered the event to the point where it has a global reputation in the motorsport world. Through its committed sponsorship of the event, Nissan has played a significant role in providing the long-term investment platform and behind-the-scenes support which has enabled the Desert Challenge to flourish.

Adel Hussein Abdulla won the 2016 FIA T2 World Championship in his Nissan Patrol.

"Nissan's commitment to motorsports in the Middle East is intrinsically linked to our desire to create vehicles which serve the needs of our customers in what is one of the harshest motoring environments on the planet, but it is also born out of a broader wish to support the overall development of the region" said Fadi Ghosn, Nissan Middle East's Chief Marketing Officer. "The desert is an unforgiving place, so our off-road vehicles must be rugged, durable and reliable. Rallying is an incredible test bed for components and our works prepared Patrols provide us with invaluable data which enables us to build better cars for our customers. But equally, by encouraging motorsport in the Middle East we feel that we are promoting the region in the eyes of the world. Over the years the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge has brought world-famous motorsport legends such as Carlos Sainz, Ari Vatenan and the late Colin McRae to the UAE. The presence of such figures here all helps to showcase the country as a wonderful place to visit. In this way, we feel we are playing a wider role in assisting in the development of the Middle East's economy."

In addition to the financial backing which helps guarantee the viability of the event, Nissan Patrols are the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge's official vehicle, being used in the preparation phase by the organisers to map out the course to be followed by the participants, as well as during the race itself as support vehicles.

SWIMMING

Hackett blames drinking and anxiety for woes

SYDNEY: Australian Olympic swimming great Grant Hackett has blamed excessive drinking and anxiety attacks for a series of unsavoury incidents that badly tarnished his reputation. The 37-year-old sought help for mental health issues in February after being arrested at his parents' home following a family bust-up. He then went missing for several days, sparking fears for his safety. He said he had been in a bad place mentally and drinking excessively as he opened up yesterday for the first time since then.

"I was in a bad place, I suffer from pretty bad anxiety and ended up drinking. I drank too much at my parents' house and got into an argument with my dad," he told KIIS commercial radio.

Several weeks earlier, he had got in a fight with his brother, who was trying to help him recognise he had problems. It left him with a black eye. "I wasn't in a good space for a couple of months and he came over to my house and I was refusing that help, I didn't want him to come in and when I get in that state of mind I get quite reclusive," Hackett said. "He wanted to come in, I didn't want him to come in. I was trying to push him out and we got into a push-and-shove and he whacked me with his weak arm, so I'd hate to see him (hit me) with his strong arm." Hackett said the incident at his parents' home-in which they feared for their safety-had terrified him, and prompted him to seek help after admitting he hit "rock bottom".

"I was deep down in that ditch and hit rock bottom," he said. "When I got arrested I thought, 'This is it, I've had enough of this'. "I get anxiety, I haven't handled the past few years very well in bits and pieces. Ever since I went through that divorce and all the publicity that followed."

Hackett retired after the 2008 Beijing Olympics, having won the 1500m freestyle at both the 2000 Sydney and 2004 Athens Games. He also claimed four world titles in the 30-length event.

But he quickly ran into problems with a messy divorce and allegations he smashed up his Melbourne home in 2011. Then in 2014, he checked into a US rehabilitation clinic to treat an addiction to sleeping pills.

He came out of six years of troubled retirement in 2014 in a bid to make the Rio Games, but narrowly missed out on a berth and after the Olympic trials in 2016, hit the headlines again with a public meltdown on a plane.—AFP

RUGBY

Late penalty sinks stuttering Lions

DUNEDIN: The British and Irish Lions stumbled to a 23-22 defeat to the Otago Highlanders yesterday as they suffered the second loss of their tour ahead of next week's first Test against the All Blacks.

The Lions finally found their attacking mojo, scoring three tries to two-more than doubling their try tally so far-but lost from a winning position through a late penalty.

"Unfortunately, some big moments we didn't nail allowed them back into the game," coach Warren Gatland said after his team led 22-13 mid-way through the second half. "We needed some strong game management to close the game down. We've taken a little bit of a step backwards but we have to learn from those moments."

The Lions now have two wins and two losses after four outings on their gruelling 10-match New Zealand tour, with the first Test in Auckland looming a week on Saturday. The match was played at breakneck pace in front of a capacity 27,000 crowd at Forsyth Barr stadium, with both sides attempting to run the ball under the covered roof. It resulted in a chaotic scramble in the final minutes, when replacement fly-half Marty Banks potted a penalty to give the Highlanders a one-point edge.

Elliot Daly attempted to return fire but his long-range penalty effort fell just short, before centre Jonathan Joseph's knock-on after the siren dashed hopes of a last-gasp comeback. The loss against a Highlanders side missing seven players on international duty was a disappointment for Gatland's men, who were looking to build momentum after beating the Canterbury Crusaders on Saturday.

They also have concerns over lock Courtney Lawes, who went off in the first half with head knock. Fullback Stuart Hogg earlier departed the tour after suffering a facial fracture against the Crusaders.

HAKA-FREE ZONE

The Lions showed attacking intent, with captain Sam Warburton among the try-scorers as he fights to secure his Test spot after a run of injuries.

While disappointed the Lions conceded 12 penalties, Warburton said the match should help instill some discipline as the tourists build to the three-Test series against the world champion All Blacks.

"We're going to learn a lot more from a game where we lose by one point than we win by 60," he said. "We can mature a bit as a squad and work on those key moments."

The Highlanders decided against performing a haka before the match and were instead led out by a piper before captain Luke Whitelock handed Warburton a giant claymore sword. The hosts tested fullback Jared Payne under the high ball early but he proved up to the challenge, prompting them to send the ball wide.

After a penalty apiece, All Black Waisake Naholo scored the first try after Malakai Fekitoa broke the Lions' defensive line and flanker Gareth Evans off-loaded as he was being crashed to the ground.

Joseph hit straight back with a scything run that left Highlanders fullback Richard Buckman flailing, locking up the scores 10-10 at the break. Scottish winger Tommy Seymour put the Lions into the lead just after the restart, beating Fekitoa in the air as he tried to gather Naholo's cross-field kick. Warburton then gave the tourists a third try after a dominant Lions scrum, only for Highlander Liam Coltman to retaliate from a lineout drive. That reduced the arrears to 22-20, and Owen Farrell missed a chance to give the Lions some breathing space with a penalty from out wide.

But Banks made no mistake after the Highlanders won a scrum penalty, coolly slotting over the posts to put the hosts ahead 23-22 with eight minutes to go.

Daly's ambitious kick from 56 metres fell just short before Joseph's mistake ended the match, a harsh result for the try-scorer, who was one of the Lions' standouts. The Lions' next tour match is against the Maori All Blacks in Rotorua on Saturday, with the first Test in Auckland a week later. — AFP

DUNEDIN: Highlanders winger Tevita Li, center right, makes a run down field against the British and Irish Lions during their game in Dunedin, New Zealand, yesterday. The Highlanders defeated the Lions 23-22. — AP

Rahm goes from low amateur to top contender at US Open

ERIN: Jon Rahm left his first US Open with a gold medal for being the low amateur and no guarantees except for sponsor exemptions to play in six PGA Tour events in two months.

That was one year ago, and even for Rahm, it's hard to believe how far the 22-year-old Spaniard has come. A year after his final event as an amateur, Rahm is one of the favorites at Erin Hills. He is No. 10 in the world - only Tiger Woods and Sergio Garcia were ranked higher at a younger age. Along with winning at Torrey Pines with an eagle on his final hole, Rahm challenged Dustin Johnson in Mexico and scared him in Match Play when Johnson was on his three-tournament winning streak.

Oakmont now seems like far more than a year ago. "It's truly amazing to me to just look how things have changed," Rahm said Monday. "The future was so unknown. There were so many options depending on how I did. To see how I've accomplished my goals on such a fast pace ... of course, I wanted to be top 10 in the world someday. I didn't believe I could win, give myself chances to win World Golf Championships, get into the top 10 in the same year."

He doesn't lack any of the skills required to be among the best in the world. He certainly doesn't lack for confidence. But there was that moment at the US Open last summer at Oakmont when Rahm felt he gave the toughest test in golf a little too much credit.

"I teed off a little too on the defensive side, tried to respect the golf course too much and not playing as aggressive as I did," Rahm said. He made a few bad swings after a second rain delay that cost him five shots, and he opened with a 76. Rahm has such passion for how he plays that his emotion can get the best of him. It also can spur him on, and he bounced back with a 69 to make the cut, and two solid rounds on the weekend (72 -70) to tie for 23rd. And that unknown future was cleared up quickly.

In his first tournament as a pro, he shot 64 at Congressional - which has hosted three US Opens - and was leading the Quicken Loans National. Rahm wound up in a tie for third, and he was well on his way to securing a PGA Tour card for the following season.

But it was the way he finished at Congressional, and a month later in the Canadian Open, that showed why he is such a threat no matter where he plays. He was trailing Billy Hurley, who still had more holes to play, and Rahm was in deep rough. This was no time to take a big risk and cost himself spots on the leaderboard when he needed a high finish toward getting a tour card. "A lot of people might have laid up or tried to give themselves a better chance to make par, finish second or get almost all the money needed to take the card," he said. "I wasn't thinking about the card at that point. All I had in mind was winning the tournament. Same in Canada, when I hit the shot in 18, it was a 5-iron. I took it right at it. I didn't hesitate. "When I'm playing, I don't think of anything else than doing the best I can do to win a tournament."

Erin Hills is a different test than Oakmont, a traditional course that has hosted the US Open a record nine times. Erin Hills opened only 11 years ago, a massive course in Wisconsin farmland with generous fairways, elevation and shaved slopes around the green. There is plenty of hay, thick and knee-high, for the really wayward shots.

Rahm didn't bother going in there Monday. "There's no need to injure my wrist before I tee off," he said. But he liked what he saw. It's a big course, and he has power to spare. He sees holes where he can attack, and Rahm knows no other way. "It's not the usual US Open golf course, the US Open classic setup," Rahm said. "It's more similar to Chambers Bay. And actually, I absolutely love the golf course. It's a very long golf course, big greens, a little different to what it played last year. It gives you a lot of opportunities to hit the pin. You can be really creative. And I believe it will be a really fun week."

The last year has been nothing short of a joy ride. — AP

BOSTON: Deven Marrero #17 of the Boston Red Sox score in eleven innings on a hit by Dustin Pedroia #15 of the Boston Red Sox as Andrew Knapp #34 of the Philadelphia Phillies fields a late throw at Fenway Park on Monday in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

BASEBALL

Taillon leads Pirates over Rockies in comeback game

PITTSBURGH: Jameson Taillon pitched five scoreless innings on his return from treatments for testicular cancer to help the Pittsburgh Pirates beat the Colorado Rockies 7-2 in Major League Baseball on Monday night. Taillon (3-1) allowed five hits, walked two and struck out five. The 25-year-old had surgery May 8, four days after losing to the Reds at Cincinnati, then made three rehab starts in the minor leagues. Josh Harrison hit a two-run home run, his eighth, in the first inning off Kyle Freeland (7-4). Harrison, David Freese and Jose Osuna each had two hits for the Pirates. Freeland, a rookie, lost for the first time in seven road starts by giving up five runs (four earned) and nine hits in 5 2/3 innings. Freeland failed to pitch the past the sixth inning for just the second time in his last 10 starts and allowed a home run in a sixth consecutive outing.

METS 6, CUBS 1

Jacob deGrom pitched a five-hitter and Asdrubal Cabrera atoned for an embarrassing error by lining two home runs and turning four double plays as the Mets beat the Cubs. DeGrom (5-3) threw the Mets' first complete game of the season as New York won its fourth in a row. Still under .500 but getting healthier, the Mets started a key two-week stretch where they face 14 straight games against teams that reached the NL playoffs last year. The Cubs dropped to 31-32 with their ninth straight road loss - the World Series champions haven't won away from Wrigley Field in a month during their worst road skid since 2012. Mets star outfielder Yoenis Cespedes left the game because of a sore left heel. He went 1 for 3 before being pulled. On Saturday, Cespedes hit a grand slam at Atlanta in his return from a six-week stint on the disabled list. He had been out with a strained left hamstring, and also had been nagged by trouble with his quadriceps. John Lackey (4-7) fell to 0-4 in five starts.

BRAVES 11, NATIONALS 10

Tyler Flowers hit a go-ahead three-run home run off Matt Albers in the ninth inning as Atlanta came from three runs down to beat Washington and snap a three-game skid. Flowers had been hitless in his first four at-bats before he took Albers' fastball to the opposite field and into the Nationals bullpen. Matt Adams hit a pair of homers, including one off starter Stephen Strasburg. The Nationals' ace gave up six runs and three homers. Adams' second homer, a solo shot, was the first of five runs scored against a Nationals bullpen that blew its 11th save and second during a four-game losing streak. Albers (2-1) allowed the final three runs in the ninth after entering to work out of an eighth-inning jam. Atlanta's bullpen allowed two runs over 5 and 2/3 innings. Jason Motte (1-0) pitched a scoreless eighth and Jim Johnson allowed a run but completed the ninth for his 13th save.

RED SOX 6, PHILLIES 5, 11 innings

Dustin Pedroia singled home the winning run in the 11th inning to lift the Red Sox to a win over the Phillies. Pablo Sandoval opened the inning with a single off Casey Fein (0-1). Deven Marrero pinch-ran and moved up on a sacrifice. After Mookie Betts was intentionally walked, Pedroia hit a ground single to right and Marrero beat the throw from Aaron Altherr with a headfirst slide on a close play. Hanley Ramirez had tied the game 5-5 in the eighth with a homer. Betts had four hits with three doubles and a single, and Andrew Benintendi also hit a solo homer for Boston, which has won three of four. Tommy Joseph had a two-run single and former Red Sox player Daniel Nava three hits for the Phillies, who have lost 10 of their last 12 games in Fenway Park. Matt Barnes (5-2) pitched two scoreless innings of relief with five strikeouts.

WHITE SOX 10, ORIOLES 7

Kevan Smith hit his first career home run, Avisail Garcia celebrated his 26th birthday with three RBIs and the White Sox beat the Orioles. The White Sox opened a four-game series on a strong note after dropping nine of 11 and handed the Orioles their fifth straight loss. Smith set the tone with a two-run drive in the second against Wade Miley (2-4) and finished with a career-best three RBIs. Garcia added an RBI double in a four-run third and drove in two more with a single in the fourth to give Chicago an 8-2 lead. Matt Davidson had an RBI single and solo homer. Melky Cabrera had three of Chicago's 14 hits. Jose Abreu added a single, a ground-rule double and scored twice. Jake Petricka (1-0) pitched one-hit ball over 2 1/3 innings after Mike Pelfrey struggled, and the White Sox picked up the win after a 2-7 road trip.

MARINERS 14, TWINS 3

Nelson Cruz drove in four runs and Mitch Haniger had four hits as the Seattle Mariners started a series against Minnesota with a football score for the second time in a week to beat the Twins. Danny Valencia and Mike Zunino hit back-to-back home runs in the eighth inning, the fifth such feat for the Mariners this season. Yovani Gallardo (3-6) sailed through six innings with the excess support, allowing three runs and seven hits. Twins rookie Adalberto Mejia (1-2) struggled from the start, allowing nine hits and nine runs and leaving with two outs in the fourth inning. The first two batters in the lineup, Ben Gamel and Haniger, reached base and eventually scored all three times they faced Mejia.

RANGERS 6, ASTROS 1

Yu Darvish pitched seven solid innings and Nomar Mazara hit a three-run homer to give the Rangers a win over the Astros. Darvish (6-4) allowed one hit and one run with three walks. He induced a season-best 12 groundball outs. The Rangers went up 2-0 on back-to-back triples by Rougned Odor and Joey Gallo in the third inning. The Astros got an RBI single by Alex Bregman in the fifth, but a run-scoring double by Adrian Beltre gave the Rangers some insurance in the sixth inning. Mazara provided more cushion with his shot to straightaway center field off Dayan Diaz with two outs in the eighth to make it 6-1. Houston starter Joe Musgrove (4-5) allowed five hits and two runs in 4 2/3 innings. — AP

MLB results/standings

San Diego 9, Cincinnati 3; NY Yankees 5, La Angels 3; Chicago White Sox 10, Baltimore 7; Seattle 14, Minnesota 3; Texas 6, Houston 1; NY Mets 6, Chicago Cubs 1; Boston 6, Philadelphia 5 (11 innings); Atlanta 11, Washington 10; Pittsburgh 7, Colorado 2.

American League

	W	L	PCT	GB
Eastern Division				
NY Yankees	38	23	.623	-
Boston	35	28	.556	4
Tampa Bay	34	32	.515	6.5
Baltimore	31	31	.500	7.5
Toronto	31	32	.492	8
Central Division				
Minnesota	32	28	.533	-
Cleveland	31	29	.517	1
Detroit	30	32	.484	3
Kansas City	28	34	.452	5
Chicago White Sox	27	35	.435	6
Western Division				
Houston	44	21	.677	-
LA Angels	33	34	.493	12
Seattle	32	33	.492	12
Texas	31	32	.492	12
Oakland	27	36	.429	16

National League

Eastern Division				
Washington	38	25	.603	-
NY Mets	29	33	.468	8.5
Atlanta	28	35	.444	10
Miami	27	35	.435	10.5
Philadelphia	21	41	.339	16.5
Central Division				
Milwaukee	33	31	.516	-
Chicago Cubs	31	32	.492	1.5
St. Louis	29	32	.475	2.5
Cincinnati	29	34	.460	3.5
Pittsburgh	29	35	.453	4
Western Division				
Colorado	41	25	.621	-
LA Dodgers	39	25	.609	1
Arizona	39	26	.600	1.5
San Francisco	26	39	.400	14.5
San Diego	25	40	.385	15.5

GOLF

Thailand hails new hero as Ariya makes history

BANGKOK: Thailand hailed Ariya Jutanugarn as their new sporting hero yesterday as she finally secured her place on top of the world rankings-a week after being wrongly named number one.

The 21-year-old overcame that disappointment to sink a monster 25-foot birdie putt in a playoff on Sunday to take the Manulife LPGA Classic in breathtaking style and ensure a fairytale finish to a rollercoaster week.

The win in Canada came a week after the LPGA said Ariya would take over the top ranking from Lydia Ko, only for her to be informed when the rankings were published a day later that an embarrassing miscalculation had been made and that she was still 0.01 points behind the New Zealander.

The weekend's victory put her elevation to number one beyond doubt and it was duly confirmed when the new rankings were released on Monday, sparking celebrations back home.

Thailand has a long golfing history but Ariya made history by being the first Thai, male or female, to reach the top of the world rankings.

Pictures of a beaming Ariya-known by her nickname "May" back home-were emblazoned across most Thai newspaper front pages yesterday.

"May is world's number one, she has made history for Thai golfers," read the front page headline of Thairath, the country's largest selling newspaper.

"She fought hard to claim her success," junta chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha told reporters. "Her family were dedicated, they struggled and sacrificed."

Much of the coverage focused on the financial sacrifices Ariya's family made so she and her older sister Moriya, the world number 46, could turn pro.

Ariya first showed an interest in golf at the age of five when her father opened an equipment shop at a Bangkok driving range. Worried she might distract customers, Ariya's dad gave her some clubs to play with, local media reported.

From then on both she and Moriya were hooked. As they progressed through their teens the family sold their house and car to raise enough funds.

It was a gamble that paid off. Ariya has won some $3.9 million in career earnings while her sister has racked up $1.6 million. Many Thais left messages of support on social media after Ariya's number one spot was confirmed.

"You have written a new chapter in Thailand's sporting history," wrote one Facebook user. "You have won the hearts of all Thais." Ariya's struggles and success mirrors that of Thailand's other great female sporting star-badminton player Ratchanok Intanon. She has also topped the world rankings during her career and first picked up a racket at a badminton centre where her parents worked as a cleaner and driver. —AFP

CAMBRIDGE: Ariya Jutanugarn of Thailand with the trophy after sinking her birdie putt on the 1st playoff hole to win during the final round of the Manulife LPGA Classic at Whistle Bear Golf Club on Monday in Cambridge, Canada. — AFP

Morgan drops Bairstow hint ahead of Pakistan semi-final

CARDIFF: England captain Eoin Morgan said yesterday there was a "chance" Jonny Bairstow could replace the struggling Jason Roy for the Champions Trophy semi-final against Pakistan in Cardiff today. And Morgan insisted he would have "no worries" about Bairstow opening-something he has yet to do in international cricket. Morgan would not confirm his XI at yesterday's pre-match press conference in Cardiff but said there was "a chance we could make a change". Surrey opener Roy has averaged just 6.37 from eight ODI innings this season, with a mere two double-figure scores.

Morgan had been staunch in his support of Roy before the Champions Trophy started, saying: "The decision remains the same throughout the tournament...he'll definitely play." However, that backing has softened in the light of Roy's repeated failures and Morgan, fresh from his impressive 87 in England's group win over Australia, indicated Tuesday the team could not afford to 'carry' anyone as they went in search of a first major ODI tournament triumph.

'BUSINESS END'

"I mentioned after the last game that we're getting to the business end of the tournament and we need to produce results, so it's important that we get what we feel is our best XI to win the tournament out tomorrow (Wednesday) in order to win the game," said Morgan.

Bairstow, in marked contrast to Roy, has scored three fifties in his last four ODI innings when standing in for others in England's top order. Although he's yet to open in ODI cricket, Test wicket-keeper Bairstow's highest List A score of 174, for Yorkshire against Durham last month, at the top of the order.

"Jonny's qualities are that he's a fantastic batsman," Morgan said. "I think his best attribute, certainly in white-ball cricket over the last year and a half, has been his relentless attitude to score runs regardless of the situation."

Morgan cited Bairstow's unbeaten 83 in England's ODI series-clinching win over New Zealand at Chester-le-Street in 2015 as proof of the 27-year-old's ability to rise to the occasion. "One innings he did play for us won us a series, against New Zealand, a match-winning knock up at Durham two years ago sums him up," Middlesex left-hander Morgan said.

"He came from playing for Yorkshire, straight into the squad having played no part in the series, and he produces a match-winning knock. So I think his all-round ability is as good as we have in the squad. "But, like I've mentioned before, it's a very difficult team to get into and you've just got to wait for your chance," he added. "I'd have no worries if he has to open the batting...If Jonny does get the opportunity, I'm sure he'll take it with both hands." Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur said he would be glad if Roy was left out. "I was particularly worried that Roy hadn't fired yet because I think he's very close to something quite good," said Arthur. "So if he's not playing, that wouldn't be too bad." But the South African, who denied using "mind games", was well aware of Bairstow's quality, having seen him score an unbeaten 61 on his Headingley home ground in a four-wicket ODI victory against Pakistan last year. Bairstow was only called into the England side shortly before the start after Jos Buttler suffered a hamstring injury in the warm-up.

"He wasn't supposed to play half an hour before the game, got roped in for Buttler, and got man-of-the-match, recalled Arthur. "So that was an incredible performance. "The only thing I will say, I know that Bairstow has opened at county level, he's never done it internationally, and I think that's a different ball game." —AFP

CRICKET

Sarfraz hopes Cardiff run continues in England s-final

CARDIFF: Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed hopes the team's "high confidence" in Cardiff will stand them in good stead when they return to the Welsh capital to face England in a Champions Trophy semi-final today.

It will be Pakistan's second key match at Sophia Gardens in a matter of days after a tense three-wicket victory over Sri Lanka there on Monday saw them into the last four of a tournament featuring the world's top eight one-day international (ODI) sides.

Pakistan, chasing a seemingly modest 237 for victory, were on the brink of defeat at 137 for six. But Sarfraz made Sri Lanka pay for dropping him twice with a superb 61 not out and received excellent support from Mohammad Amir (28 not out) in a decisive and unbroken eighth-wicket stand of 75. It was Sarfraz's second impressive innings at Cardiff after the wicket-keeper's 90 on the same ground last year saw Pakistan chase down a target of 303 against England in a four-wicket win that prevented a 5-0 ODI series whitewash.

"We played the last ODI here. We win that time, we chased 300, so definitely our confidence is very high playing in Cardiff," Sarfraz told reporters after Monday's nailbiting triumph.

'POSITIVE CRICKET'

England, however, have arguably improved their white-ball game even more since that series.

They've won 11 of their last 12 matches at this level, a far cry from their woeful first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup, and Eoin Morgan's men were the only side to exit the group stage of the Champions Trophy with a perfect played three, won three, record.

"England is a very good team, a very, very good team," said Sarfraz of the tournament hosts. "If you are playing a world-class team, definitely, you play more positive cricket, so we will do so against England," he added. But Sri Lanka might well have won had they dismissed Sarfraz, with Thisara Perera guilty of dropping a simple catch at mid-on when he had made 38. "If we had held those catches, it would have been a different story," said Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews.

Pakistan certainly made far harder work than they ought to have done of getting to the knockout stage in a winner-takes-all clash given they held Sri Lanka to 236 all out, with pacemen Junaid Khan (three for 40) and Hasan Ali (three for 43) doing the bulk of the damage.

"I think it's a great win today, and credit goes to the bowlers, who bowled really well at a crucial time," said Sarfraz. "Yes, there is a little bit of concern about the middle order batting, but we will sort out the problems."

A two-day turnaround does not leave much time to address such issues but, then again, Pakistan only needed three days to bounce back from a 124-run thrashing by arch-rivals and title-holders India in their tournament opener before defeating top-ranked South Africa.

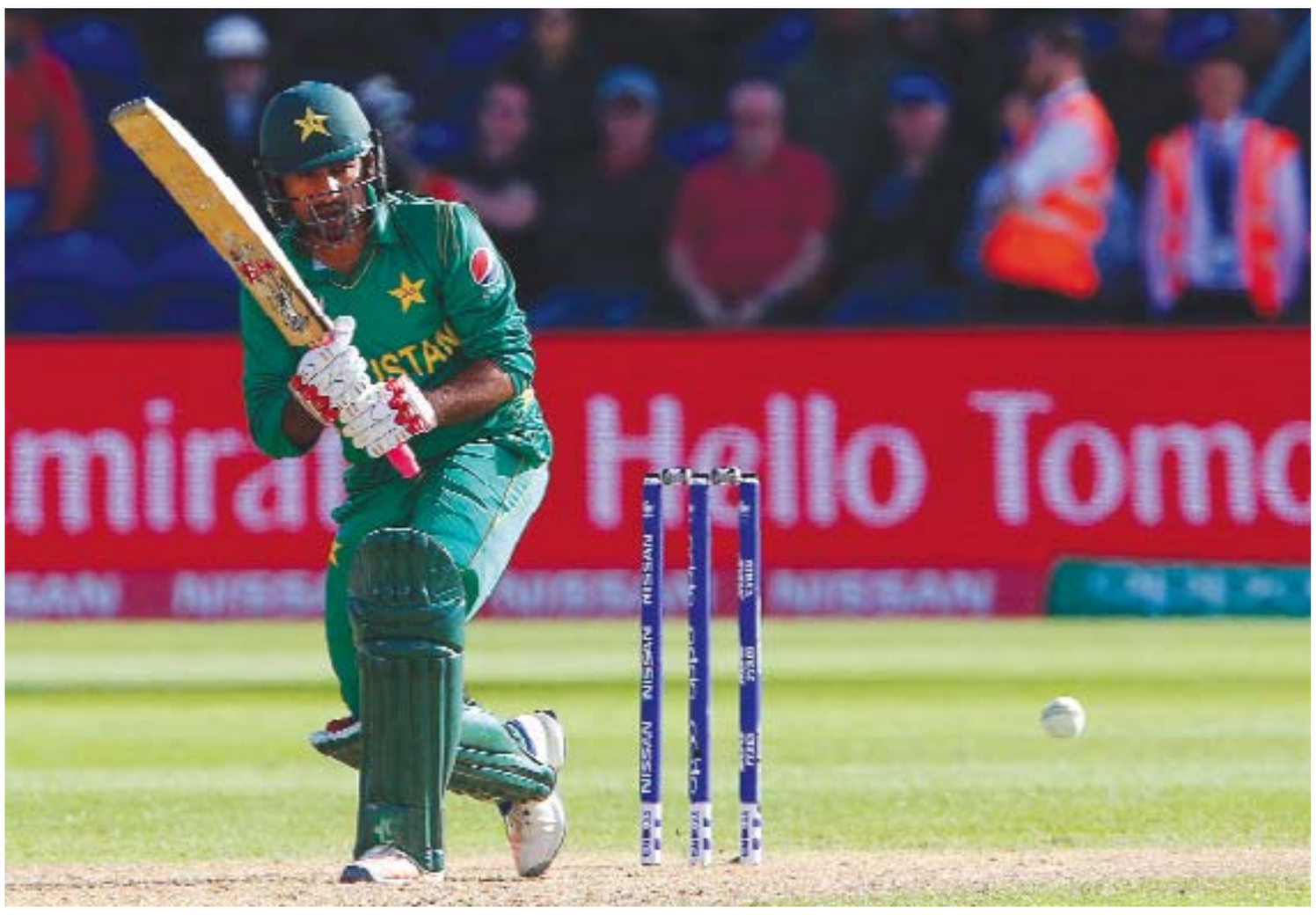
ROY WORRY

If Pakistan have middle-order concerns, the big decision facing England is whether to drop opener Jason Roy, whose latest low score against Australia means he has now managed just 51 runs in eight ODI innings this season. Morgan, previously unstinting in his praise of Surrey batsman Roy, was not quite so effusive after a win at Edgbaston on Sunday where England slumped to 35 for three before their captain's 87 and Ben Stokes's 102 not out bailed them out, with the duo sharing a stand of 159.

"It's unfortunate that Jason didn't get runs," said Morgan. "We revisit it every game, everybody's position, whether it can be changed around, can we do anything better?"

England do have the in-form Jonny Bairstow waiting in the wings. Although he has never opened in ODIs, Bairstow did make 174 at the top of the order for Yorkshire against Durham in a domestic 50-over match this season.

Roy apart, England appear to have all bases covered as they go in search of their first major ODI tournament title, with key fast bowler Mark Wood summing up their mood by saying: "It's great to be part of a team with so many game-changers ... so many match-winners, with bat or ball." — AFP



CARDIFF: Pakistan's Sarfraz Ahmed plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy match between Sri Lanka and Pakistan in Cardiff on Monday. — AFP

CARDIFF: This is a Friday June 9, 2017 file photo of Bangladesh's Mosaddek Hossain, center, as he celebrates with his teammates after taking the wicket of New Zealand's James Neesham during the ICC Champions Trophy, Group A cricket match between New Zealand and Bangladesh, at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, Wales, The cricket-mad country of Bangladesh will play its biggest ever game when the team takes on India in the Champions Trophy semifinals tomorrow. — AP

Cricket fever grips Bangladesh

DHAKA: As the city's 18 million inhabitants will attest, Dhaka - the densely populated capital of Bangladesh - is known as the "traffic capital of the world" for good reason.

Expect roads there to be deserted at about 3:30 pm local time tomorrow, though. "A journey that would take one hour to get to your destination, will take five minutes," predicted Habibul Bashar, one of Dhaka's more famous residents.

Bashar is the former captain and currently a national selector of Bangladesh's cricket team, which will be taking part in the biggest game in its history tomorrow. "The Tigers" - as the team is also known - play India in Birmingham, England, in a semifinal match in the ICC Champions Trophy, one of the world's leading cricket tournaments.

"This is big, very big," Bashar said. "The most important day of Bangladeshi cricket ever. This is what we have been dreaming for." Once regarded as the minnows of high-level cricket, Bangladesh's players are on a remarkable journey to the top of the game. At the Champions Trophy, they managed to finish - partly by luck, partly by skill - above 2015 World Cup finalists Australia and New Zealand in group play to qualify for the semi-finals of an ICC tournament for the first time.

Cricket is Bangladesh's most important sport - "the people, they eat and sleep cricket; they do everything for cricket," Bashar says - so the country with a population of 160 million cannot wait for tomorrow. "Literally, when a cricket match is happening, there's nothing else in Bangladesh," Bashar said in a phone interview from Dhaka after returning from the Champions Trophy. "I think no one will miss this. Each and everyone will see this game."

Bangladesh was only granted full membership of the ICC, cricket's governing body, in 2000, which allowed the country to play matches against the world's top teams on a more regular basis.

There have been some dark days since then: They went nearly five years (May 1999-March 2004) without a victory in one-day cricket, a run that took in 45 losses and two no results because of washouts. But being exposed to the game's best players, combined with improved domestic structures and coaching, saw Bangladesh gradually pick up significant wins here and there.

An ODI win over Australia in Cardiff in 2005, when Bashar was captain; a group-stage victory over India - under the leadership of Bashar - at the 2007 Cricket World Cup that helped the team reach the Super Eights; a first overseas Test series success over a top-tier team, against West Indies in 2009; the famous group-stage win over England at the 2015 Cricket World Cup as the Tigers reached the quarterfinals.

On Friday, Bangladesh beat New Zealand in Cardiff, Wales, to give itself a chance of qualification to the last four of the Champions Trophy and progress was sealed by Australia losing to England in Birmingham the following day.

"I think everyone has contributed to what we are today," Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza said. "The whole nation will be with us, as they were in our desperate times and good times."

These days, players like Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah and Mortaza are established names even to the average cricket fan - and icons to kids in Bangladesh. Shakib and Mahmudullah put on a national-record partnership of 224 in the win over New Zealand. "This is one of the big things; in Bangladesh, everyone wants to play cricket now," Bashar said. — AP

Anil Kumble set to remain India coach for Windies tour

NEW DELHI: Anil Kumble's term as India coach looks set to be extended until the end of the West Indies tour next month, a top official said Monday. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) advertised for a head coach in May with Kumble's one-year deal due to expire at the end of the Champions Trophy in England this week.

The first one-day international in the West Indies just 10 days away with Kumble in the mix for the post along with former India opening batsman Virender Sehwag and Australian coach Tom Moody, according to media reports.

But BCCI official Vinod Rai said a special panel overseeing the selection was yet to decide if someone else will take the reins.

"Since it has got delayed, Anil Kumble, subject to his acceptance, will be there till the West Indies tour," Rai, who is chairman of the Committee of Administrators, told reporters on Monday.

India will play five one-day internationals in the Caribbean starting June 23, with a Twenty20 international wrapping up the trip on July 9.

Rumours of a rift between Indian skipper Virat Kohli and Kumble were reported to be behind the BCCI throwing open the position. Former India greats Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman have been tasked with selecting the next coach.

Rai, whose special committee was assigned by the Supreme Court to oversee the scandal-ridden cricket board, dismissed allegations of a spat between Kumble and Kohli.

"There is no question of any controversy... We discussed with Kohli, we discussed with Kumble and neither of them confirmed to what has come out of media reports," said Rai.

Rai's committee has also been dogged by controversy. One of its high-profile members, historian Ramachandra Guha, resigned earVlier this month, citing the committee's mishandling of the Kumble situation. —AFP

Anil Kumble

De Villiers to lead SA in England T20 series

LONDON: AB de Villiers will captain South Africa in their three-match Twenty20 series against England, team officials announced yesterday.

De Villiers takes over from Faf du Plessis, who has returned home, following South Africa's group-stage exit from the Champions Trophy, to attend the birth of his first child.

However, the senior batsman is expected back in time for the first of four Tests against England at Lord's starting on July 6 — a series de Villiers is set to miss as he takes a break from the longest international format.

De Villiers, South Africa's one-day international captain, will skipper the Proteas in three T20s against England in Southampton, Taunton and Cardiff starting on July 21. He will be in charge of a 14-man squad, without several Proteas regulars and one man yet to make his T20 international debut in all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius.

Cricket South Africa selector Linda Zondi said: "I would like to thank Farhaan Behardien for leading the side so ably in the recent series against Sri Lanka.

"We are indeed fortunate in the quality of our team leaders, and Farhaan remains very much part of this group." Test players Hashim Amla, Quinton de Kock, JP Duminy and Kagiso Rabada have all been rested for the Twenty20 series as South Africa try to make sure their key players remain fresh on a lengthy three-month tour of England.

"We have also been impressed as a panel by the quality of players coming through our franchise and South Africa A system and we are ready to give further opportunities to Andile Phehlukwayo, Mangaliso Mosehle, Jon-Jon Smuts and Dane Paterson-who all made their debuts in the recent series against Sri Lanka," Zondi added.

South Africa Twenty20 squad to play England AB de Villiers (capt), Farhaan Behardien, Reeza Hendricks, Imran Tahir, David Miller, Morne Morkel, Chris Morris, Mangaliso Mosehle (wkt), Wayne Parnell, Dane Paterson, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Tabraiz Shamsi, Jon-Jon Smuts.

Fixtures

June 21: 1st T20 International, Southampton (1730 GMT)

June 23: 2nd T20 International, Taunton (1600 GMT)

June 25: 3rd T20 International, Cardiff (1330 GMT). — AFP

Modric appears as star witness in Croatia graft trial

ZAGREB: Luka Modric will swap his football kit for a suit yesterday as he appears in the witness box to testify in a multi-million-euro corruption trial against Dinamo Zagreb's ex chairman.

The 31-year-old star midfielder is to give evidence at the trial of controversial Zdravko Mamic, considered the most powerful man in Croatian football. Mamic is being tried along with three others: his brother and former Dinamo Zagreb coach Zoran Mamic, former club director Damir Vrbanovic, and a tax inspector.

They were charged last year with abuse of power and graft that cost the former Croatian champions more than 15 million euros ($17.6 million), and the state 1.5 million euros.

Most of the money-more than 12 million euros-was illegally acquired by the Mamic brothers, said the indictment. The cash was allegedly embezzled through fictitious deals related to player transfers.

Modric is expected to testify over the details of his 2008 transfer from Dinamo to Tottenham Hotspur. From there he joined Real Madrid in 2012. His testimony given to prosecutors in Zagreb in 2015 could be embarrassing for the Mamic brothers. "I acted as I was told, to withdraw cash and give it to them," Modric told the prosecutors, according to the Jutarnji list newspaper. He explained that he paid them some seven million euros, as instructed, from the nine million that arrived in his bank account from Dinamo. Another Croatian international, Liverpool defender Dejan Lovren, will follow as a witness today. The 27-year-old is expected to be questioned over his 2010 transfer from Dinamo to French side Lyon.

'FAKERS AND MANIPULATORS'

The trial has attracted huge interest from media and residents in the eastern city of Osijek, where it is being held, reportedly to avoid Mamic's influence on judges in the capital Zagreb.

Mamic's connections extend into many spheres of Croatian public life and he donated to the election campaign of President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic. Most Croatian football fans consider him the real boss of the Croatian Football Federation and believe its formal chief Davor Suker is merely Mamic's puppet. The magnate has bragged to media about feeling like a "Hollywood star" in Osijek because local people regularly approach to greet him. Since the trial opened in April under strict security, Mamic lived up to his controversial reputation, easily losing his temper and trying to turn the process into a performance.

The indictment is the "most disgusting lie I've heard in my life" and the trial "a politically-rigged process", he said, lambasting the anti-corruption prosecutors as "fakers and manipulators". State attorneys were even allocated extra protection after Mamic verbally attacked one of them.

"What the fuck are you laughing at!" he shouted at Sven Miskovic in the courthouse, prompting a warning from the judge while his lawyer tried to calm him down, local media reported.

'MODERN DINAMO CREATOR'

Judge Darko Kruslin has often warned and threatened him with fines over his behaviour. But unlike the other suspects, he regularly attends the trial. "I'm not a criminal, I'm the creator of a modern Dinamo. With my arrival to the club the fight against corruption began," Mamic told local media.

Dinamo have won 18 national championships since the former Yugoslav republic declared independence in 1991. Witness Modric, who grew up as a refugee child in Zadar on the Dalmatian coast, is highly popular in Croatia where he has a reputation for modesty.

He was only six when Croatia's independence war broke out, and although Zadar was heavily bombed his football skills in the corridors of a refugee hotel and in cratered car parks did not go unnoticed. Mamic's trial is a major one for Croatian football, which is known for the success of its national team but also hooliganism and poor infrastructure. — AFP

MEXICO CITY: United States coach Bruce Arena, center, celebrate with Christian Pulisic, left, as Michael Bradley salutes supporters at the end of a World Cup soccer qualifying match at the Azteca Stadium in Mexico City, Sunday. — AP

Bruce Arena rebuilds US confidence after Klinsmann

MEXICO CITY: Bruce Arena has managed the tricky task of establishing a sense of calm along with urgency within the US soccer team. It's quite a contrast to the frustration and futility at the end of Jurgen Klinsmann's coaching reign last November.

Of course, climbing from last to third in the final round of World Cup qualifying has eased pressure immensely. "We haven't lost yet this year since Bruce has had the team," US Soccer Federation President Sunil Gulati said Monday, a day after a 1-1 draw with Mexico at Azteca Stadium. "So whatever has gotten us there, whatever occasion or bonding that's led to a change, that's a positive, and certainly Bruce has to receive a lot of credit." Now 65, Arena is a member of the US National Soccer Hall of Fame. He coached the national team from 1998-2006, leading the Americans to the 2002 World Cup quarterfinals in their best result since the first tournament in 1930.

Klinsmann was fired after a 2-1 home loss to Mexico and a 4-0 fiasco at Costa Rica. The rebound in qualifying under the witty and sarcastic Arena began with a 6-0 home win over Honduras and a 1-1 tie at Panama. It continued with a 2-0 home victory over Trinidad and Tobago last Thursday in Colorado and the draw against El Tri - just the third point the Americans have gained at Azteca.

"I'm not going to compare the current situation to any previous situations. I don't think that is appropriate. But I think that clearly the team has responded to some of the things that Bruce has outlined and is doing, and that's what we were hoping for," Gulati said. "I think it's probably a lot of little things and not any one thing.

"Obviously when you're on the field and in camp and the team starts to believe even before they've played a game that they're capable of playing better and of winning, that helps. And then when you go out and see results that come from that, from following the path he's laid out, that obviously gives people a lot of confidence not only in Bruce but in themselves and in the team." On the sidewalk outside Estadio Nacional in San Jose, Costa Rica, last fall, U.S. captain Michael Bradley said self-examination and urgency was needed. Speaking in Azteca's tunnel on Sunday night, Bradley diagnosed what had gone wrong.

"It was just a case at the end of last year where a few too many areas started to drop, and I think Bruce has done a very good job of coming in and just little by little working at getting every - just raising the level across the board," he said. "And obviously a big part of it is this idea of team, of spirit, of mentality, of (guts) and understanding that we have good players, we have a good team, but we're not good enough to just step on the field and think that things are going to take care of themselves."

Arena's biggest personnel changes were to add left back Jorge Villafana, who was overlooked by Klinsmann, and to bring back midfielder Darlington Nagbe, dropped by Klinsmann in a spat for refusing an invitation to a training camp ahead of exhibition games last October.

Arena used 20 of the 26 players on his roster in the last two qualifiers, changing seven starters because of the 7,820-foot altitude and the short recovery time.

"When you have the confidence of the manager to put you in a game like this, it means everything, obviously," said Brad Guzan, who started against Mexico in place of No. 1 goalkeeper Tim Howard. "We've got a lot of good guys in our group, not just the guys that are here on this trip, but guys back home, and I think ultimately that's going to make our team stronger."

Arena shifted from a 4-4-2 formation against Trinidad to a five-man back line against Mexico, a tactic he settled on in the winter, and had players practice daily once the most recent training camp opened May 29. He wouldn't try to explain how he created confidence. — AP

NHL

Panthers new coach Bob Boughner says team's future is bright

SUNRISE: The Florida Panthers went into this offseason with a very specific plan regarding what they thought they wanted for the team's next head coach. Then they met with Bob Boughner. And their plan changed on the spot.

Boughner was introduced Monday as the Panthers' 15th coach in 24 years - and the fifth to hold the job since 2011. It's the first time Boughner has gotten the reins of an NHL team, and he comes to Florida after spending the last two years as an assistant coach under former Panthers coach Peter DeBoer in San Jose.

"I think we have a lot of great pieces here to build something special in South Florida," Boughner said.

General manager Dale Tallon said Boughner sees the game in a modern way and is the right leader to get the Panthers back toward competing for the Stanley Cup. Tallon said the Panthers quickly decided after interviewing Boughner that he was the pick, and went forward with the rest of their lengthy search anyway - no one knowing those subsequent talks were in vain.

"Of all the interviews and of all the people, Bob Boughner impressed us like no one else," Tallon said. "All the years I've been in the business interviewing coaches, firing coaches, meeting coaches, Bob was the most prepared. His performance, his preparation, his passion knocked us out of the park. It really did. It was incredible to see."

Added Panthers President Matthew Caldwell: "He blew us away. He's the right fit for us." DeBoer said the Sharks hated to see Boughner leave. "This is a terrific opportunity for Bob to become a head coach in the National Hockey League and one that he deserves," Sharks general manager Doug Wilson said.

Boughner is the fifth coach to be hired since the regular season ended, a list that includes the Vegas Golden Knights choosing Gerard Gallant as their first coach. Gallant was fired by the Panthers early this past season, getting replaced by then-general manager Tom Rowe. But Florida never found the same form it had a year ago on the way to the Atlantic Division title, and missed the playoffs by 14 points.

That led to the Panthers going back to what has worked in the past: Tallon squarely in charge again as general manager, and his first major move of the offseason is bringing in a 46-year-old - he shared the ice with Panthers free agent forward Jaromir Jagr both as a teammate and an opponent - to take over a team that believes it should be right back in the playoff mix next spring.

Panthers captain Derek Mackenzie said players had no doubt Tallon would make the right call. "Given the makeup of our team and knowing the way he played, I think it's kind of the perfect combination for our team right now," Mackenzie said.— AP

SOCCER

Souza's quickfire goal sparks Brazil to win over Australia

MELBOURNE: The world's number one team Brazil demolished Australia 4-0 fired by a Diego Souza goal after just 12 seconds in their international friendly in Melbourne yesterday. The Socceroos held the five-times World Cup champions to 1-0 at half-time but the dazzling Brazilians ripped apart the home defence with three second-half goals.

Souza, who replaced injured striker Gabriel Jesus, scored twice with other goals from defender Thiago Silva and substitute Taison with his first international goal.

Brazil bounced back spectacularly from their 1-0 loss to Argentina at the same venue on Friday with captain for the night Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho and Chelsea's David Luiz outstanding for the South Americans. Brazil, which did not bring stars Neymar, Marcelo, Dani Alves or Roberto Firmino to Melbourne, still had far too much firepower for the Socceroos. Brazil got off to a stunning start with a goal after just 12 seconds when defender Bailey Wright dithered and gave away the ball to Giuliano. Giuliano sent Diego Souza through to beat goalkeeper Mitch Langerak for his first international goal.

But after the catastrophic start, the Socceroos settled down with their passing improved from last week's World Cup 3-2 qualifier win over Saudi Arabia. Coutinho, Brazil's ninth captain since Tite became manager, troubled the Australians with his deft close skills and touch, while Luiz was rock solid as the holding midfielder in front of the back three. The Brazilians made it 2-0 just after the hour when Luiz's thunderous header from Coutinho's corner came off the bar for Silva to nod home amongst a crowd of players in the six-yard box.

Langerak saved with his legs to deny Souza from scoring when Mark Milligan gave away possession to substitute Willian as Brazil turned the screws on the Socceroos.

Coutinho and Luiz, Brazil's two most influential players, were substituted minutes apart before substitute Taison scored his first international goal. After exquisite interplay by Willian, Paulinho back-heeled the ball into Taison's path to slot home.

Souza had a free header off corner in the third minute of stoppage time to round off the scoring for Brazil. It was a sobering farewell for the Australians, who leave today for Russia and the Confederations Cup where they face Germany in their first game on June 19.

"I guess the first half, apart from the first action where we conceded a silly goal, I thought it wasn't too bad," Australia coach Ange Postecoglou said. "The second half, I'll take responsibility. We made a lot of changes and looked disjointed and they took advantage of that. And we conceded two from set pieces which we hadn't done for a while."

Brazil, who were the first time to qualify for next year's World Cup finals in Russia, will face Ecuador in Porto Alegre on August 31 in their next World Cup qualifier. — AFP

MELBOURNE: Diego Andrade (L) of Brazil scores his second goal during the friendly international football match between Brazil and Australia in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

'Women Football Tournament' Championship match tonight

KUWAIT: The championship match to decide the winner of the 'Women Football Tournament' is scheduled to take place tonight at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium. The final game kicks off at 9 pm and awards ceremony will take place at 10 pm. For easy access to the stadium, please enter through gate number three.

The event is being held under the patronage of and in the presence of H.E. Khaled Nasser Al-Roudan, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs. The tournament is organized by Eighty Percent, a socially driven sports company established by three young Kuwaiti women dedicated to sports and fitness.

Gulf Bank was pleased to sponsor the tournament as part of its series of events during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The tournament encourages women to incorporate playing sports as part of leading an active and healthy lifestyle. Gulf Bank is also supporting and conducting several other activities. These include the distribution foodstuff boxes in collaboration with Saveco, the Kuwait Food Bank, and LOYAC.

Staff from the Bank are also currently visiting to hospitals to celebrate "Girgi'an" with children, and holding "Girgi'an" celebrations with other health institutions and special needs schools. Earlier in the month, the Bank launched a well-received Ramadan-themed television commercial, which can be viewed on the Gulf Bank YouTube channel.

To find out more about Gulf Bank's initiatives please visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches; visit the bank's bilingual website at www.e-gulfbank.com, or see its social media channels.

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OAKLAND: Golden State Warriors players, coaches and owners pose for photos after Game 5 of basketball's NBA Finals against the Cleveland Cavaliers in Oakland, Calif., Monday. The Warriors won 129-120 to win the NBA championship. — AP

Durant, Curry lead Warriors to NBA title

OAKLAND: As a fresh NBA champions cap sat a tad off-kilter on his head, Kevin Durant embraced mother Wanda. Then he moved across the podium and hugged Stephen Curry before accepting his shiny MVP trophy, holding out his arms and hoisting it for everyone to see.

From the Bay all the way to OKC. Durant capped his spectacular first season with the Warriors by bringing home that coveted NBA championship he joined Golden State last July so determined to get. He scored 39 points in a fast-and-furious, Finals-clinching 129-120 victory over LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers in Game 5 on Monday night.

"You can talk about whatever you want to talk about, but nobody comes in and cares about the game or loves the game as much as I do or works as hard as do I at the basketball game. You can talk about whatever happens on the outside, but inside those lines, I come to bring it every day," Durant said. "I work hard, I believe in myself, I believe in the game, I respect the game, I love the game, and I knew at some point in my life that it will come around for me."

Stephen Curry added 34 points, 10 assists and six rebounds as Golden State closed out its second title in three years after squandering a 3-1 lead a year ago. That stung ever since, and even Durant understood, because he gave up the same lead to the Warriors a round earlier with Oklahoma City.

James, who in 2012 with Miami beat the Thunder in Durant's only other Finals, wound up with 41 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists. "I left everything on the floor every game," James said after averaging a triple-double in his eighth Finals.

Kyrie Irving followed up his 40-point gem in Game 4 with 26 points but shot 9 for 22. This time, King James gave way to KD, who was the NBA Finals MVP 10 years after being picked second in the NBA draft behind Greg Oden. Durant drove left, right and down the middle, knocked down 3-pointers, dished and dunked. He hit a 17-foot fadeaway over James early in the fourth quarter, then assisted on a 3-pointer by Andre Iguodala the next time down as the Warriors pulled away.

Iguodala, the 2015 Finals MVP, came up big again with his 2017 postseason-best 20 points off the bench in a testy, tightly called finale to this trilogy Finals that everyone had stamped on the calendar from the moment Durant departed Oklahoma City to join Curry and Co. last July.

The Warriors won in 2015 before the Cavs made their historic comeback last year. Then it was Golden State's time again, with Durant as the prized addition. Sure, the Warriors missed becoming the first undefeated champion, but 16-1 still gave Golden State the best winning percentage of any title team at .941.

Durant shot 14 for 20 and Curry - the two-time reigning MVP who took a backseat as the new big star got acclimated - finished off a brilliant postseason. Not to mention a healthy one after his 2016 injuries. Green stayed on the court in a game that featured three technicals on one play 3:08 before halftime. David West fought for the ball with Irving, then they got tangled up and Tristan Thompson entered the fray and he and West went at each other face-to-face. West, Thompson and J.R. Smith received techs after a replay review. Green had sat out this very game a year ago, suspended because of flagrant foul point accumulation. He had 10 points, 12 rebounds and five assists in this clincher.

With a much-improved bench led by Iguodala, JaVale McGee, Shaun Livingston and West, that "Strength In Numbers" slogan that has become such a staple the past two seasons shined all season long, from Durant's 19-game absence late in the regular season with a left knee injury to assistant coach Mike Brown stepping in for 11 postseason games to lead the way while Steve Kerr was ailing.

Golden State used a 28-4 second-quarter run to take charge - just after it appeared Durant should have been called for a third foul on a basket by James - and got to celebrate right at home in Oakland surrounded by a deafening home crowd waving yellow rally towels and holding up phones to shoot video and photos as the final minute of the clock ticked away.

The Warriors became the first Bay Area team to capture a championship at home since the A's finished the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 5 of the 1974 World Series.

A year ago, these Warriors fell short after a record-setting season that included a 24-0 start and 73 victories at the end to break the 1995-96 Chicago Bulls' wins mark. Then they got Durant, who after the buzzer sounded did a little shake with Curry on the court before they slapped hands several times.

"I'm happy for him," Curry said. "You've got to call Kevin Durant a champ now." — AP

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BEIJING: A general view shows a construction site on the outskirts of Beijing. — AFP

TRUMP TO TOUT APPRENTICESHIPS

PRESIDENT HOPES THIS WILL FILL THE JOB GAP

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump says apprenticeships could match workers with millions of open jobs, but he's reluctant to devote more taxpayer money to the effort. Instead, Trump and Labor Secretary Alex Acosta say the administration is focused on getting universities and private companies to pair up and pay the cost of such learn-to-earn arrangements.

The president has accepted a challenge from Salesforce.com CEO Marc Benioff to create 5 million apprenticeships over five years. Now, as part of a week-long apprenticeship push, he is visiting Waukesha County Technical College in Wisconsin Tuesday with his daughter, Ivanka, as well as Acosta and Wisconsin Gov Scott Walker. "Apprenticeships are going to be a big, big factor in our country," Trump said during his first-ever full Cabinet meeting Monday. "There are millions of good jobs that lead to great careers, jobs that do not require a four-year degree or the massive debt that often comes with those four-year degrees and even two-year degrees."

Idea welcome

Many employers and economists - and Republicans and Democrats - welcome the idea of apprenticeships as a way to train people with specific skills for particular jobs that employers say they can't fill at time of historically low unemployment. The most recent budget for the federal government passed with about $90 million for apprenticeships, and Trump so far isn't proposing adding more.

But the Trump administration, like President Barack Obama's, says there's a need that can be met with a change in the American attitude toward vocational education and apprenticeships. A November 2016 report by Obama's Commerce Department found that "apprenticeships are not fully understood in the United States, especially" by employers, who tend to use apprentices for a few, hard-to -fill positions" but not as widely as they could. The shortages for specifically-trained workers cut across multiple job sectors beyond Trump's beloved construction trades. There are shortages in agriculture, manufacturing, information technology and health care.

"There aren't enough people to fill the jobs and the people applying don't have the skills necessary," said Conor Smyth, spokesman for the Wisconsin Technical College System, where President and Ivanka Trump, Acosta and Walker were visiting. That's where apprenticeship comes in. Participants get on-the-job training while going to school, sometimes with companies footing the bill.

IBM, for example, participates in a six-year program called P-TECH. Students in 60 schools across six states begin in high school, when they get a paid internship, earn an associate's degree and get first-in-line consideration for jobs from 250 participating employers. It relies on funds outside the apprenticeship program - a challenge in that the Trump budget plan would cut spending overall on job training. The program uses $1.2 billion in federal funding provided under the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act passed in 2006, said P-TECH co-founder Stan Litow.

"This really demonstrates what you can do with apprenticeships with existing dollars," Litow said. Eric Haban, 35, started as a youth apprentice junior in high school and then completed a four-year program at Lakeshore Technical College in Wisconsin, the first state in the country to pass a law establishing apprenticeship programs in 1911. At the school, Haban learned to be a machinist for LDI Industries, which makes hydraulic components and lubricating equipment. "It really gave me a jump start to get into a field that I had no prior experience in," Haban said.

Few and far between

Apprenticeships are few and far between. Of the 146 million jobs in the United States, about 3.5 percent - or slightly more than a half-million - were filled by active apprentices in 2016. Filling millions more jobs through apprenticeships would require the government to massively ramp up its efforts. "Scaling is the big issue," said Robert Lerman, a fellow at the Urban Institute. Another complication: only about half of apprentices finish their multi-year programs, Lerman said. Fewer than 50,000 people including 11,104 in the military completed their apprenticeships in 2016, according to Labor Department. The Trump administration has yet to spell out how it would close the completion gap. Acosta said Monday that the policy would revolve around encouraging more partnerships between business and schools rather than increasing the $90 million the federal government currently devotes to apprenticeships. "I want to challenge the assumption that the only way to move policy is to increase government spending," Acosta said at the Monday White House news briefing. "We should measure success based on outcomes and not simply based on spending."

Susan Helper, former chief economist at the Commerce Department, said it would likely require more than $90 million a year to cover the administrative costs of increasing the number of apprentices. But Helper, currently a professor at Case Western University, noted that how federal funds are spent on apprenticeship programs also matters. Tax breaks might do little to expand the number of apprenticeships, since the major barriers involve the upfront costs of starting an apprenticeship program that helps groups of smaller employers and the community colleges often involved in apprenticeship programs. —AP

EU SEEKS POST-BREXIT POWERS OVER LONDON FINANCE HUB

BRUSSELS: The EU unveiled plans yesterday to give itself new powers over London's banking business after Brexit in a blow to the city's supremacy as a global financial hub. The draft law unveiled by European Commission vice-president Valdis Dombrovskis will empower Europe to decide if post-Brexit London has the right to host financial market "clearing houses" that deal in euros, the EU's single currency.

Clearing houses are a key part of the financial system's plumbing, with trillions of euros being handled every year, mostly out of London. "As we face the departure of the largest EU financial centre, we need to make certain adjustments to our rules to ensure that our efforts remain on track," Dombrovskis said in a statement. The draft law is weaker than the forced relocation of euro clearing initially feared by London, in a sign that the EU does not want to overtly offend Britain only days after Prime Minister Theresa May embarrassingly lost her majority in British elections.

The issue of whether euro clearing houses can remain in the British capital is set to be one of the most contentious issues when Britain negotiates its future trade relationship with the EU after its departure. Britain has jealously guarded dominance of the clearing house sector in Europe and won an EU court decision in 2015 against the European Central Bank in order to keep hosting the euro deals.

Still, under the draft law, vaunted financial firms such as the London Stock Exchange stand at risk of a forced move of their euro clearing business to a bloc country. "We are giving ESMA more powers to regulate European counter parties," an EU official said, in reference to the Paris-based European Securities and Markets Authority. With the proposal, "the door remains open to the forced relocation" of clearing houses considered at risk of causing severe damage to the EU economy, another source said. — AFP

LONDON: Britain's Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Brexit Minister) David Davis arrives to attend a Cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street. — AFP

INDIA'S EXCESS LAND IS ENOUGH FOR HOUSING

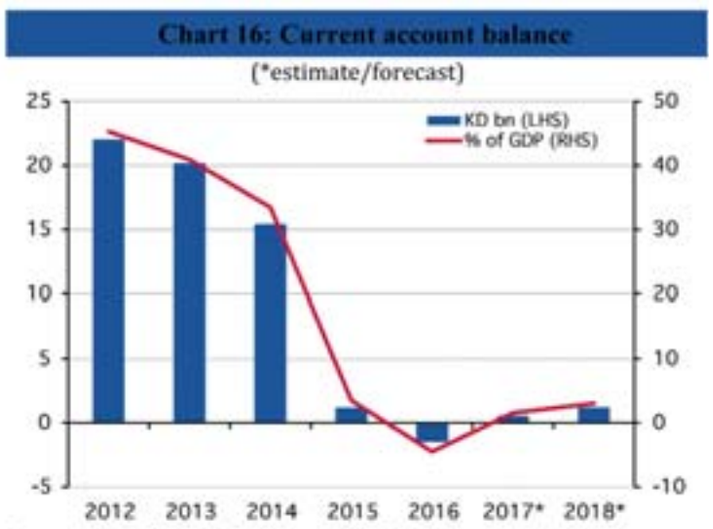
MUMBAI: India should use excess land held by government agencies to meet its goal of providing housing for all by 2022, experts and activists said, as the country struggles with rising conflicts over land for industry, infrastructure and its citizens. The government recently launched a long-delayed process to sell 2,000 acres of unused land belonging to unprofitable state-owned enterprises - known in India as public sector undertakings (PSUs).

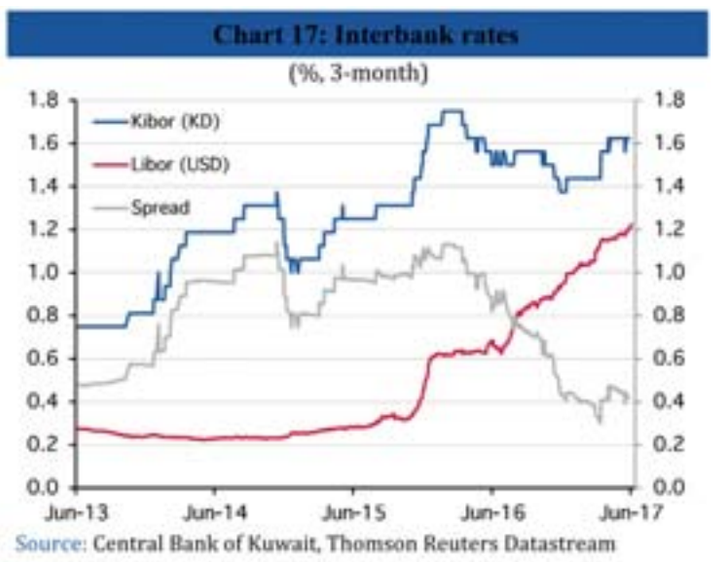
The railways, ports, aviation and defence ministries also hold vast tracts of surplus land. A portion of this land held by the government must be given to states to build housing for poor and low-income groups to meet India's goal of Housing for All by 2022, experts and activists said. "The government says finding land is the biggest problem for affordable housing, but the government is sitting on so much land that is lying idle," said Shivani Chaudhry, executive director at New Delhi-based advocacy group Housing and Land Rights Network.

"PSUs could easily work with the ministry of housing to see how best to address this issue, but they would rather monetise the land in other ways." India's state-owned enterprises hold more than 1 million acres of surplus land, according to some estimates. Government enterprises themselves are unsure how much land they have, said Samar Lahiry, a former adviser to the government's planning commission. "India has sufficient land for all uses, including housing, if we use our existing resources with prudence," Lahiry said. "We need to evaluate land use and take stock of land that is locked up with PSUs. Using idle land for vital civic infrastructure such as hospitals, roads and affordable housing is important, given the contentious nature of land acquisition."

Urban poor

Some of these surplus government-held lands have been encroached upon by the urban poor struggling with a lack of affordable housing. Government committees over the years have failed to sell off these lands because of a lack of clear guidelines, inadequate records and a lack of coordination between various ministries. A spokesman for the ministry of housing said plans to create a land bank are on track. "The government has asked PSUs how much unused land they have. Once there is a clear idea of how much land there is, the government will draw up a plan for its use," A A Rao told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. — Reuters





Kuwait: Non-oil activity maintains solid growth amid mild fiscal adjustment

NBK ECONOMIC UPDATE

KUWAIT: Non-oil activity has remained resilient since oil prices began retreating in 2014, thanks in large part to a strong projects pipeline and relatively limited fiscal adjustment. We expect non-oil growth to improve slightly to 3.5-4% in 2017 and 2018. Inflation is also expected to remain largely in check as pressures from housing rent ease, and despite some upward pressures from subsidy cuts.

Meanwhile, the fiscal deficit should narrow in 2017 and 2018 as oil prices improve and some additional fiscal adjustment is implemented. Despite healthy non-oil activity, overall GDP growth is expected to take a hit in 2017 as Kuwait continues to apply cuts to crude oil production agreed upon in conjunction with other OPEC members. Those cuts, which are aimed at supporting oil prices, are expected to reduce Kuwait's average crude output by 7-8% in 2017. Overall GDP is likely to shrink by around 2.4% in 2017, before returning to positive growth of 3.2% in 2018.

Government project activity remains healthy

Capital spending has increasingly been driving non-oil economic activity, with the implementation pace holding up relatively well after a clear pick up in 2014. Project awards were healthy in 1Q17 at KD 1.4 billion according to MEED Projects. The figure is similar to the quarterly average in 2016. Another KD 6.2 billion in projects are in the bidding stage and could be awarded in 2017. The projects pipeline remains solid, given the government's commitment to its development plan. The government remains committed to an ambitious capital spending program. Indeed, the Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP) was re-launched in 1Q17 under the "New Kuwait" slogan. The plan, also dubbed Kuwait Vision 2035. It seeks to transform the country into a financial, cultural and trade leader. The plan brings together a number of ongoing initiatives into a renewed and more comprehensive vision for the country's development, which includes structural and fiscal reforms as well as capital spending plans.

The KNDP targets investment of KD 34 billion through 2020, about a third of which will come from the private sector. A number of schemes are being implemented as public-private partnership projects (PPP), including the Al-Zour North and Khairan integrated power generation and water desalination projects. As a result of the infrastructure investment push, aggregate investment is expected to continue to see healthy growth. Expenditures on gross capital formation grew by 13% in 2015 and could see real growth of 8-9% on average in 2017 and 2018. This could further push up the share of investment in the economy to 23%, the highest level recorded in over 20 years, and up from 19% in 2015.

Table 1: Key economic indicators

		2015	2016*	2017*	2018*
Nominal GDP	KD bn	34.3	33.5	37.4	40.7
Nominal GDP	USD bn	114	111	123	134
Real GDP growth	% y/y	1.8	3.4	-2.4	3.2
Oil	% y/y	-1.7	3.3	-7.7	2.4
Non-oil	% y/y	1.3	3.5	3.5	4.0
Inflation (average)	% y/y	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.5
Budget balance**	% of GDP	-17.4	-18.7	-13.8	-12.0

Source: CBK, MOF, CSB, NBK estimates; *estimate/forecast; **after FGF

Consumer sector has slowed

The consumer sector has long been a robust and reliable source of growth in Kuwait. This began to change in 2015 and 2016, following the persistent decline in oil prices when households took a more cautious view of the economy. The sector continues to be supported by steady growth in employment and salaries, particularly in the government sector and among Kuwaiti households.

Consumer spending continued to moderate in 1Q17, but maintained a decent pace. The value of point-of-sale transactions grew by 7.1% y/y; while slower than the double-digit growth rates recorded in previous years, the pace held up relatively well thanks to steady growth in employment and wages (Chart 6). Household borrowing also moderated over the last year; growth in consumer debt eased to 6.7% y/y in March 2017 (Chart 7).

Most of the weakness in the sector has come from lower consumer confidence. Ara's index has been on a declining trend for over four years. It fell more rapidly in 2016 after the government hiked fuel prices and while it has since recovered somewhat from those levels, it remains relatively subdued (Chart 8). The index stood at 104 in April, surpassing the 100 mark for the first time in nine months.

Employment growth among Kuwaiti nationals remains relatively healthy. While there has been a slowdown in private employment, this is due to the clampdown on "phantom employment", which has resulted in a drop in reported employment numbers since mid-2015. However, employment of nationals in the public sector continued to see robust growth of around 3.5% in 2016. Meanwhile, expatriate employment maintained healthy growth of 5.6%.

Credit growth has remained healthy

Credit growth has remained relatively healthy boosted by the resilience of non-oil GDP and the pace of capital spending, though a large corporate repayment in 4Q16 has distorted the figures (Chart 4). Credit growth in March stood at 3.6% y/y. Gains were seen across a number of sectors led by "oil & gas". Growth in "productive" sectors (excluding real estate and securities lending) accelerated to a robust 9.6% y/y reflecting progress in Kuwait's projects pipeline.

Real estate prices appear to stabilize

Activity in the real estate market continued to decline year-on-year for the third consecutive year, but there are some early signs of stabilization. Sales during the 12 months through April 2017 were off by 22% y/y (Chart 9). Most of the recent weakness has come from the investment and commercial sectors. Meanwhile, activity in the residential sector has been improving. The number of transactions in the sector during the three months through April 2017 was up 22% y/y.

Prices have also been showing signs of stabilizing, as reflected in NBK's real estate price indices. Prices experienced an orderly correction during the last two years of around 18-20% from the highs in the residential and investment sectors. However, since the middle of 2016, NBK's price indices indicate that real estate values have been holding.

Inflation rose following the rise in fuel prices

Inflation eased in recent months after impact of the September 2016 hike in fuel prices faded and growth in housing rent began to moderate. Inflation eased to 2.6% y/y in March compared to its peak at 3.8% y/y in September 2016. Declining housing inflation was a welcome development, and comes after four years of accelerating price growth in the sector. Weakness in the real estate market no doubt began to makes itself felt. Rent inflation went from a recent high of 7.3% y/y in mid-2016 to 4.3% this past March.

Fiscal deficits will persist, but to remain manageable

While oil prices have improved over the last year, the Ministry of Finance is expected to continue to register a deficit in the medium-term. With the price of oil expected to stay around $55-60 per barrel in 2017 and 2018, a deficit of 19% of GDP is expected in FY16/17, after the mandatory allocation to the Future Generations Fund (FGF). The deficit is likely to narrow to around 14% of GDP in FY17/18and to 12% in FY18/19 as oil prices improve and additional fiscal reforms are implemented.

Since oil prices began to decline in 2014, the government has taken a number of steps towards fiscal adjustment. A package of fiscal reforms was approved by the cabinet a year ago, including energy and water subsidy cuts, and the introduction of a corporate income tax and a value added tax (VAT). The National Assembly (NA) approved increases in electricity and water tariffs beginning in 2017. New taxes, including the VAT, are unlikely before 2019. We estimate that these reforms will reduce the deficit by around 5-6% of GDP by 2020, excluding the impact of higher oil prices.

The government reduced government spending by around 15% in FY15/16. Government spending is likely to have returned to positive growth in FY16/17. Spending during the first eight months of FY16/17 was above expectations at 98% of the pro-rated budget, indicating growth of 1.5%. The FY17/18 draft budget, which awaits National Assembly approval, projects expenditure growth of 5.3%; we think it will be slightly lower at around 4%.

In March 2017, the government approved increases in electricity and water tariffs that were significantly lower than those mandated in legislation passed in May 2016. The subsidy cuts, to be introduced this year, will increase the electricity rates to 3-5 fils per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for the various sectors from the current 2 fils. Water tariffs will rise to KD 2 per 1,000 imperial gallons from the current KD 0.8. We estimate that the revenue increase from the new utility prices will be around KD 0.2billion or 0.6% of GDP.

Indian tycoon Mallya denies charges at London hearing

LONDON: Indian tycoon Vijay Mallya yesterday insisted he was innocent as he appeared at a court in London over an extradition request from India, where he is accused of fraud. "I deny all allegations that have been made and I will continue to deny them," the flamboyant financier, who co-owns Formula One team Force India, said outside the court. "I have not eluded any court. If it is my lawful duty to be here, I'm happy to be here," he added. "I've given enough evidence to prove my case."

Ben Watson, Mallya's representative, told the preliminary hearing that his client could face a second extradition request, including a "separate set of charges". Mallya fled India in March 2016 owing more than $1 billion after defaulting on loan payments to state-owned banks and allegedly misusing the funds. India submitted an extradition request to Britain in early February after investigators demanded the 61-year-old be brought home to face charges.

Mallya, known for his lavish lifestyle, made Kingfisher beer a global brand and ran a now-defunct airline with the same name. He stepped down as the director of the Indian Premier League cricket team Royal Challengers Bangalore last year. Mallya caused a stir last week when he attended India's cricket match against South Africa in London, where Indian fans met him with shouts of "chor, chor" (thief, thief).

His financial dealings are being investigated by the federal Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate, a financial crimes agency. Mallya was once known as the "King of Good Times" but dropped off India's most wealthy list in 2014, engulfed by the massive debts of his grounded carrier Kingfisher Airlines. Mallya, who now lives in a sprawling $15 million (13 million euro) mansion in England's county of Hertfordshire, has denied absconding and has criticized the media for what he has called a "witch hunt". — AFP

LONDON: Indian tycoon Vijay Mallya leaves court in central London yesterday. —AFP

US wholesale prices flat in May on low food, energy

WASHINGTON: Falling food and energy prices helped keep US wholesale inflation flat in May, in another sign of slackening price pressures, the Labor Department reported yesterday. The new figures come as the US central bank begins a two-day monetary policy meeting, with the Federal Reserve widely expected to raise the key interest rate for the second time this year despite signs of a cooling economy.

Policymakers said last month they believed the weakness in the economy likely was "transitory" and a rate hike would be appropriate "soon," although they also promised to wait for confirmation the recovery has resumed before increasing the benchmark lending rate. The Producer Price Index, which measures input costs from the seller's perspective, was unchanged in May, down sharply from April's 0.5 percent jump. The result matched analyst expectations.

For the latest 12 months, PPI was up 2.4 percent, down a tenth of a percentage point from last month's reading. Energy prices continued to see sharp declines, dropping three percent, as gasoline prices plunged 11.2 percent, the largest drop since February 2016. Food prices meanwhile fell 0.2 percent in the month. Car prices also posted a big decline, amid flagging car sales, falling 1.4 percent from April.

"The drop in new car sales in recent months clearly has worried automakers, who have responded with the biggest one-month price cut since July 2009," Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics said. However, services showed persistent signs of rising prices, up 2.1 percent compared to May 2016, the largest increase in two and a half years.

Excluding the more volatile categories food, fuel and trade services, PPI slipped 0.1 percent for the month, while the 12-month rate was up 2.1 percent, unchanged from last month. Shepherdson said costs for services were driving up "core" PPI, excluding food and fuel, which gained 0.3 percent for the month and was up 2.1 percent over May 2016. Core goods and services prices are trending higher, he said in a research note, and while "Neither are yet very alarming ...further sustained increases would be unwelcome."

The May consumer price report is due out Wednesday, which last month showed a 12-month rate of 2.2 percent, two-tenths below PPI. Chris Low of FTN Financial said, "There is plenty of leeway for wholesale prices to rise faster than consumer prices. — AFP

NEW YORK: In this Saturday, May 20, 2017, photo, boxes of the Aldi food market chain's Millville Raisin Bran are on display in a purple box similar to the versions made by Kellogg and Post, at an Aldi store. —AP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.773
Indian Rupees	4.726
Pkistani Rupees	2.899
Srilankan Rupees	1.984
Nepali Rupees	2.956
Singapore Dollar	220.860
Hongkong Dollar	39.992
Bangladesh Taka	3.751
Philippine Peso	6.151
Thai Baht	8.945
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.094
Qatari Riyal	83.523
Omani Riyal	789.761
Bahraini Dinar	807.490
UAE Dirham	82.795
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.300
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.726
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.221
Tunisian Dinar	126.360
Jordanian Dinar	428.630
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.026
Syrian Lira	2.167
Morocco Dirham	31.656
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	303.900
Euro	344.320
Sterling Pound	393.700
Canadian dollar	226.690
Turkish lira	87.130
Swiss Franc	317.220
Australian Dollar	230.660
US Dollar Buying	302.700
GOLD	
20 Gram	261.980
10 Gram	133.910
5 Gram	67.800

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.900
Canadian Dolla	226.475
Sterling Pound	388.545
Euro	342.155
Swiss Frank	295.810
Bahrain Dinar	806.040
UAE Dirhams	83.135
Qatari Riyals	84.355
Saudi Riyals	81.935
Jordanian Dinar	428.545
Egyptian Pound	16.923
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.988
Indian Rupees	4.725
Pakistani Rupees	2.898
Bangladesh Taka	3.772
Philippines Pesso	6.140
Cyprus pound	167.715
Japanese Yen	3.755
Syrian Pound	2.420
Nepalese Rupees	3.962
Malaysian Ringgit	72.080
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.135
Thai Bhat	9.910
Turkish Lira	86.480

Bahrain Exchange Company WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.380616	0.390616
Czech Korune	0.004990	0.016990
Danish Krone	0.041735	0.046735
Euro	0. 335219	0.344219
Norwegian Krone	0.031780	0.036980
Romanian Leu	0.074603	0.074603
Slovakia	0.009092	0.019092
Swedish Krona	0.030830	0.035830
Swiss Franc	0.307471	0.318471
Turkish Lira	0.080681	0.090981
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.220634	0.232634
New Zealand Dollar	0.211843	0.221843
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.220545	0.229545
Georgina Lari	0.137257	0.137415
US Dollars	0.300150	0.304550
US Dollars Mint	0.300650	0.304550
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003381	0.003969
Chinese Yuan	0.043304	0.046804
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036934	0.039684
Indian Rupee	0.004275	0.004963
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002673	0.002853
Kenyan Shilling	0.002939	0.002939
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067172	0.073172
Nepalese Rupee	0.002976	0.003146
Pakistan Rupee	0.002714	0.003004
Philippine Peso	0.006030	0.006330
Sierra Leone	0.000037	0.000043
Singapore Dollar	0.214391	0.224391
South African Rand	0.017573	0.026073
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001606	0.002188
Taiwan	0.009950	0.010130
Thai Baht	0.008585	0.009135
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.799606	0.808106
Egyptian Pound	0.013995	0.019903
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.423764	0.432764
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.00251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019785	0.043785
Nigerian Naira	0.000334	0.000969
Omani Riyal	0.783839	0.789519
Qatar Riyal	0.079280	0.084220
Saudi Riyal	0.080047	0.081347
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.121479	0.129479
Turkish Lira	0.080681	0.090981
UAE Dirhams	0.081411	0.083111
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069

Hungary passes tough anti-foreign NGO law

BUDAPEST: Austrian President Alexander van der Bellen (L) and his Hungarian counterpart Janos Ader (R) listen to their national anthems in front of the presidential palace of Buda Castle yesterday prior to their official meeting. — AFP

BUDAPEST: Hungary's parliament approved yesterday a crackdown on foreign-backed civil society groups despite an international outcry, in a move seen as targeting US billionaire George Soros. A new law, passed by 130 votes to 44, will force groups receiving more than 24,000 euros ($26,000) annually in overseas funding to register as a "foreign-supported organization", or risk closure for non-compliance.

They will also have to use the label "foreign-supported organization" on their websites, press releases and other publications. The government of populist premier Viktor Orban says the measures are aimed at improving transparency as well as fighting money laundering and terrorism funding. But the European Commission and the United Nations have condemned the law, with experts saying it could "discriminate against and delegitimize" non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Two prominent NGOs said they would boycott the law and take the matter to the constitutional court and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. "One of the fundamental pillars of a strong democracy is a strong independent civil society," said Marta Pardavi of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC), a local refugee rights group. The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union also said it would "not comply with the requirements of an unlawful law".

Amnesty International meanwhile called the measures "a vicious and calculated assault" on civil groups critical of Orban's hardline policies. The organization said the move resembled legislation introduced in Russia in 2012 requiring foreign NGOs to register as "foreign agents". The Hungarian law marks a hardening of frontlines in Orban's battle with foreign-funded NGOs, in particular those receiving support from Hungarian-born emigre Soros.

Fake-civil groups

Government-backed billboard and media campaigns have targeted the philanthropist, while a questionnaire sent to households nationwide urged support for the registration of foreign-funded NGOs. In January, a senior official from Orban's ruling Fidesz party said the "Soros empire's fake-civil groups" should be "swept out" of Hungary for attacking the government's anti-immigration line. Earlier this month the EU's rights watchdog Venice Commission said the NGO bill was "excessive" despite pursuing "legitimate aims", and urged the government to consult local civil society groups. It also accused "some state authorities" of staging a "virulent" campaign against NGOs. — AFP

Moody's downgrades top S African banks, insurers

JOHANNESBURG: Credit ratings agency Moody's yesterday said it had downgraded a slew of top South African banks, insurers and local authorities prompted by fears over the country's worsening financial position. It slashed the creditworthiness of the five largest banks-FirstRand, Standard, Nedbank, Investec and Absa-to just one notch above junk status, all with a negative outlook.

"The primary driver for today's rating downgrades is the challenging operating environment in South Africa, characterized by a pronounced economic slowdown, and weakening institutional strength," Moody's said in a statement. Insurers Old Mutual, MMI Group, Guardrisk and Standard Insurance were all downgraded one notch to either Baa2 or Baa3 — the lowest investment-grade level. "Recent political developments suggest a weakening of the country's institutional strength which casts doubt over the strength and sustainability of the recovery in growth," said the statement.

Moody's was likely referring to President Jacob Zuma's shock purge of critical ministers in March, including respected finance minister Pravin Gordhan. The move prompted Fitch and Standard and Poor's, the other two main global ratings agencies, to downgrade South Africa's sovereign debt to junk status. It also led to outrage amongst the opposition and part of Zuma's own ruling African National Congress (ANC), with tens of thousands taking to the streets to demand the president's resignation.

Moody's currently has South African government debt rated at Baa3 — one notch above junk status-with a negative outlook. On Tuesday Moody's also announced that it had downgraded the creditworthiness of 10 South African regional governments and local authorities by one notch-including the cities of Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town. "While (the cities) have comparatively rich economic bases, sound financials and good governance practices, Moody's expects that reduced growth prospects in the medium-term will put pressure on their overall financial performances," it said.

Moody's announcements will pile pressure on Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba who is facing criticism after the economy entered recession-its first since 2009 — with an unexpected 0.7 percent contraction in the first quarter. — AFP

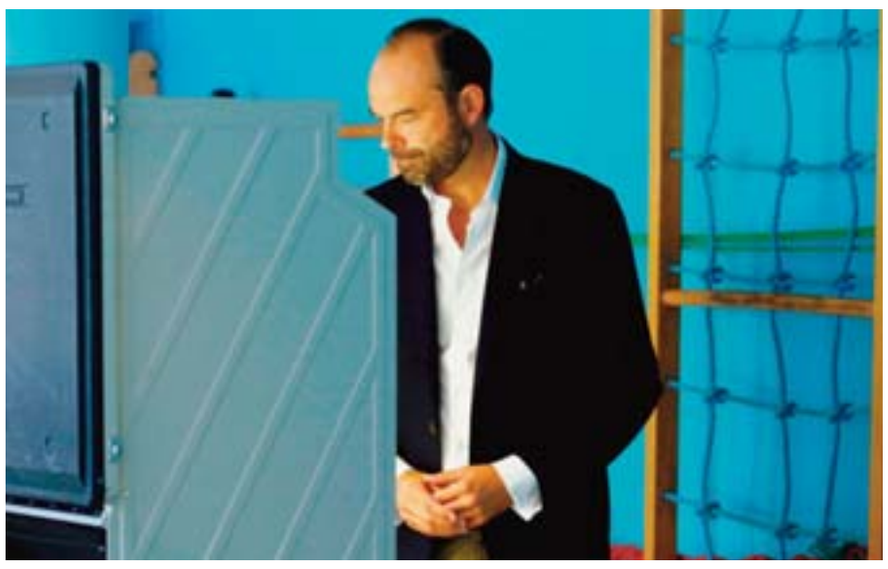
France will likely miss 2017 deficit target: PM

PARIS: French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said yesterday there is a very strong possibility that France will miss its deficit target for this year because of the previous government's lax spending. France has been aiming to bring the deficit down to 2.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) this year, below the 3.0 percent threshold required by eurozone rules. But Philippe told franceinfo radio there was "an extremely high risk" that the government would fail to do so.

"Before becoming prime minister, I had my doubts. Now that I am prime minister, I have even greater doubts," he said. Philippe blamed budget-busting spending by the previous government under Francois Hollande in the run-up to this year's presidential election which swept Emmanuel Macron into the presidency. He said it "can quite easily happen" in the months before an election that a government "lets a certain amount of tough decisions slide, and then it is up to others to manage this".

Philippe said France's government auditors, the Cour des Comptes, is to submit a report in July which will determine "whether we are on a path to 2.8 percent or whether we are higher". In the event of an overshoot, Philippe said there "would be a whole series of measures" to get the deficit back on track, but he added that there were no plans for a formal corrective mini-budget later in the year.

The EU Commission already warned Paris last month over its deficit, saying it believed France's 2017 shortfall would come in at above 3.0 percent of GDP. Yesterday, EU Economics Commissioner Pierre Moscovici called on Macron to ensure the deficit comes back into line as of this year. "France must restore its credibility as far as reforms are concerned," Moscovici told the German media group Funke in an interview. — AFP



LE HAVRE: French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe casts his electronic vote at a polling station during the first round of legislative elections on June 11. — AFP

China moves step closer to resuming US beef imports

WASHINGTON: China is a step closer to allowing imports of US beef for the first time in almost 14 years. The United States and China have agreed on final details of a deal to allow the imports, the Agriculture Department said Monday. The agreement is one part of a bilateral agreement reached following President Donald Trump's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in April. China imposed a ban on American beef in 2003 after a case of mad-cow disease, a ban that remained in place despite extensive efforts by the Bush and Obama administrations to get it removed. Before the ban, the United States was China's largest supplier of imported beef.

In exchange for China opening its borders to US beef, the US would allow the sale of cooked Chinese poultry. USDA said that China is requiring that any beef imported from the US must have been born, raised and slaughtered in the United States or imported from Canada or Mexico and raised and slaughtered here. It could also be imported from Canada or Mexico and slaughtered in the US.

The beef also has to be derived from cattle less than 30 months old and traceable to the US birth farm or first place of residence or port of entry. All of the precautions lessen the risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer all praised the deal in a statement. "I have no doubt that as soon as the Chinese people get a taste of American beef, they'll want more of it," Perdue said. —AP

SKOPJE: This file photo taken on March 20, 2017 in Skopje shows People holding banners against US financier-cum-philanthropist George Soros during a demonstration against a deal between Social Democrats and the Albanian Democratic Union for Integration, for a law making Albanian the second official language. — AFP

Lauded to loathed: Who's afraid of George Soros?

The world has a new puppetmaster

VIENNA: From his New York home, US financier-cum-philanthropist George Soros has manufactured Europe's migration crisis, backed a coup in Macedonia and sponsored protests in Hungary. At least that's what his detractors say, and there are many.

From the Kremlin via Skopje to the power corridors of Washington, the Hungarian-born Jewish emigre is the favourite bete noire of nationalists around the globe. Listed by Forbes magazine as the world's 29th richest man, Soros and his Open Society Foundations (OSF) stand accused of political meddling by seeking to push a liberal, multicultural agenda. Nations like Poland that once bestowed the 86-year-old with their highest civilian honours are now calling him an enemy of the state who wants to destroy their sovereignty.

The attacks have been particularly virulent in his birth country Hungary, which on Tuesday is set to pass a controversial anti-NGO bill seen as directly targeting the OSF. "To go on what you read and hear these days, Soros seems to be responsible for every political upheaval," said German political analyst Ulf Brunnbauer. "He makes an excellent scapegoat for increasingly authoritarian regimes as someone who's invested a lot of money into philanthropy and represents capitalism."

Another Hungarian law hastily approved in April threatens to shut down the Soros-founded Central European University (CEU) in Budapest. Across Hungary, government-backed billboards have popped up showing the magnate as a puppeteer pulling the strings of an opposition politician, a motif associated with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

"His (religious) background is irrelevant to the central issue, which is that an increasing number of governments... see Soros's networks as a threat to democracy," Zoltan Kovacs, the spokesman of populist premier Viktor Orban, wrote in a recent blog post entitled "Myths and facts about Hungary and George Soros". Orban-a one-time recipient of a Soros scholarship-has accused his former benefactor of using "predator" NGOs to flood Europe with Muslim refugees and create a "transnational empire".

'Gift to my enemies'

Born in Budapest in 1930, Soros survived both the Nazi and Soviet occupation before eventually moving to the US where he made his fortune from hedge funds. His dealings were not without controversy. In 1992, the Wall Street trader became known as "the man who broke the bank of England" when his aggressive speculation against the sterling sent it crashing out of the European exchange mechanism. He also has a 2002 conviction of insider trading in France, a verdict he described as a "gift to my enemies". Marked by his experience of totalitarian regimes- "I have seen the damage done when societies succumb to the fear of the 'other'," he wrote in the New York Times in March-Soros created his foundation in 1984 to help countries move from communism toward democracy. — AFP

Tablet revolt: Guinea prez's rant ignites student debate

CONAKRY: Footage of Guinea's President Alpha Conde, 79, berating and mocking students has morphed into a national debate about his conduct, forcing the government to repeat a promise to provide university-goers with tablet computers. Tensions began at a student forum held on June 1, when Conde ranted at a booing section of young attendees, accusing them of throwing a tantrum for jumping up and down while chanting "Tablets! Tablets!"

Conde made a "one student, one tablet" campaign promise during a 2015 presidential election that has yet to materialize, with youth groups saying it embodies another failure by his administration to address holes in education financing. But what has really incensed Guineans is a widely shared video showing Conde's reaction to the students' cries, with both sides accusing the other of disrespect in a society where deference to elders is expected.

"I would like to offer my excuses for the rude behaviour of these people, who are not representative of Guinea's youth," Conde says to attending international dignitaries, before turning his wrath on the students. "I was a student before you, we made Africa proud of us. You are like baby goats. 'Tablets', tablets'," he mocks. "Like baby goats!"

The expression he uses-"sauter comme un cabri" (jump like a baby goat) is a nod to French president Charles De Gaulle, who used it to mean someone making a big fuss for nothing. Conde goes to say the tablets are "not a right", even for students in the United States and France, calling his audience "unworthy" of the devices, before threatening to cancel the policy entirely.

"You can jump up and down and shout until tomorrow, it doesn't bother me," Conde declares, jabbing with his finger, his voice raised in anger. Tensions were so high at the People's Palace in Conakry that the vice-rector of Lansana Conte University, an establishment close to the capital, had a heart attack on the spot and died. A rector from another university was hospitalized following the incident.

'Family argument'

Although tensions have calmed and the government has attempted to make amends, students are not letting go easily. "Nobody is asking him anything because now we have understood. He has not kept a promise since he took power," said Mamadou Soumare, a medical student. On Facebook, commenters such as Guiramba Koikoi Kalivogui told Conde "a promise is a debt," urging him to "have the courage to pay for the tablets." Others noted a lack of respect on the students' side, while nonetheless calling on Conde to do as he had promised. The presidency announced last week that Conde had gathered his higher education minister and advisors for a comprehensive meeting on the distribution of tablets to universities. Advisor Tibou Kamara described a "family argument" that had got out of hand, describing Conde as a "father" who had failed to hand over a "present". — AFP

Pound tumbles as election sows uncertainty

HONG KONG: The pound wallowed near two-month lows yesterday, unable to sustain a strong recovery from last week's shock election that saw Britain's ruling Conservatives lose their majority, throwing the country into uncertainty, days before key Brexit talks. While Prime Minister Theresa May looked to counter anger within her party by apologising and telling MPs "I got us into this mess, and I'm going to get us out", there are doubts about her future in Downing Street.

May had called the vote in a bid to strengthen her majority, and her bargaining power, before going into the EU exit talks set for June 19. Now she must rely on the support of Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party. Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader, said: "The political uncertainty is unhelpful given Brexit talks are about to begin in the next week."

He added that "sterling came under renewed pressure as a result" of the newly formed government's refusal to soften its approach to the discussions. "Why the government wouldn't use the election for a reset I just don't know." In Asian trade the pound bought $1.2690, up from New York trade but well off levels around $1.29 seen before the election. The currency's "near-term direction will continue to be driven by the post-election fallout, but the prospects look increasingly gloomy as the possibility of another Tory leadership vacuum enters the picture at precisely the wrong time for the UK," said Stephen Innes, senior trader at OANDA.

Fed, Sessions in view

On equity markets, technology firms failed to bounce back from the previous day's sell-off that was sparked by a rout in the sector on Wall Street Friday while Samsung was flat in Seoul. The losses came after the Nasdaq suffered another slump as Apple and Amazon took a beating, with analysts wondering whether the selling is down to profit-taking or the start of a broad retreat after all US indices hit records last week.

Broader markets fared slightly better after Monday's steep losses. Tokyo finished marginally lower but Shanghai closed up 0.4 percent and Hong Kong gained 0.3 percent in the afternoon. Sydney gained 1.7 percent and Seoul jumped 0.7 percent, while Wellington and Taipei were also up. Traders are now awaiting the end of the Federal Reserve's latest policy meeting. While another interest rate hike is widely expected, the bank's post-meeting statement will be scanned for some forward guidance and clues about future movements.

Also, US Attorney General Jeff Sessions is due to testify yesterday to the Senate Intelligence Committee as it probes Russian meddling in last year's election and Moscow's links to under-fire President Donald Trump. Attention has focused on Sessions as reports swirl that he may have had more meetings with Russian officials during the campaign last year than the two he has informed authorities of. In early European trade London, Frankfurt and Paris each rose 0.3 percent.

Wall Street tech sell-off

Elsewhere, Japan's benchmark Nikkei index slipped yesterday in response to Wall Street's technology sell-off, with market heavyweight SoftBank falling for a second day. US technology giants including Apple and Netflix Monday suffered another bruising session in New York which analysts attributed to profit-taking. "The upward trend in earnings for US technology companies isn't likely to change, but with those stocks in for a speedy correction, it's hard to buy their Japanese peers," said Shoichi Arisawa, an equity analyst with Iwai Cosmo Securities. "But the downside will remain supported as well, with stocks of companies with a domestic business focus that have solid earnings like retailers and builders continually on the rise," he told Bloomberg News.

Investors were also cautious ahead of the start of a US Federal Reserve meeting later yesterday. The Nikkei 225 index edged down 0.05 percent, or 9.83 points, to close at 19,898.75. But the broader Topix index of all first-section issues rose 0.12 percent, or 1.96 points, to 1,593.51. SoftBank lost 1.62 percent to 9,078 yen following a report it has reached an agreement to merge its Indian e-commerce unit Snapdeal with rival Flipkart, with Softbank to own 20 percent of the merged firm.

Japan Display, which supplies screens for Apple's iPhone, dropped 2.39 percent to 204 yen while electronics giant Kyocera slipped 0.78 percent to 6,344 yen. Automakers lost ground, with Nissan falling 0.18 percent to 1,075 yen while Toyota ticked down 0.10 percent to 5,874 yen. Banking giant Mitsubishi UFJ was up 0.09 percent at 734 yen. The dollar fetched 110.03 yen, against 109.91 in New York and 110.28 yen in Tokyo earlier Monday. — Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

جلوبل Global

Tuesday 13 June 2017

Index		Change	Closing	Last Closing
Price index	▲	2.00	6,776.72	6,774.72
Weighted Index	▼	-1.08	398.10	399.18
KSX 15	▼	-4.68	895.77	900.45

Volume	19,463,603
Value (KWD)	3,881,626
Number of Trades	880

Security	High	Low	Trades Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last		Change
MARIN	90	90	200	18	1	90	▲	3.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	345	—	0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,507	—	0.0
ENERGYH	37.0	37.0	300	11	1	37.0	▼	-4.5
GPI	36.3	35.8	1,113,199	40,101	21	36.3	▼	-0.2
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87	—	0.0
Oil & Gas			**1,113,699**	**40,130**	**23**	**1038.92**	▼	**-2.40**
KFOUC	290	290	35,000	10,150	5	290	—	0.0
BPCC	582	578	182,542	105,759	19	582	—	0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	690	—	0.0
ALQURAIN	337	337	2,337	788	1	337	▲	2.0
Basic Materials			**219,879**	**116,696**	**25**	**1299.48**	▲	**2.70**
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	467	—	0.0
CABLE	410	405	15,000	6,100	4	405	▼	-15.0
SHIP	214	214	20	4	1	214	▲	7.0
PCEM	960	960	1,000	960	1	960	▲	15.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	270	—	0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	—	0.0
ACICO	251	251	3,511	881	1	251	▼	-9.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	—	0.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	—	0.0
NICBM	170	170	315	54	1	170	▼	-15.0
EQUIPMENT	52	49.0	131,834	6,460	8	49.0	▼	-1.5
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	108	—	0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	—	0.0
SALBOOKH	58	58	54,950	3,174	3	58	▲	4.3
AQLTY	735	719	449,744	324,737	47	722	▼	-4.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	—	0.0
CLEANING	46.0	46.0	500	23	1	46.0	▲	2.0
KGL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	—	0.0
KCPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	160	—	0.0
HUMANSOFT	3,899	3,899	75,618	294,835	16	3,899	—	0.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	—	0.0
GFC	78	58	330,015	21,310	59	58	▼	-6.9
MAYADEEN	27.7	27.0	42,962	1,164	6	27.7	▲	0.4
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	590	—	0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	—	0.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	740	—	0.0
ALAFCO	318	310	1,863,780	587,218	69	318	▲	7.0
MUBARRAD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78	—	0.0
LOGISTICS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	—	0.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	—	0.0
GCEM	75	73	116,670	8,537	6	75	▲	1.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78	—	0.0
FCEM	82	79	24,095	1,944	2	79	▼	-4.9
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	—	0.0
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89	—	0.0
Industrials			**3,110,014**	**1,257,401**	**225**	**1796.00**	▼	**-0.60**
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	—	0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	225	—	0.0
DANAH	77	71	1,475	108	3	77	▲	0.9
FOOD	2,600	2,460	2,130	5,524	3	2,500	▼	-200.0
Consumer Goods			**3,605**	**5,631**	**6**	**1111.23**	▼	**-27.50**
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	378	—	0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	—	0
YIACO	192	192	121,134	23,258	5	192	▼	-48
Health Care			**121,134**	**23,258**	**5**	**1450.02**	▼	**-48.60**
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,390	—	0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	—	0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	—	0
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	22.5	—	0
EYAS	1,300	1,195	23,375	28,152	6	1,300	▲	110
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	—	0
OULAFUEL	119	118	142,725	16,942	6	119	—	0
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	—	0
JAZEERA	459	458	29,330	13,443	4	458	—	0
SOOR	117	117	19,300	2,258	2	117	—	0
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106	—	0
ALRAI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	119	—	0
ZIMAH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	—	0
Mezzan	950	915	98,340	91,854	8	950	▲	16
Consumer Services			**313,070**	**152,649**	**26**	**1162.01**	▲	**37.60**
ZAIN	409	407	1,633,723	666,261	81	409	▼	-1
OOREDOO	1,200	1,200	5,000	6,000	2	1,200	▲	20
HITSTELEC	41.7	39.6	941,431	37,670	9	41.0	▼	0
VIVA	823	820	28,578	23,451	16	823	▲	3
Telecommunications			**2,608,732**	**733,382**	**108**	**599.18**	▲	**1.60**
NBK	667	663	79,971	53,099	13	667	—	0
GBK	238	238	75,505	17,970	2	238	—	0
CBK	312	311	400	125	4	312	▲	2
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	345	—	0
ALMUTAHED	443	423	8,026	3,416	2	443	—	0
KIB	245	243	201,801	49,091	4	245	—	0
BURG	320	319	319,771	102,087	13	320	—	0
KFIN	481	480	672,488	323,337	45	481	—	0
BOUBYAN	409	406	17,857	7,257	5	409	—	0
AUB	211	209	1,039,562	217,661	34	209	▼	-1
ITHMR	43.8	43.3	77,610	3,367	9	43.5	▼	0
WARBABANK	244	243	36,665	8,911	18	243	▼	-1
Banks			**2,529,656**	**786,321**	**149**	**913.06**	▼	**-1.10**
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	262	—	0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	500	—	0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	495	—	0.0
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	86	—	0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	—	0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	—	0.0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	57	—	0.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	—	0.0
Insurance			**0**	**0**	**0**	**1063.93**	—	**0.00**
SOKOUK	47.0	47.0	430300	20,224	26	47.0	▲	0.5
KRE	56	54	294,000	15,990	8	56	—	0.0
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	85	—	0.0
NRE	108	106	374,683	40,039	15	108	▲	2.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	380	—	0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	360	—	0.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	165	—	0.0
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	38.8	—	0.0
ARABREC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.3	—	0.0
ERESCO	38.3	37.4	396,042	14,849	21	38.3	▼	-0.4
MABANEE	772	770	59,302	45,675	9	772	▲	2.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	—	0.0
INVESTORS	22.8	22.7	100,010	2,270	3	22.7	▼	-0.1
IRC	33.9	31.5	61,000	1,937	6	33.9	▲	2.4
ALTIJARIA	74	73	7,000	513	2	74	▼	-0.1
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	—	0.0
AAYANRE	81	81	27,398	2,225	3	81	▼	-1.8
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	—	0.0
ALAQARIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	31.0	—	0.0
MAZAYA	111	111	45,186	5,016	3	111	▲	1.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	—	0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	—	0.0
TIJARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	58	—	0.0
TAAMEER	33.2	32.6	95,100	3,107	6	33.2	▲	0.6
ARKAN	84	83	55,000	4,570	2	84	▲	2.0
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	186	—	0.0
ABYAAR	22.7	22.5	138,690	3,137	7	22.7	—	0.0
MUNSHAAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	—	0.0
FIRSTDUBAI	48.0	48.0	40,000	1,920	2	48.0	▼	-1.1
KBT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	—	0.0
REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	—	0.0
MENA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	23.4	—	0.0
ALMUDON	35.1	33.8	175,811	6,034	5	35.0	▼	-0.7
MARAKEZ	45.0	45.0	100	5	1	45.0	—	0.0
REMAL	70	63	906,850	59,545	31	63	▼	-6.8
AWJ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	73	—	0.0
Real Estate			**3,206,472**	**227,053**	**150**	**944.27**	▲	**0.80**
KINV	95	95	35	3	1	95	▲	0.9
FACIL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	167	—	0.0
IFA	34.8	34.0	78,000	2,654	3	34.8	▲	0.5
NINV	104	101	29,980	3,028	3	104	—	0.0
KPROJ	340	340	264,625	89,973	10	340	▲	1.0
COAST	40.6	40.0	1,036,700	41,525	7	40.0	—	0.0
SECH	42.5	42.5	100	4	1	42.5	▲	1.3
SGC	97	97	40	4	1	97	—	0.0
ARZAN	35.0	33.5	200,400	6,714	4	35.0	▲	1.5
MARKAZ	110	110	2,000	220	1	110	▲	4.0
KMEFIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	28.5	—	0.0
ALAMAN	42.5	42.0	517,500	21,753	23	42.0	▼	-2.5
ALOLA	46.5	46.5	850	40	1	46.5	—	0.0
ALMAL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	15.0	—	0.0
GIH	36.9	35.0	81,500	2,897	7	36.9	▼	-0.6
AAYAN	44.9	43.7	100,210	4,392	8	43.7	▼	-1.2
BAYANINV	52	49.5	118,050	5,878	4	49.5	▼	-0.5
OSOUL	59	51	12,541	728	3	59	—	0.0
KFIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	45.0	—	0.0
KAMCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	81	—	0.0
NIH	64	64	500	32	1	64	—	0.0
UNICAP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	45.0	—	0.0
MADAR	18.9	18.4	782,903	14,510	27	18.6	▲	0.2
ALDEERA	32.3	30.0	89,550	2,709	7	32.3	▲	0.3
ALSALAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	54	—	0.0
EKTTITAB	37.5	37.0	140,507	5,201	5	37.4	▲	1.3
ALMADINA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.0	—	0.0
NOOR	53	51	58,204	2,948	4	53	▼	-0.2
TAMINV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310	—	0.0
EXCH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	158	—	0.0
KSHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	35.5	—	0.0
ASIYA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	41.5	—	0.0
GNAHC	33.0	31.8	325,000	10,556	6	31.8	▼	-1.4
AMWAL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	—	0.0
ALIMTIAZ	148	147	1,894,412	279,283	36	148	—	0.0
MANAZEL	47.8	45.5	434,792	19,861	22	45.5	▼	-1.5
NIND	108	107	111,239	11,919	6	108	—	0.0
BIHC	42.0	40.0	42,007	1,680	4	42.0	▲	1.0
SENERGY	38.0	36.2	2,102	78	3	37.9	▼	-0.1
AGHC	85	82	20,289	1,665	2	85	—	0.0
KPPC	48.9	46.5	8,000	379	2	48.9	—	0.0
TAHSSILAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	31.9	—	0.0
JEERANH	49.0	40.0	3,250	131	2	49.0	▼	-1.0
EKHOLDING	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	—	0.0
GFH	185	181	102,601	18,652	10	184	▲	1.0
INOVEST	101	100	109,452	10,996	7	101	▲	1.0
Financial Services			**6,567,339**	**560,411**	**221**	**691.25**	—	**0.00**
Investment Instruments			**0**	**0**	**0**	**1081.97**	—	**0.00**
ASC	215	215	18	4	1	215	▼	-50.0
OSOS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	132	—	0.0
HAYATCOMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	—	0.0
Technology			**18**	**4**	**1**	**703.04**	▼	**-48.30**
SANAD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	—	0.0
AFAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	—	0.0
ALSHAMIL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	260	—	0.0
EFFECT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	31.0	—	0.0
AJWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	—	0.0
MASAKEN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	77	—	0.0
DALQAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350	—	0.0
ALEID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	—	0.0
MIDAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,220	—	0.0
THURAYA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204	—	0.0
AMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	57	—	0.0
Parallel Market			**0**	**0**	**0**	**1204.37**	▼	**-7.40**

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report

الوطني NBK

At 02:00 PM Previous Day

Global Stock Indices

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change		Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Dow Jones	21,271.97	21,235.67	-36.30	▼	-0.17	7.45
NASDAQ	6,207.92	6,175.47	-32.45	▼	-0.52	14.72
S&P 500	2,431.77	2,429.39	-2.38	▼	-0.10	8.51
Financial Times	7,511.87	7,517.47	5.60	▲	0.07	5.25
DAX	12,690.44	12,764.42	73.98	▲	0.58	11.18
CAC 40	5,240.59	5,266.85	26.26	▲	0.50	8.32
Swiss	8,807.85	8,864.85	57.00	▲	0.65	7.85
Nikkei 225	19,908.58	19,898.75	-9.83	▼	-0.05	4.10
Topix	1,591.55	1,593.51	1.96	▲	0.12	4.93
Hang Seng	25,708.04	25,852.10	144.06	▲	0.56	17.51
Straits Times	3,248.34	3,257.52	9.18	▲	0.28	13.08

MENA Stock Indices

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change		Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait	6,774.72	6,776.72	2.00	▲	0.03	15.15
Saudi Arabia	6,822.43	6,816.12	-6.31	▼	-0.09	-5.38
Dubai	3,427.28	3,441.85	14.57	▲	0.43	-2.93
Abu Dhabi	4,511.28	4,537.60	26.32	▲	0.58	-0.77
Bahrain	1,322.30	1,327.48	5.18	▲	0.39	8.35
Qatar	9,135.16	9,095.45	-39.71	▼	-0.43	-12.47
Oman	5,314.19	5,313.71	-0.48	▼	-0.01	-8.10
Lebanon	1,169.90	1,173.65	3.75	▲	0.32	-3.53
Jordan	2,160.35	2,157.54	-2.81	▼	-0.13	-0.46
Egypt	13,491.89	13,545.48	53.59	▲	0.40	9.29
Morocco	11,684.96	11,665.17	-19.79	▼	-0.17	0.18
Tunisia	5,839.33	5,845.28	5.95	▲	0.10	6.39

Global Currencies Exchange Rate

Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar		12.2469	3.2792	2.9261	2.5746	3.1759	360.88	4.3474
Saudi Riyal	0.08165		0.2678	0.2389	0.2102	0.2593	29.47	0.3550
US Dollar	0.30495	3.7347		0.8923	0.7851	0.9685	110.05	1.3257
Euro	0.34176	4.1855	1.1207		0.8801	1.0856	123.38	1.4864
Sterling Pound	0.38841	4.7569	1.2737	1.1362		1.2335	140.23	1.6896
Swiss Franc	0.31487	3.8562	1.0325	0.9211	0.8107		113.69	1.3689
Japanese Yen	0.00277	0.0339	0.0091	0.0081	0.0071	0.0088		0.0120
Australian Dollar	0.23002	2.8171	0.7543	0.6728	0.5919	0.7305	83.01	

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate

Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dollar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30495	3.7347	0.3744	3.6550	0.3831	3.6571	18.0300
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2792		12.2469	1.2277	11.9856	1.2564	11.9925	59.1244
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08165		0.1002	0.9787	0.1026	0.9792	4.8277
Bahraini Dinar	2.6709	0.81450	9.9752		9.7623	1.0233	9.7679	48.1571
Qatari Riyal	0.2736	0.08343	1.0218	0.1024		0.1048	1.0006	4.9330
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.79594	9.7479	0.9772	9.5398		9.5453	47.0597
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08339	1.0212	0.1024	0.9994	0.1048		4.9301
Egyptian Pound	0.0555	0.01691	0.2071	0.0208	0.2027	0.0212	0.2028	

Global Interest Rates

Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.00	1.38	1.63	1.88	2.19
US Dollar	1.15	1.15	1.24	1.42	1.73
Euro	-0.41	-0.40	-0.37	-0.29	-0.18
Sterling Pound	0.23	0.25	0.28	0.41	0.60
Swiss Franc	-0.78	-0.78	-0.73	-0.66	-0.49
Australian Dollar	1.56	1.63	1.61	1.61	1.61
Japanese Yen	0.00	-0.03	-0.01	0.02	0.13

Global Bond Yields

Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year
United States	1.36	1.78	2.22	2.87
Europe	-0.74	-0.44	0.27	1.11
United Kingdom	0.13	0.43	1.02	1.73

Commodities

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change		Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait Oil	45.30	45.31	0.01	▲	0.02	-17.46
Brent	46.64	46.29	-0.35	▼	-0.75	-17.20
West Texas	46.15	46.05	-0.10	▼	-0.22	-16.47
Gold	1265.02	1262.51	-2.51	▼	-0.20	8.95
Silver	16.92	16.82	-0.10	▼	-0.57	5.80

Source: National Bank of Kuwait

Immelt alters GE's business model, not its stock price

NEW YORK: General Electric's Jeff Immelt is stepping down after 16 years as CEO of the iconic conglomerate, having succeeded in repositioning the company as a producer of large industrial products but failing to fully revive its lagging stock price. John Flannery, president and CEO of the GE's health care unit, will take over as CEO in August, the company said Monday.

Immelt took the helm in 2001 from legendary CEO Jack Welch. After the financial crisis, he sharply pared down the financial services business that Welsh had built up and went on a spending spree to acquire businesses in the power and oil and gas sectors. During his tenure Immelt also disposed of GE's appliance unit and the NBC television business. The 61-year-old Immelt will stay on as chairman until his retirement from the position at the end of the year, with the 55-year-old Flannery stepping into the role after that.

GE traces its roots to 1878, when inventor Thomas Edison formed the Edison Electric Light Co. in New York City after having opened his famous laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey. The next year, Edison invented the first successful incandescent electric lamp. Recent reports say GE is considering selling the lighting business, which could fetch about $500 million. While GE credits Immelt with improving its financial performance and its focus, GE's stock price has trailed the market with him as CEO. The stock was worth a bit less than $40 on Immelt's first day in 2001, with the US in the middle of a recession. The stock briefly rose above $40 in 2007, just ahead of the economic crisis. It sank as low as $6.66 in March 2009 in the depth of the crisis, and closed at $27.94 a share Friday.

Large exposure

Analyst Robert McCarthy at Stifel Nicolaus wrote in a note to clients that the timing of the change in leadership was "unsurprising since the serial underperformance of the stock." GE said the moves were part of its succession plan. An investor who bought $1,000 in GE stock when Immelt took over would have $1,243 today, including dividends. The same amount invested in the S&P 500 index would be worth $3,206 today. GE's stock rose 4.1 percent to $29.10 in afternoon trading Monday. Immelt spent the second half of his time as CEO returning the company to its less-risky industrial roots. In 2007, GE's finance arm accounted for about 55 percent of its profits, but its large exposure to commercial real estate left it vulnerable during the financial crisis.

Immelt instead focused on products like energy-generating windmills, gas turbines power plants, online medical records and energy saving equipment for electrical grids as a source of new profits. GE made big acquisitions under Immelt to bring new business and technologies to GE. The company acquired the power business of France's Alstom three years ago. GE on Monday received US antitrust approval to combine its oil and gas operations with Baker Hughes, potentially creating an oil services powerhouse with more than $32 billion in revenue. The approval is conditioned on GE selling its Water and Process Technologies business.

GE also remains one of the world's biggest producers of jet engines. Flannery is a longtime General Electric executive, starting his career at GE Capital in 1987. He became president and CEO of the company's equity unit in 2002 and eventually joined the health care division in 2014, focusing on advanced technologies. In addition, Chief Financial Officer Jeff Bornstein was named vice chair and Kieran Murphy was named president and CEO of GE Healthcare to succeed Flannery. —AP

Cuba hardliners, US defenders battle over new Trump policy

HAVANA: Cuba's best friends in the US used to be a smattering of Washington policy wonks and leftists who sent donated school buses and computers to the communist-led island. Five months into the Trump administration, Cuba has a new set of American defenders: a coalition of high-tech firms, farming interests, travel companies and young Cuban-Americans thrown into action by the looming announcement of a new Cuba policy.

On the opposite side, hard-line members of Miami's Cuban exile community who suddenly have a direct line into the White House through Cuban-American Republican members of Congress and the administration. President Donald Trump planned to announce the new policy on Friday in Miami but had not yet decided all the details, according to a White House official who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss internal deliberations. The US Embassy in Havana will remain open, but Americans can expect actions by the departments of State, Treasury and Homeland Security to ban US trade with any Cuban entity linked to the military.

Also planned: A reduction in the number of categories for which Americans do not need US government licenses to go to Cuba. The US will demand greater internet access and the release of prisoners and return of American fugitives in Cuba. President Barack Obama's repeal of the special Cuban immigration privileges known as wet-foot/dry-foot will not change, the official said."If this were a traditional policy environment, we'd be having great success," said Collin Laverty, head of one of the biggest Cuba travel companies and a consultant for US corporations seeking business in Cuba.

Political deal

"We're certainly winning the debate for public opinion and in foreign policy circles, but unfortunately it appears that it'll come down to a backroom political deal between the president and Cuban-American members of Congress."The most prominent figures still seeking a reversal in the opening are Sen. Marco Rubio and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, both Cuban-Americans. The Trump government wants to maintain good relations with both Rubio, who sits on the Senate committee investigating Trump's relations with Russia, and Diaz-Balart, a member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

Laverty is one of the most prominent figures in the new pro-Cuba lobby, which has been furiously tweeting and writing letters to the White House in a last-minute rush to sell the Trump administration on the benefits of the friendly relations established by President Barack Obama on Dec 17, 2014. A particular focus is saving Obama's easing of US travel to Cuba, which tripled the number of American travelers to the island and pumped tens of millions of dollars into the island's private hospitality sector."Thousands of Americans are visiting Cuba and fueling the fastest growth in its private sector since 1959," CubaOne, a group of young pro-engagement Cuban-Americans, wrote in an open letter to Trump Monday.

After months of public silence, Airbnb last week released a report on its activities in Cuba, which have put $40 million into the hands of private bed-and-breakfast owners since the online lodging giant became the first major US company into Cuba in the wake of Obama's declaration of detente. Google, which installed servers on the island to speed Cuban internet service last year, spoke out for the first time Monday in favor of maintaining relations."Google has played a formative role in the first chapter of Cuba's connectivity story, but this is just the beginning," Brett Perlmutter, head of strategy and operations for Google Cuba, said at a conference in Miami on Monday. — AP

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump, accompanied by, from left, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, smile during a Cabinet meeting, Monday, June 12, 2017, in the Cabinet Room of the White House. — AP

Attorneys Gen hopes to force Trump financial disclosures

Purpose of currying special favor

WASHINGTON: The attorneys general of Maryland and the District of Columbia hope a little-known clause in the Constitution will force President Donald Trump to separate himself from his businesses and release his tax returns and other financial information, contending in a lawsuit he is corruptible to foreign governments who make payments to his businesses from around the world. The emoluments clause bars the president and other government employees from accepting foreign gifts and payments without congressional approval.

A lawsuit filed in federal court in Maryland on Monday alleges he is violating the Constitution by accepting payments from foreign governments. "We're concerned that foreign governments are coming to the Trump businesses with a single purpose of currying special favor from the president of the United States so that their interest can get a higher priority than the interest of the American people," District of Columbia Attorney General Karl Racine said at a news conference announcing the lawsuit. "If that's not a harm to every American citizen and every resident in the District of Columbia and Maryland, I don't know what is."

Unique status

Trump's unique status as both president and the financial beneficiary of his global business empire raised questions about the emoluments clause of the Constitution even before he took office. Trump and his attorneys argue the clause does not cover fair-value transactions, such as hotel room payments and real estate sales. The attorneys general aren't the first to sue Trump over emoluments. Just days after Trump's inauguration in January, the government watchdog Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington filed a federal lawsuit in the Southern District of New York. Since then, a restaurant group and two individuals in the hotel industry have joined as plaintiffs.

The Justice Department said Friday that those plaintiffs did not suffer in any way and had no standing to sue, and that it was unconstitutional to sue the president in his official capacity. White House press secretary Sean Spicer noted that response at a White House briefing Monday. "This lawsuit today is just another iteration of the case that was filed by that group CREW, filed actually by the same lawyers," Spicer said. "So it's not hard to conclude that partisan politics may be one of the motivations behind the suit." But the two Democratic attorneys general say their lawsuit is unique, because they are suing as sovereign entities on behalf of residents of Maryland and Washington, DC They say the Trump Hotel in the nation's capital affects business in the Washington area.

Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh also underscored that the framers of Constitution included the clause for good reason. "If the Justice Department is right, the emoluments clause has no meaning whatsoever," Frosh said. "The president can stand over here with his president of the United States hat and he's not allowed to take payments, but he takes a step over here and puts on his businessman hat they can funnel as much money to him as they want. You got no emoluments clause there, and it's absolutely clear that the framers of the Constitution intended that to protect us from presidential corruption." The two attorneys general also hope the case will build a record against Trump through the discovery process in the court case. Frosh said the president has discussed some of his business dealings on the campaign trail, noting Trump's mention that a state-owned Chinese bank has office space in Trump Tower in New York.

Emoluments clause

"He bragged about that on the campaign trail," Frosh said. "I don't think he's giving it them for free, and there are many sources that have given us information about the payments that he has received. We'll have a lot more after we get discovery." Racine noted that the emoluments clause hasn't been tested by the Supreme Court or federal circuit courts. "And we think that our case will also further develop the record and the law for the court, which obviously will ultimately be the final arbiter, a necessary cog in the check-and-balance wheel," Racine said.

The lawsuit also focuses on the fact that Trump chose to retain ownership of his company when he became president. Trump said he was shifting assets into a trust managed by his sons to eliminate potential conflicts of interest. If a federal judge allows the case to proceed, Racine and Frosh say they will demand copies of Trump's personal tax returns in court to gauge the extent of his foreign business dealings. "Mr Trump is unique in American history in violating the emoluments clause," Frosh said. "There is no other president whose domestic and foreign investments, the entanglements, have been so bound up with our policy and our interests, and he is the only president who has refused to disclose the extent of his holdings and interests, so, yes, it will be a subject of our lawsuit. We will be seeking that information."— AP

Japan court clears way for nuclear reactor restarts

TOKYO: A Japanese court yesterday gave the green light to switch on two more nuclear reactors despite heavy public opposition, in the latest victory for the government's pro-atomic push. Local residents lost their bid for an injunction to block the re-firing of the No 3 and No 4 reactors at the Genkai nuclear plant in southwestern Japan on safety grounds, according to a district court official. The site, operated by Kyushu Electric Power, lies some 100 kilometers north of Kumamoto prefecture which was hit by a deadly earthquake last year.

Residents unsuccessfully argued that the utility had not taken enough measures to prevent an accident linked to a natural disaster. The restarts are not likely to happen for at least several months. The court ruling comes a week after another utility switched on a reactor at the Takahama plant in Fukui prefecture, some 350 kilometers west of Tokyo, bringing the number of running reactors in Japan to five. Dozens more in the country still remain offline. Japan shut down all of its atomic reactors after a powerful earthquake in March 2011 spawned a huge tsunami that led to meltdowns at the Fukushima nuclear plant.

It was the world's worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl in 1986. Since then, just a handful of reactors have come back online due to public opposition and as legal cases work their way through the courts. However, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has aggressively promoted nuclear energy, calling it essential to powering the world's third-largest economy. Much of the public remains wary of nuclear power after the disaster at Fukushima spewed radiation over a large area and forced tens of thousands to leave their homes, with some unlikely to ever return. Last week, Japan's nuclear energy agency said five employees were exposed to dangerously high levels of radiation after a bag containing plutonium broke apart during a routine inspection. —AFP

SAGA: Residents seeking to suspend the operation of No 3 and No 4 reactors of Kyushu Electric Power's Genkai nuclear plant hold a banner while heading to the Saga District Court. — AFP

Thai junta vows to force through China railway

BANGKOK: Thailand's junta chief said yesterday he would invoke his 'absolute powers' to clear hurdles holding up a multi-billion-dollar deal with China to build a high-speed railway. The two countries, who are increasingly close friends, have agreed to lay the track that will ultimately cut through the Laos' border to Thailand's south. Beijing's big plan is to link the southern Chinese city of Kunming by rail with Singapore and work has already begun on the line in Laos.

But the deal with Thailand has been beset by delays, including a tussle over the initial loan terms from Beijing. More recently construction has been set back by a Thai law limiting the number of foreign nationals who can work as engineers and architects on mega-projects inside the kingdom. Yesterday Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha said he would force through the deal, if necessary using Article 44 a self-granted law dubbed an absolute power by critics.

"The government must solve the problem otherwise it will hit snags or legal issues and it will look like the government can't achieve anything," he told reporters. Article 44 is a controversial power Prayut granted himself to make any executive decision in the name of national security. He has used the law on a raft of issues, from sacking officials to raiding a controversial temple, to deputizing all soldiers with policing powers. His government defends it as a needed tool that bypasses Thailand's sclerotic bureaucracy. But critics say it is a vivid illustration of the junta's unaccountable powers. Prayut's comments will be a comfort to Beijing. The rail deal with China is one of the biggest foreign investment projects in Thailand in years and is part of China's huge regional infrastructure drive.

The first stage of the Thai railway, a high-speed line between Bangkok and the north eastern province of Nakhon Ratchasima, is alone worth 179 billion baht .The vast majority of technical expertise will come from Chinese engineers, something that may disgruntle Thai construction firms that stand to lose out. Under junta rule Bangkok has become more comfortable with Beijing, splurging billions on Chinese arms and welcoming investment from the regional superpower. Washington's relationship with Bangkok cooled under the previous administration of Barack Obama over the junta's rights abuses. But Donald Trump has signaled relations may be rebooted by inviting Prayut to visit the White House. —AFP

Jazeera Airways celebrates Gergian with its passengers

KUWAIT: JAZEERA Airways, the first private airline in Kuwait and the Middle East, celebrated the annual Ramadan children's tradition by distributing beautifully designed Girgian boxes to children and families at Jazeera Airway's Check-in counters and the baggage zone.

As part of a well-established Kuwaiti tradition, young passengers en-route to their different destinations shared in the joy of candy and sweets' giveaways aimed at spreading smiles all around during the most special time of the year. Additionally, as part of the airline's yearly observance of the Holy month of Ramadan, key areas such as Gate B and the baggage zone have been decorated to deliver messages portraying a spirit of giving and kindness.

Commenting on this initiative, Mr. Rohit Ramachandran, Chief Executive Officer at Jazeera Airways said: "Girgean is a special occasion for us and we feel privileged to pass on a this rich heritage to our passengers and their children who will carry on this wonderful Kuwaiti tradition in the future. Small acts of kindness and generosity are a powerful reminder of the positive impact we can all have in society. On behalf of Jazeera Airways, we wish Kuwait and its people a blessed Ramadan." As a catalyst for positive change in Kuwait, Jazeera Airways' annual Girgean celebrations comes as part of its continued Corporate Social Responsibility strategy that aims to engage with and contribute to all segments of the Kuwaiti society.

Burgan Bank offers free Eideya delivery service to premier banking customers

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the free 'Eideya' delivery service provided to Premier Banking customers in collaboration with 'Qiblah' concierge services. This service enables Premier Banking customers to receive new bank notes before the Eid holidays at their offices or homes, avoiding the hassle of waiting in the branches at that time of the year.

To request this service, Premier customers can simply contact Qiblah concierge services starting 9 am until 4 pm, by calling 22317755 or emailing Burganpremier@qiblah.com.kw to request the amount of Eid money required and state their address in order for the concierge messenger to deliver it accordingly. The service is available from June 14th till June 21st 2017. The Eideya delivery service is part of the bank's wide range of valuable privileges and benefits that are especially designated for its Premier customers.

Additionally, the bank's collaboration with 'Qiblah' concierge services stems from its commitment to support its customers' every day requirements with an unmatched personalized experience. Burgan Bank's Premier customers can avail instant concierge services from a selected list of more than 20 services such as travel bookings, airport transfers, visa assistance, party planning, valet parkers and others. The free concierge services were introduced as part of the bank's wide range of valuable privileges and benefits that are especially designated for its Premier customers.

NBK offers Saudi Riyal Prepaid Card free during Ramadan

KUWAIT: NBK recognizes and responds to the lifestyle needs of all its customers. Now during the month of Ramadan, customers traveling to Saudi Arabia can get a free prepaid card in Saudi Riyals. "NBK meets customers where they need banking - either locally, regionally or internationally," explained Mohammed Al Othman, Deputy General Manager- Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "When you travel for Hajj or Umrah, we want to help make the trip as smooth as possible, providing a Saudi Riyal Prepaid Card helps our customers meet all their needs while also controlling their spending."

Mohammed Al Othman

NBK Saudi Riyals Prepaid Card protects customers against future conversion rate fluctuations, offering the same safety and security as all NBK cards. Customers will also receive valuable offers and promotions. You can apply for your NBK Saudi Riyals Prepaid Card through NBK Online Banking, NBK Call Center or through our branch network, and your card will be delivered to your door step, free of charge. The issuance fee will be waived during the holy month of Ramadan. NBK account holders will have flexible and convenient access to use the Saudi Riyals Prepaid Card when shopping online, at POS machines and at ATMs in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to withdraw cash. Important features of the card include:

- Purchase protection
- Fraud protection
- SMS service
- NBK Secure Shopping
- Avoid currency fluctuations
- Convenience of spending in chosen currency, without the hassle of currency conversions
- Better budgetary control
- More convenient and safer than cash

Trump has plan if debt limit not up by August

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration has a backup plan to keep the government from defaulting on its financial obligations even if Congress misses an August deadline to raise the debt limit, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told a congressional panel Monday.

Mnuchin had previously set an August deadline for the federal government to avoid a catastrophic default. Mnuchin said he still prefers that Congress increase the government's authority to borrow before lawmakers leave on a five-week break in August. However, he said he is "comfortable" that the Treasury Department can meet the government's financial obligations through the start of September. Private analysts say Mnuchin probably has even greater leeway.

Slowdown in revenues

"If for whatever reason Congress does not act before August we do have back up plans that we can fund the government," Mnuchin said without elaborating. "So I want to make it clear that that is not the timeframe that would create a serious problem." The federal government technically hit the debt limit in March, but Treasury has been using accounting steps known as "extraordinary measures" to avoid a default.

Shortly before Mnuchin testified, a Washington think tank projected that despite the slowdown in revenues, the government will have enough cash to pay its bills until October or November. The Bipartisan Policy Center says that revenue results from this month's quarterly tax payments could clarify the deadline, but for now it forecasts that Mnuchin has sufficient maneuvering room to keep the government solvent into the fall. The policy center says a big Oct. 2 payment into the military retirement trust fund could trigger default.

As of Friday, the Treasury had a cash balance of $148 billion, down from $204 billion a month ago. The national debt is nearly $20 trillion, including money owed to several federal programs. Raising the debt limit has become a politically-charged vote in Congress, even though economists believe that an unprecedented default would catastrophic for the economy. Republicans, who control Congress and the White House, are struggling to come up with a strategy to raise the debt limit, with some GOP members demanding spending cuts in exchange for their vote.

But since Republicans have many members who simply refuse to vote for a debt increase, GOP leaders such as Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin may have no choice but to seek help from Democrats, who are demanding that any debt limit hike be "clean" of GOP add-ons. Lawmakers are trying to deal with the debt limit while at the same time a House panel is beginning work on spending bills to fund the government.

Also Monday, Republicans controlling the House took the first steps to approve President Donald Trump's big budget increase for veterans' health care and the Pentagon. A House Appropriations panel got the process under way with voice vote approval of an $89 billion spending bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs and Pentagon construction projects. The bill would give the VA a 5 percent budget hike for the budget year beginning in October as the agency works to improve wait times and correct other problems.

Reviving parochial projects

The Defense Department, meanwhile, would receive a $2 billion, 10 percent increase for military construction projects at bases in both the US and abroad. The measure also funds $439 million worth of projects such as barracks and target ranges not requested by the administration, which could open Republicans up to charges they are reviving parochial projects known as earmarks. —AP

Casino industry ramps effort to repeal sports betting ban

LAS VEGAS: The casino industry's largest lobbying group in the US is ramping up its efforts to repeal a 25-year-old federal law that bans sports betting in most states. The American Gaming Association on Monday announced the creation of a coalition involving organizations of attorneys general and police, policymakers and others to advocate for the repeal of the ban that the industry says has fueled the $150 billion illegal sports betting market.

"The American Gaming Association believes a perfect storm is aligning and now is the time to repeal a failing law," Geoff Freeman, the association's president and CEO, said during the announcement. He cited a recent survey commissioned by the organization that found there is strong bipartisan support nationwide for legal sports betting, as well as Oxford Economics research showing that legalizing sports betting in the US could support more than 150,000 jobs.

The Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992 bans sports betting in every state except Delaware, Montana, Nevada and Oregon. Legal sports gambling is allowed in those states because they had approved some form of wagering before the federal law went into effect. Congress gave New Jersey a one-time opportunity to become the fifth state before the ban was enacted, but the state failed to pass a sports betting law in the required time window. The state has asked the US Supreme Court to hear arguments in favor of legalizing sports betting and expects a decision by the end of the month.

The survey commissioned by the association found that 57 percent of independents, 58 of Republicans and 52 of Democrats support ending the ban.

Freeman said the group has hosted sessions with members of Congress to show the technology from European companies specialized in data integrity that that wasn't available when the ban was enacted.

"They are tracking ... how much is being bet, who is betting it, where the bet is taking place, what is the betting history of these individuals, what games are they betting on, who's playing in those games, who's coaching those games, who are the trainers in those games, who are the officials in those games," Freeman said. "All of that input goes into these algorithms that they built so that it is very easy for them to identify when there is an anomaly."

The association has also met with the players unions of the NFL, NBA, NHL and MLB. The executive directors of those unions have met multiple times over the past several months to discuss the challenges that legalized sports betting could create for players, including potentially being put under pressure for any fixing of matches.

NFL Players Association spokesman George Atallah said the executive directors have discussed the issue of legalized sports betting multiple times, with the conversations centering on "protecting the integrity of our respective sports." —AP

Hyundai catching-up with subcompact SUV

SEOUL: Hyundai Motor Co is playing catch-up in the fast-growing sport utility vehicle market with its first subcompact SUV targeting Europe and North America. The South Korean automaker said Tuesday that the Kona will go on sale this month in South Korea before it launches in Europe and North America. Hyundai Motor has long focused on the Sonata and other sedans, which helped build it a reputation in the West as a maker of cars that are excellent value. But in recent years, most growth in global auto markets, especially in China, has come from SUVs. Hyundai's deteriorating profitability and missing of its annual sales targets in recent years were attributed to its failure to respond to rising global demand for SUVs.

Hyundai arrived late but now plans to increase its bet on SUVs. With the launch of the Kona, Hyundai is seeking a slice of the subcompact SUV market - the fastest-growing sector in the auto market. The sector snowballed by nearly 10 times from 2010 to 2016, Hyundai said, citing data from IHS Automotive. This year, the segment's annual growth rate is expected to be 19 percent.

Hyundai Motor has only four SUV lineups, including Creta, a subcompact SUV targeting emerging markets. Tucson and Santa Fe cater to buyers seeking medium and large SUVs. The company plans to expand its SUV models by 2020 by adding mini SUV and executive vehicles, among others.

Before the summer of next year, it will launch a fuel-cell SUV and electric Kona.

Sales of Kona would be crucial to help counter Hyundai's eroding auto sales this year in the US and China, where a backlash against South Korea's deployment of a US anti-missile system hurt Korean businesses. In the domestic market, Hyundai has a challenge of having to restore its image following massive government-led recalls. Kona, equipped with a 1.6-liter gasoline or diesel engine, will compete with Ssangyong Motor's Tivoli, the leader in the subcompact SUV sector in South Korea. Showing the importance of the Kona to the South Korean automaker, Chung Eui Sun, Hyundai's vice chairman and son of its chairman, took the stage Tuesday at a launching event north of Seoul. Named after a district in Hawaii, the Kona continues Hyundai's tradition of naming a vehicle after a particular region. —AP

Centrify enables organizations to stop breaches that start on Mac endpoints

DUBAI: Centrify, the leader in securing hybrid enterprises through the power of identity services, today announced enhancements to the Centrify Identity Platform that deliver local administrator password management for Macs and comprehensive Mac application management and software distribution via turnkey integration with the Munki open source solution. These new capabilities enable Mac administrators to solve critical challenges by implementing best practices for controlling privileged access on Macs while at the same time simplifying management of Mac endpoints.

"Our latest security capabilities extend shared account password management (SAPM) from servers, network devices, Windows and Linux endpoints to Mac, while at the same time simplifying Mac application management with Munki support that enables users to install applications without knowing the admin password," said Bill Mann, chief product officer at Centrify. "The Centrify Identity Platform secures Mac endpoints as well as Windows and Linux with our market leading Identity-as-a-Service (IDaaS) and privileged identity management (PIM) solutions that help stop breaches across endpoints, infrastructure and apps."

Control Shared Passwords

It is common for organizations to maintain administrative accounts on their users' Macs and use the same admin password across all Macs. This introduces risk, because inevitably the password is shared with an end user who needs to install applications on their Mac, or is known by admins who leave the company. These users and ex-employees now have full administrative privilege across every Mac. This leaves an organization highly susceptible to breaches that start on Mac endpoints, and demands a solution that enables organizations to minimize and centrally control access to Mac administrative accounts, just like they do for Windows and Linux endpoints, servers and network devices.

The Centrify Identity Platform closes this gap in security with local administrator password management (LAPM) for Mac that enables administrators to generate a unique administrator password for each Mac. With Centrify, organizations are eliminating the sharing of a single Mac admin password across an entire organization. The solution can be enabled for all Macs enrolled in the cloud-based management service, ensuring support for remote machines as well as those on the corporate network. Authorized admins can check out the admin password, and the rotation of the admin password is automated. Who accessed what and when is fully audited across Mac administrative access and all other endpoints and infrastructure and available through comprehensive reporting.

Bill Mann

Eliminate Admin Access

End users cannot install software without local admin rights. However, local admin rights mean your end users-or anyone who compromises their accounts-are privileged users on their Mac. This increases your attack surface and makes endpoints an effective target for malware and rogue applications. By seamlessly combining the Centrify Identity Platform with the open source Munki solution - the leading Mac app and patch management solution - your end users can install and manage applications without local admin rights.

Munki's open-source toolset provides a rich Apple App Store like end user experience, where the specific apps an organization approves are available for seamless installation. Centrify simplifies the Munki setup, management, security and ongoing support to make it easier for organizations to deploy and operate their own enterprise Mac app store. Additionally, Centrify's cloud-based app repository extends Munki to remote Mac users regardless of their location or status on the corporate network.

Controlling access to shared administrative passwords for endpoints and eliminating the need for local admin rights to install software on Macs are established PIM best practices. A recent Forrester study found a direct correlation between the number of PIM best practices an organization has implemented and the number of security incidents it encounters. The Centrify Identity Platform now makes it easy for organizations to extend best practices to Mac in order to stop breaches that start on endpoints.

Connecting the cold economy to tackle issues of warming world

By Dermot O'Connell, Vice President, OEM and IOT solutions, Dell EMC EMEA

The accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in our atmosphere has led to noticeable changes in natural systems. Ocean acidification and increasing ocean temperatures are damaging marine ecosystems. Each year, at least eight million tons of plastics find their way into the ocean - which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one binlorry into the ocean every minute.Further still, the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events are putting many more at greater risk, irrespective of location. We all know that to limit the likelihood of disruptive and potentially catastrophic change to our climate and ecosystems, public and private institutions across the planet will need to develop and implement mitigation and adaptation strategies. As atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases rise, however, it's become widely accepted that mitigating adverse impacts will become more challenging, complex and costly. This bleak outlook needs to serve as a call to action for governments, businesses and the general public alike to do their part to enact change.

Where to start?

Let's look with the retail sector. Did you know that the retail sector, including supermarkets, is one of the largest users of F-gas (fluorinated greenhouse gas) refrigerants? That's something that we can change and without a complex solution. We've all heard the hype about the Internet of Things and how cool it is that your fridge can tell you when you're out of milk. Now, what if the millions of refrigerated trains, trucks and storage centres used in the cold chain process by supermarkets to transport and store food could tell you when they needed to be on to keep food fresh? Surprise! They can.

IoT sensors can be used to monitor the refrigeration units needed to transport and store food around the world to keep it fresh. The sensors can track the temperature in units, lowering the level of energy or units needed in conjunction with how cold the food needs to be and how much food is currently stored. They can also track how long food has been out of refrigeration and how quickly it needs to be put back in before it spoils and creates unnecessary waste.

How does it work?

Have a look at IMS Evolves' cutting edge Cold Chain Logistics process as an example. The food retail industry admits that supply chain complexity has meant it is easier and safer to chill all food to the lowest temperature required (by meat) meaning an extensive annual over-chill. However, by integrating the data from the existing machine sensors with supply chain and merchandise systems as well as the fridge control systems, each machine can be automatically set at the temperature to suit the specific contents, removing instances of over-chilling. The 'always on' nature of this approach ensures that even throughout the course of normal business when products are moved around the store, the right temperature for the right product is sustained automatically.

The result is that IMS is able to significantly reduce excess energy consumption, minimise food waste and improve customer experience. In addition, with smart cold chains, a higher quality product can be achieved, resulting in a better customer experience. In manufacturing and processing environments, consistency of both ingredients quantities and environmental factors can be regulated and the available data from each stage of the process united to ensure the highest quality, most profitable end product every time.

Take dairy products for example, many of us have come face to face with an unappetising watery yogurt, but few are aware this a familiar bi-product of over-chilling squeezing the product, that can be eliminated bya smarter cold chain. The possibilities for IoT are endless but it's important that to think beyond the obvious smart cities applications and think about how you can change your business and your product for the better - for the customer and even for the world.

Connecting the cold chain process is only one example of how businesses can make a positive impact on their customers' experience and on the environment.It's important to look at all options to reduce the effect that businesses can have on the physical world - alternative shipping methods can be deployed, sustainable packaging can be used, components can be recycled. While we can't fix global warming with just a few sensors, as more organisations realise the capabilities of IoT, it's at least one small step for man in the pursuit of change.

LOS ANGELES: Nintendo co-Representative Director and Creative Fellow Shigeru Miyamoto, left, and Ubisoft Co-founder and CEO Yves Guillemot talk about 'Mario Rabbids Kingdom Battle' on stage during the Ubisoft E3 conference at the Orpheum Theater in Los Angeles, California.

'Assassin's Creed' heading for Egypt to reignite gamers

LOS ANGELES: Ubisoft's blockbuster "Assassin's Creed" video game is heading for Egypt, taking the serial's storyline back to an ancient world and overhauling play to reignite its top franchise. The French video game star took last year off after hitting the market with annual releases and boasting overall sales of more than 110 million copies of the game since it first launched in 2007.

A cooling in fan interest appeared to prompt a step back, and an investment by Ubisoft to revitalize it was unveiled at a press event Monday ahead of the opening of the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles. Work on "Assassin's Creed: Origins" began nearly four years ago, and included overhauling the combat system and building artificial intelligence into all of the non-player characters, according to game producer Julien Laferriere.

Every character has a "life" of its own, tending to work, worship, family, meals and other daily routines that players can take into account while on missions, an early glimpse at the game showed. Players are also free to explore a virtual version of all of Egypt in 49 BC, during the rise of Cleopatra to the throne. "It is a part of world history we have wanted to do for a long time," Laferriere said. "We wanted to be as authentic as we could." Players get to climb pyramids, explore beneath the Sphinx, and learn the origins of the brotherhood of assassins, whose deadly fight with the order of Templars is at the core of the franchise that segues from one generation of master assassin to another. "Fans will have a front row seat to the formation of the brotherhood," Laferriere promised. Ubisoft hopes Origins will energize long-time fans and win new players at the start of the story in a game that has become fodder for books and films. Versions of Origins tailored for play on Xbox One, PlayStation 4 and Windows-powered personal computers will be released on October 27.

South Park and Mario

"Assassin's Creed" was among a diverse lineup Ubisoft is showing off this week at E3. Ubisoft offerings spanned genres, from action shooters such as "Far Cry 5," to sports, dance, piracy, a space monkey, and virtual reality. A "Fractured But Whole" based on an irreverent South Park animated television series opens with well-known children characters obsessed with being super heroes sneaking into a strip club to solve the mystery of a missing cat. Their weapons include flatulence and firecrackers.

"The South Park universe doesn't take itself too seriously, so you can be satirical," game director Jason Schroeder told AFP while providing a peek at the game, which also releases on October 17. "You can take the notion of something like a strip club and turn it on its head." Nintendo legend Shigeru Miyamoto joined Ubisoft chief executive Yves Guillemot on stage at a press event to unveil an innovative alliance with Nintendo to unite its zany "Rabbids" with beloved "Mario" in a game. "I have been excited to see what kind of humor the Rabbids could bring to the Mario world," Miyamoto said through an interpreter.

Getting into heads

The game maker continued its tradition of embracing hardware innovations, showing off games crafted for Nintendo's hot-selling and tough to find Switch consoles as well as the budding virtual reality gear market. "We have been experimenting with virtual reality for several year," said Ubisoft partnerships vice president Chris Early. "Though it is not taking off as fast as any of us would like, it is providing some great learning about what it means for having fun." — AFP

Sony fires at Xbox with arsenal of big PS4 games

LOS ANGELES: Sony on Monday showed off rich, action-packed new PlayStation 4 video games, some for virtual reality, as it defended its crown as the top-selling new-generation console. The company focused on blockbuster games and intriguing new titles for PS4 at a press event on the eve of the opening of the major Electronic Entertainment Expo here. There was no mention of the Xbox One X console unveiled a day earlier by rival Microsoft in a heightened challenge to PS4.

"PlayStation is home to all the biggest and best game franchises in the world," Sony Interactive Entertainment worldwide studios chairman Shawn Layden said during a rapid-fire presentation of video trailers. The line-up included the first "Uncharted" game to feature a heroine in place of the "Nathan Drake" hero, a "God of War" sequel with a mighty father-son theme, and a pulse-pounding title starring "Spiderman" of Marvel Comics fame. The event also unveiled a version of the hit fantasy role-playing game "Skyrim" tailored for play on PlayStation virtual reality gear.

"It's all about gaming," Layden said. "Every year, we continue to push the envelope of imagination, storytelling, and technology." PlayStation has had success in keeping the focus on gamers and what they like. PS4 models include a "Pro" console for powering ultra-high definition 4K graphics, and the entire line of consoles syncs with PlayStation VR gear. Sony has sold more than 60.4 million PS4 consoles since they hit the market in November of 2013, the company revealed on Monday.

LOS ANGELES: Game enthusiasts and industry personnel attend the Sony Playstation E3 showcase before the start of the conference at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos

More virtual reality

A PlayStation 'ecosystem' that includes online game communities, content and services had more than 70 million monthly active users as of the end of March, according to Sony. "The PS4 platform is in its prime, with the industry's best lineup of exclusive and partner titles slated to release this year, taking full advantage of the power of the PS4 system," Sony Interactive Entertainment global chief executive Andrew House said.

PlayStation plans to expand services, software, and virtual reality offerings, he said. Microsoft unveiled its Xbox One X on Sunday, billing it as the most powerful video console ever made, and escalating a battle with market king PlayStation. The $499 product was built with the muscle for seamless play on ultra-high definition 4K televisions and will be available worldwide on November 7, according to Xbox team leader Phil Spencer. Meanwhile, PS 4 Pro is priced at $399 and other models of the console can be bought for less.

Microsoft also showed off coming games, an array tailored for exclusive play on Xbox One consoles, but it remained to be seen if there is enough unique content to get lots of people to buy the higher-priced hardware. Independent publishers tend to make blockbuster titles available for play on Xbox, PlayStation and personal computer hardware in an effort to sell creations to as broad an audience as possible.

LOS ANGELES: Shawn Layden, President of Sony Interactive Entertainment America, speaks on stage.

Game play on 4K screens, whether on televisions or personal computer monitors, is expected to be among themes at E3 this week. Sony PlayStation 4 has dominated the latest generation of consoles, outselling Xbox One two to one, according to industry trackers. PlayStation has also become the prime driver of revenue and profit at the Japan-based entertainment giant Sony, executives say.

Nintendo's recently launched Switch has been a winner, with fans snapping up the console and a "Legend of Zelda" game that has become a must-play title for fans. Demand for Switch consoles has been so intense since its launch early this year that the consoles are tough to find in stores and Nintendo has reportedly doubled production. Switch launched at the start of March and some 2.74 million were sold bythe end of that month, according to Nintendo. —AFP

Angola backs down on total abortion ban

LUAND: Angola's ruling party has bowed to public criticism of a proposed law banning all abortions and instead accepted a revised bill allowing terminations in cases of rape or maternal health risk. The about-turn follows a rare rally in March when roughly 200 demonstrators protested against the proposed bill under heavy police surveillance in the capital Luanda. "We have decided to listen to the pressure from society," the president of the ruling MPLA party's parliamentary caucus, Virgilio de Fontes Pereira, told reporters on Monday. The initial draft penal code brought before parliament in February would have punished anyone who had an abortion or performed one with up to 10 years in jail with exceptions in cases of rape or risk to the mother's health. But the draft code was strengthened after lobbying by church leaders led to the removal of the limited exemptions, triggering a fierce public debate. Ninety percent of Angolans are Christian.

The harshest version of the law was sharply criticized by President Jose Eduardo dos Santos' daughter Isabel, reported to be the richest woman in Africa. Isabel dos Santos used her Instagram social media account to denounce the "criminalization of women". Angola, which has been ruled by Dos Santos since 1979, is updating a penal code which dates back to 1886 the Portuguese colonial era. "When the life of the mother is at stake. when there is a rape, we can imagine lifting the law's ban," said De Fontes Pereira.—AFP

Eavesdropping on fish sex

PARIS: Scientists unveiled yesterday a unique new method for counting stocks of threatened fish eavesdropping on their love calls when the fish gather in massive mating throngs. Using underwater microphones and mathematical models, researchers from the US and Mexico were able to estimate population numbers for the Gulf corvina, a popular eating fish from Mexico's Gulf of California.

About two million corvina gather every spring for a frenzied breeding session in a shallow estuary of the Colorado River Delta, bringing the entire adult population to an area less than one percent of its usual home range. When the males start calling to attract mates, the sound is "deafening", said researchers from the University of Texas Marine Science Institute (UTMSI). At about 192 decibels, the sound could damage human eardrums on land. "It's louder than a rock concert," study co-author Brad Erisman said in a statement issued by the UTMSI. "It's louder than standing less than a meter from a chainsaw."

Unfortunately for the corvinas, the calls announce their presence to fishermen who gather for a seasonal frenzy of their own: netting more than a million fish in about three weeks. But now the sound may be used to save the fish, which are listed as "vulnerable" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of threatened species. Though population numbers have been hard to determine, there is evidence that landed fish are getting smaller and smaller, a sign of overfishing, the researchers said, which happens when fish of a species are caught faster than they can reproduce.

Herrings, sardines, sturgeons

Accurate population numbers are essential for setting sustainable fishing limits. But it is nearly impossible to get a headcount for fish, often flitting about in deep or murky waters, and many estimates are based on unreliable fisheries data. The new technique involves a mathematical model for determining stock density from the levels of sound the fish generate while spawning. Using this method, the team calculated there were over 1.5 million corvina at the height of their annual "spawning aggregation", a collective mass of more than 2,000 tones.

Their technique is inexpensive and not intrusive, the researchers said, and can be adapted for other species that form similar spawning groups and produce mating sounds. These include herrings, sardines, cod and haddock, croakers, groupers, sea bass, snappers, catfish and sturgeons. It may be particularly useful for determining the remaining stock of endangered totoaba, a large fish also from the Gulf of California, whose swim bladder is believed in China to hold medicinal powers, the team said.—AFP

Australian nurse denies running illegal surrogacy in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH: An Australian nurse denied running an illegal surrogacy service in Cambodia when her trial began Yesterday, the first case of its kind in the country that recently banned the practice. Tammy Davis-Charles, 49, was arrested in late November with two Cambodians and accused of recruiting foreign couples and Cambodian surrogate mothers to a clinic in the capital Phnom Penh.

The detentions came just two weeks after Cambodia moved to outlaw the surrogacy industry, which critics say exploits poor women, after a similar ban in neighboring Thailand pushed the business across its borders. The trio were also charged with faking documents to obtain birth certificates for the newborns. In court on Yesterday Davis-Charles said she played no part in arranging surrogacies. Instead she said her role was limited to providing medical care to a total of 23 surrogate mothers who carried babies for 18 Australian and five American couples.

"They find the clinic" by themselves, she said of the would-be foreign parents, adding that she was also not involved in the recruitment of Cambodian surrogates. The nurse said she received $8,000 from each couple while received around $10,000. All of the infants were born and moved out of Cambodia before her arrest, she added. Davis-Charles, who is from Melbourne, told the court she left Thailand more than a year ago after Bangkok outlawed commercial surrogacy and moved to Cambodia, which at the time lacked regulations on the industry. Two surrogate mothers testified in court on Yesterday to receiving $10,000 from Tammy.

Surrogate mother Hor Vanday said she gave birth to a baby girl who was whisked away for a foreign couple. "I did not see the face of the baby, but I know her father took her away," she recalled. She added that she did not miss the child as she knew it was never hers. Thailand for years hosted Southeast Asia's most thriving unregulated surrogacy industry that was particularly popular with same-sex couples. But several scandals in 2014 including tussles over custody spurred the government to bar foreigners from using Thai surrogates.

Surrogacy consultants say Laos, a poor and opaque communist country to the north, has since emerged as the next frontier for the "rent a womb" business in the wake of the recent bans by Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal and India. A number of Laos-linked surrogacy agencies and IVF clinics have cropped up in recent months, according to consultancy group Families Through Surrogacy. A Thai man was recently arrested for smuggling frozen sperm between the two countries. Some offer to carry out the embryo transfer in Laos and then provide pregnancy care for the surrogate in Thailand, a wealthier country with vastly superior medical facilities.—AFP

Malaysia seizes pangolin scales

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian customs officers have seized almost 300 kilograms of pangolin scales being smuggled through the main airport, officials said yesterday. The 288-kilogram haul was found at Kuala Lumpur International Airport last Friday in 12 boxes labeled as oyster shells on the waybill. The scales worth around 3.69 million ringgit arrived from Ghana on a Turkish Airlines flight, the customs department said in a statement.

Authorities are investigating. The scales of the endangered pangolin, the world's most heavily trafficked mammal, are highly prized in Vietnam and China where they are misleadingly touted as having medicinal properties. Malaysia last month made its largest haul of such scales, 712 kilograms estimated to be worth more than nine million ringgit.

Pangolins are indigenous to the jungles of Indonesia, parts of Malaysia and areas of southern Thailand, and their meat is considered a delicacy in China. Four pangolin species can also be found in Africa. Increasingly they are smuggled to Southeast Asia from Africa, but the majority goes to China. Soaring demand has seen an estimated one million pangolins plucked from Asian and African forests over the past decade.—AFP

MALAYSIA : The photo shows seized pangolin scales during a press conference at the Malaysian Customs Complex in Sepang. Malaysian customs officers have seized almost 300 kilograms of pangolin scales being smuggled through the main airport.—AFP

AFGHANISTAN : A view over the lake from a birdwatching tower at the Kol-e Hashmat Khan wetland in the outskirts of Kabul. A rare Afghan marsh that was once a royal hunting ground is set to come under the official protection of the UN environment agency, with the aim of saving hundreds of migratory bird species. —AFP

War-torn Kabul becomes a protected site for birds

UN designates wetlands as conservation site

KABUL: A rare Afghan marsh that was once a royal hunting ground is set to come under the official protection of the UN environment agency, with the aim of saving hundreds of migratory bird species. On the long, arid journey to the Caucasus and Siberia, across the Hindu Kush massif, the Kol-e-Hashmat Khan wetlands outside Kabul provide sanctuary for the thousands of storks, egrets, pelicans and flamingos that head north every spring from southern India.

But after 40 years of conflict and neglect, their habitat is being threatened by the growth in new homes, irrigation systems, rubbish and global warming which is gradually changing the local environment. Now the UN has designated the wetlands a conservation site, the Afghan government said on Sunday, as it also looks to help preserve the water supply of the capital. "There are probably more than 300 or 400 species that pass through, though without an accurate count it is hard to be sure," says Andrew Scanlon, head of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) in Afghanistan. They are migratory birds and "tourists" who stay for a very short period of time to find food, he adds. At daybreak, the marsh comes alive with the morning chatter of the birds hungry for breakfast. Binoculars in hand, Scanlon stands atop a tower that dominates the landscape. In the distance is the silhouette of Bala Hissar, an ancient fortress that defended the city for centuries. Opposite, mud houses and sturdier dwellings made from bricks seem to spring up at random, hurrily erected during wars for tides of refugees and displaced people.

It was once a favored place for royals to go hunting, though Scanlon stresses any activity would have been carried out "in a sustainable way". But with the invasion of the Soviet army in 1979 and the succession of conflicts afterwards, including the civil war in the early 1990s, Afghans were preoccupied by their own survival and the environment suffered. War saw the marshes more or less abandoned until 2005, Scanlon explains.

Everybody is guilty

Scanlon says that land grabbing was common in the chaos of the 90s as Afghans fought for survival. The marshes became a sanctuary, providing safe haven and water. As Afghanistan's population swelled with the return of refugees after the Taliban were toppled in 2001, he says the situation became a "tragedy of the commons". The phrase refers to an economic theory in which individuals act in their own self-interest towards a shared resource but against the common good.

"Everyone is taking a piece to survive but all together this is a tragedy, it's no one's fault but everybody is guilty," he says. Taking advantage of the chaos, factional and party leaders built houses on the water's edge. According to the UN, about 50 hectares of wild land were taken over, which the Afghan environmental protection agency, created in 2005, is now trying to recover.

"Some politicians are reluctant" to act, but attitudes are changing, said Muhibullah Fazli, the agency's biodiversity expert. The most important thing, he says, is to educate local residents. "The problem is the people taking their cattle to graze or cutting the reed, local people also pour their garbage in the river, they don't know the scientific value of this area," he said. Together with Qargha reservoir, Kol-e-Hashmat Khan, a marsh some eight meters deep at its centre, is one of Kabul's two water sources.

But experts are already worried about its falling water levels. NGO Afghanistan Youths Greens was ordered by UNEP to organize waste collection and educate the villagers who will continue to live on the shores. "At the beginning people didn't accept us but finally we managed to convince them," says the organization's director Mohammad Shafaq. "I told them what the Holy Koran has said," adds Fazli. "Birds are a community just like yours... they need a habitat and they need food."—AFP

Costa Rica says no to animal cruelty

SAN JOSE: Thousands of animal lovers packed a major San Jose avenue Sunday, many with pups in tow, to celebrate Costa Rica's new animal cruelty law and its fines and jail time for violators. Bikers, animal rights activists and many animal lovers were on hand dancing to traditional tunes to support the law, signed this month by the Central American nation's President Luis Guillermo Solis. "We have got to demand that there be no more impunity; that whoever abuses an animal be punished," Solis said, raising cheers from the crowd.

The parade marshal for the day was Duke, a dog that became well known in local media after someone hacked him with a machete and left him for dead. In another grim case, local teenagers seriously injured a toucan, pummeling its bill with stones. "We have just seen too many horrific acts against animals. So it's time that we have a law to ensure that they are punished," said Antonio Pacheco, who turned up with his sweater-wearing schnauzer Tony in tow. Cockfighting and dog fights also have been outlawed, and can earn criminals jail time.—AFP

SAN JOSE: A woman takes a selfie with a dog as she joins thousands of people celebrating in the streets of San Jose.—AFP

WHO: Maldives, Bhutan have eliminated measles

NEW DELHI : The World Health Organization said yesterday that Bhutan and the Maldives have eliminated measles, becoming the first countries in their region to stop the highly contagious disease. The Maldives has not reported any case of indigenous measles since 2009, and Bhutan since 2012, WHO said. "WHO commends them for this momentous public health achievement," said Poonam Khetrapal Singh, regional director of WHO Southeast Asia. Bhutan and the Maldives launched immunization programs around 40 years ago with a strategy of mass vaccination of high-risk populations.

"The strongest political commitment, alongside the concerted efforts of health workers, officials and partners at all levels, has helped achieve this landmark success," Singh said. WHO has set a deadline of 2020 for the elimination of measles in the 11 countries that it categorizes as the Southeast Asian region.The region has averted an estimated 620,000 measles deaths in 2016 alone following vaccinations carried out by the 11 member countries, a WHO statement said. Last year, North and South America were declared free of measles, but last month an outbreak was reported in Minnesota. Measles, a viral disease which is spread through coughing and sneezing, can lead to pneumonia, brain inflammation, hospitalization or death, mainly among children.—AP

Fancy names may boost healthy dining

CHICAGO: Researchers tried a big serving of food psychology and a dollop of trickery to get diners to eat their vegetables. And it worked. Veggies given names like "zesty ginger-turmeric sweet potatoes" and "twisted citrus-glazed carrots" were more popular than those prepared exactly the same way but with plainer, more healthful-sounding labels. Diners more often said "no thanks" when the food had labels like "low-fat," "reduced-sodium" or "sugar-free."

More diners chose the fancy-named items, and selected larger portions of them too in the experiment last fall at a Stanford University cafeteria. "While it may seem like a good idea to emphasize the healthiness of vegetables, doing so may actually backfire," said lead author Bradley Turnwald, a graduate student in psychology. Other research has shown that people tend to think of healthful sounding food as less tasty, so the aim was to make it sound as good as more indulgent, fattening fare.

Researchers from Stanford's psychology department tested the idea as a way to improve eating habits and make a dent in the growing obesity epidemic. "This novel, low-cost intervention could easily be implemented in cafeterias, restaurants, and consumer products to increase selection of healthier options," they said. The results were published Monday JAMA Internal Medicine. The study was done over 46 days last fall. Lunchtime vegetable offerings were given different labels on different days. For example, on one day diners could choose "dynamite chili and tangy lime-seasoned beets.

"On other days the same item was labeled "lighter-choice beets with no added sugar," "high antioxidant beets," or simply "beets."Almost one-third of the nearly 28,000 diners chose a vegetable offering during the study. The tasty-sounding offering was the most popular, selected by about 220 diners on average on days it was offered, compared with about 175 diners who chose the simple-label vegetable. The healthy-sounding labels were the least popular. Diners also served themselves bigger portions of the tasty-sounding vegetables than of the other choices.

Turnwald emphasized that "there was no deception", all labels accurately described the vegetables, although diners weren't told that the different-sounding choices were the exact same item. The results illustrate "the interesting advantage to indulgent labeling," he said. Dr. Stephen Cook, a University of Rochester childhood obesity researcher, called the study encouraging and said some high school cafeterias have also tried different labels to influence healthy eating. "It shouldn't be a surprise to us because marketing people have been doing this for years," Cook said.—AP

NEW YORK: The photo shows roasted carrot hummus with crudite and pita chips at the Institute of Culinary Education.—AP

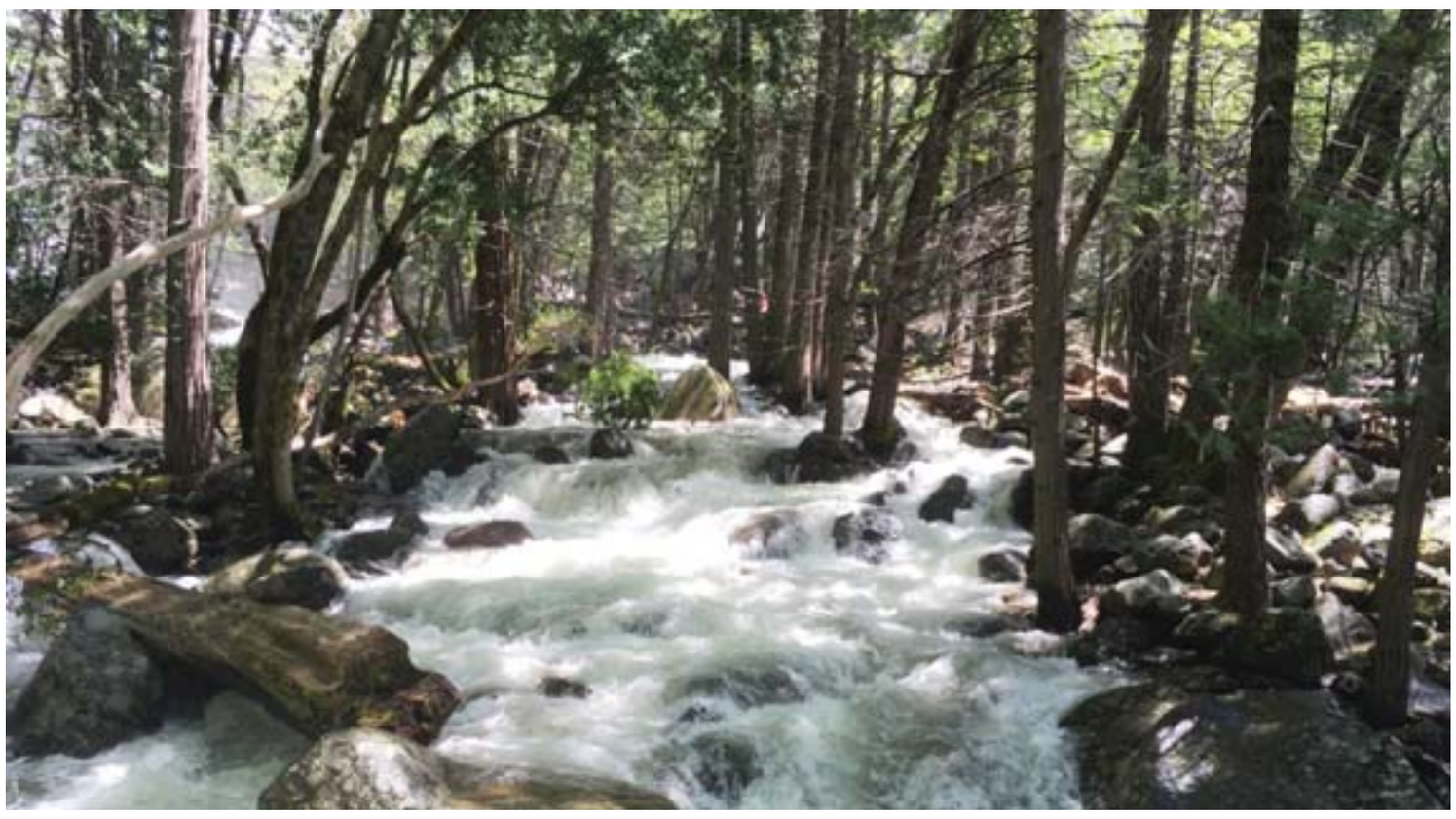
It's in the genes: Songbirds really do sing their own tune

PARIS: How do baby birds learn the song unique to their species? Is it drilled into their tiny brains by their parents, or do they hatch pre-programmed? On Monday, researchers offered intriguing evidence that the distinct melodies of at least some songbirds are encoded in their genes.
Flycatchers taken from the nest as eggs, then hatched and raised by a foster family from a different species, consistently harbored a lifelong preference for the telltale tune of their genetic kindred, a study has found.

This can only mean one thing: the ability to distinguish between songs is innate, not taught, said study co-author David Wheatcroft of Uppsala University in Sweden. "Song discrimination depends on genetic inherited factors," he said. For scientists, bird song is a model for studying the behavioral, neural and genetic mechanisms that drive vocal learning the ability to absorb and reproduce language, whether human or animal.

Songbirds are able from an early age to distinguish between the chants of their own species and those of others. Researchers have long been trying to unravel whether this ability is inborn or learnt, the age old Nature Vs Nurture debate. For the latest study, Wheatcroft and colleague Anna Qvarnstrom swapped eggs in the nests of two flycatcher species, pied and collared. The infants were isolated from bird sound until 12 days after hatching. They were then played recordings of their biological species' song, and the tune of the parents that raised them.

The baby birds reacted more to their own species' call, the team found. This was measured by how much they chirped to beg for food, how often they looking up at the nest opening, and how much they moved around. "Nestlings discriminate songs... even when they have been raised completely by parents from the other species," concluded Wheatcroft."This shows that song discrimination does not depend on early experience or learning." —AFP



CALIFORNIA: The water in Bridalveil Creek rushes through boulders at Yosemite National Park, California. —AP

Rivers turn dangerous as days warm, snow thaws

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK: Massive waterfalls in Yosemite National Park and rivers raging in mountains throughout the western United States are thundering with greater force than they have for years and proving deadly as warm weather melts the deepest mountain snowpack in recent memory. Record snowfall on towering Western peaks this winter virtually eliminated California's five-year drought and it is now melting rapidly.

But it has contributed to at least 14 river deaths and prompted officials to close sections of rivers popular with swimmers, rafters and fishing enthusiasts. In Utah and Wyoming, some rivers gorged by heavy winter snowfall have over flown their banks, and rivers in Utah are expected to remain dangerously swollen with icy mountain runoff for several more weeks. The sheer beauty of the rivers is their draw and represents a big danger to people who decide to beat the heat by swimming or rafting with little awareness of the risks posed by the raging water.

This year's velocity and force of the Merced River that runs through Yosemite Valley is similar to a runaway freight train, said Moose Mutlow of the Yosemite Swift Water Rescue Team. "You step out in front of it, it's going to take you," he said. "You're not going to stop that, and that's what people need to get their heads around." Heavy storms this winter covered the central Sierra Nevada mountains with snow that remains at twice its normal level for this time of year. While officials celebrated an end to drought in much of California, the snowmelt is so dangerous that park rangers fear its impact on the crowded park that drew a record five million people last year, when four people drowned.

So far this year, one 50-year-old man is believed to have drowned at Yosemite after falling into the Merced River from a winding trail. His body has not been found. One of Yosemite's deadliest days was in 2011, when three young church group visitors were swept to their deaths over the 317-foot Vernal Fall. Elsewhere in California, there have been at least 11 drownings since the snowpack started melting in May. At the San Joaquin River near Fresno, 18-year-old Neng Thao drowned last month swimming in the river during a picnic with his family days before he was set to graduate as the valedictorian of his high school.

Power of water

And six people have died in the rugged Tule River south of Yosemite. Some drowned, but others suffered injuries suggesting their bodies were beaten to death by the river water slamming them against the riverbed. "The force of that water pounds people into rocks and sends them over waterfalls," said Eric LaPrice, a US Forest Service district ranger at the Giant Sequoia National Monument in central California. At the Kern River in central California, officials last month updated a sign warning that that 280 people have died in it since 1968. The sign is already outdated, with four more drownings since then. And in northern Utah, a 4-year-old girl playing at the side of the Provo River fell from a boulder into the water last month. Her mother and a man who was nearby jumped in to try to save the girl. All three drowned, illustrating how quickly one tragedy can multiply. "As little as six inches of water can actually sweep an adult away at the rate of speed that the water is traveling," said Chris Crowley, emergency manager for the county where Park City is located. In Reno, Nevada, rising temperatures that have accelerated snowpack melting prompted officials to erect a sign next to the Truckee River warning people to stay away from it.

In Idaho, snowpack at double normal levels have prompted warnings from officials that densely populated areas near the Boise River could flood. And in Wyoming, officials have placed sandbags and flood barriers to protect homes and public infrastructure from rivers and streams swollen with the snowmelt. On his first trip to Yosemite, cartoonist Andy Runton, 42, steered clear of the turbulent Merced River. He took a selfie at a safe distance from a grassy meadow with Yosemite Falls far behind him. Within a few hours of entering the park, Runton said the sweeping vistas and raging waterfalls had left a lifelong impression. "You can see the power of the water," Runton said. "You can feel it. Nature doesn't slow down."—AP

AT SEA: Dolphins jump in the Mediterranean sea.—AFP

—Photos by Salma Abdulla

Kuwait celebrates Worldwide Knit in Public Day

By Tammy Asad

More than 40 crafters including those who knit, crochet, do needlepoint, cross stitch, embroidery and other needle crafts gathered to celebrate Worldwide Knit in Public Day (WWKIPD). Begun in 2005 by Danielle Landes as a way to bring knitters together in public, the event is celebrated globally. Thanks to the efforts of Kuwait Crafters and organizer Bharti Chopra, Kuwait has officially taken part in WWKIP Day for the past three years. The Kuwait version of the WWKIPD has grown from eight attendees to more than three dozen who gathered on Saturday, June 10, 2017 at the Boulevard shopping mall to celebrate fiber arts and the joy of crafting with others.

Saturday's event brought crafters of many nationalities and different backgrounds, ages from 8 to 60+, together under one roof for the love of knitting, crocheting, and stitching. The Knit in Public Day slogan of "better living through stitching together" reinforces the well-documented benefits of crafting such as alleviating stress, anxiety and depression. It is also a means of showing the general public that crafting can be a community activity in a very distinct way.

Children can also benefit from learning needle crafts like knitting or crochet, which have been demonstrated to help with fine motor skills, reducing stress and even learning things like coding due to the ability to read patterns. Each Knit in Public event is organized by volunteers. Kuwait Crafters is proud to host this event and was pleased this year to welcome local entrepreneurs and small businesses Needles and Yarn, Zephyr, Whiskers and Yarn and Made by Mrs Q as prize sponsors. Crafters can learn more by searching for Kuwait Crafters on Facebook or Ravelry.

ABCK celebrates Ramadan with an Iftar

The American Business Council Kuwait (ABCK) hosted an Iftar with their members and invited Kuwaitis who had graduated from universities in the United States on Monday evening at the Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre in Salmiya. Dr Juliet Dinkha, Chair of ABCK, welcomed the members and distinguished guests to the Iftar and talked about the long history of Kuwaitis who were educated in the United States.

Alumni from the University of the Pacific, University of Miami, University of Dayton, Arizona State University, University of Chicago and West Virginia University were among the many guests. Representing the alumni from University of the Pacific was Eng. Faisal Al-Ragom, President of the Alumni Club, representing the University of Miami was Dr Anwar Al-Naki, President of the Alumni Club, and Reyadh Alrabeah, and representing University of Dayton was Hussain Al-Barimi, President of the Alumni Club.

ABCK also had the pleasure of having as a guest Jassim Qabazard, graduate of the class of 1972 from the University of the Pacific. Eng. Wael Al-Omar, a graduate of the University of the Pacific, Head of Department of Ministry of Justice was also a distinguished guest.

KFH hosts Ramadan Ghabqa for media

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) hosted its annual Ghabqa for media members as a token of appreciation for their efforts and instrumental role in enriching the media and the economy. Also, the Ghabqa comes as part of the bank's keenness to strengthen communication with media outlets. The media Ghabqa witnessed remarkable attendance of journalists and reporters from different media types; print, broadcast and digital media, along with a number of public relations and social media personalities.

The media Ghabqa included a range of exciting activities held in an interactive environment. It comes as one of KFH CSR initiatives for the holy month of Ramadan. Present at the event from KFH were Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh, Manager Media and Government Relations, Mohammed Al-Fares in addition to the Media and PR team.

Mohammed Al-Fares welcomed everyone to the Ghabqa and congratulated them on the occasion of Ramadan. He extended the bank's thanks and gratitude for their efforts in the media, yet hailed their important role in tracking news and highlighting different issues of interest to the society. He added that KFH attaches great interest in the media industry that has witnessed a paradigm shift while keeping abreast of technology and electronic developments. He said that KFH considers media members as partners in success.

Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh

Mohammed Al-Fares

OSN MOVIES ACTION

00:30 Tekken: Kazuya's Revenge
02:15 Dr. No
04:15 Beyond Redemption
06:00 Taken 3
08:00 Tekken: Kazuya's Revenge
09:45 Beyond Redemption
11:30 Dr. No
13:30 Taken 3
15:30 The Tower
17:45 Black Rose
19:15 Die Hard
21:30 Rivers Nine
23:15 Momentum

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:45 America's Cutest Pets
01:40 Up Close And Dangerous
02:35 Tanked
03:25 Killer Iq: Lion vs Hyena
04:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
05:02 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
05:49 Up Close And Dangerous
06:36 Gorilla School
07:00 Gorilla School
07:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
08:15 Up Close And Dangerous
09:10 Killer Iq: Lion vs Hyena
10:05 Tanked
11:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
11:55 America's Cutest Pets
12:50 Up Close And Dangerous
13:45 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
14:40 Killer Iq: Lion vs Hyena
15:35 Tanked
16:30 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
17:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
18:20 League Of Monkeys
19:15 Tanked
20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
22:00 League Of Monkeys
22:55 Killer Iq: Lion vs Hyena
23:50 Untamed China With Nigel Marven

BBC FIRST

00:10 Doctors
00:40 Prime Suspect: Tennison
01:30 Spooks
02:20 Spooks
03:15 Doctors
03:45 Doctors
04:15 Prime Suspect: Tennison
05:05 The Musketeers

09:20 Sweat Inc.
10:10 Bondi Ink.
11:00 Life Or Debt
11:50 Bondi Ink.
12:40 Disaster Date
13:05 Disaster Date
13:30 Lip Sync Battle
14:20 Bondi Ink.
15:10 Catch A Contractor
16:00 Sweat Inc.
16:55 The Jim Gaffigan Show
17:25 The Jim Gaffigan Show
17:50 Frankenfood
18:15 Frankenfood
18:39 Impractical Jokers
19:03 Disaster Date
19:27 Lip Sync Battle
19:50 Lip Sync Battle
20:13 Disaster Date
20:37 Disaster Date
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The President Show
22:00 The Jim Gaffigan Show
22:25 The Jim Gaffigan Show
22:50 Tosh.0
23:15 Lip Sync Battle
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

Discovery Family

00:30 Nextworld
01:20 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand
01:45 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand
02:10 Guinness World Records Smashed UK
03:00 What Happened Next?
03:25 What Happened Next?
03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
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 Bear Grylls Survival School
07:50 America's Cutest Pets
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Nextworld
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 America's Cutest Pets
12:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Storm Chasers
14:30 Kenny The Shark
14:55 Bear Grylls Survival School
15:20 America's Cutest Pets
16:10 Nextworld
17:00 Bondi Vet

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 The Lion Guard
08:15 PJ Masks
08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:05 Goldie & Bear
09:35 The Lion Guard
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
11:00 Little Mermaid
11:25 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
11:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
12:15 Gummi Bears
12:40 Miles From Tomorrow
13:10 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
14:30 The Lion Guard
14:55 Unbungalievable
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 And The Roadster Racers
19:05 PJ Masks
19:35 PJ Masks
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 Little Mermaid
22:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
22:55 PJ Masks
23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
23:35 The Hive
23:45 Loopdidoo

Discovery Channel HD

00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 The Island With Bear Grylls
02:00 The Wheel: Survival Games
02:50 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
03:40 Misfit Garage
04:30 Container Wars
05:00 How Do They Do It?

TAKEN 3 ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

06:00 Father Brown
06:50 Doctors
07:50 New Tricks
08:45 The Musketeers
09:40 Father Brown
10:30 Doctors
11:35 New Tricks
12:30 The Musketeers
13:25 Father Brown
14:15 Doctors
15:15 New Tricks
16:10 The Musketeers
17:10 Father Brown
18:00 Doctors
18:30 EastEnders
19:00 New Tricks
20:00 Kat & Alfie: Redwater
21:00 Maigret
22:35 The Kettering Incident
23:30 Doctors

crime & investigation network

00:00 It Takes A Killer
00:30 It Takes A Killer
01:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
02:00 Bill Cosby: The Women Speak
03:00 It Takes A Killer
03:30 It Takes A Killer
04:30 It Takes A Killer
05:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
06:00 I Love You...But I Lied
07:00 I Love You...But I Lied
08:00 Evil Up Close
09:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
12:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
13:00 I Love You...But I Lied
14:00 Evil Up Close
15:00 Homicide Hunter
16:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
18:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
19:00 Evil Up Close
20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
21:00 Homicide Hunter
22:00 My Haunted House
23:00 Paranormal State
23:30 Paranormal State

Comedy Central

00:05 Brotherhood
00:30 Brotherhood
00:55 Impractical Jokers
01:20 Impractical Jokers
01:45 Lip Sync Battle
02:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Life Or Debt
04:15 Disaster Date
04:40 Disaster Date
05:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
05:55 Bondi Ink.
06:50 Catch A Contractor
07:40 Lip Sync Battle
08:30 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol

17:50 Everest: Beyond The Limit
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 Bondi Vet
22:00 Everest: Beyond The Limit
22:50 What Happened Next?
23:15 What Happened Next?
23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor

ID

00:30 Six Degrees Of Murder
01:20 Casey Anthony: An American Murder Mystery
02:10 Grave Secrets
03:00 Who Killed Jane Doe?
03:48 I Almost Got Away With It
04:36 California Investigator
05:01 California Investigator
05:24 Deadly Affairs
06:12 Southern Fried Homicide
07:00 The Locator
07:25 The Locator
07:50 I Almost Got Away With It
08:40 California Investigator
09:05 California Investigator
09:30 Deadly Affairs
10:20 Southern Fried Homicide
11:10 Betrayed
12:00 The Locator
12:25 The Locator
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:40 California Investigator
14:05 California Investigator
14:30 Deadly Affairs
15:20 Southern Fried Homicide
16:10 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
17:00 The Locator
17:25 The Locator
17:50 I Almost Got Away With It
18:40 California Investigator
19:05 California Investigator
19:30 Deadly Affairs
20:20 Southern Fried Homicide
21:10 Vanity Fair Confidential
22:00 Betrayed
22:50 Murder Chose Me
23:40 Grave Secrets

Disney Junior

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

05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Gold Divers
06:50 Street Outlaws
07:40 Misfit Garage
08:30 What On Earth?
09:20 Garage Gold
09:45 How Do They Do It?
10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 The Island With Bear Grylls
11:25 The Wheel: Survival Games
12:15 Life After: Chernobyl
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 Garage Gold
13:55 Container Wars
14:20 Gold Rush
15:10 What On Earth?
16:00 Gold Divers
16:50 Misfit Garage
17:40 Street Outlaws
18:30 How Do They Do It?
18:55 How Do They Do It?
19:20 What On Earth?
20:10 Container Wars
20:35 Container Wars
21:00 Abandoned Engineering
21:50 Man vs Weird
22:40 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
23:30 Misfit Garage

Disney XD

06:00 Right Now Kapow
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 Atomic Puppet
13:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Mighty Med
14:40 Kirby Buckets
15:05 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
15:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
15:55 Right Now Kapow
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 Marvel's Guardians Of The Galaxy
22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
22:35 Boyster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

E! HD

00:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
00:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
01:50 E! News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Hollywood & Football
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 La Clippers Dance Squad
06:55 E! News
07:10 La Clippers Dance Squad
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 WAGs
10:05 WAGs
11:00 WAGs
12:00 E! News
12:15 Second Wives Club
13:10 Second Wives Club
14:05 Second Wives Club
15:00 E! News
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
18:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 E! News
20:00 Botched
21:00 Botched
22:00 Botched
23:00 E! News
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry

food network

00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Man Fire Food
01:30 Man Fire Food
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
07:00 The Kitchen
08:00 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
09:00 Siba's Table
09:30 Siba's Table
10:00 Bake With Anna Olson
11:00 The Kitchen
12:00 The Pioneer Woman
12:30 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Bake With Anna Olson
17:30 Bake With Anna Olson
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
20:00 Chopped
21:00 Kids BBQ Championship
22:00 The Big Eat - Middle East
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped

itv CHOICE

00:10 Pick Me!
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
03:25 Grantchester
04:20 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
05:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
06:10 Pick Me!
07:05 Who's Doing The Dishes?
08:00 Grantchester
09:00 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
10:00 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
10:55 Pick Me!
11:50 Who's Doing The Dishes?
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Pick Me!
15:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
16:00 This Is England '86
16:55 Safe House
17:50 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
21:00 This Is England '86
21:55 Safe House
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street

History HD

00:20 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
01:10 Alone
02:00 Swamp People
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Leepu And Pitbull
06:50 Duck Dynasty
07:15 Duck Dynasty
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
11:50 Duck Dynasty
12:15 Duck Dynasty
12:40 Swamp People
13:30 Ax Men
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Leepu And Pitbull
16:00 Storage Wars
16:25 Storage Wars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Alone
18:30 Swamp People
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Detroit Steel
21:50 Forged In Fire
22:40 Britain's Bloodiest Dynasty
23:30 American Pickers

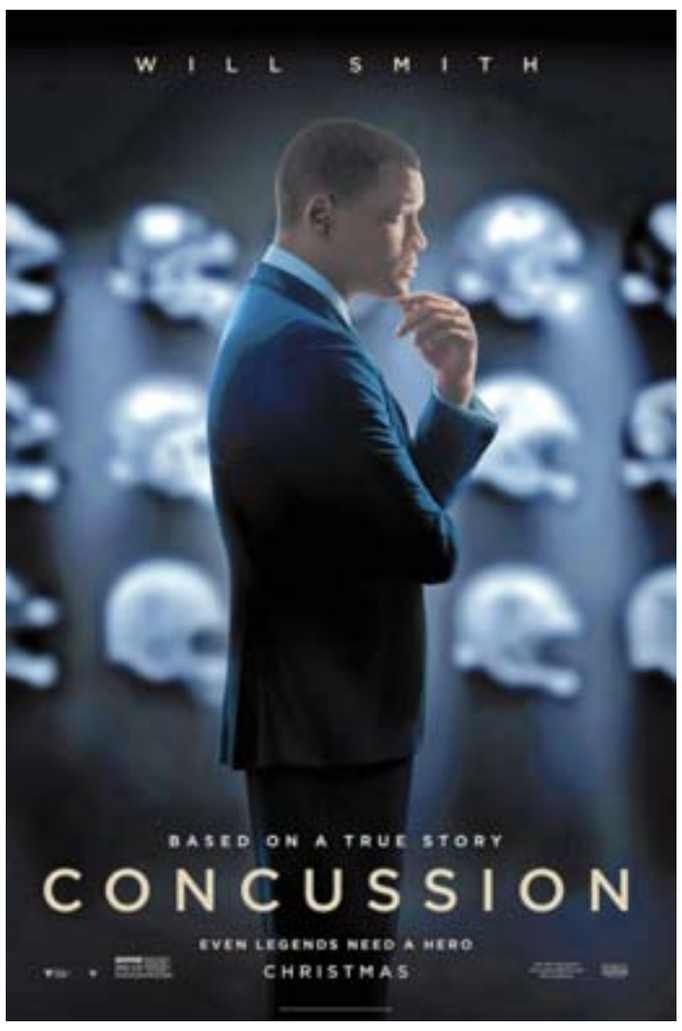
NAT GEO people HD

00:15 Places We Go
00:45 Eat Street
01:10 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
01:40 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
02:05 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
02:35 Mega Food
03:30 Rustic Adventures Italy
03:55 Miguel's Feasts
04:25 Miguel's Feasts
04:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
05:20 What's For Sale?
05:45 What's For Sale?
06:15 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
07:10 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
07:35 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
08:05 Mega Food
09:00 Rustic Adventures Italy
09:25 Miguel's Feasts
09:55 Miguel's Feasts
10:20 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
10:50 What's For Sale?
11:15 What's For Sale?
11:45 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
12:10 A Is For Apple
12:40 A Is For Apple
13:05 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
13:35 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
14:00 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
14:30 Mega Food
15:25 Miguel's Feasts
15:50 Miguel's Feasts
16:20 Island Hunter
17:15 What's For Sale?
17:40 What's For Sale?
18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
19:05 Miguel's Feasts
19:30 Miguel's Feasts
20:00 Island Hunter
21:00 What's For Sale?
21:30 What's For Sale?
22:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
22:55 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
23:20 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
23:50 Mega Food

National Geographic Channel HD

00:10 Monster Fish
01:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
03:00 Explorer
04:00 Monster Fish
05:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
06:00 Science Of Stupid
06:30 Science Of Stupid
07:00 Dog Whisperer
08:00 Evacuate Earth
09:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
10:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
11:00 Beast Hunter
12:00 I Wouldn't Go In There
13:00 Science Of Stupid
13:30 Science Of Stupid
14:00 Evacuate Earth
15:00 Dog Whisperer

THE BLIND SIDE ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL



CONCUSSION ON OSN MOVIES HD

16:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
17:00 Russia's Mystery Files
18:00 I Wouldn't Go In There
19:00 Evacuate Earth
20:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
20:50 Russia's Mystery Files
21:40 I Wouldn't Go In There
22:30 Evacuate Earth
23:20 Science Of Stupid
23:45 Science Of Stupid

NAT GEO WILD HD

00:20 Original Fight Club
01:10 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
02:00 Kings Of The Kill
02:50 Monster Fish
03:45 Hooked
04:40 Savage Kingdom
05:35 Kings Of The Kill
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 Hooked
08:20 Savage Kingdom
09:15 Battle Of The Swamp Dragons
10:10 Wild Case Files
11:05 Animal Fight Club 4.5
12:00 Call Of The Baby Beluga
12:55 Planet Carnivore: Perfect Killers
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 Monster Fish
15:40 Deadly Instincts
16:35 Turf War- Lions And Hippos
17:30 Wild 24
18:25 Animal Fight Club 4.5
19:20 Monster Fish
20:10 Deadly Instincts
21:00 Turf War- Lions And Hippos
21:50 Wild 24
22:40 Animal Fight Club 4.5
23:30 Call Of The Baby Beluga

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

00:05 Max Keeble's Big Move
01:35 Pirates Code: The Adventures Of Mickey Matson
03:15 The Wild
04:40 The Hunchback Of Notre Dame II
05:50 Max Keeble's Big Move
07:20 Pirates Code: The Adventures Of Mickey Matson
09:00 Nancy Drew
10:40 The Wild
12:05 Home On The Range
13:30 Frankenweenie
15:00 Gnomeo & Juliet
16:30 Snow Dogs
18:15 Hannah Montana Movie
20:00 True Heart
21:40 Gnomeo & Juliet
23:05 Frankenweenie

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

01:15 The To Do List
03:00 The Duff
04:45 Perfect Match
06:15 Ride
08:00 The Duff
09:45 Perfect Match
11:30 Ride
13:15 The Beautician And The Beast
15:00 Once Upon A Crime
16:45 Love, Rosie
18:30 7 Chinese Brothers
20:15 Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo
22:00 Barbershop 2: Back In Business
23:45 The Hot Chick

OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

00:00 We Are Many
02:00 The Blind Side
04:15 The Theory Of Everything
06:30 Jappeloup
08:45 We Are Many
10:45 The Theory Of Everything
12:45 Quiz Show
15:00 The Blind Side
17:15 The Sting
19:30 And Justice For All
21:30 The Manchurian Candidate
23:45 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

00:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
01:30 Lego: Scooby Doo Haunted Hollywood
03:00 Ducktales: The Movie
04:30 Winnie The Pooh
06:00 The Heart Of The Oak
07:30 Robosapien: Rebooted
09:15 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
11:00 Marco Macaco
12:30 Mamma Moo And Crow
14:00 Capture The Flag
15:45 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
17:30 Frog Kingdom
19:00 Yugo & Lala 2
20:30 Capture The Flag
22:15 Robosapien: Rebooted
23:45 Frog Kingdom

OSN MOVIES HD

00:15 Concussion
02:15 War Of The Worlds
04:15 Goosebumps
06:00 Concussion
08:00 Steve Jobs
10:00 Paddington
11:45 War Of The Worlds
13:45 Concussion
15:45 The Intern
17:45 Sherlock Holmes
20:00 Erin Brockovich
22:15 Inception

Discovery Science

00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Strangest Weather On Earth
02:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
03:00 Secret Space Escapes
03:48 Race To Escape
04:36 Strangest Weather On Earth
05:24 Mythbusters
06:12 How Do They Do It?
06:36 Food Factory
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 Race To Escape
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
09:50 Secret Space Escapes
10:38 Strangest Weather On Earth
11:26 Race To Escape
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
13:50 Secret Space Escapes
14:38 Race To Escape
15:26 Strangest Weather On Earth
16:14 NASA's Unexplained Files
17:02 Secret Space Escapes
17:50 How Do They Do It?
18:15 Food Factory
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 Invent It Rich
20:20 NASA's Unexplained Files
21:10 Fire In The Sky
22:00 Invent It Rich
22:50 Race To Escape
23:40 Mythbusters

TLC HD

00:20 Body Bizarre
01:10 Monsters Inside Me
02:00 Cake Boss
02:25 Cake Boss
02:50 Say Yes To The Dress
03:15 Say Yes To The Dress
03:35 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
04:20 Little People, Big World
04:45 Little People, Big World
05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
06:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
06:50 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
07:40 Oprah's Lifeclass
08:30 Little People, Big World
08:55 Little People, Big World
09:20 Suddenly Rich
10:10 Say Yes To The Dress
10:35 Say Yes To The Dress
11:00 Cake Boss
11:25 Cake Boss
11:50 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
12:40 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
13:30 Cake Boss
13:55 Cake Boss
14:20 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
15:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
16:00 Little People, Big World
16:25 Little People, Big World
16:50 Suddenly Rich
17:40 Say Yes To The Dress
18:05 Say Yes To The Dress
18:30 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
19:20 Cake Boss
19:45 Cake Boss
20:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
21:00 My 600lb Life
22:40 The Rarest Boy In The World
23:30 My 600lb Life

travel channel

00:00 Bizarre Foods America
01:00 Mysteries At The Monument
02:00 Going RV
02:30 Big Time RV
03:00 Booze Traveler
04:00 Bizarre Foods: Delicious Destinations
04:30 Bizarre Foods: Delicious Destinations
05:00 Bizarre Foods America
06:00 Mysteries At The Monument
07:00 House Hunters International
09:00 Going RV
09:30 Big Time RV
10:00 Hotel Impossible
11:00 Mysteries At The Monument
12:00 Texas Flip And Move
13:00 House Hunters International
15:00 Going RV
15:30 Big Time RV
16:00 Texas Flip And Move
17:00 Hotel Impossible

CLASSIFIEDS

Kuwait Times

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2017

Kuwait CINEMA

KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO THURSDAY (08/06/2017 TO 15/06/2017)

SHARQIA-1
Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) 10:00 PM
Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) 12:15 AM

SHARQIA-2 Seats-428
Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) 9:30 PM
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 12:30 AM

SHARQIA-3
MINIONS (Re Release) 9:45 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:45 PM

MUHALAB-1
Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) 9:30 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:45 PM

MUHALAB-2
RAABTA (Hindi) 9:45 PM
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 12:45 AM

MUHALAB-3
Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) 10:00 PM
Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) 12:15 AM

FANAR-1
RAABTA (Hindi) 9:30 PM
RAABTA (Hindi) 12:30 AM

FANAR-2
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL 10:30 PM
Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) 12:30 AM

FANAR-3
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 9:45 PM
Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) 12:15 AM

FANAR-4
Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) 9:30 PM
ALIEN: COVENANT 12:30 AM

FANAR-5
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 10:00 PM
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 11:30 PM
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 1:00 AM

MARINA-1
Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) 9:30 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:15 AM

MARINA-2
Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) 9:45 PM
Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) 12:30 AM

MARINA-3
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL 10:00 PM
Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) 12:05 AM

AVENUES-1
YO-KAI WATCH: The Movie 9:30 PM
ALIEN: COVENANT 11:30 PM

AVENUES-2
MINIONS(Re Release)-3D-4DX 10:00 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD (3D-4DX) 12:05 AM

AVENUES-3
THE BOSS BABY 10:30 PM
HERE ALONE 12:30 AM

AVENUES-4
ALIEN: COVENANT 10:15 PM
Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) 12:45 AM

AVENUES-5
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 9:45 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL 12:15 AM

AVENUES-6
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 10:00 PM
Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) 11:30 PM

AVENUES-7
Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) 9:30 PM
Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) 11:45 PM

AVENUES-8
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL 10:15 PM
Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) 12:30 AM

AVENUES-9
RAABTA (Hindi) 9:45 PM
THE EXCEPTION 12:45 AM

360°- 1
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 9:45 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 AM

360°- 2
Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) 10:15 PM
ALIEN: COVENANT 12:45 AM

360°- 3
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 9:45 PM
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 11:15 PM
Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) 12:45 AM

AL-KOUT.1
Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) 9:30 PM
Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) 11:45 PM

AL-KOUT.2
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 9:45 PM
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 11:15 PM
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 12:45 AM

AL-KOUT.3
Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) 10:15 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 AM

AL-KOUT.4
Safra 5 Njoom (Kuwaiti Film) (Re-Release 10:00 PM
Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) 12:05 AM

BAIRAQ-1
MINIONS (Re Release) 9:45 PM
THE BOSS BABY 11:45 PM

BAIRAQ-2
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL 10:00 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL 12:05 AM

BAIRAQ-3
RAABTA (Hindi) 9:30 PM
AL FERAN (KUWAITI) 12:30 AM

WANTED

Indian Sales Men
- Minimum 5 years' experience as a sales man in Kuwait.
- full knowledge of Kuwait market + Driving license and car .
- V good Salary + commission.

Coordinator (Lady)
- Good interpersonal skills & knowledge in computer.
- Good appearance, skill in secretarial job.
- With minimum 3 years' experience.

Accountant (Recent graduate)
- Transferable Residence.

- All candidates must attach recent personal photo
- P.S: No CVS will be accepted from board, only living in Kuwait

Send your C.V Email: careers@ntcq8.com

LOST

I, Ayesha Jaffar, Eshbelia Block 4 street 429 building no. 48, hereby inviting to the notice of the public that my certificate of BCOM examination 2014 with registration no. FFALBS0003 of Calicut University have been irrecoverably lost during transit from India to Kuwait as such I intend to apply for the duplicate certificate. If anybody happens to get the originals may kindly send the same or intimate the undersigned or the university. Ayesha Jaffar S/d.
(C 5321)
14-6-2017

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation For Filipino Bachelor ONLY Farwaniya block 1, near gulf-mart. Available on June 25,

Required
Data Entry Operator
with Shipping Line Experience to work U.S Army, Shuaiba Port
Email: **faisal@cts-kuwait.com**

Contact 94418396 or 94033908 **(12-6-2017)**

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	**03:13**
Shorook:	**04:49**
Duhr:	**11:48**
Asr:	**15:22**
Maghrib:	**18:48**
Isha:	**20:21**

Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

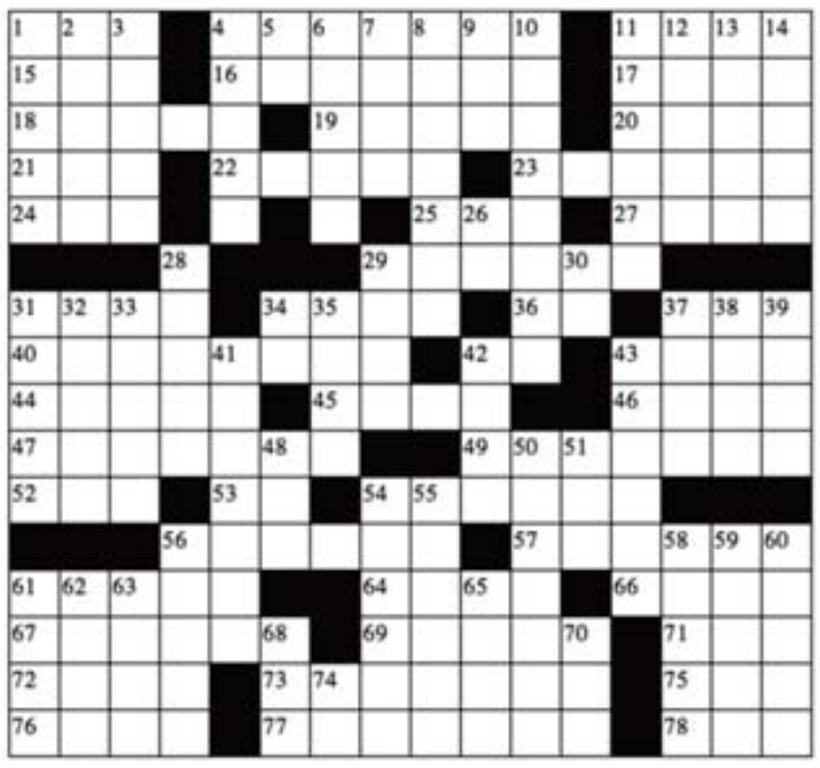
Arrival Flights on Wednesday 14/6/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	553	Alexandria	00:15
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:55
DLH	635	Doha	01:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35
RJA	642	Amman	01:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15
ICV	856	Luxembourg	02:45
KAC	418	Manila	02:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:40
KAC	544	Cairo	03:50
KAC	796	Madinah	03:55
CEB	018	Manila	04:00
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50
FEG	931	Alexandria	05:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50
BAW	157	London	06:05
THY	6562	Istanbul	06:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
IRC	6511	ABD	09:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
AXB	189	Delhi	09:45
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50
FEG	953	Asyut	12:55
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
KAC	514	Tehran	13:10
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	13:15
KNE	529	Jeddah	13:40
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55
IRC	6521	Lamerd	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
KAC	364	Colombo	14:15
KAC	618	Doha	14:20
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
KAC	304	Mumbai	14:55
KAC	692	Muscat	14:55
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05
OMA	645	Muscat	15:10
KAC	502	Beirut	15:25
KAC	412	Bangkok	15:30
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
SAW	705	Damascus	15:50
SVA	504	Madinah	16:00
RJA	640	Amman	16:00
MSR	E70	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
FDB	051	Dubai	16:15
JZR	535	Cairo	16:20
KAC	118	New York	16:25
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35
JZR	1777	Jeddah	16:35
NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
AZQ	4565	Baghdad	17:00
KAC	542	Cairo	17:05
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
JZR	177	Dubai	17:45
QTR	1080	Doha	18:05
KAC	616	Bahrain	18:20
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	512	Mashhad	18:40
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30
KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	620	Doha	19:50
KAC	104	London	20:00
OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
KNE	381	Taif	20:10
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15
MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
JZR	702	Taif	20:55
KAC	564	Amman	21:00
ETD	307	Dhabi	21:10
KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:15
ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
AIC	975	Goa	22:25
BBC	043	Dhaka	22:30
JZR	241	Amman	22:55
MSR	2614	Cairo	23:30
FDB	071	Dubai	23:35

Departure Flights on Wednesday 14/6/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
JZR	1540	Cairo	00:20
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
KAC	363	Colombo	01:55
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
MSR	619	Alexandria	02:35
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
PGT	831	Istanbul	03:10
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30
OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	417	Manila	04:20
JZR	560	Sohag	04:45
KAC	103	ondon	05:00
CEB	019	Manila	05:30
QTR	1077	Doha	05:35
KAC	303	Mumbai	5:50
FEG	954	Asyut	05:55
RJA	643	Amman	06:25
THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	501	Beirut	07:50
KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50
THY	6562	Hanoi	08:15
BAW	156	London	08:20
KAC	741	Riyadh	08:35
KAC	513	Tehran	08:45
KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	08:45
KAC	101	London	09:00
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
KAC	117	New York	09:15
KAC	691	Muscat	09:30
JZR	534	Cairo	09:30
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
IRC	6522	Lamerd	10:00
KAC	617	Doha	10:15
IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
JZR	1776	Jeddah	11:00
AXB	190	Delhi	11:05
MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
SYR	342	Latakia	12:00
AXB	890	Mangalore	12:05
KAC	511	Mashhad	12:45
IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
FEG	932	Alexandria	13:55
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30
IRC	6512	ABD	14:50
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KNE	382	Taif	15:00
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
KAC	615	Bahrain	15:10
QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
KAC	563	Amman	15:40
SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	619	Doha	16:00
JZR	701	Madinah	16:00
KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
SAW	706	Damascus	16:50
MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:50
RJA	641	Amman	16:55
SVA	505	Madinah	16:55
FDB	052	Dubai	17:05
KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
JZR	552	Alexandria	17:25
QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
JZR	240	Amman	17:30
KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	381	Delhi	17:50
NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	538	Cairo	18:30
KAC	785	Jeddah	18:45
AZQ	4566	GYD	19:00
QTR	1081	Doha	19:15
MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:35

CROSSWORD 1636



ACROSS

1. A lyric poet.
5. A mountain peak in the Andes in Bolivia (21,391 feet high).
11. A piece of information about circumstances that exist or events that have occurred.
15. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
16. Grammatical number category referring to two or more items or units.
17. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
18. The state of being decayed or destroyed.
19. An island in the Aegean Sea in the Saronic Gulf.
20. Concerning those not members of the clergy.
21. A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
23. (prefix) Coming after.
25. (informal) Being satisfactory or in satisfactory condition.
26. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
28. An industrial city in the Donets Basin.
31. The ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle.
33. Hormone secreted by the posterior pituitary gland (trade name Pitressin) and also by nerve endings in the hypothalamus.
34. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
35. Small genus of Australian shrubs or trees.
38. (informal) Of the highest quality.
40. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
42. Either extremity of something that has length.
43. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydrazid) used to treat tuberculosis.
44. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
46. A name for the Old Testament God as transliterated from the Hebrew YHVH.
48. An area of ground used for some particular purpose (such as building or farming).
52. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
53. A very prickly woody vine of the eastern United States growing in tangled masses having tough round stems with shiny leathery leaves and small greenish flowers followed by clusters of inedible shiny black berries.
54. Relating to or like or divided into areolae.
56. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
57. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
59. In such a manner as could not be otherwise.
60. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
63. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
67. The capital city of Vietnam.
69. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
72. Large high frilly cap with a full crown.
74. Loose temporary stitches.
76. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
77. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
78. Chop cut from a hog.
81. An open box attached to a long pole handle.
82. A major school of Buddhism teaching personal salvation through one's own efforts.
83. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.

DOWN

1. An outlying farm building for storing grain or animal feed and housing farm animals.
2. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
3. The German state.
4. Fairly small terrestrial ferns of tropical America.
5. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
6. A city in northwestern Syria.
7. A native or inhabitant of Yugoslavia.
8. Bristlelike process near the tip of the antenna of certain flies.
9. A blanket that is used as a cloak or shawl.
10. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
11. A family of languages of the Fula people of west Africa in the sub-Sahara regions from Senegal to Chad.
12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
13. (Greek mythology) The Muse of history.
14. A metallic tapping sound.
22. An informal term for a father.
24. Warm-blooded egg-laying vertebrates characterized by feathers and forelimbs modified as wings.
27. A Thraco-Phrygian language spoken by the ancient inhabitants of Phrygia and now extinct--preserved only in a few inscriptions.
29. Tall fan palm of Africa and India and Malaysia yielding a hard wood and sweet sap that is a source of palm wine and sugar.
30. Of or relating to near the ear.
32. A mass of ice and snow that permanently covers a large area of land (e.g., the polar regions or a mountain peak).
36. The cardinal number that is the sum of eight and one.
37. Large scissors with strong blades.
39. The 3rd planet from the sun.
41. Long-legged spotted cat of Africa and southwestern Asia having nonretractile claws.
45. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
47. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
49. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
50. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
51. A Russian river.
55. A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
58. Obsolete terms for legal insanity.
61. A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
62. A metal spike with a hole for a rope.
64. A cord fastened around the neck with an ornamental clasp and worn as a necktie.
65. In bed.
66. The 11th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
68. A law passed by US Congress to prevent employees from being injured or contracting diseases in the course of their employment.
70. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
71. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
73. Hawaiian dish of taro root pounded to a paste and often allowed to ferment.
75. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
79. A radioactive gaseous element formed by the disintegration of radium.
80. A substance produced by the hypothalamus that is capable of accelerating the secretion of a given hormone by the anterior pituitary gland.

Yesterday's Solution

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

STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

In taking care of business, it is important to stay focused. There is a sense of emotional coolness or detachment at the personal level. It is ideas that count for you now, more than narrowly personal concerns-and you may have little tolerance for people who do not function at this level. You do not waste words today as communications tend to be short and to the point. Take time to be specific and ask for feedback so that you can be sure you were clear in your instructions to others. Take care of every last detail by proofing, or if possible, exchanging your work with someone else and proofing the other's work. Develop and use your critical faculties. You are determined to complete your tasks. This evening is an excellent time to relax by music.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Inventions, in particular in communications, perhaps by updating computers and electronics, may be a path of temptation to move into some type of new profession. There are clear perspectives into your present reality, making situations easier to understand. You are tolerant and accepting of differences and have good insights into problems. Independent, you like to promote and compromise and otherwise show your desire and abilities to understand others. You may be unconventional in matters of philosophy and religion-always finding new ways to get past the fluff. You must understand, however, that your insights into truth and the eternal make you a loner at times. You seek to understand situations by finding new ways to better conditions.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time of good fortune when things open up in a very natural way for you. Opportunities are plenty and you may find yourself wanting and able to do almost anything. This is one of those days that everything blends together and results are the best they can be. Now . . . Here are some real opportunities to complete and work out difficulties and projects that require both long-term effort and a high degree of discipline. This is also a day that is good for most job-related events. You could represent or speak for your company at this time. Any personal matters you want to accomplish or business matters that need tending will also certainly end in positive ways. Tonight would be a good time to pal around with some of your friends-maybe sports.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are in control of your day, especially when interacting with superiors. You may find that you enjoy your job or the responsibility it requires. It is ideas that count for you now, more than narrowly personal concerns. You are at your most practical when it comes to dealing and working with others. You know just what to do and can act without haste. Your ideal dream is a private one and heaven is as close as work and family. The romantic in you struggles against the frontier spirit that often moves you to action. You will continue to develop a knack for organizing things and people as a sense of ambition and practicality deepens. Work, achievement and ambition mean a lot to you now-show off your skills.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your dreams and ideals are very important to you. You may be more focused on your goals now than ever before. You busy yourself putting those plans of yours to work. You will notice that you have become more focused in your work lately. This afternoon, when you show up early for a family get-together, they may be surprised as well as pleased that you broke free from your projects in order to be with them. You are intuitively learning your limits as well as implementing a balance in your life. There is time this evening for making a few special plans that will help you complete one or two of your goals. You may find yourself putting your whole heart into making your dreams and ideals a reality. Much can be accomplished without stress.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Saying or writing with style comes natural to you these days. New words to increase your vocabulary expertise can be a fun activity between you and a friend or co-worker. Your ability to discriminate real breakthroughs and spot new trends makes you able to work in areas that are at the very fringe of technology as well as psychology. You love all that is new and different and electronics, computers, communication-in fact, everything electrical is where your attention stays focused most of this day. There is a desire for variety this evening, particularly where it applies to romantic experience and artistic tastes. A sociable, congenial, slightly frivolous orientation sets in now. You will enjoy the interaction of friends tonight.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your career could assume a much more determined and solid form. This is a real time to buckle down and firm up your career goals. Your own ambition and drive are strong. You are able to use good reasonable thinking and make good choices. You can get a faster push forward by taking the right kind of action; you are positive and attentive. By working at a steady pace you will make a lot of progress. This afternoon you may find yourself advising or guiding another. Your spontaneity and unpredictability make you interesting to a group gathering this evening. You are independent and the way you come across to others creates an opportunity to teach and guide. You find some time to enjoy some simple exercise before retiring tonight.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find that a particular project is just not your cup of tea this morning. You take your turn and may have the opportunity to suggest a rotation routine so that you are not always called on to do things you do not want to do every day. A good sport attitude may be all-important just now. Outwardly you are intense and passionate and this quality is so essential to your character that all else revolves around it. This is what makes you popular when your work or personal partners want to move forward and get things accomplished. This afternoon you and your neighbors may decide that this next weekend would be perfect for a cookout. A meeting will be productive and allow everyone to pick what to bring, whose house and the theme or fun activities to enjoy.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are in tune with the practical issues in the workplace today. A firm sense of direction will help get you to your destination. This is a great time to be working in groups. You may be sought after as a guide or leader. You could be most persuasive with others and charismatic in speech and communication. You could come up with new solutions or inventions, and it is good that you are willing to listen to the ideas of others. It is ideas that count for you now, more than narrowly personal concerns. Family needs are important and there is no question about attending a family event this evening. Praise and support encourages a loved one to achieve the best. You are the cheerleader and the inspiration for your family and friends.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Be satisfied with the ordinary and usual for now. Novel ideas or insights could be more damaging than useful. There is hectic emotional energy prevailing, but it is only temporary. After the workday is over, you could be tempted to relieve stress by purchasing some items. There is a greater appreciation for things of value and the idea of value itself is in order. This could be a period of great material gain; it is certainly a time when material things have a great deal of importance for you. If you are on a budget, give yourself twenty-four hours before making your final purchase decision. You may be helpful to a friend or close relative this evening. You are able to find the real truth about a questionable situation.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Anyone who tries to get you to play with words is in for a big surprise. Your mind cuts right through all the window dressing and gets right down to the quick. Before anyone knows it, you have the heart of the matter out front for everyone to see. You would make a great investigator, either in scientific research or undercover work. It makes no difference. Your ability to get to the point is all but phenomenal. You can talk and put into words areas of the psychological that others would not touch. You have an urge to put out to sea and to somehow get past what separates and into that which unites or ties things together. Your drive to make dreams real keeps you working for your vision and goals. Consider volunteer work this week.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your successful optimism is obvious and therefore, catching. You see positive results from your hard work today. Family, home, relatives and real estate play a big part in your life now. Perhaps you have been planning a move and someone calls with information on just the right home for you. You work to show off your skills and you enjoy the praise you receive. This time marks a change of direction for you, away from the material and glitter, toward inner needs and security. Your intuition is strong and can guide you accurately in making forecasts or decisions; allow this to work for you. You will find yourself more concerned with maintaining and strengthening your position, rather than pushing outward. These next few months are for friends.

WORD SEARCH

Fantasy World 1

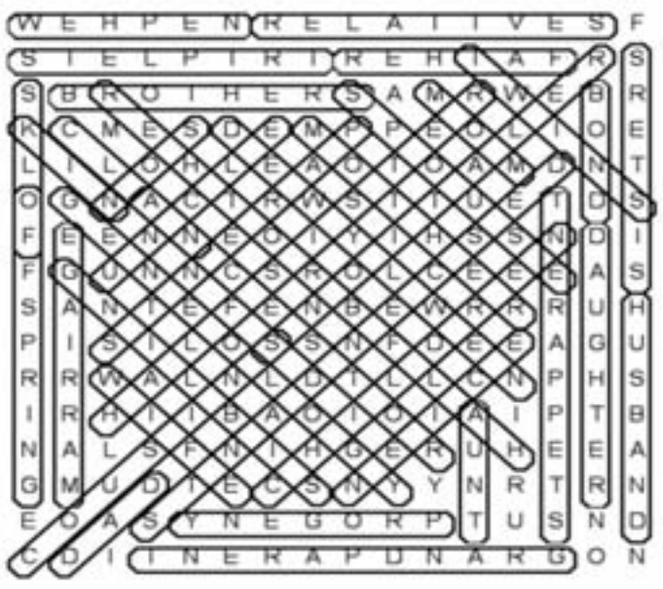
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining 17 letters spell the name of a popular fantasy book series.

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

ALE	ELVES	LANCE	QUEST
BATTLE	FARM	MACE	SERVANT
CASTLE	FOREST	MAGIC	SPEARS
CENTAUR	GIANTS	MINSTREL	SPRITE
CHALICE	GNOMES	MOAT	STEW
CROSSBOW	GOLD	OGRE	TOWER
CROWN	GUARDS	PEASANT	WARLOCK
DAGGER	HERD	PEDDLER	WEAPONS
DRAWBRIDGE	HORSE	POISON	WINE
DUNGEON	INN	PRINCE	WITCH

Yesterday's Solution

Family Ties



ANCESTOR	FATHER	MOTHER	SISTERS
AUNT	FOLKS	NEICE	SON
BOND	GENEOLOGY	NEPHEW	SPOUSE
BROTHERS	GRANDPARENT	NEWLYWED	STEPPARENT
CHILDREN	HALF BROTHER	OFFSPRING	TRIPLETS
CLAN	HALF SISTER	PARENTS	TWINS
COUSINS	HUSBAND	PROGENY	UNCLE
DAD	KIN	RELATIONS	WIFE
DAUGHTER	MARRIAGE	RELATIVES	
DESCENDANTS	MOM	SIBLING	

The hidden message is: FAMILY REUNION

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322

PHARMACIES
ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan	Fahaeel Makka St	23915883
	Abu Halaifa	Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd	23715414
	Danat Al-Sultan	Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1	24575518
	Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 92	24566622
Capital	Ahlam	Fahad Al-Salem St	22436184
	Khaldiya Coop	Khaldiya Coop	24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa	Farwaniya Block 40	24734000
	Ferdous Coop	Ferdous Coop	24881201
	Modern Safwan	Old Kheitan Block 11	24726638
Hawally	Tariq	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St	25726265
	Hana	Salmiya-Amman St	25647075
	Ikhlas	Hawally-Beirut St	22625999
	Hawally & Rawdha	Hawally & Rawdha Coop	22564549
	Ghadeer	Jabriya-Block 1A	25340559
	Kindy	Jabriya-Block 3B	25326554
	Ibn Al-Nafis	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St	25721264
	Mishrif Coop	Mishrif Coop	25380581
	Salwa Coop	Salwa Coop	25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

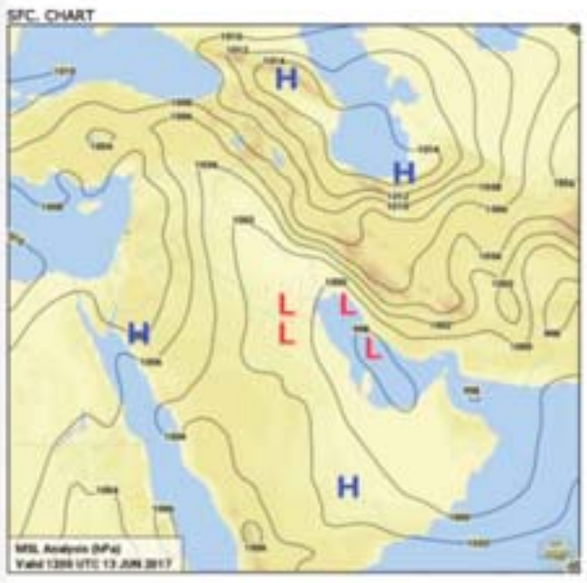
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours
Issued 13/06/2017-19:00 LT UTC +3hr

MIN Temperature 31 °C

By Night :Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h .

By Day : Very hot with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Expected Weather	Very hot	Very hot	Very hot + with a chance for rising dust over open areas	Very hot
Min Temp °C	31	30	29	30
Max Temp °C	49	48	48	47
Wind Direction	variable to northerly westerly	variable	northerly to northerly westerly	northerly easterly to variable
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 30	06 - 18	15 - 40	08 - 28

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches
no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C EXP	Max °C REC
KUWAIT CITY	34	49
KUWAIT AIRPORT	31	49
ABDALY	30	48
BUBIYAN	29	48
JAHRA	35	49
FAILAKA ISLAND	30	47
SALMIYAH	32	45
AHMADI	34	43
JAL ALIYAH	29	48
QAROH ISLAND	30	42
UMM AL-MARADEM	30	40
NUWAISIB	30	45
WAFRA	28	49
SALMY	29	48
MUTRIBA	29	50

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	47
Min Temp (°C)	34
Max Rel Hum (%)	23
Min Rel Hum (%)	08
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	50 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	04:48
Sunset	18:48

Tomorrow Prayer Times

Fajr	03:13
Sunrise	04:48
Zuhr	11:48
Asr	15:22
Sunset	18:48
Isha	20:21

INTERNATIONAL CALLS

Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Nigar	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists

Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223

Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)

Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daaory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426

General Practitioners

Dr. Mohamme Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae	25333501

Urologists

Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons

Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60

Family Doctor

Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581

Psychiatrists

Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0

Gynaecologists & Obstetricians

DrAdrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787

General Surgeons

Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148

Internists, Chest & Heart

Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians

Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maaroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282

Dermatology

Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955

Dentists

Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111

Neurologists

Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875

Gastrologists

Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist

Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924

Physiotherapists & VD

Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees	22666288

Rheumatologists:

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Carole King announces Tapestry: Live At Hyde Park release

Carole King is to release her iconic 'Tapestry: Live At Hyde Park' concert on CD, DVD and digitally. The 75-year-old music legend performed her seminal album 'Tapestry' live for the first time ever when she headlined Barclaycard presents British Summer Time Hyde Park in London in July last year. The 'It's Too Late' hitmaker - who was playing her first concert in the UK for 27 years - was welcomed onto the stage by a video tribute that included messages from Sir Elton John and Tom Hanks as her thousands of fans cheered wildly. In the clip that was broadcast, the 70-year-old 'Tiny Dancer' hitmaker said of the star: "She's the quintessential singer/songwriter. I can't thank her enough because without her I would have never wanted to write songs. I always wanted to write songs like Gerry Goffin and Carole King." Hanks, 60, added: "There wasn't a woman on the planet earth that, sometimes even your mum, who didn't take 'Tapestry' and hold the album to their heart and say, 'This is real.'" Now fans will be able to relive the live show, a moment in musical history, with the release of the package, which includes the entire concert and Carole herself giving fans an insight into the making her esteemed second record. Acknowledging the 45 years that have passed since the album's original release, King said at the concert: "So, this is what 74 looks like ... I'm old but I want you to know I'm OK with it." King's set was watched by a host of stars including One Direction's Niall Horan, Suki Waterhouse, Georgia May Jagger and her sister Lizzie Jagger, Dominic Cooper, Kelly Jones, Mel C and Will Young. 'Tapestry: Live At Hyde Park', which is being released via Legacy Recordings, a division of Sony Music Entertainment, and Rockingale Records on September 1.

GOMEZ HOPES BAD LIAR INTRODUCES FANS TO TALKING HEADS

Selena Gomez hopes sampling Talking Heads on 'Bad Liar' has introduced her fans to the legendary new wave band. The 24-year-old pop beauty received permission from the group's lead singer David Byrne, 65, to use Tina Weymouth's classic bassline from their 1977 hit 'Psycho Killer' on the song and is thrilled that they liked how it turned out. Asked about the track, she said: "It was just kind of one of those moments where it happened. 'Psycho Killer' is an amazing song and the bass line is totally separate from what the actual song is, but it is one of the those things where it either works or it doesn't work. And luckily, in this case, I think it came out really well, and it did it justice. And I really hope that some of my fans who maybe weren't really familiar with that kind of music would be introduced to that. So, it was exciting." The 'It Ain't Me' hitmaker has promised her fans - who are known as Selenators - that new tunes are "coming for sure" as she is making headway in the studio. She said: "I spent a year in the studio, and now I'm putting all of these pieces together, and it's coming a lot faster than people think. But that's what makes it great, because there's a little mystery to it, and it sounds so separate from everything else I've done. I mean, from the Kygo record, to 'Bad Liar' and the next thing that's after 'Bad Liar' is so separate from that, it's just me trying to figure out where it's gonna go. And I don't really have a set plan, but a lot of new music is coming for sure." The brunette beauty - who is dating 'Starboy' rapper The Weeknd - has admitted she needed some space to work out what she enjoys most in life as an actress, singer and as executive producer on hit Netflix series '13 Reasons Why'. She told iHeartRadio: "I kind of hovered away a little bit because I really tried to find the balance in my life. I think it's really important for me to figure out what makes me happy, and I don't really want to be all over the place. "I want to pick the things that I'm passionate about, and I want to make them great, and I think that's where I'm at in my life and in my career. So, I take the moments for myself."

Ed Sheeran to perform intimate gig for Capital

Ed Sheeran is to perform an intimate gig at KOKO London in Camden on June 20. The 26-year-old flame-haired hunk will perform at the venue, which holds just 1,410, for what will be one of the smallest shows he's played in a very long time. The show is part of the second gig in the 'Capital Up Close with Coca-Cola' series, which only Capital listeners will be able to win tickets to by listening to the radio station. The 'Supermarket Flowers' hitmaker is looking forward to performing in the British capital amid his extensive world tour in support of his record-breaking album 'Divide', as it feels like home. Ed said: "I love London, it's like coming home. I'm away a lot at the moment with the tour and I always miss the UK. The fans are incredible and I can't wait to play for Capital listeners at such an intimate venue." Ashley Tabor, founder & executive president of Global, said: "Ed Sheeran is an incredible talent and one of the biggest artists on the planet. He sells out arenas all over the world, so to have him perform in such an intimate setting just for Capital listeners is very special. We created 'Capital Up Close' to give hit music fans the chance to see the world's biggest artists up close and personal, kicking it off last year with none other than Justin Timberlake. This is going to be another incredible show!"

Eddie Vedder pays £22K for Pearl Jam to play past curfew?

Eddie Vedder reportedly signed a cheque for around £22,000 to continue Pearl Jam's concert after the curfew at Dublin's 3Arena on Friday night. The 'Better Man' hitmakers ended up doing a mighty 32 songs at the show and a fan has claimed the 52-year-old rocker paid the staggering amount to perform beyond the 11pm time limit. Eddie is believed to have walked off stage briefly to sort out the money before continuing to perform the rest of the set, which included Bob Dylan covers. A fan wrote on the group's forum on PearlJam.com: "A lad who works at the 3Arena said Eddie walked off stage and signed a cheque for 25,000 (£22,000) so he could keep playing." Meanwhile, the rock star recently revealed Beatles legend Sir Paul McCartney, 74, once punched him in the face by mistake when they were out drinking in a busy bar in Seattle, Washington, but he didn't mind his idol coming into contact with him and making him bleed. Speaking on SiriusXM on the new channel dedicated to the 'Let It Be' hitmakers, simply called The Beatles Channel, Eddie shared: "He kind of was illustrating how he hit this guy, and when he did that, he shot out his left arm as if he was hitting this guy, and I was standing there, and I got hit. "He hit me! He didn't quite pull back the punch, you see." On how he didn't want the moment to fade, he added: "I think I remember tasting a bit of blood. He got me right on the side of the [face]. "I remember it hurt for a few days, and I remember when it went away, and when the pain finally subsided and the swelling went down, I kind of missed it."

AEROSMITH CLOSE DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL

Aerosmith's Steven Tyler closed Download Festival with the support of his daughter Liv Tyler on Sunday night. The legendary rockers performed their biggest hits including 'Love in an Elevator' and 'Dude Looks Like a Lady' as the 39-year-old beauty sung along with her fiance Dave Gardner, 12-year-old son Milo - whom she has with ex-husband Royston Langdon - and her stepson Gray, nine, from the side of the main stage. The actress - who also has children Sailor, two and Lula-Rose, 11 months, with Dave - attempted to go incognito by rocking blacked out shades, but Steven kept going over and singing to his daughter. During the two-hour set of 18 songs, Steven, 69, dedicated 1973 classic 'Dream On' to the people who lost their lives and were affected by the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester. He said: "It is amazing how quickly a dream can turn into a nightmare, right? I'm so sorry for the nightmares England has gone through lately. Not to mention the ones that we all go through daily. But, remember when you dream good dreams, they are good for the whole world. Aerosmith is dreaming with. Dream on baby." Meanwhile, guitarist Joe Perry, 66, was on form and looked in good health despite last July's stage collapse mid-concert, after which he was hospitalized for dehydration and exhaustion. Highlights of the set included power ballad 'I Don't Want to Miss a Thing' as the clouds darkened the night sky and the finale of 'Walk This Way', which everyone was waiting for. The only thing missing to wrap up a great weekend of live music at the festival at Donington Park in Leicestershire, was a big fireworks display at the end of their set, like Biffy Clyro had on Saturday night. Earlier on in the day, heavy metal icons Slayer, Opeth and Clutch were among those who performed on the Zippo Encore stage. Throughout the festival fans were able to purchase their own official Download lighter at the Zippo Encore Area.

Nicki Minaj teases new music

Nicki Minaj has teased she has new music coming this month. The 34-year-old rapper hasn't released a studio album since 2014's 'The Pinkprint', and although she has had a range of singles this year including 'Changed It' and 'Frauds', the star has teased she has big plans for the rest of June. Speaking to DJ Whoo Kid on his 'Whoolywood Shuffle' show on Shade 45, Nicki simply said: "June is going to be a huge month for music, that's all I'm going to say." Meanwhile, it was revealed last month that the 'Anaconda' hitmaker was teaming up with Katy Perry to record a song called 'Soft Lips' for Calvin Harris' next album. And whilst all three artists have history with fellow musician Taylor Swift, sources insist the track won't be about the 'Blank Space' hitmaker. Calvin dated Taylor for 15 months until June last year, Katy famously fell out with her in 2012 after the blonde beauty claimed she pinched her backing dancers and Nicki had Twitter beef with her over the lack of black artists nominated for MTV Video Music Awards in 2015. Of the song, which will no doubt be a big hit, an insider said: "Nicki and Katy Perry have already been teasing 'Soft Lips' on social media. Although lyrically the song is not obviously about Taylor, it's no coincidence that these three artists all have come together. They have all had high-profile run-ins with Taylor and it won't have gone unnoticed by her." And the 'Super Bass' musician was also forced to make changes to her 'No Frauds' music video in March after footage she shot on Westminster Bridge in London was deemed inappropriate after the tragic news that three people were killed on the iconic landmark when a terrorist drove a car into pedestrians just one day after Nicki's shoot. A source said: "When everybody involved in the project heard the news they were devastated and thought it would be in bad taste to feature it. "The other London scenes will remain, but it's highly doubtful the bridge footage will make the cut."

The Lounge Kittens: Rossi was like fatherly figure on tour

The Lounge Kittens say Status Quo's Francis Rossi was like a "fatherly figure" when they supported the legendary rockers last year. The comedy rock trio - comprised of Jenny Deacon, Timia Gwendoline and Zan Lawther - got the chance to perform on the 'Rockin' All Over the World' hitmakers' 'Last Night Of The Electrics Tour' in December and have heaped praise on the 68-year-old singer and guitarist who looked after them as if they were his daughters and encouraged them before they went on stage. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz at Download Festival at Donington Park, Leicestershire on Sunday Zan said: "They were just lovely people. Francis [Rossi] is a bit of a fan. He was like this father figure on the tour. He would pop up and he keeps a lot of time for himself and obviously Rick wasn't there and he passed just after the tour finished. "Francis would be there when you wouldn't expect it. "Moments before we were going on stage at The O2, Francis appeared and was like, 'I'm really p***ed off girls there is not enough people out there to see you, they are all in the band.'" When they performed at The O2 in London, which seats 20,000 people, Francis apologized to them about the small amount of people who turned up to see them, but they were happy to even be performing at the famous venue. The pink-haired beauty said: "Even when there are only 10 people in The O2 it is still lots of people. We were fine. "He was there and ushering you onto the stage like he's got your back. Lovely guys." The girls were gutted that Status Quo's late rhythm guitarist Rick Parfitt, who died last Christmas Eve at the age of 68 as a result of a severe infection, was too unwell to perform on the tour and even more so when he passed away shortly after the tour ended. Zan added: "He was too unwell for the tour and he died the day after, it was a shame. But his presence was there."

GOSSIP

IAIN GLEN: MY COUSIN RACHEL KEEPS YOU GUESSING

Iain Glen's latest film 'My Cousin Rachel' will keep you "guessing". The 'Game of Thrones' star is starring alongside Rachel Weisz, 47, in the new film by Roger Miller which is based around the 1951 novel by Daphne Du Maurier and Iain, who plays Nick Kendall, says the story will "keep you guessing" in a good way. Speaking to website Collider, the 55-year-old actor said: "Your relationship to Rachel, played so brilliantly by Rachel Weisz, changes throughout. You become entranced and enticed by this exotic creature that comes in and turns things upside down and you spend the rest of the film thinking 'I've got a hold of it. I know what's going on. Wait, no I don't.' That's the psychological thriller that's at the heart of Daphne Du Maurier's writing." The film follows young Englishman Philip (Sam Claflin) who plots revenge against his mysterious cousin Rachel believing that she murdered his guardian. But his feelings become complicated as he finds himself falling under the beguiling spell of her charms and Iain claims the audience will also jump between liking the character and not trusting her. Iain said: "I knew that she was the great mistress of irresolution where nothing would become concrete and you'd be suspended throughout. "But in amongst that you feel like you understand and that you've just been given a clue which leads you to one conclusion. "But then before you know it, you're being dragged back into another conclusion. Rachel does that very well because you feel for her at times. "You feel her hurt sometimes, and then you feel her vulnerability but then you think she's being manipulative. "She plays it out very subtly throughout so that you're kept guessing."

Shiori Kutsuna cast in Deadpool 2

'Deadpool 2' has added Shiori Kutsuna to the cast. The 24-year-old actress is to star alongside Ryan Reynolds who is reprising his role as the wise-cracking anti-hero in sequel to the 2016 box office hit. Kutsuna - who starred in Lee Sang-il's 2013 remake of Clint Eastwood's 'Unforgiven' - has been cast in an as-yet unknown role, but her character is believed to be key to the action flick's plot. 'The Strain' star Jack Kesy recently joined the project as a main villain, believed to be Black Tom, an Irish mutant who wreaked havoc in the 'X-Men' comics as he had the ability to manipulate energy through plants and nature. Josh Brolin is also on board the project and has been cast as Cable, whilst Stefan Kapacic will reprise his role as Colossus and Brianna Hildebrand returns as teenage psychic Negasonic Teenage Warhead. Morena Baccarin will also return as Deadpool's love interest Vanessa Carlysle, and Leslie Uggams will reprise her role as Blind Al. When the 73-year-old actress was previously asked if she has a role in the second instalment, Leslie simply replied: "Definitely." Also recently cast for 'Deadpool 2' is 'Atlanta' star Zazie Beetz, who will play the role of Domino, a mutant who has developed telekinetic powers. David Leitch will direct the upcoming film in replace of Tim Miller who helmed the first movie from a script penned by the returning Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick. 'Deadpool 2' is scheduled to be released on June 1 next year. Kutsuna will soon be seen in comedy 'Oh Lucy!' alongside Josh Hartnett and a few months ago she wrapped shooting on crime drama 'The Outsider', which also stars Jared Leto.

Chris Evans got misty-eyed reading script for Gifted

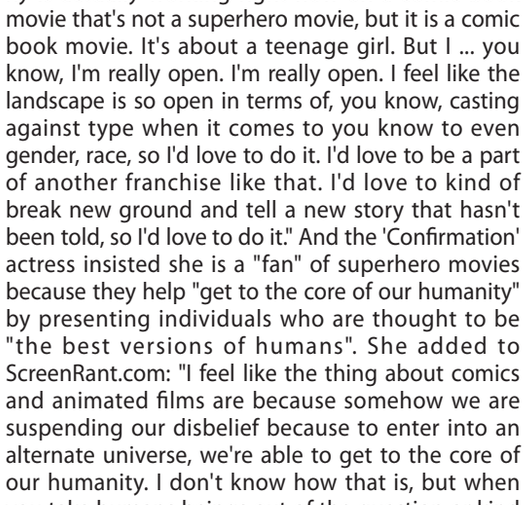
Chris Evans got "misty-eyed" reading the script for 'Gifted'. The 36-year-old actor admitted his character Frank Adler - who cares for his niece, a mathematical genius - is very different to both himself and his most famous alter ego, Captain America, but he could relate to having a "complex" family to deal with. He told Time Out magazine: "This is the kind of movie I would go and see. When I read it I got a little misty-eyed. "I have a very big, colorful family who are complex at times. With friends you can always say 'get off' but with family you have to make it work. "Captain America is so selfless and noble. Frank is a little bit more of a gorilla. "He bottles up his feelings. That's very much not like me so it's fun to play the opposite." Meanwhile, Chris' long-running contract with the Marvel Cinematic Universe is due to end after two more movies, and though he's looking forward to not having any "professional obligation" to stick to, he is expecting more tears when the time comes to say goodbye to his character. He said: "It's exciting to not have any professional obligation but it has been a wonderful sense of job security. "There will be tears when I have to hang up the suit." Like many Marvel characters, there is a huge array of Captain America-themed merchandise available, and while Chris admitted it was initially "weird" seeing his face on lunchboxes and pyjama sets, his mother is an avid collector. He said: "It was weird at first but now it's old hat. My mother has all of it. Her attic has turned into a museum of 'Captain America' memorabilia."

Richard Gere: 'Pretty Woman still has its magic'

Richard Gere thinks 'Pretty Woman' had a special "magic" to it. The 67-year-old actor - who played businessman Edward Lewis in the 1990 romantic comedy alongside Julia Roberts as his lover Vivian Ward - admitted the iconic movie isn't always "in his life", but he is regularly asked about it, and he believes its enduring popularity is down to a quality that can't be easily replicated. When asked if he hated talking about 'Pretty Woman', he said: "No, I am OK with it, I only talk about it in interviews. It is not in my life all the time. It has lasted because there is a magic to it that you can't repeat, it was a magic that came from that time, that place and the people involved. When it comes to choosing his roles, Richard - who was previously married to Cindy Crawford and Carey Lowell and has dated Priscilla Presley and Kim Basinger - compared the process to "falling in love" because it is just as instinctive. He told the Metro newspaper: "You're just drawn to it. It's like falling in love - you can't say why, you can just feel it." And the actor relished the chance to portray small time operator Norman Oppenheimer in 2016 political drama 'Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer' because it was such an unexpected role to be offered. He admitted: "With Norman I was surprised they asked me, it's not an obvious piece of casting. Everything about Norman is emotionally, physically and psychologically opposite to me. But I was like, 'OK, if you are open to trying to figure out how to make this then I am too'." But when it comes down to Hollywood success, Richard believes "luck" is just as vital a factor as talent. He said: "You have to have a certain amount of talent of or you are a non-starter but there is an enormous amount of luck. I don't think it's something you can actually make. In Buddhism we say 'causes and conditions'. You can't force it."

Washington wants superhero movie role

Kerry Washington wants to do another superhero movie. The 40-year-old actress previously starred as Alicia Masters in 2005's 'Fantastic Four' and its 2007 sequel 'Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer', and has said she'd "love" the opportunity to "break new ground" by telling a story which "hasn't been told". She said: "I would definitely be open to doing another superhero movie. My company is actually working right now on a comic book movie that's not a superhero movie, but it is a comic book movie. It's about a teenage girl. But I ... you know, I'm really open. I'm really open. I feel like the landscape is so open in terms of, you know, casting against type when it comes to you know to even gender, race, so I'd love to do it. I'd love to be a part of another franchise like that. I'd love to kind of break new ground and tell a new story that hasn't been told, so I'd love to do it." And the 'Confirmation' actress insisted she is a "fan" of superhero movies because they help "get to the core of our humanity" by presenting individuals who are thought to be "the best versions of humans". She added to ScreenRant.com: "I feel like the thing about comics and animated films are because somehow we are suspending our disbelief because to enter into an alternate universe, we're able to get to the core of our humanity. I don't know how that is, but when you take humans beings out of the question or kind of push them to the side, so how our themes with being the best versions of humans you can become more clear, so I'm into it. I love it. I'm a fan."



O'Shea Jackson Jr to star in Dock

O'Shea Jackson Jr is set to star in 'Dock'. The 26-year-old actor - who is the son of rapper and fellow movie star Ice Cube - landed his big break in 2015 starring in 'Straight Outta Compton' and the dark-haired hunk will continue to make waves in the film industry as he portrays the lead role of the baseball pitcher Dock Ellis in the upcoming biopic penned by Joseph Poach. According to Empire Online, O'Shea's upcoming project will see him depict the real life story of the late New York Yankees sportsman - who died in 2008 aged 63 - and his battle against racism in the Major League Baseball during the 1960s and 1970s. And the creative team believe O'Shea is the "perfect fit" to play the titular role. Speaking about the forthcoming project, producer David Permut, who will be backing the film with The Firm's Jeff Kwatinetz - said: "Joey Poach's script is one of the most heartfelt, honest and emotional pieces of material I've read in years, and I think the complexities of the character are a perfect fit for O'Shea." O'Shea's 47-year-old father - whose real name is O'Shea Jackson Senior - is also set to be on hand to produce the movie as he will be involved via his entertainment company Cube Vision. However, the production team are still searching for a film director to jump on board and help to create the movie, which is why a release date has yet to be confirmed. O'Shea is set for a busy year ahead as he stars in the comedy production 'Ingrid Goes West', which is set for release in November this year, as well as the 'Godzilla' follow-up that is slated to be released on March 22, 2019.

Death of Hayek's dog mirrored new movie's plot

Salma Hayek's world was rocked when her dog died and Donald Trump won the Republican nomination - events which mirrored the script of 'Beatriz at Dinner'. The 50-year-old actress plays the titular Beatriz in her latest movie, directed by Miguel Arteta and written by Mike White, and she explained that certain moments in the world and her life gave her a deeper understanding of the writer and the brilliance he'd created. Salma's beloved nine-year-old German Shepherd Mozart was shot dead by her neighbor in February 2016 after the pooch ran onto the person's land which is adjacent to the star's Washington state ranch where she lives with her husband Francois-Henri Pinault. Recalling how her canine was killed in an interview with Collider.com, she said: "Mike wrote this script before Trump won the Republican nomination but so many things that have happened in my life and in the world starting happening after I read this script. Trump wins the nomination and then my neighbor kills my dog and it all goes back to Beatriz for me. But the way the police and everyone around me behaved after my dog was shot I remember calling [director Miguel Arteta] and sobbing and saying to him, 'I am discovering a whole new America that makes me think that Trump is going to win.' " Describing Mike as a "visionary", Salma also referenced a scene in which John Lithgow's character Doug Stutts boasts of a safari trip - pointing out he later saw a photo of President Trump's sons with a dead leopard on a hunt of their own. She added: "I read all of this a year and a half ago. My birthday is in September, so this would have been September 2015 when I read it and one after another all of these things have happened in America and in my life that were in the script."

In this June 17, 1967 photo is the scene on the football field at Monterey Peninsula College where over 20,000 people camped during the Monterey Pop Festival in Monterey, Calif. — AP photos

In this June 18, 1967 file photo, Jimi Hendrix performs at the Monterey Pop Festival in Monterey, Calif.

In this June 18, 1967 photo, Roger Daltry, left, and Keith Moon, right, of The Who perform at the Monterey Pop Festival in Monterey, Calif.

In this June 16, 1967 photo, co-producer John Phillips, left, talks with Alan Pariser, right, at the Monterey Pop Festival in Monterey, Calif.

In this June 17, 1967 photo is the scene on the football field at Monterey Peninsula College where over 20,000 people camped during the Monterey Pop Festival in Monterey, Calif.

In this June 18, 1967 photo, Pete Townshend of The Who smashes his guitar after their performance at the Monterey Pop Festival in Monterey, Calif.

Backstage beefs, onstage magic: Monterey Pop 50 years later

Before Burning Man and Bonnaroo, Coachella and Lollapalooza, Glastonbury and Governors Island, there was Monterey Pop. Fifty years ago this week, the three-day concert south of San Francisco became the centerpiece of the "Summer of Love" and paved the way for today's popular festivals. The Monterey International Pop Festival created the template for giving emerging artists exposure alongside blockbuster bands while showcasing different genres of music in outdoor settings. John Phillips of The Mamas & the Papas came up with the idea for three days of music with proceeds going to charitable causes. He brought in Grammy-winning record producer Lou Adler, promoter Alan Pariser and publicist Derek Taylor, who worked with the Beatles. The festival was planned in just seven weeks with the goal of validating rock music as an art form in the same way that jazz and folk were regarded in 1967.

"The focus was the music and how to present it in the best possible way," Adler said recently at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles. "The byproduct of that was the feeling that took place in Monterey - love and flowers." Organizers sought out the best musicians, sound and lighting systems and food "in order to lift the level of what rock 'n roll should be," Adler said. They signed on Jefferson Airplane, The Who, the Grateful Dead, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Simon & Garfunkel, Big Brother and the Holding Company featuring Janis Joplin, Otis Redding, Ravi Shankar, and The Mamas & the Papas.

Drug-related problems

"We sort of had our pick," Adler recalled, noting no one booked acts that far out at the time. It was Shankar's introduction to an American audience, and the Indian sitar player was the only one who got paid, Adler said. He received $3,000, while the others had their flights and hotels comped. "Everybody just wanted to play and that's why they signed on," Adler said. Below the single stage that hosted 32 acts was a 24-hour cafe serving the artists steak and lobster. The organizers also set up a first-aid clinic for concertgoers and help for drug-related problems.

"If the artist is happy and the audience is comfortable, then that's a start," Adler said. "If the audience can give back to the performer, then that's a chemistry that is hard to beat." Adler's favorite performance was by soul singer Redding, who died six months later in a plane crash. Redding was backed by Booker T. and the MGs. Bandleader Booker T Jones was 22 and "an innocent guy" at the time, he recalled. "There we were in our green mohair suits and ties and our white shirts and there was everybody else with long hair and smoking," Jones said by phone from his Nevada home. "I had never smoked stuff before. There's all this stuff in the air. I got the contact high."

In this June 17, 1967 photo shows two women at the Monterey Pop Festival in Monterey, Calif.

Destroying guitars and amplifiers

Jones and his band were escorted to the show by the Hells Angels motorcycle gang. "I remember the music impressing me," he said. "We'd only been doing R&B. I learned to love rock 'n roll during that time." Backstage, the era's peace and love vibe didn't extend to Hendrix and Pete Townshend of The Who. Both were known for destroying guitars and amplifiers. Adler recalled that neither wanted the other to perform first, so Phillips flipped a coin. The Who won.

"Hendrix jumped upon a table and said, 'OK, you little (expletive)," Adler recalled. "No matter what you do, I'll do something that burns you.'" Aware that The Who planned an explosive finale, Hendrix capped his set with a version of "Wild Thing," kneeling over his guitar and setting it on fire before smashing it repeatedly and tossing the remains into the crowd. Not all the biggest names of the day played Monterey. The list of cancellations and no shows was equally impressive, including the Rolling Stones (Mick Jagger and Keith Richards couldn't get work visas because of drug arrests), the Beatles, the Beach Boys, the Kinks, and Bob Dylan.

Festival's golden anniversary

Two years later, Adler got a call asking if he wanted to help put together Woodstock on a farm in upstate New York. He declined. Held at the Monterey County Fairgrounds, attendance numbers vary from 25,000 to 90,000 people, easily tripling the county's population. It was a one-time only event because by the next year things had changed. Adler cites money issues and "angry people who didn't like that hippies were in their town." The festival is featured at the Grammy Museum in a new exhibit called "Music, Love and Flowers 1967" that runs through Oct 22. Monterey Pop spawned an eponymous nonprofit foundation that donates to musical and humanitarian efforts in the names of the festival's original performers. Its money comes from video and audio profits generated by the festival.

The festival's golden anniversary will be celebrated June 16-18 at the Monterey Fairgrounds. The lineup includes three acts that played the original: Eric Burdon and the Animals, Booker T Stax Revue and Phil Lesh. Others artists include Leon Bridges, Gary Clark Jr, The Head and the Heart, Jack Johnson and Norah Jones (Shankar's daughter). Three-day tickets cost from $295 to $695 for a VIP package. The original prices ranged from $3 to $6.50. Fifty years later, Adler is in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, having worked with some of music's biggest names. Today, the white-haired, beret-wearing 83-year-old is best known as Jack Nicholson's seatmate at Los Angeles Lakers games. He regularly attends Coachella in the Southern California desert, still imbued with the easygoing spirit of Monterey. "I couldn't have asked for more," Adler said. "We're still talking about it." — AP

LATE PUNK PIONEER ALAN VEGA'S ALBUM DUE NEXT MONTH

The first track from a posthumous album of punk pioneer and Suicide singer Alan Vega was released on Monday, featuring his signature style of abrasive nihilism. Vega's wife and artistic collaborator Liz Lamere said the album, "IT," would follow on July 14 to mark the anniversary of his death last year at age 78. The first single, "DTM," features Vega reciting a stream-of-conscious set of dark thoughts from "goodbye dreams" to "living in the home sewer."

"DTM-Dead to me," he repeatedly states over a grinding guitar and jarringly incessant beat. Vega found inspiration for the album by "religiously consuming global news and taking frequent late-night walks alone throughout the streets of downtown New York," Lamere said in a statement. "He understood we can't control much of what happens to us, or in our world, but we have free will and the power to go on and stand for what we believe in," she said in a statement. Vega and his band Suicide were one of the defining if controversial voices of the US underground in the 1970s and were credited with popularizing the term "punk."

Initially with no songs in any traditional sense, Vega would pound a cheap keyboard and shout aggressively at small New York clubs as he physically confronted the audience, who often pelted him with chairs. Vega proved to be an inspiration for gloomy post-punk rockers in both the United States and Europe but also has been cited as an influence by more mainstream musicians including Bruce Springsteen. Vega was prolific in his solo work but slowed down after a stroke in 2012. His last album was 2010's "Sniper," full of gloomy ambient effects by Vega and the French musician and director Marc Hurtado. — AFP

This file photo taken on April 17, 2008 shows Alan Vega performing at the John Varvatos 315 Bowery opening party to benefit VH1 save the music in New York City. — AFP

'Wonder Woman' buries 'The Mummy' at box office

This image released by Warner Bros Pictures shows Chris Pine, left, and Gal Gadot in a scene from, "Wonder Woman." — AP

Superhero movie "Wonder Woman" maintained its lead at the North American box office over the weekend pulling in $58.5 million and burying newcomer "The Mummy," industry figures showed. The action film starring Gal Gadot has grossed an impressive $206.3 million in domestic ticket sales in two weeks, placing it in the top tier of movies that have managed to maintain such a lead at the box office. Gadot, of the "Fast and Furious" series, plays an Amazonian goddess-princess-superhero whose lasso, bracelet and tiara have magical powers. Universal's "The Mummy," starring Tom Cruise, placed second, falling well below industry expectations.

Industry tracker Exhibitor Relations said the movie, the latest revival of the original "Mummy" made in 1932, took in a disappointing $31.7 million in its first weekend. The film, which cost $125 million, has been widely panned by critics. It managed nonetheless to make a strong showing overseas, grossing $141.8 million in ticket sales in 63 international markets, the largest opening ever for a Cruise film, according to Boxofficemojo.com. In third on North American screens was DreamWorks Animation's "Captain Underpants," based on the popular children's books by Dav Pilkey. The film, which tells the story of two students who hypnotize a school principal to believe he is a superhero, took in $12.2 million for the weekend.

Next was Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales," the latest installment in the popular franchise starring Johnny Depp as a dread-locked pirate, at $10.7 million. Fifth spot went to another Disney production, "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2," at $6.3 million. The lighthearted tale about misfit space adventurers played by Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana, Bradley Cooper and Vin Diesel has taken in more than $366 million domestically since it opened on May 5. — AFP

Auerbach taps veteran acts in Nashville for solo album

The recording of Dan Auerbach's new solo album was so magical he wanted to film the process, which included him collaborating with some of the most veteran session musicians of all time. But Auerbach also felt that he needed to keep his recipe safe. "We filmed it, but I didn't like it. I mean, I don't like to give up my secret sauce. But at the same time, it felt so special, I wanted to document it," Auerbach said in a recent interview. "Waiting On a Song" was recorded last summer in Auerbach's studio in Nashville, Tennessee, featuring musicians like Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Duane Eddy, 14-time Grammy winner Jerry Douglas and Johnny Cash's former bass player Dave Roe. The Black Keys leader and producer approached songwriting differently this time, adopting the normal style in Nashville.

He called the switch "life-changing." "We got into this schedule where we'd write Monday through Wednesday, and we'd record Thursday through Saturday every week," he said. "It was really amazing. And I sort of haven't stopped. ... It's just something I'm planning on keeping a part of my diet." In an interview with The Associated Press, Auerbach - a nine-time Grammy winner - discussed the making of his second solo album, which was released this month and includes musicians such as David "Fergie" Ferguson, John Prine, Bobby Wood and Gene Chrisman of the Memphis Boys, Pat McLaughlin, Kenny Malone and Russ Pahl.

Associated Press: Did you feel any pressure while working with those seasoned acts?

Auerbach: I think you kind of rise to the occasion or you don't get it done. ... Because we're all there to serve the song, that's what's most important, and that's kind of the common thread between all of us.

AP: How did being in Nashville shape the album?

Auerbach: (Nashville) supports the music business, whether you like the music or not, it's the music business there. So it affords a lot of musicians to live comfortably in Nashville and I get to benefit from that because all those guys are there and I get to tap into that energy and do some really creative recording at my studio with these guys who love it.

AP: You moved to Nashville from Ohio in 2010. Do you plan to stay for a while?

Auerbach: I don't ever wanna leave. They had a hard time getting me here (to New York).

AP: The album has an old-school soul and R&B feel, especially "Stand By My Girl."

Auerbach: I mean, Bobby Wood and Gene Chrisman who play on the record played on "Natural Woman" by Aretha (Franklin), "I'm in Love" by Wilson Pickett, "Son of a Preacher Man" by Dusty Springfield - some of the greatest soul records of all-time. That's the thing, it doesn't sound like it, it is it. Those guys are the sound of those records - it's them. It's hard to kind of sometimes wrap my head around it. Like, what you're hearing doesn't sound like a style, it is the root of the style, because the guys who invented it are playing it (on my album). It was kind of a trip when you're there having Duane Eddy play a guitar solo and it's like, 'Man, that sounds like (Duane Eddy). Oh man, it is Duane Eddy.' (Laughs.)

AP: It's just that most people don't know their names.

Auerbach: Of course, and that's always how it's been. In actuality when you look at most of the records that have been popular in the history of American music, it's really just a handful of musicians that made all those records. Motown/Stax, Wrecking Crew, Philly, there were just little camps that made all these records, and I'm just lucky to have a few of those guys in my stable now that work at the studio all the time and have become a part of my process.

AP: How are you balancing your bands the Black Keys and the Arcs, solo stuff and also producing for others?

Auerbach: ... I just work all the time. But it's easy because I like it. I have the studio down the street from my house. I have all these great people. It's a joy really. I love it. It's my hobby and my profession. — AP

In this May 15, 2017 photo, Dan Auerbach poses for a portrait in New York to promote his solo album, "Waiting On a Song." — AP

This photograph shows a general view of the Refuge of Tongerlo Abbey, home of Royal tapestry manufacturers De Wit in Mechelen. — AFP photos

Specialist restorers work on an old tapestry at the Royal Manufacturers De Wit in Mechelen.

Bobbins of thread lie arranged in order ready to be used in the restoration of old tapestries.

Restored tapestries are displayed at the Royal Manufacturers De Wit.

Restored tapestries are displayed at the Royal Manufacturers De Wit.

An old tapestry is cleaned at the Royal Manufacturers De Wit.

Bringing ancient tapestries back to life in Belgium

'In the industry, you can't find the right colors'

The painstaking job of restoring some of the world's finest ancient tapestries, stitch by stitch, is not for the highly strung or restless. Returning to its former glory the kind of creation that adorns a cathedral wall or is displayed at a world-renowned museum can take more than a year for tapestry restorers at Royal Manufacturers De Wit. Tucked away in an elegant medieval monks' residence in Belgium, head restorer Veerle De Wachter and her white-coated, all-female team of 15 labor away with needle and thread, adding thousands of stitches to a single piece. "Someone who is nervous or excitable would never manage it," she tells AFP, seated in front of a vast wall stacked with bundles of thread, a colorful reminder of the days when the company produced its own tapestries.

The work calls for a demanding degree of focus, knowledge of fabrics and thoroughness, she adds. "You need a calm person, who can work in a concentrated manner without being distracted with what's going on around them." As well as the traditional meticulous craftsmanship, resuscitating the faded scenes and preparing them for the future ravages of time requires modern technology.

Million-dollar project

Museums such as the Louvre in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg entrust the restorers with their finest pieces in cotton and silk, some with strands of silver and gold. Based in the northern Flemish town of Mechelen, the Royal Manufacturers De Wit was founded 1889 and is currently the biggest restorer of old tapestries in the world, based on the value of the pieces it restores. These have included legendary works like "The Lady and the Unicorn", a series of six tapestries woven in wool and silk in Flanders in the Middle Ages, on display at the Cluny museum in Paris. There is also a collection of 29 enormous tapestries from Saint John's Co-Cathedral in Malta which the restorers have been gradually working through over the past dozen years in a project estimated at around one million dollars. Difficult to transport due to their enormity, the 17th century Flemish tapestries have been sent to Royal Manufacturers De Wit in pairs. First cleaned of dust, the artworks are then washed with an enormous spraying machine. Only once they are dried do the restorers set about their work.

New techniques

Restoration overtook tapestry making as the mainstay of the business about 40 years ago. "At the end of the 1970s weaving workshops had a very hard time because tapestries were too expensive and no longer in fashion," says Yvan Maes De Wit, great-grandson of the firm's founder, accounting for the shift towards restoring and conserving historic tapestries. The company came up with new cleaning techniques, using a combination of suction and spraying to protect the fibres against strain. Washing dyed cloth is a very risky step in the restoration process, as cotton often frays and silk disintegrates over time and in light.

A specialist restorer works on an old tapestry.

'Luminous, infinite' colors

The restorers have also had to develop expertise in removing huge tapestries from their hanging places, a delicate task given their size, weight and fragility. De Wit recalls the stress of a "very dangerous operation", to remove a nine-meter by 14-metre (30-foot by 46-foot) tapestry suspended 25 meters high in the entry hall of the United Nations building in New York, using "gigantic scaffolding". Meanwhile, his team of restorers, silently hunched over their work, seated on benches in a vast white room, is known, above all, for having an "eye for color".

The company makes its own silk and cotton threads to match the original historic colors as closely as possible. "In the industry, you can't find the right colors," says De Wachter. "So we have to dye them ourselves in our laboratory, with colors which have a high luminosity. That way we can produce infinite combinations." — AFP

A specialist restorer threads a needle as she works on an old tapestry.

A specialist restorer works on an old tapestry.

Bobbins of thread lie arranged in order ready to be used in the restoration of old tapestries.

A specialist restorer works on an old tapestry.

A specialist restorer works on an old tapestry.

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Chinese artist Liu Bolin takes part in a performance with trash pickup by children on beaches, at the headquarters of the Surf Rider Foundation association in Biarritz, southwestern France. — AFP

Picasso's tiny apology portrait for lover to go on sale

A tiny portrait which Pablo Picasso set into a ring to appease his lover Dora Maar after an argument will go under the hammer at Sotheby's London auction house next week. The piece of jewelry was created by the great Spanish artist after he berated Maar for convincing him to trade an artwork for a ruby ring, prompting her to throw it into the River Seine.

While Maar later searched unsuccessfully for the discarded ring, Picasso went to work on creating a replacement with a miniature portrait of his muse which he set into a ring encircled with flowers. "Picasso has depicted a world on a scale so intimate you can hold an entire artistic vision on your finger," said Thomas Bompard of Sotheby's London. Despite their relationship breaking down, Maar kept the ring until her death in 1997. It is expected to fetch up to £500,000 (RM2.6 million) when it is auctioned on June 21. French artist Maar was influential in Picasso's life as he responded to the Spanish Civil War, most famously with his "Guernica" mural following the bombing of the town.

In his "Femme en pleurs" portrait, of a weeping woman following the devastating bombing raids, Picasso depicts a distraught Maar. His muse became "the tragic embodiment of human suffering, her highly strung temperament fitting her for this role", as Picasso depicted war-torn Europe, according to a recent exhibition of Picasso's work at London's National Portrait Gallery. Picasso continued seeing other lovers during his relationship with Maar and the pair separated in 1946. Last month one of Picasso's portraits of Maar, "Femme assise, robe bleue", sold for US$45 million at Christie's in New York. Back in 2006 his "Dora Maar au chat" portrait fetched US$95.21 million at Sotheby's in New York. — AP

A model poses with an oval shaped ring designed by Pablo Picasso, during a photocall at Sotheby's auction house in London. — AFP photos

EINSTEIN LETTERS ON MCCARTHY, ISRAEL GO UP FOR AUCTION

A collection of letters written by Albert Einstein is set to go to auction next week, offering a new glimpse at the Nobel-winning physicist's views on God, McCarthyism and what was then the newly established state of Israel. The five original letters, dated 1951 to 1954 and signed by Einstein, reveal a witty and sensitive side of the esteemed scientist. They were sent to quantum physicist David Bohm, a colleague who fled the United States for Brazil in 1951 after refusing to testify about his links to the Communist Party to the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Bohm's widow's estate put the documents on the block after she passed away last year. One of the yellowing pages, bearing Einstein's signature and embossed seal, and a handwritten general relativity equation, opens at $8,000 and is expected to sell for at least twice that. In all, the collection is expected to fetch over $20,000. Einstein and Bohm became friends when they both worked at Princeton University. Their letters touch on quantum physics, the nature of the divine and Bohm's miserable time in Brazil.

'The present state of mind'

"If God has created the world his primary worry was certainly not to make its understanding easy for us," Einstein assured Bohm in February 1954, a year before his death. In another letter from February 1953, Einstein compares "the present state of mind" of America gripped by McCarthyist anti-Communism to the paranoia in Germany in the early 20th century under Kaiser Wilhelm II. Republican Sen Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s led a hunt for alleged communist traitors he believed worked in the government and the army.

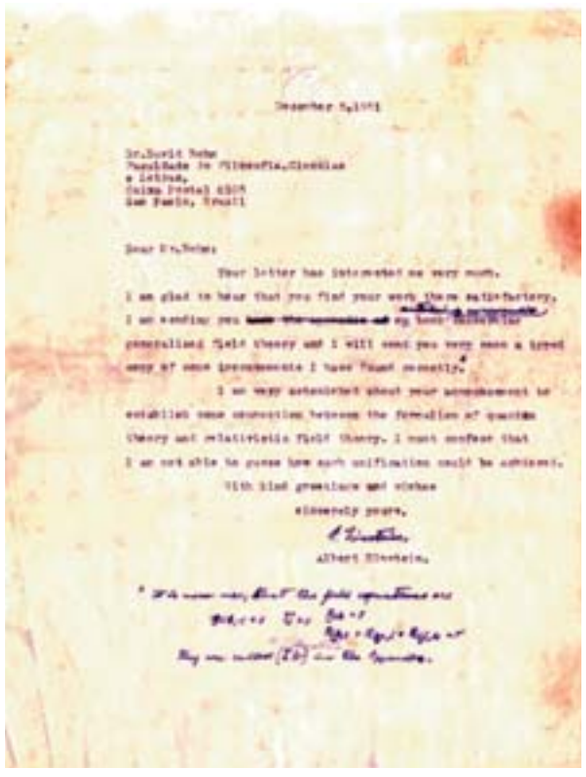
Bohm, who left the United States in the midst of the so-called Red Scare, conveyed dismay and displeasure about living in Brazil, where he was working at the University of Sao Paulo. He said he had trouble adjusting to the local food. Einstein, then 75, offers sympathy to his younger colleague for the "instability of your belly, a matter where I have myself extended experience." He suggested getting a good cook. Einstein said the foreseeable future didn't portend a "more reasonable political attitude" in the United States, and that Bohm ought to hold out in Brazil until he gets citizenship before leaving for a more "intellectual atmosphere."

One idea that came up was relocating to Israel, which had declared independence in 1948. But despite Einstein's ties to Israel's Hebrew University, he believed the country offered limited opportunities. Einstein himself declined an offer in 1952 to become Israel's president, though he served remotely on the Hebrew University's first Board of Governors and left his papers to the school in his will. "Israel is intellectually active and interesting but has very narrow possibilities," the Nobel laureate wrote. "And to go there with the intention to leave on the first occasion would be regrettable."

Nothing extraordinary

Despite Einstein's counsel, Bohm, who was Jewish, left Brazil for Israel in 1955, where he taught at Haifa's Technion Institute of Technology for two years. There he met his wife, Sarah Woolfson. They married in 1956. A year later the couple moved to the United Kingdom, where Bohm taught at Bristol University until his death in 1992. Mrs Bohm returned to Israel after her husband's death and resided in Jerusalem. She died in April 2016 and her estate put her husband's letters from Einstein up for sale at Winner's auction house in Jerusalem.

Roni Grosz, curator of the Albert Einstein Archives at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, home to the world's largest collection of Einstein material, said copies of the Bohm letters were already in the archive and that there was "nothing extraordinary" about them. But he said anything connected to Einstein tends to generate interest. "There's today tremendous interest in all things Einstein. Einstein documents, letters, drafts are being on sale all the time," he said. "There's barely a month that passes with no Einstein documents in auction or in sale." The auction, which includes copies of other letters sent by Einstein and correspondence by fellow Nobel laureate Louis de Broglie, will be held on June 20, though early bids are being accepted online. — AP



This photo provided by Winner's Auction House shows a letter of Albert Einstein to Professor David Bohm from 1954. — AP

Bizarre News

Girlfriend cooks dead tarantula in toastie and serves to boyfriend

A woman stuffed a dead tarantula inside her boyfriend's cheese toastie. The Mirror Online reports Kirsty Matthews was making her boyfriend Daniel Brookes a cheese, pepperoni, ham, jalapenos and chilli sauce crusty sandwich, before she decided to spice things up a little by adding the huge spider to the meal. Although zebra tarantulas are edible, Daniel wasn't expecting his toastie to have the unique flavor it did and merrily munched on the savory snack before opening up the slices to find the squashed spider inside. He then rushed to the bathroom to be sick. It's not known whether couple stayed together following Kirsty's prank.

Group of streakers fined for running past children's park

A group of British tourists have been fined for stripping and running through the streets of Majorca. The group of about 20 men left their hotel stark naked, ran through the streets of Palmanova and went for a swim in the sea before they then ran back to their establishment. Some wore hats and sunglasses to hide their identity as they covered their private parts with their hands, while other opted to let it all hang loose, the Metro newspaper reports. Their route took them passed a children's park and 18 of the men were fined for exposing themselves in public after being tracked down by the police. According to the newspaper the men paid the fine and apologized.

Children embarrassed by parents colorful clothing

More than half of children are embarrassed by their mum and dad's clothing choice, according to a new poll. The charity chain Oxfam found that socks with sandals, eccentric hats and wearing leggings on school runs is a no go for the children, The Sun reports. Some of the children also said they cannot bear to be seen with their parents if they are wearing bright clothing or Crocs. Oxfam did the survey as part of its Dressed By The Kids fundraiser on June 16 which aims at making children put adults in bizarre get-ups.

Man builds home out of McDonald's rubbish

A former waste management worker has creatively built his own home using McDonald's food wrappers and plastic bottles. The Sun newspaper reports Angus Carnie turned the rubbish into materials to build his two-bedroom home near Dundee. Speaking to the paper Angus, 55, said: "People thought I was bonkers but I said 'I'll manage - I'm Scottish'." The price Angus paid overall for his new home was roughly around £15,000 - a massive reduction from current properties on the market. Angus reportedly started the production on his ideal home after surviving a brain tumor scare.—Bang Showbiz