

Administrators call on Amir to help save museum



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ERDOGAN SLAMS 'BANANA REPUBLIC' NETHERLANDS

ANKARA/ROTTERDAM: President Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday the Netherlands was acting like a "banana republic" and should face sanctions for barring Turkish ministers from speaking in Rotterdam, fuelling a row over Ankara's political campaigning abroad. Erdogan is looking to the large number of Turks living in Europe, especially in Germany and the Netherlands, to help secure victory next month in a referendum that would give the presidency sweeping new powers.

In a speech in France, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu described the Netherlands as the "capital of fascism" as it joined other European countries in stopping Turkish politicians holding rallies, due to fears that tensions in Turkey might spill over into their expatriate communities. The Dutch government barred Cavusoglu from flying to Rotterdam on Saturday and later stopped Family Minister Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya from entering the Turkish consulate there, before escorting her out of the country to Germany.

Dutch police used dogs and water cannon yesterday to disperse hundreds of protesters waving Turkish flags outside the consulate in Rotterdam. Some threw bottles and stones and several demonstrators were beaten by police with batons, a Reuters witness said. Mounted police officers charged the crowd. The Dutch government - set to lose about half its seats in elections this week, according to polls, as the anti-Islam party of Geert Wilders makes strong gains - said the visits were undesirable and it would not cooperate in their campaigning.

"I call on all international organizations in Europe and elsewhere to impose sanctions on the Netherlands," Erdogan said, after his prime minister earlier said Turkey would retaliate in the "harshest ways", without specifying how. "Has Europe said anything? No. Why? Because they don't bite each other. The Netherlands are acting like a banana republic," Erdogan said in a speech in Kocaeli province, near Istanbul. — Reuters (See Page 7)



A police dog bites a demonstrator after riots broke out during a pro-Erdogan demonstration at the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam, Netherlands yesterday. (Inset) Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan gestures as he speaks in Istanbul yesterday. — AP/AFP

KUWAIT: A child was killed and his brother was injured in Qusoor while they were playing with a BLU61 type cluster bomb, a remnant from the 1990 Iraqi invasion. The interior ministry said in a statement that concerned authorities checked the shrapnel lodged in the boy's body, and confirmed it was from a cluster bomb. The children had gone on a picnic and brought home two "foreign objects". One of the boys was playing with it when it exploded, leading to a fire.

Leftover ordnance from the Iraqi invasion continues to cause sporadic casualties. In December last year, an unidentified man was killed by a landmine in the Salmi desert. The victim's legs were blown off by the blast. In November, landmines were found on the beach and in the water near a seaside club in Bidaa. According to the interior ministry, the landmines were washed up by the tide on the beach. The mines were removed safely and no injuries were reported.

According to reports, during the 1991 Gulf War, Iraqi troops planted millions of mines in Kuwait, with approximately 97.8 percent of Kuwait's land mined or affected by unexploded ordnance. Heavily mined areas included the northern coast of Kuwait Bay and the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia border. Millions of mines have since been recovered, but many are still hidden in coastal and desert areas of Kuwait.

Separately, Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi yesterday said he has ordered the medical license committee of his ministry to interrogate a surgeon involved in a video showing a woman undergoing a liposuction. "The video, circulated live on social media, shows the surgeon conducting the cosmetic procedure on the woman in contravention of the values and standards of the medical profession," the minister told KUNA.

"The surgeon is a consultant in general surgery and not plastic surgery, so he is not entitled to conduct such a procedure," he said. "Moreover, it is unacceptable to film a surgery and circulate such a video, which violates the privacy of the patient and the standards of the profession," Harbi explained. The video, circulating on Facebook and Twitter, drew resentment in professional and public circles. — Agencies



This picture released by the official website of the Iranian Defense Ministry yesterday shows a domestically manufactured tank called "Karrar" in an undisclosed location in Iran. — AP

IRAN UNVEILS DOMESTICALLY MADE TANK, PRODUCTION LINE

TEHRAN: Iran's semi-official Fars news agency yesterday reported that the country has unveiled a domestically manufactured tank and has launched a mass-production line. The report quoted Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan as saying: "The tank has the capability to fire missiles and precisely guide them." Fars said the tank named "Karrar" is equipped with an electro-optical fire control system and laser range-finder and is capable of firing at both stable and mobile targets day or night.

Last week Iran unveiled a new helicopter designed for offshore operations,

medical evacuations and surveillance. The official IRNA news agency said that the four-bladed Saba-248 has two engines but its capable of operating with just one, and that it can fly in temperatures ranging from minus 25 to 55 degrees Celsius.

Dehghan also said the tank can compete with the most advanced tanks in the world in the three main areas of "power, precision and mobility". Iran has been producing its own weapons and military equipment, including missiles, fighter jets and submarines, for more than two decades. — AP

JORDAN RELEASES JAILED SOLDIER

MP THREATENS TO GRILL PREMIER, THREE MINISTERS

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Leading opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri yesterday threatened that he will file to grill the prime minister and three Cabinet ministers after 30 days if a number of demands were not met, including scrapping hikes in the prices of petrol and electricity. Muwaizri's threat comes just a few days after a self-declared moratorium by the opposition not to grill the prime minister as part of a deal stipulating that the government will reinstate citizenship of opposition figures it revoked in the summer of 2014. Several lawmakers however openly said they were not committed to that agreement. Muwaizri is one of them.

Muwaizri said that the grillings against Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and at least three ministers are ready and he plans to file them after 30 days. The demands the lawmaker made include respecting the constitution, suspending the so-called economic reform charter, immediately halting the petrol and electricity price hikes and suspending the privatization program. Other demands include resolving the decades-long problem of stateless people locally known as bedoons, stopping security restrictions on Kuwaiti jobseekers and halting government "atrocities" against the disabled and receivers of social aid.

The lawmaker said that the constitution does not give any immunity to anyone against grillings and the only immunity for the government is to serve the people correctly. He called on ministers and officials to respect the responsibilities entrusted to them.

Continued on Page 13

AMMAN: A Jordanian soldier who shot dead seven Israeli schoolgirls in 1997 was released from prison yesterday after serving out his life sentence, sparking outrage from the families of those killed. In March 1997, Ahmad Dakamseh fired an automatic weapon at schoolgirls on a trip to the Jordan-Israel border, killing seven of them and wounding five others and a teacher. "He is now a free man," his cousin Mohammed Yahya Dakamseh told AFP by phone, saying he had been released at around 1:00 am after "he finished his jail term".

Dakamseh, who is aged 46 according to a family member, was released from the Bab al-Hawa prison in Irbid, 90 km

north of the capital Amman. He had been sentenced to life imprisonment, which in Jordan is 20 years. Dakamseh, who hails from Irbid's Ebder area, was a married father-of-three at the time of the attack. His motives were never entirely clear, but he told the national security court during his trial that he fired his weapon at the schoolgirls after they mocked him while he was praying.

Jordan's then ruler King Hussein condemned the attack and later travelled to Israel to offer his condolences to the families of the murdered schoolgirls. His government also paid compensation.

Continued on Page 13



IBDIR, Jordan: Ahmad Dakamseh (second left) is seen with friends and relatives after his release from prison yesterday. — AP

Kuwait Times THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the Bosnian House of Representatives Sefik Dzaferovic. —KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the Bosnian House of Representatives Sefik Dzaferovic.

AMIR MEETS TOP BOSNIAN LAWMAKER

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met with the visiting Speaker of the Bosnian House of Representatives Sefik Dzaferovic at Bayan Palace yesterday. The meeting was attended by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Deputy Minister of Amir Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Dzaferovic arrived to Kuwait earlier yesterday on a two-day official visit. He also met with Ghanem to discuss bilateral cooperation in all fields, pointing out the importance of parliamentary collaboration and ways of enhancing existing relations, in addition to regional and international issues that concern both nations.

The meeting was attended by Kuwait's Deputy Speaker MP Essa Al-Kandari, Chief of the Honorary Mission MP Ali Salem Al-Deqbasi and several members of Kuwaiti parliament, in addition to Kuwait's Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Nasser Al-Mutairi, and Bosnian Ambassador to Kuwait Mehmed Halilovic.

After the meeting, Speaker Ghanem held a luncheon banquet in honor of the visiting official and his accompanying delegation at Sabah Al-Ahmad's building where a number of MPs attended. The Bosnian parliament speaker arrived in Kuwait earlier yesterday on a two-day official visit. Dzaferovic also met with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace.

Senior officials

Separately, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak as well as First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Moreover, His Highness the Crown Prince received Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Affairs Hind Al-Sabeh.

In other news, His Highness the Amir addressed a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman on the demise of the mother of Prince Nawaf bin Saud bin Abdulaziz. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. —KUNA



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Speaker of the Bosnian House of Representatives Sefik Dzaferovic.



The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training's new building in Shuyoukh.

AMIR TO ATTEND PAAET GRADUATION CEREMONY

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is set to patronize and attend the honoring ceremony of outstanding graduates of colleges and institutes of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) for the academic year 2015/2016. The event takes place today at PAAET's new building in Shuyoukh, starting from at 10:30 am. —KUNA

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MIDEAST FULL OF CHALLENGES, DAUNTING FUTURE: FORMER FM

CANBERRA: Former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah said yesterday that the Middle East region is witnessing a daunting future full of challenges, calling on the international community to exert more efforts to confront it.

In a lecture at the Australian National University (ANU), Sheikh Dr Mohammad said "when it comes to understanding populism's impact on national security, it is important to both look at the height of international relations but also the plains-of convulsions in people's lives." The lecture was held under the title "Regional security in unstable world, a GCC vision" highlighted various areas in the region.

"Speeches are often difficult to get right," he said. "At best they are funny, uplifting, or thoughtful. Since this is a conversation about recent developments in the Middle East, it is hard to promise anything but the last. There was nothing funny or uplifting about the political convulsions, that gripped the world last year and that continue to roil our region. Today we share a feeling of sadness and mutual condolences, as we see innocent civilian victims, falling in Berlin, in Amman, in Aleppo, and just a few days ago, in Istanbul. To be sure, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in the Middle East, while millions of refugees now roam the world."

"Terrorism has reached its pinnacle, and metastasized into the so-called (IS) Da'esh. Key states in the region are now fighting for their very existence. Old global powers, United States, United Kingdom, and France that have shaped the 20th century Middle East, are nowhere to be seen," he noted.

"The new actors, Russia, Turkey, and Iran are now the ones calling the shots," he emphasized. "In fact, one consequence of the political dynamics in the Middle East today is the surge in nationalist, sectarian, and populist rhetoric in key states across the world. The surprise of Brexit and Trump, an escalation of the Syrian refugee crisis, and the resurgence of the far-right in Europe—all herald a crisis of the established order in the West."

"This year, elections will be held in four of the six founding members of the European Union, and populist forces are on the march in each one. Everything is at stake," he warned. "Peace and prosperity, knotted together by trade and financial globalization, underpinned by a security alliance led by the United States, could all unravel. Ladies and gentlemen, we are truly in dangerous times. Harvard professor Graham Allison warned us about 'Thucydides Trap.' A condition by which a rising power (Russia) rivals and challenges a ruling power (United States), resulting in a catastrophic war and mayhem. This can't be more evident than in Europe and the Middle East. In addition to that, the rise of populist movements, which is not simply a European or North American phenomenon, will have profound effects on the very foundation of global peace, that was built after the 2nd World War."

"What are the Security Implications of these developments?" Sheikh Dr Mohammad asked. "First, it will likely mean that the politics of the United States and Europe will turn inward and tend towards isolationism."

Populism

Sheikh Dr Mohammad said "that is because populism emerges out of a reaction to failed foreign engagements, and is often xenophobic in nature. In poll after poll, most Americans say that it would be better if the United States simply dealt with its own problems, and let other countries deal with theirs. To be sure, the consequence of American ambivalence towards globalism means they are potentially less reliable partners in a crisis."

"Following eight years of weakened American engagement in the our region, which many feel has created a disconcerting vacuum, it looks like we have to wait a little bit longer, until the contours of president Trump's approach to our region, becomes clearer," he said. "Second, it is clear that populists will push for 'beggar thy neighbor' kind of policies, that aim for national self-interests and threaten to undermine historic treaties. The Bretton Woods Agreement—the foundation for a free

and fair international monetary system—is in peril due to populist forces bucking against globalization and a discontent about migration. This populist movement is inherently anti-free trade, and will add to an already uncertain and nervous global market."

"We have learnt all too well that aggressive non-market policies in support of populist forces will always fail; populist economic policies simply do not work. What are the Implications on GCC Security?" he wondered. "Turning to our region, we in the GCC feel directly the reverberations of these alarming trends. It has manifested itself in several ways across the region, from the failed states in Yemen and Libya to the ongoing crisis in Syria. The international community can no longer merely manage crisis in the Middle East. Our focus must shift to resolution. Failure to take early action may arguably lead to disastrous consequences, and will impose a heavy economic and humanitarian toll. Such inaction insures that crises will inevitably produce their own set of sub crises. The Palestinian Israeli conflict vividly demonstrates what happens when we fail to make the difficult choices."



CANBERRA: Former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah speaks during a lecture at the Australian National University (ANU). —KUNA

Lack of will

"For over 60 years, the Palestinian issue has been a source of regional instability, extremism and numerous wars, to be sure - it has tested the regional and international order. Even though the political solution is within reach, there is still a lack of political will to take the necessary steps required," Sheikh Dr Mohammad argued.

"In Yemen and Libya, despite all the difficulties there are positive mechanisms in place and roadmaps for a political solution," he said. "We must work collectively to realize these solutions. The GCC is actively working to support these processes. In Yemen, the GCC roadmap provides a realistic path out of the current crisis. The international community now needs to use all of its available leverage to ensure that all Yemeni actors accept and implement this road map. We understand the path ahead is not an easy one but surely it is preferable to continued confrontation. In Libya the way out of the current chaos is through the Libyan political agreement signed in Sakhairat. What is needed are greater efforts to facilitate the dialogue between the Libyan parties to overcome outstanding issues and insure the full and fair implementation of the agreement."

"In Syria, the region and the world cannot afford to walk away from their responsibilities," he underlined. "We must double our efforts and find a constructive solution to the conflict. Unfortunately, prospects are not encouraging and the Syrian crisis continues to tear apart the Syrian people and their society. The geopolitics of the crisis and the regime's believe that it can secure a military victory, are obstructing the constructive and serious political engagement required, to embark on the road towards resolving the crisis."

"Interlinked with our effort to ending conflicts in the region is the GCC's absolute commitment to combat and overcome extremism and terrorism," he stressed. "The link between extremist ideology and terrorist acts is a clear one. We cannot face off with one without considering the other. Furthermore, we believe that confronting extremism and terrorism is a long drawn out and extend challenge. This understanding is essential in our effort to confront extremism and terrorism. Various tools are required in this lengthy battle. Including control over financial flows and the deconstruction of the extremist ideology and narrative. The GCC is an active member of the global coalition to degrade and destroy Daesh. The battle to liberate Mosul is a critical turning point in this effort. While the priority is to defeat Daesh, we continue to voice our concern towards sectarian violence against innocent civilians, and the implication of that on the future stability of Iraq."

Greater efforts

In order to deprive the extremist of their support base and lay the foundation for peace and stability, greater political efforts are needed to reconcile Iraq's communities, according to Sheikh Dr Mohammad. "A unified nation state, devoid of sectarian rhetoric and practice, remains our best insurance against the politics of extremism and instability," he said. "We in the GCC are strong advocates for an international effort to empower nation states over the dangerous rise of sectarianism."

"The Arab world continues to pay a heavy price for the sectarian agendas promoted by regional actors and non-state groups. Their expansionary and divisive politics breed hatred and erode the very foundations of our states and communities. The current ugly trend prevailing in regional politics, is an accumulation of past failures, regional milestones, and countless revisionists who are trying to redefine the political role of region. To be sure, we are now paying a heavy price due to this lethal combination. It is vital that we as a region defend the pluralistic nature of our societies against those who promote division and sectarianism."

"Here, it is critical that Iran ceases it is meddling in the affairs of Arab states," he indicated. "By employing sectarian methods in instigating instability in Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, Iran hopes to establish itself as the region's hegemonic power. And despite all these misgivings, the GCC has repeatedly stated its desire to initiate dialogue with Iran. Such dialogue must be genuine and construct, and based on the golden rule of international relations, the principle of no interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations."

Cyber warfare

"Finally, the American inventor Charles Kettering once said 'My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there.' So, perhaps I should conclude with what I think the most hideous instrument of warfare in the 21st century, cyber," Sheikh Dr Mohammad said. "It has often been said that the first casualty of war is truth. We can see how state and non-state actors are continuously engaging in massive disinformation campaigns and cybercrime."

"Daesh's savvy online recruitment campaign, and Russian's cyber intervention in the American election, are only few examples. In this 'post-truth' era, social media legitimizes these movements to create information bubbles that we all live in - this is called 'confirmation bias'. It is critical that we identify these biases early on and gain the conceptual toolkit in order to fight them."

"The GCC is, indeed, well positioned to create a model of moderation that will confront the negative stereotypes about the Arabs and their culture," he pointed out. "A model that is unified in its promotion of stable, open, and dynamic region, a model that promotes cultural openness, religious tolerance, and the empowerment of women. We must be creative and smart in our war against deception, defamation and misinformation. We must master these 21-century tools to help us navigate through these dangerous and treacherous waters." —KUNA

Legalese

STARTING A BUSINESS
IN KUWAIT

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

I think for many people starting their own business is a dream come true. To have that independence, to wake up every morning and do something that you love, to be your own boss and to make a difference for the community around you. I strongly believe in the benefits of having young and talented locals be creative and run their own businesses.

Ten years ago, having a small business in Kuwait was extremely difficult. The streets of Kuwait were run by western franchises then, but that is not the case today. Every day we hear about a new Kuwaiti business opening up. In fact, recently we have been hearing more and more words like entrepreneur, start-up, SMEs and franchises, and the terms can be very confusing, but I think it is important for us as a society to understand what is going on and what impact we have on ourselves by supporting local business. The success stories are inspiring; our local concepts have franchised to Doha, Dubai, Manama and Muscat, and even to London and Paris.

Today I will be answering common yet important questions for inspiring creative people who would like to establish SMEs. SME is an abbreviation that stands for a 'small or medium enterprise'. There are different definitions, and in Kuwait, we do not really have one standard definition. However, an easy way to define it is by the amount of employees a business has. Medium enterprises usually have under 50 employees in total.

Kuwaiti partner

Question: Can I own a business in Kuwait as an expatriate without a Kuwaiti partner?

Fajer: Theoretically and according to the companies law you will need a Kuwaiti partner, but recently a new law has passed for establishing Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA). It is a governmental authority that aims to encourage foreign investment in Kuwait. You can visit their website at www.kdipa.gov.kw and apply online for a commercial license as an expat in Kuwait. They offer exemptions and have four different application types.

From home

Question: I have heard that in the near future we are going to have a law in Kuwait that allows people to run businesses from their homes. Is this true?

Fajer: The idea of having a business legally run from a private residence has been discussed widely in the legal field in the past few years and even more so in the past few weeks. It seems like the government would like to encourage the youth to start their own companies and this seems like a positive reform. I personally hope this becomes a reality because I know for a lot of people, renting a place to start a business can be very difficult. If you would like more information on the idea itself, please follow @legalizekw on Instagram for more information.

KD 10,000 deposit

Question: Is it true that you do not need KD 10,000 deposited in your bank account in order to get a license for my business?

Fajer: Yes. Previously, KD 10,000 or even KD 15,000 was required as a deposit in the bank account of the person that was obtaining the commercial license. But now for the majority of commercial license types, you only need KD 1,000 as a deposit. You can find the list of licenses and their requirements on the Kuwaiti government's website. If not, please send me an email at ask@fajertelawyer.com and my firm will forward you the information. If you have inquiries on the requirements for starting a business, please visit Kuwait business center www.kbc.gov.kw. The staff there are very knowledgeable and welcoming.

Non-profit

Question: The new commercial laws in Kuwait allows you to start a non-profit company. What is the difference between non-profit companies and non-profit organizations?

Fajer: I think it is important for those in the field to understand the difference between non-profit organizations and non-profit companies under Kuwaiti law, which can be confusing because a different lingo is used to explain things. A non-profit company would be registered under the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry and can run commercial activity, whereas non-profit organizations in Kuwait are usually societies that have a very different internal structure compared to a company.

Should you be interested in more information about running a company in Kuwait, please email me at ask@fajertelawyer.com and ask to be signed up to my weekly letter, or follow @sirdab_lab, @mefazec and/or @reyada_co that are offering many services as well as talks and workshops to encourage business creative individuals. Good luck in your newest endeavors and I will continue answering questions next week on the same topic.

For any legal questions or queries, email ask@fajertelawyer.com.

RESEARCH FIELD VITAL TO
PETROCHEMICALS: HASHIM

MANAMA: Deputy CEO for Olefins and Aromatics at the Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) Hosnia Sayed Hashim stressed importance on research as a field in petrochemical industry. This came in a statement made yesterday on the sidelines of her participation in the Research and Innovation forum organized by the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA).



Hosnia Sayed Hashim

Hashim, who is also EQUATE Board Chairperson, said the company has developed in cooperation with the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) a road map for research and development in the petrochemical industry field. On the most prominent challenges facing the petrochemical industry, Hashim said that the lack of the natural gas represents one of the most challenges, especially since the industry relies on it. About her participation in the Research and Innovation Forum, Hashim said that it was a great opportunity that provided valuable insight into the current industry plans to harness the power of innovation and to help drive sustainable and profitable growth for the sector and the region. —KUNA

ORGANIZERS ASK AMIR TO
HELP SAVE INVASION MUSEUM

ELECTRICITY CUT TWO DAYS BEFORE NATIONAL DAY

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Kuwait House for National Works Museum is still facing the threat of being demolished without getting an alternative place to move to. The situation got worse when the government cut the building's electricity last month, two days before National Day.

The administration of the museum held a press conference yesterday at the museum in Shuwaikh, to which they invited representatives of various embassies of countries



KUWAIT: Salem Al-Anezi, a volunteer administrator at the Kuwait House for National Works Museum speaks during a press conference at the museum in Shuwaikh yesterday.

that have sections in the museum. "There are sections for 28 countries in the museum, which is a symbol and appreciation for their support of Kuwait during the invasion. We invited them to explain that it is not our fault. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should inform them about its plans," said Salem Al-Anezi, a volunteer administrator.

The Kuwait House for National Works is the only museum in Kuwait telling the story of the Iraqi invasion of 1990. It will be demolished to complete the road development project in the area. This will be a great loss for the country due to its value and cultural role.

Dr Yousef Al-Amiri, President of Museum,



Students tour the Kuwait House for National Works Museum. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

called upon His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to help the museum get its power back. "This museum represents a historical epic telling the story of the invasion and the great sacrifices by the martyrs to defend our country. We used to receive about 150 students daily, who come on school field trips to learn about Kuwait history," he pointed out.

"Moreover, all foreign military delegations visiting Kuwait visit the museum as part of their trip, in addition to welcoming other delegations, officials, visitors and residents. We had visitors coming from abroad to visit the museum on National Day, but we were without electricity. This is really sad," added Amiri.

New locations

Most NGOs in the area have moved to new locations they were given as replacements by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, as they belong under its umbrella. "The Cabinet issued a decree previously listing this museum under the umbrella of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, and that it can still continue providing its activities, yet the electricity was cut," explained Anezi. "It seems that they just want to delete this part of Kuwait's history by demolishing the only museum telling this event. But this is impossible, it is a part of our history during which we suffered a lot and we lost many martyrs. It was an event that took place in Kuwait and

can't be erased easily," he added. The Kuwait House for National Works was established by donations. "This museum was launched in 1997 only from donations, and the government didn't spend one fil on it. Around 200 volunteers were working here to do this great job. During these 20 years, I collected all the items, including the audiovisual materials and did all the work from my own resources with the support of donations. I have spent over KD 600,000 for this historical work, but they want to demolish everything," Amiri lamented. The officials of the museum only want the electricity back until they are given a replacement building to move the museum before it gets demolished.



The Jaber Hospital.

JABER HOSPITAL TO SERVE CITIZENS
FROM ALL OVER KUWAIT: MINISTER
MUNICIPALITY CAN CLOSE SHOPS NONCOMPLIANT WITH SHARIA

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi reaffirmed that Jaber Hospital would only serve citizens, free of charge. He also noted the new hospital will serve areas of Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Hawally governorates, in addition to some Capital governorate areas, while citizens from other areas would have access to treatment at the hospital only with official transfers from other public hospitals. Harbi explained that Jaber Hospital would be the largest in the Middle East with a capacity of 1,166 beds, 36 operation theaters and 196 ICU beds. He said the hospital was built in South Surra to reduce the burden on Amiri, Mubarak and Adan hospitals.

In another health concern, the newly-appointed overseas treatment manager Dr Abdul Razzaq Al-Anjeri (appointed in mid-January) quit his new post after only 55 days, said health sources. The sources added that Harbi was expected to name an acting manager or appoint a new one matching the conditions of being a consultant and having good skills in dealing with the public. The sources also predicted the new manager to be a doctor from the younger generation.

Rent allowance

The Ministry of Education's (MoE) human resource manager Saud Al-Jowaisri said rent allowance had been temporarily suspended for some non-Kuwaiti female teachers who have not updated their information. Jowaisri stressed 85 percent of female teachers had already updated their information and provided the ministry with the needed documents - copies of marriage deeds, copies of the teacher's and her husband's civil IDs and a 'To Whom it May Concern' certificate from the husband's workplace. "Rent allowance payment will automatically resume once this is

done," he underlined, noting that the documents were needed to make sure the teachers were not married to Kuwaitis or to people working for the government and already getting rent allowance. Jowaisri added the suspension was made on CSC instructions through decision number 38 pertaining cutting non-Kuwaiti teachers' rent allowance from KD 150 to 60.

In another educational concern, MoE Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari said the ministry will launch a new service to receive applications and interview expat teachers online next year without having to dispatch special committees to the teachers' respective countries. Athari said the ministry was currently working on developing a special e-system enabling applicants to file in their applications through the ministry's website, and then communicate with those to be interviewed through email, and finally specialized technical committees will interview them online. He added that coordination with the foreign ministry is underway to prepare special halls at Kuwaiti embassies abroad where the applicants would have access to MoE's website and do the online interviews.

Retirees

Head and founder of the National Project for Retirees Dr Salah Al-Abduljadir said a campaign was launched to promote the project that includes building a database of over 3,000 retired citizens. He also announced that over 100 of them had been nominated for recruitment in government and private bodies.

Privatization

Oil Minister and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq stressed that Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has set a plan to rope in the private sector in running some current and future activities. Marzouq said the plan includes some sug-

gestions about the activities that could be considered when putting the privatization law number 37/2010 into practice.

Taxes

The Finance Ministry's tax department plans to follow strict measures with shareholding companies to compel them to pay overdue fees and taxes to the government. The ministry will suspend all government services provided to general and closed shareholding companies unless they get a clearance from the tax sector. The decision was made upon directive number 1/2017 pertaining collecting overdue funds, rationalizing and controlling expenditure.

Unified portal

UAE's telecommunications regulatory authority (TRA) said GCC states plan to launch a unified electronic government portal through which GCC citizens' transaction could be processed. TRA explained that once in service, the new unified e-government site would enable GCC citizens to do various transactions using special usernames and passwords after respective GCC e-government networks are connected. TRA added that the GCC e-government executive committee had prepared an initial list of services to be provided to be reviewed by the GCC ministerial committee meeting due to be held in Doha on March 22.

Sharia laws

Kuwait Municipality recently activated ministerial decision number 372/2008 pertaining public stores causing annoyance or health problems, said informed municipal sources, noting that the municipality had the right to close down any commercial facility if it contradicts Islamic sharia laws and regulations, such as allowing men to work in women's beauty salons or women working in barbershops.

TEMPORARY SPORTS
COMMITTEES EXTENDED

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait's official gazette Al-Kuwait Al-Youm yesterday published a decision extending the tenures of the temporary committees running Kuwait Football Association (KFA) and Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC), formed by decision number 730/2016, for three further months. According to the decision, some members of KFA's board of directors headed by Fawwaz Al-Hasawi were changed to include Jawad Maqseed, Hamed Al-Shaibani, Salamah Al-Enezi, Hussein Al-Khodari, Khaled Al-Fadhli and Salah Al-Hasawi.

Egyptian universities

Minister of Education Mohammed Al-Fares issued a decision cancelling the previous ministerial decision number 20/2015, which had stipulated suspending the registration of Kuwaiti students for graduate and post-graduate law studies in Egyptian universities. Separately, lawyer Adel Abdul Hadi said through a power of attorney issued to him by some judiciary chancellors, he filed a contest questioning the constitutionality of the Public Anti-Corruption Authority.

'Violent shakeup'

Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Assembly Affairs Faleh Al-Azeb stressed that the ministry is about to witness a 'violent shakeup' in various sectors, where employees showing up to work would be meticulously scrutinized in a bid to achieve equality by rewarding those with good performance and holding those with poor performance accountable, starting from senior officials all the way down to various employees. Azab also noted that part of the new Jahra court complex would be allocated for the family court.



A policeman distributing leaflets of guidance to motorists at an intersection.

KUWAIT DECLARES
START OF 3RD GCC
TRAFFIC WEEK

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior announced yesterday inaugurating the Third GCC Traffic Week, themed 'your life is a liability', scheduled to proceed till March 18. The week-long activity has already begun with police patrols distributing leaflets of guidance to motorists at road intersections.

Members of the participating GCC delegation have visited the operation and control rooms, inspecting the traffic personnel task performance, ensuring smooth flow on the road via smart visual equipment. The ministry's statement said the GCC Week activity is aimed at gearing up all possible efforts to limit accidents, spare lives and swap expertise among the Council member states.

The traffic department holds exhibitions at the Avenues and 360 malls during the week, with participation of medical teams, staff from various traffic departments, the information systems' department and the general director of relations and security information. During the exhibition, motorists with grave penalties will be given the chance to re-examine and get softer punitive measure-except for very grave cases. —KUNA

HALFWAY THERE! FIFTH B777-300ER AIRCRAFT JOINS KUWAIT AIRWAYS FLEET

58 PERCENT SEAT CAPACITY INCREASES ON KEY LONG-HAUL ROUTES

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways, the official national carrier of the State of Kuwait, has this weekend welcomed the fifth of 10 Boeing 777-300ER aircraft into its expanding, new look fleet; signaling the halfway point in an order for the extended-range aircraft and second-largest passenger jet in the sky today.

Following the theme of naming the new fleet after place names, in Kuwait, the fifth Boeing 777-300ER has been called 'Warbah' - the Kuwaiti island that sits at the mouth of the Euphrates River. After entering commercial service, 'Warbah' will be a key factor in enabling the airline to increase its seat capacity on Kuwait Airways' long-haul routes, during the Summer Season, to destinations like Frankfurt, Bangkok and Manila.

While, during the Summer Season, Frankfurt (4), Bangkok (7) and Manila (7) maintained the same number of weekly flights as the Winter Schedule, the seat capacity increases that the introduction of the Boeing 777-300ER fleet will make on these routes, will be close to 60 per cent.

"As we stand at the midway point of the delivery order of 10 Boeing 777-300ER aircraft, we already recognize the importance these new planes have had in improving the product offering we provide to many of our long-haul customers on core routes within our network," said Rasha Al-Roumi, Chairperson and CEO of Kuwait Airways.



Kuwait Airways Chairperson Rasha Al-Roumi.

"In just a short period of time, since the first Boeing 777-300ER delivery in December 2016, these aircraft have increased our seat capacity, increased the numbers in our operational fleet, and allowed Kuwait Airways to boost flight frequencies to key destinations - in line

with demand. The new aircraft are also the canvass upon which we showcase our new look livery to the world," Roumi added.

"In addition to this, the Boeing 777-300ER fleet has also enhanced Kuwait Airways' on-board product offering, including one of the



'Warbah,' the latest Boeing 777-300ER to join Kuwait Airways' fleet.

most spacious economy seat configurations in the world, a state-of-the-art in-flight entertainment system [Panasonic ex3], and the introduction of new menus that cater to the widest range of palettes and specialist requests," she concluded. Later into the Summer Season,

which starts 26th March, Kuwait Airways will exclusively deploy Boeing 777-300ER aircraft on its Bangkok, Manila, Dhaka, and Frankfurt routes. Dates for the full transfer of these aircraft onto several other long-haul routes will be announced shortly.



KUWAIT: An aerial view of the Saad Al-Abdullah housing project. — KUNA photos

HOUSING WELFARE A PRIORITY IN KUWAIT VISION 2035

KUWAIT: Providing housing for citizens is considered one of the main goals for Kuwait Vision 2035, through establishing and distributing thousands of houses, apartments, in various parts of the country. Kuwait allocated billions of dinars in response to Kuwaiti families requests for housing, and made it a government priority through establishing a huge housing projects, like in Jaber Al-Ahmad city, Saad Al-Abdullah, Sabah Al-Ahmad, northwest of Al-Sulaibkhat, Mutlaa, Khairan, and Silk residential cities.— KUNA



Housing complexes in the residential area northwest of Al-Sulaibkhat.



Housing projects northwest of Al-Sulaibkhat.



Sabah Al-Ahmad housing project.



Jaber Al-Ahmad residential city.



Homes in the Saad Al-Abdullah residential project.

In Brief

BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETS

DUBAI: Kuwait Business Council in Dubai and Northern Emirates held its General Assembly on Saturday, and members approved the 2016 and 2017 budgets. The council said the members discussed financial and administrative performance since establishment until end of the fiscal year. They reviewed a report about diversification of revenues in order to support the council's activities for a whole year. — KUNA



KUWAITI WOMEN HONORED

BEIRUT: The Arab woman festival 2017 honored two Kuwaiti women Saturday in Lebanon for their hard efforts in education and business, and celebrated a third Kuwaiti for being awarded membership of Arab Women Council. They are Seham Al-Furaih, chairperson of the Kuwaiti National Society for Protection of Children, and Maha Albaghli, Founder of the Safira Company for Social Responsibility. — KUNA



BANK'S CULTURAL CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced its sixth annual 'Ya Zain Turathna' (our beautiful heritage) cultural campaign while participating in a live broadcast aired on FM 88.8 this past Saturday. Amani Al-Waraa, Assistant General Manager - Public Relations and Media Department gave a presentation about the campaign's goals which reflect CBK's commitment to reviving the Kuwaiti heritage, the bank said in a statement.



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: This photo taken on March 10, 2017 shows the Mammatus clouds' formation over a location south of Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



VIVA PLATINUM SPONSOR OF 'MARJ' EXHIBITION



KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, sponsored 'Marj' Exhibition for Kuwaiti Small Businesses held last Saturday 12 March at Murouj Center, organized by Attention Company.

Abdelrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA stated: "VIVA's platinum sponsorship for this significant exhibition that focuses on small businesses, proves that VIVA's strategy always revolve on embracing the Kuwait Small businesses and the Creative Kuwaiti Youth at different aspects, and 'Marj' exhibition was a great opportunity to highlight these projects and grant its owners the chance to engage through displaying their products and innovations."

Hessah Salem Al-Sabe from Corporate Communications at VIVA was presented at VIVA's booth and a professional team offered to the visitors the latest prepaid and postpaid packages, products and services including "more" platform launched recently. The exhibition featured entertainment and competitions, kids' games, in addition to a show for the biggest owl in the world. Winners received valuable prizes at the end of the event and enjoyed songs and music.

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Crime

Report

DRUNK POLICEMAN ARRESTED AT SEAFRONT

KUWAIT: A drunken policeman in uniform danced by the seafront with families and women around. A police patrol was sent to the area and arrested the policeman, despite resistance. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Cross-dresser caught

Patrol officers pulled over a car in the Rehaya desert and thought at first that the driver was a female wearing heavy makeup who was in an abnormal condition. The discovered later that the motorist was a 40-year-old male. Police found heroin, shabu and three joints of hashish. He was arrested and sent to concerned authorities. In addition to drug possession and abuse, the man also faces charges of cross-dressing, which is illegal under Kuwait's Penal Code.



Smuggling foiled

Nuwiseeb customs foiled an attempt by a citizen to travel with heroin and Captagon tablets to Saudi Arabia. The citizen seemed nervous, so officers searched his vehicle and found two envelopes of heroin, 23 Captagon and 52 Seroquel tablets. He was arrested and handed to police.

Generator thieves arrested

Ahmadi detectives solved the mystery of the theft of power generators from camps after they arrested a bedoon, two Egyptians and an Iraqi, in addition to a prisoner in the central prison. Police received complaints that generators were being stolen. Detectives then learned about a bedoon, who confessed to several thefts and told them about a partner who is serving a jail sentence, and an Egyptian who bought what they stole. The Egyptian said he sold three generators to people he did not know, then told them about another Egyptian and an Iraqi. Detectives found 34 power generators with the second Egyptian. The Iraqi was caught with two generators. All four were sent to concerned authorities. — Translated from the Arabic press



Al-Anbaa

القلمس

Al-Qabas

THE CIVILIZED DIFFERENCE

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

The Kuwaiti society, like other Arab and Muslim societies, is a masculine one, where females have no role in it except for what the man wants for her, with some exceptions. So, it is very rare to see women confronting men in courts, because most legislation are biased against her, especially those related to her life in matters of marriage, divorce, alimony and custody, apart from the masculine stand towards the rest of her rights as a human being. This is not limited to the husband, but also widens to include an oppressive father or ignorant brother or even a thankless son!

So, it is not strange to notice that the majority or maybe all Muslim countries have signed the universal declaration of human rights, while having reservations towards items dealing with woman's rights - the wife, sister, mother and daughter!

So, as we said, it is rare for the woman, who is mostly conservative, to get out of her narrow surroundings and visit a lawyer's office, enter courts, compromise her reputation and be humiliated between various degrees of litigations and spend much time and money in the form of judicial and lawyers' fees.

The stand of the legislative committee is also strange, which takes interest in matters that are not that

interesting, or some members of the alien phenomena committee spend their time arguing about trivial matters and ignoring women's rights and her malicious treatment, though she represents half the society and is its main pillar, without facing it and justify the oppression of men.

It also becomes silly for these "leaders" to accuse infidels and immoral liberals and seculars of being corrupt in their ethics, ignoring the fact that liberals in general are more humane than them and more just in dealing with the woman and less exploitive of her circumstances. It would have been better for them, as they are speaking about morality and good deeds, to become more noble in dealing with those they exploited to satisfy their desires, then ignore their rights shamelessly.

A sheikh said the woman lacks an unknown gland, so she cannot talk, think and remember at the same time! And I do not know why I remembered Chancellor Angela Merkel while I was reading this, and the reason may be the time difference between Socrates' saying and that of the sheikh which is 2,500 years. This number of years may represent the civilized difference between our societies and theirs!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

THIS IS THE RESULT

By Ali Mahmoud Khajah

Throughout the last months of the previous parliament's tenure, those returning from boycotting the elections actively criticized the 2013 parliament and its decisions and even the previous government's decisions. We used to see them expressing rejection of fuel price increases, depriving blasphemers from the right to run for elections, citizenship withdrawal, etc on all occasions until the election season started. They then increased the dose of opposition and raced to declare their attitudes over the speakership election, expressing rejection of the incumbency of speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

These are the lawmakers who were elected by large sections of voters

As usual, all idiots and naive people of all actions raced to promote these candidates in various public forums, describing them as the 'saviors' who will put things back on the right track. And, naturally enough, they were wrong, but it seems that they will never learn the lesson and will still make the same mistakes over and over until God knows when. After shouting, whining and strict rejection of any law that would depose politicians and end their careers as lawmakers, those who had complained and are currently in a truce with the government are making proposals to enhance the very same bill!

One of them even withdrew all his previous criticism to the bill and summed it up in suggesting not to impose it retroactively. Another is seeking adding new articles to the bill to include the Prophet's (PBUH) companions and wives. A third will most probably suggest adding the Prophet's (PBUH) family members. It will not even be strange to add more expansions in the future!

These are the lawmakers who were elected by large sections of voters. They are also the same ones who will be re-elected as soon as they use the very same old stereotypical talks with new packaging in future electoral speeches!

Lawmakers' practices nowadays are but the inevitable results of many people's persistence on remaining head to toe in 'full cream' ignorance and naivety, because those who vote for candidates they are unfamiliar with know nothing about democracy, and will never enhance democracy at all.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

GULF BANK SUPPORTS 4TH BENCHMARK FORUM 2017 ENCOURAGING YOUNG DESIGNERS AND ENTREPRENEURS



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is proud to have participated, as a sponsor, in the Benchmark Forum 2017, the 4th Annual Design Entrepreneurship Forum. Organized by yourAOK, the Benchmark Forum took place on Friday March 3 and Saturday March 4, 2017, in Dar Al Athar Al Islamiya, Yarmouk.

Benchmark Forum brings together innovative business minds and creative designers to share their experience and inspire young entrepreneurs and to provide them with the mentorship that may guide them down the road towards development and success.

Commenting on this occasion, Khaled AlOtaibi, Manager of External Relations at Gulf Bank said: "Gulf Bank has always placed entrepreneurship and youth at the core of its CSR strategy. We are proud to sponsor the Fourth Benchmark Forum as we are strongly

committed to giving back to the Kuwaiti community by focusing on youth, education, health and fitness, helping the underprivileged, women's empowerment, as well as promoting Kuwait's heritage and culture."

With regards to the objective of the event, Ruba Al- Saleh, Co-founder and Managing Director of YourAOK stated: "We aim to bridge the gap between passion and profession to aid young designers in creating efficient, long term businesses for themselves and to aid in enhancing Kuwait's economy".

The event convened professionals from their respective fields, Kuwaiti and Arab designers and entrepreneurs who gave talks and lectures over two consecutive days. Additionally, the forum included an exhibition of design works and arts, on-the-spot consultation by incubators, and outdoor

activities. Free of charge, Benchmark is a non-profit event that aims to educate designers and creative professionals by providing them with a merging skill-set between design and business.

It is the only Design Entrepreneurship Forum in the MENA region, with a focus on creativity and innovation as tools to become a better designer and entrepreneur.

YourAOK is a networking platform bringing together creative professionals, design firms and product suppliers together. It offers them a multimedia platform with digital portfolios allowing clients to easily browse through profiles and visual works to hire artists, photographers or designers. Gulf Bank is strongly committed to supporting youth initiatives and entrepreneurs and empower them to lead the next generation.

KFH-BAHRAIN RECEIVED DELEGATION OF BANGLADESHI ISLAMIC BANKERS

MANAMA: Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain (KFH-Bahrain) recently hosted a delegation from the People's Republic of Bangladesh which included a number of officials from leading Islamic banks and financial institutions from February 26 to March 2, 2017. The delegation was headed by AKM Nurul Fazul Bulbul, Director CEO of Axim Exchange Company.

Abdulhakeem Al-Khayyat, the Managing Director and CEO and various Executive and Senior Managers of Kuwait Finance House-Bahrain have greeted and welcomed the Bangladeshi delegation in the Bank's headquarters in the World Trade Center in Manama.

During the agenda's, the two sides exchanged cordial talks and expertise in the banking industry. The visit was arranged in collaboration with the Central Bank of Bahrain, the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance and a number of Islamic banks in the Kingdom. The aim was to educate the delegation on the basics of

banking transactions compliant with Islamic sharia law.

During the reception, Khayyat confirmed the distinguished bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of Bangladesh. He welcomed the delegation in collaboration with distinguished guests to enhance strategic partnerships and relationships and provide support to the Islamic banking industry in their organizations.

During a meeting, discussions were held about the role of Islamic banks in the global economy, how to overcome the global financial crisis successfully and how it became a successful model to the economic experts around the world.

The delegation's visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain included the appointments to the headquarters of the Central Bank of Bahrain, the offices of the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions in Bahrain, Al Baraka Bank and other places around the Kingdom.



Group picture of the delegation with KFH-Bahrain officials.



Iraqi forces retake 3rd of west Mosul



ISTANBUL: A group of Turks protest outside the Dutch consulate in Istanbul yesterday. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says he appropriately accused the Dutch government of 'Nazism and fascism,' saying only those types of regimes would bar foreign ministers from traveling within their countries. — AP

NETHERLANDS BARS TURKISH MINISTERS

TURKEY VOWS HARSH RETALIATION AS DISPUTE ESCALATES

ANKARA: Turkey told the Netherlands yesterday that it would retaliate in the "harsh ways" after Turkish ministers were barred from speaking in Rotterdam in a row over Ankara's political campaigning among Turkish emigres. President Tayyip Erdogan had branded its fellow NATO member a "Nazi remnant" and the dispute escalated into a diplomatic incident on Saturday evening, when Turkey's family minister was prevented by police from entering the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam.

Hundreds of protesters waving Turkish flags gathered outside, demanding to see the minister. Dutch police used dogs and water cannon yesterday to disperse the crowd, which threw bottles and stones. Several demonstrators were beaten by police with batons, a Reuters witness said. They carried out charges on horseback, while officers advanced on foot with shields and armored vans. Less than a day after Dutch authorities prevented Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu from flying to Rotterdam, Turkey's family minister, Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya, said on Twitter she was being escorted back to Germany.

"The world must take a stance in the name of democracy against this fascist act! This behavior against a female minister can never be accepted," she said. The Rotterdam mayor confirmed she was being escorted by police to the German border. Kaya later boarded a private plane from the German town of Cologne to return to Istanbul, mass-circulating newspaper Hurriyet said yesterday. The Dutch government, which stands to lose heavily to the anti-Islam party of Geert Wilders in elections next week, said it considered the visits undesirable and "the Netherlands could not cooperate in the public political campaigning of Turkish ministers in the Netherlands."

The government said it saw the potential to import divi-

sions into its own Turkish minority, which has both pro and anti-Erdogan camps. Dutch politicians across the spectrum said they supported Prime Minister Mark Rutte's decision to ban the visits. In a statement issued yesterday, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said Turkey had told Dutch authorities it would retaliate in the "harsh ways" and "respond in kind to this unacceptable behavior".

Turkey's foreign ministry said it did not want the Dutch ambassador to Ankara to return from leave "for some time". Turkish authorities sealed off the Dutch embassy in Ankara and consulate in Istanbul in apparent retaliation and hundreds gathered there for protests at the Dutch action. Erdogan is looking to the large number of emigre Turks living in Europe, especially in Germany and the Netherlands, to help clinch victory next month in a referendum that would give the presidency sweeping new powers.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said she will do everything possible to prevent Turkish political tensions spilling onto German soil. Four rallies in Austria and one in Switzerland have been cancelled due to the growing dispute. Erdogan has cited domestic threats from Kurdish and Islamist militants and a July coup bid as cause to vote "yes" to his new powers. But he has also drawn on the emotionally charged row with Europe to portray Turkey as betrayed by allies while facing wars on its southern borders.

The Dutch government had banned Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu from attending a rally on Saturday in Rotterdam but he said he would fly there anyway, saying Europe must be rid of its "boss-like attitude". Cavusoglu, who was barred from a similar meeting in Hamburg last week but spoke instead from the Turkish consulate, accused the Dutch of treating the many Turkish citizens in the country like hostages, cutting them off from

Ankara. "If my going will increase tensions, let it be ... I am a foreign minister and I can go wherever I want," he added hours before his planned flight to Rotterdam was banned.

Sanctions threat

Cavusoglu threatened harsh economic and political sanctions if the Dutch refused him entry, and those threats proved decisive for the Netherlands government. It cited public order and security concerns in withdrawing landing rights for Cavusoglu's flight and said the threat of sanctions made the search for a reasonable solution impossible. "This decision is a scandal and unacceptable in every way. It

does not abide by diplomatic practices," Cavusoglu told reporters in Istanbul on Saturday evening.

Dutch anti-Muslim politician Wilders, polling second ahead of Wednesday's elections, said in a tweet on Saturday: "To all Turks in the Netherlands who agree with Erdogan: Go to Turkey and NEVER come back!!" Rutte, the Dutch prime minister, said: "This morning on TV (the Turkish minister) made clear he was threatening the Netherlands with sanctions and we can never negotiate with the Turks under such threats. So we decided ... in a conference call it was better for him not to come." — Reuters

GERMANY SHUTS DOWN MAJOR SHOPPING MALL OVER THREAT

ESSEN: German police sealed off a major shopping centre in the central city of Essen yesterday, citing the threat of a terror attack, with media reports suggesting a link to the Islamic State group. The country is on high alert following scenes of carnage at a Christmas market in Berlin in December, when an IS jihadist rammed a truck into a crowd of pedestrians, killing 12 people. The German domestic security agency BFV believes the IS group was "almost definitely" behind the threat, local media reported.

According to the Bild daily, IS called for an attack and got a message to Syrian supporters in the Essen region to attack a shopping centre on Saturday. Security services quoted by Bild described the threat as a potential multiple suicide bombing at the mall, one of the biggest in the coun-

try. "The shopping centre will be closed all Saturday due to security concerns. The police have concrete information regarding a possible attack," local police said in a statement published on social media.

Local car parks and the underground train station were also closed. Though there was no announcement of arms or explosives being found, police said two men had been picked up for questioning. Both men were arrested in the town of Oberhausen near Essen but later police said in a statement that the pair "are not suspects" in the case.

'Major operation'

"Many agents are deployed onsite. This is a major operation," a local police spokesman told AFP, indicating the lockdown included the 200-store Limbecker Platz in downtown Essen,

nearby parking garages and an underground rail station. Sniffer dogs were also been deployed at the site. Essen, which is in the industrial Ruhr region, has a population of approximately 500,000. The police said they had been alerted to the threat by "another department" but no German agency has confirmed if it was involved.

Interior ministry spokesman Tobias Plate said that the operation was being handled by the local police force but added that his ministry was in "constant touch" with the G7, a joint counter-terrorism centre used by 40 internal security agencies. German authorities have been on alert since the deadly Christmas market attack in Berlin. A Tunisian failed asylum seeker, Anis Amri, rammed a hijacked truck into the crowded market on December 19, before being shot dead four days later by police in Italy. Last July, a German-Iranian teenager who police say was obsessed with mass murderers, shot dead nine people at a Munich shopping mall before turning the gun on himself.

Fears of another attack rose on Thursday when a 36-year-old paranoid-schizophrenic man from Kosovo rampaged through Duesseldorf railway station with an axe, wounding nine people. Police have ruled out a terrorist motive for that attack. Domestic security officials estimate there are some 10,000 radical Islamists in Germany, with roughly 1,600 among them suspected of being capable of violence. IS has claimed responsibility for attacks in Germany in the past year, including the murder of a teen in Hamburg, a suicide bombing in Ansbach and an axe rampage on a train in Wuerzburg that injured five.—AFP



ESSEN: Policemen secure the area around the 'Limbecker Platz' shopping centre in Essen, western Germany, after a terror warning. — AFP

HCA NHS Ventures



Committed to collaboration

HCA NHS Ventures is a subsidiary of HCA International which was set up in 2006, the HCA NHS Ventures division leads on private partnerships with NHS Trusts across the country.

Harley Street at UCH is a joint partnership with top teaching hospital University College London Hospital, formed in 2006. Based on level 15 in the tower at UCLH, the 18 bed acute facility is a specialist cancer centre for complex and rare conditions. Patient rooms are private and en-suite offering panoramic views across London. We offer medical and surgical care including day case chemotherapy and a comprehensive JACIE accredited bone marrow and stem cell transplant service one of only a few in the UK. The centre offers the pioneering cord blood transplant; this treatment significantly widens the opportunity to find a suitable unrelated donor particularly beneficial for international patients.

The Young Person's Unit at Harley Street at UCH is the only private teenage cancer unit in Europe, treating any form of cancer in 13-19 year olds and further establishes the relationship with UCLH. The 6 bedded Unit treats all kinds of cancers and provides high quality care. All rooms are private and en-suite with views across central London. There are facilities in each room for a parent or guardian to stay with patients throughout their treatment and international entertainment packages, including internet access to keep in touch with friends and family abroad. Patients also have access to educational facilities and an entertainment lounge. 5* catering is provided with specially adapted menus to suit international patient requirements.

State-of-the-art technology includes the revolutionary TrueBeam STxTM, the latest radiotherapy and radiosurgical equipment which the most advanced linear accelerator in the world and is the first of its kind to be installed in the UK.

Harley Street at Queen's is a joint partnership with Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals Trust, based at Queen's Hospital Romford, offering advanced cancer, neurosurgical and general surgery treatment. It is the only centre of its kind in Essex and includes a dedicated High Dependency Unit, Chemotherapy Day Care Unit and advanced radiotherapy through a dedicated linear accelerator including

www.harleystreetatuch.co.uk



IMRT and RapidArcTM technology. Harley Street at Queen's offers advanced state-of-the-art treatment in the most comfortable of surroundings.

The Christie Clinic is the latest HCA NHS Venture and a partnership with The Christie NHS Foundation Trust in Manchester. The £35million development houses a state-of-the-art cancer clinic with 34 inpatient rooms, 10 chemotherapy chairs, advanced radiotherapy, sophisticated operating theatres and private patient pharmacy. This impressive facility takes the HCA standard of care outside of London to Manchester and the North of England. Located in the heart of Manchester The Christie Clinic offers light and airy private en-suite rooms, with international entertainment packages and is in close proximity to the city centre.



HCA - London's No.1 private hospital group

LIBYA'S DEEPENING SPLIT FINDS BATTLEGROUND AT TERMINALS

ARMED MEN CONVERGE ON MAIN OIL SHIPPING TERMINALS

CAIRO: Hundreds if not thousands of armed men are converging on Libya's main oil shipping terminals, which the rival powers in the country's east and west are fighting to control in a battle being watched by global oil markets. The struggle for the Ras Lanuf refinery and nearby Sidr depot threatens to spiral into an all-out conflict between east and west. Already, it has seen the bloodiest fighting yet between the two camps: Around 40 troops from the east were killed over four days as militias backed by western factions stormed the area last Friday, losing a handful of casualties.

Now forces from the east loyal to military strongman Khalifa Hifter are massing nearby, threatening a new assault to wrest back the facilities, which are nominally in the hands of the Tripoli government. In another worrying step, the eastern parliament on Tuesday voted to withdraw support from the United Nations peace deal that created the Tripoli government in January 2016 in hopes of ending years of chaos in the North African country. The withdrawal of support further undermines the government, which has had difficulty asserting authority even in Tripoli. The following is a look at the Libyan players, the oil terminals at the center of the fight and what could happen next:

The East

Hifter, an army general, former CIA asset and US citizen who lived nearly 20 years in American exile, is the most powerful figure in the east, touting himself as the champion against Islamic militants in Libya - though his enemies accuse him of aiming to become a new dictator like Muammar Gaddafi, who was overthrown and killed in the country's 2011 Arab Spring revolt. He has talked of marching to take Tripoli to unite the country, hinting that he aims to rule. He opposed the government set up by the UN peace deal because it would have pushed him out as head of the military.

The general is backed by Egypt and Russia, but Washington under the Obama administration kept him at arm's length. One key question in his future will be whether the US warms up to him under President Donald Trump, who has sounded more favorable to Egypt and more open to dealing with regional strongmen. He commands a collection of militias and eastern tribal forces as

well as the remnants of the Libyan National Army, including Gaddafi-era officers. Hifter is also allied to the eastern-based parliament, which was the last legislature to be elected in Libya and had to flee east when opponents took over the west in 2014.

Hifter's forces seized the oil facilities last year. The Obama administration had joined the UN in calling on him to hand them over to the Tripoli government. Hifter had seemed more inclined to use them as a bargaining chip to force a rewriting of the peace accord. But now that they have been wrested from him by force, he may resort instead to an all-out fight against Tripoli. His army says it is massing forces east of the terminals, awaiting orders. Their strength is unclear but they can call on reserves of thousands of eastern Libyan fighters and tribesmen and are backed by Libyan and foreign air support. Hifter travels regularly to Cairo and insiders have said he flew there shortly after losing control of the terminals.

The West

The Tripoli government was created under the UN deal in hopes of ending the east-west split. Instead, it has become just another player in that divide, reliant on its militia allies to have any authority. Chief among those allies are the militias of the neighboring city of Misrata, the strongest and most cohesive fighting force in the west. The Misrata militias provide security for the Tripoli government and it was they who earlier this year captured the Islamic State group's main stronghold, Sirte, effectively defeating for now the extremists' attempt to extend their caliphate to Libya.

The international community has tried to bolster the Tripoli government - particularly Italy, which is heavily invested in Libya's oil sector and has a military presence in the capital in the form of an army hospital that treated Misrata fighters during the battle against IS. It was a newly formed militia that retook the oil facilities at Ras Lanuf and Sidr.

The Benghazi Defense Brigades, as it is called, depicts itself as an eastern-based force, made up of former rebels and Islamic militants recently defeated by Hifter's forces in the eastern city of Benghazi. But it is clearly linked to the west, with some Misrata fighters in its ranks - and its commanders recently held a press conference in Misrata.

The Brigades handed the oil facilities over to the control of the Tripoli government, which has ordered its National Petroleum Guards under Brig Gen Idris Abukhamada - the official guard force for oil infrastructure - to deploy at the sites.

Oil Impact

Oil prices have dropped over the past week because of growing US supplies, frustrating OPEC attempts to bolster the price by curbing production. While the supply glut is the biggest factor dominating the market, the Libya fighting has potential to put some upward pressure on prices. It did so when the Brigades took Ras Lanuf and Sidr last week, forcing the shutdown of the maritime export terminals there, Libya's largest. That spooked the markets, causing a brief blip of higher prices. The facilities remain closed, causing some reduction in Libya's production, which in February had reached 700,000 barrels a day.

Oil is Libya's only real source of revenue, and it has been trying to rebuild the industry, though it remains but a shadow of the 1.6 billion barrels a day produced in 2011. While the oil facilities have changed hands several times over the past years, the revenues have continued to flow into the central bank based in Tripoli, an arrangement accepted by all parties that for the moment is not in doubt. Heavier fighting at the facilities could further scare traders, especially if infrastructure is damaged.

What could happen next

The ball appears to be in Hifter's court. His forces could face only weak opposition if they stormed Ras Lanuf and Sidr, protected only by the official oil guard units. But the impact could be much wider. Until now, the powers in east and west have largely avoided fighting directly, instead battling through proxies. Storming the oil facilities would be a direct assault by Hifter on the internationally backed Tripoli government since it officially holds them now. Hifter would likely be seen as flouting the United Nations and European countries, which have called for a cease-fire. That opens the door to further possible escalations. How far Hifter goes depends on whether he finds international supporters, but he could try to carry out his threats to move against Tripoli, pitting him against Misrata's powerful fighters. —AP

IRAQI FORCES RETAKE 3RD OF WEST MOSUL

MOSUL: Iraqi security forces have seized control of more than a third of west Mosul, a commander said yesterday, after a week of steady gains in their battle to retake the city from the Islamic State group. Fierce fighting has shaken Mosul in recent days as thousands of US-backed Iraqi soldiers and police battle to reclaim the country's second city. A renewed push against the jihadists launched last Sunday has seen IS forced from several neighborhoods and key sites, including the main local government headquarters and the famed Mosul museum.

Speaking to AFP yesterday, Staff Major General Maan Al-Saadi of the elite Counter-Terrorism Service said "more than a third" of west Mosul was now under the control of security forces. CTS forces were battling IS inside the Mosul al-Jadida and Al-Aghawat areas yesterday, Saadi said, adding that he expected the fighting there to be completed in the coming hours. Iraq's Joint Operations Command (JOC) said that forces from the Rapid Response Division, another special forces unit, and the federal police were also attacking the Bab Al-Toub area on the edge of Mosul's Old City.

"The battle is not easy... we are fighting an irregular enemy who hides among the citizens and uses tactics of booby-trapping,



MOSUL: Iraqi civilians walk toward Iraqi security forces after fleeing their homes due to fighting between government forces and Islamic State militants, on the western side of Mosul. — AP

explosions and suicide bombers, and the operation is taking place with precision to preserve the lives of the citizens," Brigadier General Yahya Rasool, the spokesman for the JOC said. Still, he said, IS resistance "has begun to weaken in a big way". IS seized Mosul in mid-2014 when the jihadist group swept across areas north and west of Baghdad, taking control of swathes of territory and declaring a cross-border

"caliphate" in Iraq and neighbouring Syria.

Backed by a US-led air strikes and other support, Iraqi forces have since retaken much of the territory they lost. The operation to recapture Mosul-then the last Iraqi city under IS control-was launched in October. After recapturing the east of the city, Iraqi forces last month set their sites on the west, where hundreds of thousands of civilians remain trapped.

Mass grave

Northwest of Mosul advancing Iraqi forces also took the infamous Badush prison this week, announcing on Saturday they had uncovered a mass grave containing the remains of hundreds of people executed by the jihadists. The Hashed Al-Shaabi paramilitary forces found "a large mass grave containing the remains of around 500 civilian prisoners in (Badush) prison who were executed by (IS) gangs," the military said. According to Human Rights Watch, IS gunmen executed up to 600 inmates from the prison in June 2014, forcing them to kneel along a nearby ravine and then shooting them with assault rifles.

The jihadists have committed widespread atrocities in areas under their control and claimed responsibility for a series of deadly attacks in Western cities and elsewhere. The US-led coalition launched air strikes against IS in Syria and Iraq in 2014 and is providing a range of support to allied forces in both countries. In Syria the coalition is backing an Arab-Kurdish alliance known as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) that is pushing towards the jihadists' de facto capital Raqa. Turkish-backed rebels are also advancing against IS in northern Syria, as are government troops supported by Russia. — AFP

News

in brief

China praises courts for punishing state crimes

BEIJING: The convictions of a prominent defense attorney and his associates were among the country's top legal achievements last year, China's chief justice said Sunday, highlighting a case that has been criticized by Western governments and rights groups. In a report to the national legislature, Zhou Qiang also said that China, which is believed to execute more people than the rest of the world combined, gave the death penalty "to an extremely small number of criminals for extremely serious offenses" in the past 10 years. The actual number of executions in China is a state secret. A 2007 decision that all death sentences must be reviewed by the Supreme People's Court is believed to have reduced the number of executions dramatically. Zhou praised courts for severely punishing crimes against state security and violent terrorism, and said the trend will continue in order "to resolutely safeguard the country's political security."

Haiti pays last respects to ex-president Preval

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Former Haitian President Rene Preval was buried Saturday after a state funeral in Port-au-Prince, a final tribute to a beloved champion of the rural poor. Preval, who served two terms as president, died on March 3 at age 74. His sister told local media that he had suffered a heart attack. In stands draped in Haitian flags, family and close colleagues of the former leader gathered at the funeral. Sitting in full sunlight, guests who had arrived early in the morning were given straw hats typical of rural areas beloved by the former president. Later, as rain fell, a funeral procession took the body 200 kilometers north to Preval's father's native village of Marmelade. There, the late president was laid to rest at the edge of a lake located on a farm - a fitting place for an agronomist by trade who was always deeply attached to the land and the people who worked it.

Madagascar's cyclone death toll reaches 50

JOHANNESBURG: Madagascar's government says the death toll from Cyclone Enawo has risen to at least 50, with 20 people missing. The island nation's disaster management agency on Sunday said the cyclone that made landfall in the northeast on Tuesday also has driven 110,000 people from their homes. At least 183 people were injured. Enawo brought heavy rains and winds in excess of 140 miles (225 kilometers) per hour - the equivalent of a Category 4 hurricane. Officials say the full extent of the damage is not yet known because of telecommunications breakdowns, making it hard to contact rural communities. The cyclone also has damaged the economy. The Sava region in the northeast produces about half of the world's vanilla, and producers predict a very bad harvest.



BATUMI, Georgia: A Georgian riot police officer jumps over a burned car yesterday in Georgia's Black Sea port of Batumi during clashes between police and stone-throwing rioters. — AFP

Dozens injured as Georgia's police and protesters clash

BATUMI: Nearly two dozen people were hospitalized yesterday in Georgia's Black Sea port of Batumi after police used tear gas and rubber bullets against hundreds of stone-throwing rioters, local media reported. The violent clashes reportedly followed a spontaneous protest by local residents against police officers arresting several men who refused to accept a parking fine. Eleven police and 10 demonstrators were hospitalized with injuries and symptoms of tear gas poisoning, regional healthcare minister Zaal Mikeladze told journalists. In an effort to calm down the worst riots Georgia has seen in decades, Interior Minister Giorgi Mgebrishvili said he ordered the arrested men be released from custody. Protesters-mostly youths-attempted to storm a police building and torched police cars in the streets of Batumi, the country's second-largest city and the most popular tourist destination, Rustavi-2 TV network reported. Opposition politicians said that public anger had been growing in Batumi over police issuing disproportionate fines for minor traffic offences.

Guatemala shelter fire death toll climbs to 39

GUATEMALA CITY: The death toll in a horrific fire at a government-run shelter for Guatemalan teens has climbed to 39, officials said yesterday. Hundreds of protesters rallied outside the residence of President Jimmy Morales, alleging that government negligence at the overcrowded facility where staffers were accused of sexual and other abuse allowed the tragedy to happen. Some of the protesters carried blue and white Guatemalan flags stained with red to symbolize blood and death. Three more adolescent girls succumbed to their injuries while being treated in intensive care, according to hospital officials, who said 14 girls are still in their care, including eight in critical condition. The girls perished in a blaze Wednesday at the co-ed Virgin of the Assumption Safe Home for children in San Jose Pinula, a village just east of the capital. The fire broke out in the girls' living quarters of the walled facility, killing 19 immediately.

Two female bombers killed in foiled attack

LAGOS: Civilian vigilantes foiled a suicide attack on the outskirts of Nigeria's flashpoint city of Maiduguri, killing two teenaged female bombers, police said on Sunday. Boko Haram's Islamist insurgency has frequently used young women and girls to stage suicide bombings. "Two female suicide bombers, about 18 years of age... were sighted by the civilian JTF (vigilantes) and consequently shot dead by security personnel," police spokesman Victor Isuku said in a statement. The would-be bombers were killed Saturday as they tried to break into Maiduguri, the provincial capital of Borno state where Boko Haram was born. Isuku said no one else was killed or injured in the incident, though a rescue services official said a vigilante had been hurt. Abdulkadir Ibrahim of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said one of the bombers was pregnant. In January, a female bomber with a baby strapped to her back used the infant as a decoy before detonating her explosives, killing several people in the volatile region.



DAMASCUS: Photo shows blood soaked streets and several damaged buses in a parking lot at the site of an attack by twin explosions in Damascus, Syria on Saturday, March 11, 2017. — AP

DEATH TOLL IN DAMASCUS BOMBINGS JUMPS TO 74

BEIRUT: The toll from twin bombings targeting Shiite pilgrims in the centre of Damascus has risen to 74 dead, a monitor said yesterday. Among the victims of Saturday's blasts were 43 Iraqi pilgrims who had come to the Syrian capital to visit Shiite shrines in Damascus's famed Old City, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The Britain-based monitor said that 11 bystanders and eight children were among those killed, as well as 20 members of pro-government security forces. Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said that a roadside bomb detonated as a bus carrying pilgrims made its way through the Bab Al-Saghir area of the Old City before a suicide bomber blew himself up. Syrian state television on Saturday gave a toll of 40 killed and 120 wounded by "two bombs detonated by terrorists".

Iraq's foreign ministry said around 40 of its nationals had died. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack. Shiite shrines are a frequent target for Sunni extremists of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group (IS), not only in Syria but also in neighboring Iraq. The Sayyida Zeinab mausoleum to the south of Damascus, Syria's most visited Shiite pilgrimage site, has been hit by several deadly bombings during the war. Twin suicide bombings in the high-security Kafr Sousa district of the capital in January killed 10 people, eight of them soldiers. That attack was claimed by former Al-Qaeda affiliate Fateh al-Sham Front. — AFP

46 KILLED, DOZENS MISSING IN ETHIOPIA 'GARBAGE LANDSLIDE'

ADDIS ABABA: A landslide swept through a massive garbage dump on the outskirts of Ethiopia's capital, killing at least 46 people and leaving several dozen missing, residents said, as officials vowed to relocate those who called the landfill home. Addis Ababa Mayor Diriba Kuma said 15 bodies had been recovered since the landslide Saturday night at the Koshe Garbage Landfill buried several makeshift homes and concrete buildings. The landfill has been a dumping ground for the capital's garbage for more than 50 years.

About 150 people were there when the landslide occurred, resident Assefa Teklemahimant said. The mayor said 37 people had been rescued and were receiving medical treatment. Many people at the landfill had been scavenging items to make a living, but others live there because renting homes, largely built of mud and sticks, is relatively inexpensive. An AP reporter saw four bodies taken away by ambulances after being pulled from the debris. Elderly women cried, and others stood anxiously waiting for news of loved ones. Six excavators dug through the ruins.

"My house was right inside there," said a shaken Tebeju Asres, pointing to where one of the excavators was digging in deep, black mud. "My mother and three of my sisters were there when the landslide happened. Now I don't know the fate of all of them." The resumption of garbage dumping at the site in recent months likely caused the landslide, Assefa

said. The dumping had stopped in recent years, but it resumed after farmers in a nearby restive region where a new garbage landfill complex was being built blocked dumping in their area. Smaller landslides have occurred at the Koshe landfill in the past two years but only two or three people were killed, Assefa said.

"In the long run, we will conduct a resettling program to relocate people who live in and around the landfill," the Addis Ababa mayor said. Around 500 waste-pickers are believed to work at the landfill every day, sorting through the debris from the capital's estimated 4 million residents. City officials say close to 300,000 tons of waste are collected each year from the capital, most of it dumped at the landfill. Since 2010, city officials have warned that the landfill was running out of room and was being closed in by nearby housing and schools.

City officials in recent years have been trying to turn the garbage into a source of clean energy with a \$120 million investment. The Koshe waste-to-energy facility, which has been under construction since 2013, is expected to generate 50 megawatts of electricity upon completion. Ethiopia, which has one of Africa's fastest growing economies, is under a state of emergency imposed in October after several months of sometimes deadly protests demanding wider political freedoms. — Agencies



ADDIS ABABA: Police officers secure the perimeter at the scene of a garbage landslide, as excavators aid rescue efforts, on the outskirts of the capital Addis Ababa yesterday. — AP

BRAZIL'S CAPITAL ON EDGE AHEAD OF CORRUPTION PROBES

BRASILIA: Brazil's capital is on edge ahead of the expected opening of scores of corruption cases this week against sitting and former politicians in a crisis that could threaten President Michel Temer's rule. Within days, Prosecutor General Rodrigo Janot is expected to request authority for a slew of probes against members of the government and Congress. It's the latest chapter of a three-year embezzlement and bribery scandal shaking Latin America's biggest economy. Last week "was the calm before the political crisis which is coming and which will last for months," said political analyst Alberto Almeida. "It's a terrible time for the credibility of the political class."

Speculation has been growing for months over who will be on Janot's list. On Saturday, G1 news site reported that Janot would seek about 80

investigations and that the number of politicians involved may reach 200. The request to the Supreme Court, which oversees all judicial matters concerning sitting politicians, will be based on a deluge of testimony in plea bargains with 77 former executives of the giant Odebrecht construction company. Odebrecht employees have confessed to systemic bribery of politicians in exchange for inflated contracts with state oil company Petrobras and favorable legislation. The money went either directly into politicians' pockets or into party campaign slush funds.

It is not clear whether Temer, who has already lost a string of ministers to the ever-expanding corruption crisis, will be subjected to a probe himself. He is also involved in a separate case at the Supreme Electoral Court which is looking into

whether his 2014 election as vice president on the ticket with then president Dilma Rousseff benefited from campaign slush funds. The court could, in theory, annul the election's result, creating yet another wave of instability for Brazil.

Reforms in danger

At the very least this week, Temer's government looks certain to take a new battering just when it's trying to push through austerity reforms. Brazil has been through two straight years of recession and Temer, who became president last year after Rousseff was impeached, says his main goal is to put the economy back on track. He has got Congress to pass a 20 year spending freeze and is now asking for pension reform and other painful measures. But the corruption scandal also

means that Congress—where many members are expected to be probed by Janot—is sometimes more interested in survival than legislation.

For example, Congress has spent much of its energy in recent weeks on trying to craft amnesties to cover anyone involved in taking unregistered campaign donations, despite fierce condemnation from anti-corruption judges and prosecutors. "Every time there's a new phase (of the probe), Congress stops," said a source in the Chamber of Deputies, asking not to be identified. Almeida said that unlike previous Brazilian political crises, this one is turning into open war between the judiciary and the political world. "These crises used to be resolved within the political world..., but that's not possible any more." — AFP



Brazilian President Michel Temer

'GHOSTS' DRIVE BRAZILIAN LEADER FROM RESIDENCE

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's President Michel Temer blames bad vibes and even ghosts for driving him from his sumptuous official residence in the capital Brasilia, a Brazilian news weekly reported Saturday. Temer surprised Brazilian politics watchers this week with the revelation that he has decamped from the Alvorada Palace and moved with his former beauty queen wife and their seven-year-old son down the road to the smaller vice presidential residence. The modernist Alvorada, which means Dawn and was designed by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, would be a dream home for many. It has a huge pool, football field, chapel, medical center and vast lawn.

But Temer, 76, and his 33-year-old wife Marcela, find the cavernous, glass-fronted building spooky. "I felt something strange there. I wasn't able to sleep right from the first night. The energy wasn't good," Temer was quoted as saying by Veja. "Marcela felt the same thing. Only (their son) Michelinho, who went running from one

end to the other, liked it." "We even started to wonder: could there be ghosts?" he reportedly quipped to Veja. According to a report in Globo newspaper, Marcela Temer brought in a priest to attempt to drive out any evil spirits, but to no avail.

The Temers then moved to the still luxurious but smaller Jaburu Palace nearby. Temer knows it well: this was his residence when he served as vice president until last year when then president Dilma Rousseff was impeached for breaking budget accounting laws. That automatically put Temer in the top job and in the Alvorada. No one filled his vacant vice presidential post, however, meaning he can now take his pick of palaces. The house moving comes in the middle of a severe political crisis for Brazil, with many of Temer's allies facing potential corruption probes. The president himself is battling a case in the electoral court where he is accused of having benefited from illegal donations when he and Rousseff ran together in 2014. — AFP

GERMAN, US LEADERS TO MEET IN 'CLASH OF STYLE AND SUBSTANCE'

TRUMP CALLED MERKEL'S REFUGEE POLICIES 'CATASTROPHIC MISTAKE'

BERLIN: She is controlled and cautious, a physicist from East Germany who takes her time making decisions and has never relished the attention that comes from being Europe's most powerful leader. He is a wealthy real estate magnate from New York who shoots from the hip and enjoys the spotlight. It is hard to imagine two leaders more different, in style or substance, than Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, and Donald Trump, the new president of the United States. For months, they have been engaged in an uneasy long-distance skirmish over policy and values.

Tomorrow, they meet for the first time - a high-stakes encounter that will be watched by governments around the world for clues about the future of the transatlantic alliance, a partnership that has helped shape the global order since World War Two but which Trump is threatening to upend. "Do I think they are going to become good friends? Probably not. They are very different personalities," said Charles Kupchan, who advised Trump's predecessor Barack Obama on European policy as a member of the National Security Council. "But I do think they have a strong interest, both politically and strategically, in learning how to work together. It is arguably the most important meeting with a foreign leader of Trump's presidency."

German officials say the detail-oriented Merkel, 62, has been preparing assiduously for her trip to Washington. She has watched Trump's speeches and poured over his interviews, including a lengthy Q&A with Playboy magazine from 1990 in which he floats many of the controversial ideas he is now trying to implement as president, they say. Members of her entourage have also analyzed Trump's encounters with other leaders - including Britain's Theresa May, Japan's Shinzo Abe and Canada's Justin Trudeau - and have had exchanges with some of their counterparts on how to handle the unpredictable former reality-TV star, the officials added. "We have to be prepared for the fact that he does not like to listen for long, that he prefers clear positions and does not want to delve into details," said one senior German official.

'Catastrophic mistake'

On both economic and foreign policy, the divide between the two leaders appears vast. Trump, 70, has called Merkel's decision to allow hundreds of thousands of refugees into Germany a "catastrophic mistake". He has threatened to impose tariffs on German carmakers that import into the US market. And he has criticized Berlin for not spending more on defense, a longstanding US complaint that Merkel has promised to address.

Another source of tension is Germany's 50 billion euro trade surplus with the United States. Trump adviser Peter Navarro has accused Germany of gaining unfair trade advantages through a weak euro. Merkel and her ministers have pointed out that the European Central Bank - and not Berlin - controls the fate of Europe's single currency. Russia will also be on the agenda. White House officials have said



This combination of pictures shows US President Donald Trump (left) and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Europe's most powerful leader, Angela Merkel, meets for the first time tomorrow America's flamboyant President Donald Trump whose arrival in the White House has sent shockwaves across the Atlantic. — AFP

Trump will seek advice from Merkel on how to deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

For her part, Merkel has been critical of Trump's travel ban targeting the citizens of several mainly Muslim countries. In a phone call in January, she explained to Trump that the Geneva Convention obliges signatories, including the United States, to take in war refugees on humanitarian grounds. Merkel is also concerned that Trump, who has repeatedly praised Britain's decision to leave the European Union, might continue to undermine the bloc with his rhetoric at a time of deep crisis triggered by the rise of anti-EU populist parties.

"Europe is in a very fragile, precarious state and Germany is trying to ensure that the European integration project holds together. I suspect the chancellor will want to make this clear to the president," said Anthony Gardner, who served as US ambassador to the European Union until January. "This is an opportunity to sketch out areas of common interest, to define a positive agenda," he added. "But one meeting won't change the atmosphere on its own."

Potential for surprises

Trump is the third US president that Merkel, Europe's longest-serving leader, has worked with. She established a good rapport with George W Bush, who was keen to repair ties with Germany after his clash with Merkel's predecessor Gerhard Schroeder over the Iraq war. And although relations with Obama got off to an awkward start when Merkel rebuffed his request to speak at the Brandenburg Gate dur-

ing the 2008 presidential campaign, the two grew close over time, cooperating on sanctions against Russia and launching negotiations on a transatlantic free-trade deal. "The parting is hard for me," Merkel acknowledged when Obama visited Berlin in November, a week after Trump's victory.

The German leader will be walking a fine line in Washington. With an election looming at home in September, she must avoid offering her political opponents ammunition by cozying up to Trump. Neither can she afford an open confrontation that might damage German interests. One of the biggest concerns in the chancellor's camp before the visit is the potential for surprises. Japan's Abe had an awkward 19-second handshake with Trump, while May was criticized in some sections of the British media for holding hands with Trump during a stroll at the White House, apparently after he reached out to steady himself.

When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Trump last month, he and his team spent the day before running through endless scenarios, lines of questioning and role-plays to ensure they were prepared for any scenario. But in the end, they were still taken aback when Trump spoke off the cuff at their news conference on the sensitive issues of settlements and a future Palestinian state. Merkel has admitted to being so uncomfortable with surprises as a child that she drew up her Christmas wish-list months in advance to avoid being caught off-guard by an unexpected gift. With Trump, she might have to expect the unexpected. — Reuters

BUS IN HAITI FLEES ACCIDENT, KILLS 34

PORT-AU-PRINCE: A bus speeding away from the scene of a hit-and-run accident plowed into dozens of street musicians in the Haitian city of Gonaives yesterday, killing a total of 34 people, officials said. Fifteen people also were injured in the incident in Gonaives, a city of some 300,000 people located about 150 km northwest of the capital Port-au-Prince. "First, the bus plowed into two pedestrians, killing one of them, and injuring the other," Marie-Alta Jean Baptiste, head of Haiti's civil protection office, told AFP.

The driver then rammed into three

groups of street musicians as he tried to speed away, leaving 33 of them dead in a scene of ghastly carnage. Emergency workers transported the injured to the hospital, while police tried to control an angry crowd. "The people who were not victims of the accident tried to burn the bus with the passengers inside," said Faustin Joseph, civic protection coordinator for the department of Artibonite, where Gonaives, the regional capital, is located. "The bus, the passengers and the driver were all placed into the care" of the local authorities, Joseph said. — AFP

US REPUBLICANS STILL BATTLE EACH OTHER EVEN AFTER GAINING POWER

WASHINGTON: Less than twenty-four hours after Donald Trump had won the White House, House Speaker Paul Ryan triumphantly proclaimed the start of a new era of Republican leadership that would "hit the ground running." Six weeks into Trump's administration, Republicans are running - just in different directions. As congressional leaders move for-

ward with efforts to undo former President Barack Obama's health care law, conservative activists and GOP lawmakers are slamming the proposal as "Obamacare lite," "Obamacare 2.0" and "RINOcare" - RINO standing for Republicans In Name Only, a term of derision.

Swing state senators worry that their sickest and poorest constituents could lose access

to health care. Republican governors fear that millions of people now covered by Medicaid could be dropped, a step the governors warn could hurt GOP candidates in their states. "We've said all along, 'Work with the governors,'" said Gov Brian Sandoval, R-Nev. "Well, they came out with their own bill, which doesn't include anything that the governors have

talked about." Republican leaders hoped unified control of Washington would unite the party around years of campaign promises to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, cut taxes and slash regulations.

Health care battle

Instead, the celebratory weeks that followed Trump's victory seem to have been little more than a temporary cease-fire in a years-long GOP civil war. "There are people who haven't adjusted to the fact that we have a Republican president," said Michael Steel, a former top adviser to onetime Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, who frequently tangled with tea party-aligned lawmakers. "These guys could wind up leading the cavalry charge straight into machine-gun fire."

The health care battle is probably the first of many intraparty clashes to come. Already, plans to overhaul tax laws have Republicans tied in knots, budget hawks are skeptical about Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure plan and senior GOP lawmakers have rejected major pieces of his upcoming budget proposal. The White House realizes that it must win over many of the objectors. With Democratic voters demanding nothing short of complete resistance to Trump, congressional passage of the Republican agenda will depend largely on party-line votes. That leaves limited room for GOP defections.

In a Wednesday meeting with the leaders of conservative groups, Trump positioned himself as the good cop in the conflict, taking what one

participant described as a series of veiled shots at Ryan. The president argued that his team was at least meeting with conservative activists, according to the participant, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private discussions. Trump also reminded the activists of his strong support among the conservative base and said he planned to campaign in states he won, in an effort to pressure their unresponsive lawmakers.

"I want to be as helpful to the Trump administration as I can. I'm very supportive of the president. I support him, I want to help him. But respect has to go up and down the street, it's got to go both ways," said Rep Gary Palmer, R-Ala, a member of the hard-line House Freedom Caucus. At least one conservative group is already running digital ads against the GOP health care plan, arguing that the tax credits in the bill essentially replace one federal entitlement with another. Activists plan to swarm Capitol Hill to demand Congress pass a repeal bill that would completely erase all trace of Obama's signature domestic achievement.

"This is not something that is easy for us to say, 'OK, we'll take half a loaf,'" said Adam Brandon, head of the conservative activist group FreedomWorks. "What Senate Leader Mitch McConnell promised when he was on the campaign trail was we're going to repeal Obamacare root and branch. So what we're asking him to do is repeal - root and branch." Republican leaders attribute some of the discord to inexperience. — AP



The Capitol is seen at sunset as Senate Republicans are poised to use their majority to confirm President Donald Trump's controversial nominee to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, despite calls from Democrats for a delay as both houses of Congress prepare to leave Washington for the President's Day weekend and return to their home districts. — AP

IMMIGRATION AND EU: BUZZWORDS IN 3 KEY ELECTIONS

PARIS: Dutch elections on Wednesday set the stage for others in France and Germany that come against a background of eurosceptic or anti-immigrant sentiments boosted by Brexit.

The Netherlands: PVV eyes record score

On Wednesday, 12.9 million Dutch voters will be eligible to cast ballots in general elections contested by 28 parties and 1,114 candidates. The vote has boiled down to a tight race between MP Geert Wilders and his Freedom Party (PVV) and Prime Minister Mark Rutte and his Liberals (VVD). Polls indicate that the anti-euro, anti-Islam PVV could score its best result since its creation in 2006. The PVV would not necessarily be part of the next government however, because that will likely be a coalition and most parties have pledged not to govern with the PVV. A firebrand politician, Wilders has vowed to shut mosques, ban the Koran, close the country's borders and take The Netherlands out of the EU, an institution that it helped found. Leiden University analyst Geerten Waling believes the vote will produce "a very divided parliament" and warned: "It's going to be much tougher to form a coalition government, much tougher than before."

France: Duel ahead with Le Pen

France's presidential race has turned into a rollercoaster, with frontrunning candidates dogged by scandal and the anti-immigrant, anti-euro National Front (FN) seeking to pull off a Donald Trump-style upset. The first round of voting takes place on April 23. If no candidate gets more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two go into a runoff on May 7. Once the frontrunner, conservative Francois Fillon has had to battle to stay in the race because of the revelations that he had paid his wife Penelope hundreds of thousands of euros from public funds, allegedly for fake jobs.

This has proved good news for Emmanuel Macron, an independent centrist, who polls show would reach the second round of the election, where his opponent is forecast to be far-right leader Marine Le Pen. Although polls show Le Pen losing in the second round, all eyes are on her nationalist FN, which is seeking to emulate Trump's surprise November victory in the US, which defied pollsters and media alike. However, Le Pen has her own legal troubles: she faces prosecution for distributing images of Islamic State atrocities over Twitter as well as separate cases over misusing public funds at the European Parliament and campaign financing. — AFP



THE HAGUE: People walk along street stalls at a fruit market in The Hague, The Netherlands. In The Hague's most culturally diverse neighborhoods, many women wear Muslim headscarves. — AP



HEERLEN: Firebrand anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders (second right) surrounded by police officers and security guards as he waves to supporters during a campaign stop in Heerlen, Netherlands. — AP

ANTI-ISLAM DUTCH LAWMAKER FANS FLAMES FROM THE SECURITY BUBBLE

ELECTION MANIFESTO PLEDGES TO 'DE-ISLAMIZE' NETHERLANDS

THE HAGUE: With his flamboyant shock of blonde-dyed hair and fiery anti-Islam rhetoric, Dutch politician Geert Wilders comes across a man who doesn't mind the limelight. Yet for the past dozen years, the right-wing populist has spent much of his time holed up in anonymous safe houses or in a heavily guarded wing of Parliament. Tight security surrounds Wilders night and day, and he hardly ventures outdoors. For his handful of campaign events ahead of a March 15 election, he traveled in convoys of armored cars.

Tax on veils

"It's a total lack of freedom. That's how I would say it," Wilders, who leads the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands said in a recent interview. The elaborate protection apparatus that surrounds him is a reaction to death threats from extremists enraged by his fierce criticism of Islam. Wilders has made headlines and drawn condemnation for more than a decade for his anti-Islam rhetoric, which has included comparing the Quran with Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and calling for a tax on the veils some Muslim women wear.

At the same time, support for his party has grown in fits and starts, mirroring what he calls a "Patriotic Spring" sweeping Europe. Despite slipping in the polls recently, the Party for Freedom remains on track to become one

of the biggest parties in the 150-seat lower house. He also is regularly compared to President Donald Trump, for his policies and also his penchant for communicating via Twitter. As protests and riots unfolded this weekend in Rotterdam over a Dutch government decision to block the visits of two Turkish ministers, Wilders fired off regular incendiary tweets.

"Go away and never come back ... and take all your Turkish fans from The Netherlands with you please. #byebye," he said in one as Turkey's family affairs minister was at the center of a tense standoff at the Turkish consulate. His one-page election manifesto is light on economic policy and heavy on pledges to "de-Islamize" the Netherlands, a nation of 17 million where an estimated 5 percent of the adult population is Muslim. Wilders calls Islam a threat to western democracy and vows to close all mosques and ban the Quran, if he wins power. But he has alienated so much of the political mainstream that even if he wins the popular vote he is considered unlikely to be able to form a ruling coalition in a nation where no single party has ever ruled alone.

Polarizing rhetoric

Crucially, Prime Minister Rutte has ruled out working together after the election. Polls show Rutte's center-right People's Party for Freedom

and Democracy with the most voter support in the days leading up to Wednesday's election. Rutte rejects Wilders' polarizing rhetoric, but also harbors hard feelings over Wilders' decision to effectively torpedo Rutte's first minority government in 2012. After weeks of negotiations on a tough austerity package, Wilders, who pledged to prop up the government by marshaling party lawmakers for key votes, backed out, forcing fresh elections. "We know they walk away when the going gets tough, that they make problems bigger not smaller," Rutte said of the Party for Freedom. Even so, Wilders' message has found strong support in a nation known for its long history of religious tolerance and personal freedoms.

Wilders' opposition to Islam dates back to the days when he could still move freely around the world. In his youth he lived in Israel, which he saw as a democratic oasis surrounded by oppressive regimes in the Middle East. After working for a Dutch government welfare organization, Wilders gravitated into politics and joined the party now led by Rutte. But he quit in 2004 over his opposition bringing Turkey into the European Union. Two years later, he formally established the PVV, the Dutch acronym for the Party for Freedom. Wilders set up his party so that he is its only member, allowing him to keep a tight rein on its message and lawmakers. — AP

CARLOS THE JACKAL FACES TRIAL IN FRANCE - AGAIN

PARIS: Carlos the Jackal, the perpetrator of headline-grabbing attacks in the 1970s and early 1980s, goes on trial in France today for the deadly bombing of a Paris shop more than 40 years ago. With attention in France now focused on the ever-present threat of jihadist attack, the trial in Paris will reach back to a time when Europe was repeatedly targeted by ruthless groups sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

Carlos, 67, a Venezuelan whose real name is Ilyich Ramirez Sanchez, describes himself as a "professional revolutionary" and was dubbed "Carlos the Jackal" by the press when he was one of the world's most wanted terror suspects. The nickname came from a fictional terrorist in the 1971 Frederick Forsyth novel, "The Day of the Jackal", which was turned into a popular film. Arrested in the Sudanese capital Khartoum in 1994 by elite French police, Carlos is already serving a life sentence for the murders of two policemen killed in Paris in 1975 and that of a Lebanese revolutionary.

He was also found guilty of four bombings in Paris and Marseille in 1982 and 1983, some targeting trains, which killed a total of 11 people and injured nearly 150. Carlos will be judged by three judges for the attack on the Drugstore Publicis, a busy shop once located in Saint-Germain-des-Pres in the heart of Paris. In the late afternoon of September 15, 1974, a grenade was lobbed into the entrance of the store, killing two men and leaving 34 people injured.

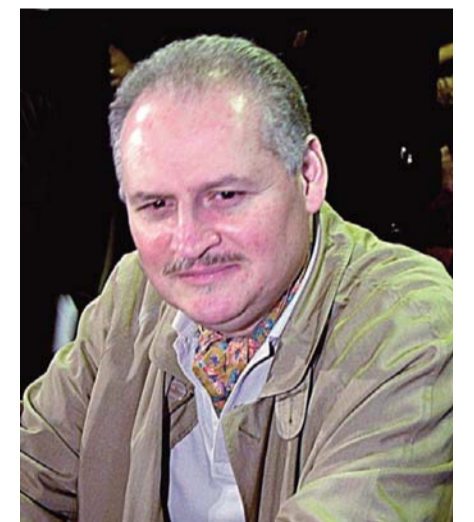
'Wounds never healed'

Georges Holleaux, a lawyer representing the two widows of the men killed and 16 other people affected, said they relished the chance to finally see Carlos in court. "The victims have been waiting so long for Carlos to be judged and convicted. Their wounds have never healed," he said. Carlos's lawyer, Isabelle Coutant-Peyre, said the trial was a waste of time and money. "What exactly is the point of having a trial so long after the events?" she said. Carlos denies the charges, which include "murders carried out with a terrorist organization". Al Watan Al-Arabi magazine published an interview in 1979 in which Carlos is said to have admitted that he had thrown the grenade into the shop. He has since denied giving the interview.

The prosecution says the attack was linked to a hostage-taking at the French

embassy in the Dutch capital The Hague that had begun two days earlier, on September 13, 1974. The Japanese Red Army, a communist militant group which had close ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in which Carlos was the head of "special operations", was demanding that French authorities free one of its members who had been arrested at Paris Orly airport two months early. The prosecution says Carlos orchestrated the Hague hostage-taking and carried out the Paris grenade attack to force the French government to give in to the Japanese group's demands.

He achieved his aim—the Japanese suspect was released and was able to travel to Yemen with other members of the Hague hostage-taking team. The case against Carlos is also based on witness testimony from his former brothers-in-arms, including Hans-Joachim Klein, a German to whom the Venezuelan is said to have admitted he wanted to "apply pressure to get the Japanese man freed". Investigators have tracked the provenance of the grenade and said it came from the same batch as those used by the Hague hostage-takers and had been stolen from a US army base in 1972. One was also found at the Paris home of Carlos's mistress. — AFP



PARIS: In this file photo, Venezuelan international terrorist Carlos the Jackal whose real name is Ilyich Ramirez Sanchez is seated in a Paris courtroom. — AP

GUIDE TO DUTCH ELECTIONS

THE HAGUE: The small lowlands country of The Netherlands holds general elections on Wednesday, the first in a series of national polls which could reshape Europe's political landscape. Away from the tourist delights of the tulips, windmills and clogs, here is a beginner's guide to the Dutch elections:

What is at stake?

Amid the rise of populist and far-right parties, the Dutch will be the first to cast ballots ahead of presidential votes planned in France in April and May, and legislative polls in Germany in September. After the surprise Brexit vote and Donald Trump's win in the US presidential election, far-right Dutch MP Geert Wilders is hoping for his biggest polls win to date, which could see him emerge with the largest party in parliament.

Who is running?

The vote has essentially come down to a neck-and-neck race between Wilders and his Freedom Party (PVV) and outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte and his Liberals (VVD). But there are 28 parties—a post World War II record—competing for the 150 seats in the Dutch lower house of parliament. A total of 76 seats are needed for a majority. Thanks to a complex system of proportional representation, even small parties can get seats, enabling them to play an important role in shaping the make-up and viability of the next government. While Wilders has been topping the polls, smaller parties like the Green ecologists GroenLinks have also been wooing voters away from some of the country's long-established, traditional parties.

The main campaign themes

Europe's worst refugee crisis since the 1940s and a slew of attacks by Islamic

jihadists have forced their way high up the Dutch campaign agenda—fueling support for Wilders's anti-Islam, anti-immigration platform. Wilders has a one-page party manifesto which vows to close the borders to Muslim immigrants, close mosques and ban the sale of Korans. In an overt bid to win over some of Wilders's supporters, some of the other parties are increasingly insisting on bolstering what they call "Dutch values." Rutte told citizens with immigrant backgrounds to "act normally" and adapt to Dutch norms or "leave" the country. The biggest debates so far have however focused more heavily on traditional concerns—health care, pensions, and work conditions. Just days before the vote too, The Netherlands became embroiled in a bitter diplomatic row with Turkey, which forced itself onto the elections agenda.

How do elections work?

The Dutch lower house, or Tweede Kamer as it is called, says on its website that "no party has ever received more than 50 percent of the votes." "All governments since World War II have been coalition governments, supported by two or more parties to form a majority." Once the official results are announced on March 21 by the elections commission, the new Dutch parliament will be installed on March 23. A point person, known as an "informateur", investigates which parties could form a coalition, and presides over negotiations between the party leaders to draw up a program of policies. These discussions can take weeks or even months. Dutch media has reported it takes on average three months for a new government to take office. Once a program has been set out, a person known as a "formateur" begins drawing up the possible new cabinet. The reward for this arduous task is often the top job—becoming prime minister. —AFP

HUNGARY PARTIES MANEUVERING TO OUST 'OMNIPOTENT' ORBAN

BUDAPEST: Hungary's left-wing parties are certain to fail at today's presidential vote but have already won a victory of sorts, forming a rare united front against Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Ahead of next year's general election, challenges to the powerful right-wing premier are taking shape on both left and right, although few are speculating they will be strong enough to turn Hungary's populist tide.

The parliamentary vote for the largely ceremonial presidential role is a mere formality given that Orban's ruling rightwing Fidesz party, in power since 2010, holds close to a two-thirds majority. In the last election five years ago, Orban's ally Janos Ader ran uncontested. But on Monday, Ader, standing for reelection, faces respected former ombudsman Laszlo Majtenyi who has managed to unite normally warring leftist parties, all of whose 43 lawmakers in the 199-seat house have pledged to vote for him.

"It's significant because for once they support a single candidate even though they don't like each other," analyst Csaba Toth said. The key question is whether that unity will lead them to support Laszlo Botka, mayor of the third-biggest city Szeged, as prime ministerial candidate. Botka, towering at nearly two meters in height, was put forward in December by the Socialists, the largest leftist party. A trained lawyer and ex-water polo player who cuts a formidable figure,

his competent running since 2002 of Szeged, the only major city not controlled by Fidesz, has earned the 44-year-old respect across party lines. Botka has accused strongman Orban of governing like a "king" and said the time has come for "new left-wing policies".

Although a recent poll put Botka almost neck-and-neck with Orban in personal popularity, his Socialist party is much less popular, tainted by its roots as a communist party and a cor-

ruption-ridden spell in government. Botka insists he will only run if the fragmented left bloc, comprising some seven parties, stands behind him—a Herculean task given their current reluctance to cooperate. Under election rules most seats are won on a first-past-the-post basis, rewarding the monolithic Fidesz. Therefore without compromises and alliances, the leftist opposition can expect "total defeat", local journalist Peter Peto said. — AFP



BRUSSELS: Hungary's Prime minister Viktor Orban (center) arrives to attend the EU summit at the new 'Europa' building in Brussels. — AFP

SLUGGISH REFORMS BLOT POPE'S FOUR-YEAR REPORT CARD

VATICAN CITY: Elected in 2013 with a brief to reform a scandal-hit Vatican, Pope Francis has launched numerous initiatives but, four years later, he is still struggling to deliver real change. As he celebrates his fourth anniversary at the head of the Catholic Church on Monday, the affable Argentine continues to bask in a remarkable level of popularity around the world thanks to his popular touch, plain speaking and his humble, modest style. But inside the Vatican Curia there is not always the same enthusiasm for a pope who has regularly lambasted the administration that runs the global church. Addressing senior officials in December, the 80-year-old pontiff warned them the reform process he launched in 2013 had to lead to more than a cosmetic "face-lift" to remove wrinkles.

"Dear brothers, it's not the wrinkles in the church that you should fear, but the stains!" he told a group of religious bureaucrats he had previously described as suffering from "spiritual Alzheimer's". One Argentine bishop estimates active supporters of Francis's agenda to make up only around 20 percent of the Curia. A majority are loyal but passive and there is a significant minority actively opposed to him, the cleric says. Adding to Francis's problems is the fact that rapid change has

been anything but a feature of Church culture over the centuries.

Good pope, bad Curia?

The sensitive issue of clerical sex crimes illustrated this double difficulty last week when Irish abuse survivor Marie Collins resigned from the pope's advisory panel on the issue blaming "shameful" obstruction from within the Curia. But some Vatican insiders say depictions of a kind of civil war in the upper echelons of the Church are wide of the mark. "We need to get rid of this cliched idea of a reforming pope on one side and a group trying to block him on the other," said German cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Muller, the head of the department targeted by Collins' criticism.

"This simplistic idea of a good pope and a wicked Curia is dangerous for the pontiff because it can leave him isolated," said Gianni Valente, of the specialist review Vatican Insider. And it does not always reflect reality. Many Vatican officials say certain reforms are held up because of a lack of sufficient preparatory consultation or because the wrong people are put in charge of them. The most flagrant example of this was the appointment to a financial reform panel of Francesca Chaouqui, a PR consultant with questionable qualifications for the role.

Years to go

Chaouqui was convicted last year of leaking classified documents to journalists at the end of a highly embarrassing trial dubbed Vatileaks II. The case centered on an unsuccessful attempt to prosecute two investigative journalists for using the leaked documents to expose waste and mismanagement of Vatican finances and the taste of some cardinals for lavish luxury. Better controls on money coming in and going out are at the heart of Francis reform agenda but officials admit it will be several years before fully audited consolidated accounts are produced. "It is not easy to introduce common accounting standards when you have not had them for centuries," confides one official.

A month after his election, Francis appointed eight (now nine) cardinals to an advisory committee on administrative reform, but details of progress on this are sketchy. At the beginning of 2014 a powerful economic department was created under Australian cardinal George Pell. The move created shockwaves at the time but his powers have been trimmed since, according to Vatican watchers. The body that manages the Vatican's huge assets has resumed control of its own affairs, noted Sandro Magister, a conservative commentator who is critical of Francis

leadership. On the other hand, Vatican media activities have been completely reorganized and shaken up, despite considerable internal reservations. "The pope starts procedures and sows disorder," says Magister, who describes Francis as being far from delivering the kind of change that was much dis-

cussed at the time of the conclave of cardinals which elected him. Valente is more forgiving. "It is a long-distance job and the pope is laying out guidelines," he says, while stressing that most believers will judge Francis's performance as pope on other, less institutional, issues. —AFP



ARRICCIA: Pope Francis sits on a bus with other clergymen on their way back to the Vatican at the end of a week long spiritual retreat at the village of Ariccia, near Rome. —AP



NAPLES: A group of people clashes with police in Fuorigrotta district during a rally organized by citizens and social community against the political meeting of Matteo Salvini, general secretary of Italian far-right party Lega Nord in Naples. —AFP

VIOLENT CLASHES TRIGGER POLITICAL STORM IN ITALY

ROME: Italy's government vowed yesterday to defend far-right Northern League leader Matteo Salvini's right to free speech after violent clashes marred his first rally in Naples, proud capital of the country's poor south. "Something very important happened yesterday which we have to reflect on," Interior Minister Marco Minniti said after the violence between a small group of masked protesters and riot police erupted on the margins of an otherwise peaceful demonstration in the sprawling port city on Saturday.

"In a democracy it is fundamental that everyone has the right to speak and it is even more fundamental for those whose views are furthest away from our own," Minniti said. Minniti's intervention came amid a row over whether Naples's leftist mayor, Luigi de Magistris, had encouraged activists bent on preventing Salvini speaking. Saturday's violence came after a handful of demonstrators broke away from a protest march.

They began hurling stones, flares, smoke bombs and Molotov cocktails at the police, who replied with baton-and-shield charges and tear gas. The confrontation continued for over an hour, during which cars and rubbish carts were vandalised or overturned. Police made three arrests and were looking for three other people reported to have been involved. There were no reports of serious injury.

Mayor 'should quit'

Salvini, an anti-immigration, anti-euro populist who attracts protests whenever he ventures out of his base in Italy's wealthy north, said he would be filing a defamation suit against de Magistris. In the run-up to Saturday's clashes, the independent left-winger had branded Salvini a fascist xenophobe with contempt for southern Italy. He also tried to use his mayoral powers to deny the far-right leader a venue for his first rally in Naples. He was overruled by the local prefect, acting on the

orders of the interior ministry. "De Magistris should resign instead of accusing me of being a Nazi-fascist," Salvini said Sunday. "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Naples and the worst thing about it is the mayor's support for it." De Magistris's handling of Salvini's visit also came under fire from the media and constitutional experts. "Handing Salvini the stamp of being the defender of free speech and the right of political leaders to voice their opinions was, frankly, an unthinkable short-circuit," Francesco Casavola, a former president of Italy's Constitutional Court, told La Repubblica.

Black Bloc and Ultras

De Magistris, who had voiced support for the anti-Salvini protesters earlier in the week, said he did not condone what happened on Saturday. "As a former magistrate who is proud of his city, I distance myself from any form of violence," he said. Media reports said the protesters involved in the violence were a mixture of militants of the anti-globalization Black Bloc group and hooligan fans of local football club Napoli, known as "ultras". Commentators described the chaotic scenes as shameful and questioned whether de Magistris had not fanned the flames with his comments before Salvini's arrival.

They included tweeting "I'm with the (protest organizers) social centers," and accusing the centre-left government of dictating to the city how to run its affairs. Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera said in an editorial that the essential point about the episode was that Salvini had not been denied a platform, in line with policies applied to far right leaders in France and the Netherlands. But it asked: "How many Neapolitans were not able to go and listen to Salvini, even just out of curiosity, because of the heavy atmosphere that was created. Is this not a high price to pay for the intolerance of those in black hoodies?" —AFP

BRITAIN PLANS FOR ALL OPTIONS; BREXIT NEARS

LONDON: Britain is drawing up contingency plans in case its Brexit negotiations with the EU fail, a minister said Sunday as speculation mounted that the withdrawal process could start this week. Brexit minister David Davis said it was in "everybody's interests that we get a good outcome", but said the government was "planning for the contingency, all the various outcomes". He was speaking after MPs warned that ministers must prepare for the possibility that, with EU treaties allowing just two years to agree a new relationship, Britain might well leave without a deal. Prime Minister Theresa May has said she is optimistic about settling the divorce and a new trade agreement with the EU within the timeframe, but would walk away

rather than accept a bad deal. The cross-party parliamentary foreign affairs committee said this "represents a very destructive outcome leading to mutually assured damage for the EU and the UK", citing economic losses and legal confusion. Davis told the BBC he did not think that was "remotely likely", adding: "There will be tough points in this negotiation. But it's in absolutely everybody's interests that we get a good outcome." The MPs noted that the previous government had not prepared for the shock vote to leave the EU in the June referendum, something they called "gross negligence". "Making an equivalent mistake would constitute a serious dereliction of duty by the present administration," they said in the report. —AFP

THAI SOAP ANGERS FAMILY OF MYANMAR'S LAST KING

MYANMAR ACCUSES THAILAND OF DOUBLE STANDARDS

YANGON: The family of Myanmar's last king hit out yesterday at a Thai soap opera inspired by the palace intrigue of their ancestors, accusing Thailand of double standards in how it treats another country's royals. Soe Win, the great grandson of Myanmar's last monarch King Thibaw said his family were angered by "A Lady's Flame", a new hit prime-time soap that recounts a bloody dynastic power struggle. The show is set in a fictional kingdom but almost entirely mimics the final years of the Konbaung dynasty in the 19th century in the country formerly known as Burma. It portrays the scheming among a key queen and princesses who orchestrated the massacre of nearly a hundred people to ensure Thibaw had no rivals to the throne following his father's death in 1878.

While the massacre is historical fact, Thibaw's scions are upset with their family's portrayal by a country that shields its own monarchy from any

criticism. "We have asked Thais this, would they accept it if one of our companies here did the same thing about their country," Soe Win said. "If no action is taken, we will ask for help from their (Thailand's) royalty," he added. Thailand ferociously enforces a lese majeste law that bans scrutiny or criticism of its monarchy. Increasing numbers have been jailed in recent years for their comments about the royal family, sometimes for as much as 30 years.

It is only supposed to protect senior living royal family members. But recent cases have been brought against a historian for writing about a Thai king four centuries ago, against students who staged a play about a fictional kingdom and against a man for insulting the favourite dog of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Neighbors Thailand and Myanmar were bitter rivals for centuries and fought a number of bloody wars. One of the most momentous battles saw Myanmar

forces attack the city of Ayutthaya, second capital of the Siamese kingdom, and raze it to the ground in 1767, forcing the inhabitants to abandon the city.

In Thai historical soaps and dramas the Burmese are often portrayed as having villainous or treacherous tendencies, something that has previously caused anger in Thailand's western neighbor. Soe Win said he was particularly incensed by scenes in "A Lady's Flame" in which royal family members slapped each other. "It's quite insulting, as if we are wild," he said. For many Burmese the fall of its monarchy at the hands of the British just a few years after Thibaw took the throne was a deep psychological scar. He died in exile in India though there are plans to return his remains to his homeland. His family is playing a much more visible role now that the military who suppressed them have given way to a civilian-led government. —AFP

MACEDONIA'S POLITICAL CRISIS TAKES ETHNIC TURN

SKOPJE: A political crisis that has paralyzed Macedonia for two years is sliding into an ethnic dispute, with nationalists taking to the streets over a series of demands by the country's Albanians. The issue seemed to be closed after 2001 when, following a seven-month ethnic Albanian insurgency that left more than 100 people dead, a peace accord provided more rights for the minority. Albanians account for around a quarter of Macedonia's two million people.

But a deadlock following December's snap election, part of a deal brokered by the European Union aimed at solving long-running political troubles, has threatened to reawaken the demons in the former Yugoslav republic. The crisis erupted in 2015 when the opposition Social Democrats (SDSM) and the ruling conservative nationalist VMRO-DPMNE party exchanged accusations of corruption and wiretapping. An acrimonious conflict ensued between the two predominantly-Slavic parties, lacking any ethnic connotation and watched over by smaller Albanian parties, themselves divided.

The election changed all that but not in the way the EU hoped for. The polls gave no clear majority, with the conservatives taking only two more seats than SDSM. The Albanian groups emerged in the role of kingmakers. After several meetings over the border in the office of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, these groups settled their differences and created a joint platform, notably demanding that their language obtain official status across Macedonia. Currently, the language is only official in areas where Albanians make up more than 20 percent of the population, in line with the 2001 peace deal.

Undermining sovereignty?

The Albanian demands were accepted by SDSM leader Zoran Zaev, in a bid to gain power after 10 years of rule by conservative leader Nikola Gruevski, his arch-enemy. But on March 1, President Gorge Ivanov-an ally of Gruevski-



SKOPJE: Farmers on tractors participate in a protest in front of the Government building in Skopje, Macedonia. Thousands of Macedonians protest peacefully for days in the capital Skopje and other cities, against the designation of Albanian as a second official language nationwide. —AFP

refused to give Zaev a mandate to form a government, saying the Albanian platform undermined "Macedonia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence". The move was swiftly denounced by the opposition as a "coup" and condemned by both the United States and the European Union, which Macedonia aspires to join.

Thousands of Macedonians agree with the president and have since taken to the streets, chanting patriotic slogans and calling for the country's unity to be preserved. The demonstrators, mostly middle-aged men and women waving the red and yellow national flag, fear the Albanian demands will lead to the "federalization" and potential break-up of the small country. "There is no end to ethnic Albanians' demands. Step by step there will be a Greater Albania and no Macedonia," said Lidija Vasileva, a fashion designer from Skopje who is a regular at the protests.

"This is our homeland, we do not have another one," said well-known singer Kaliopi Bukle at a rally. Russia has supported the protesters and denounced Tirana, accusing it of acting with "the map of the so-called Greater Albania" in mind. Albanian authorities vigorously deny the accusation. Apart from Macedonia, there are ethnic Albanian minorities in Montenegro, Greece and southern Serbia. In Kosovo, which borders Macedonia, they make up around 90 percent of the population.

'Escalation possible'

Albania, a solid NATO ally, has defended its role. To be concerned about "the situation of Albanians beyond our borders is a constitutional obligation," Foreign Minister Ditmir Bushati said. And writing on Facebook, the prime minister said Albanian "is not the language of the enemy, but of a constituent people of Macedonia." "Without Albanian, there is no Macedonia,"

he added, in a stance that has unanimous support in Albania. But for independent Serbian analyst Aleksandar Popov, this "pan-Albanian platform" negotiated in Tirana is "dangerous" for the Balkans. "There are already protests and an escalation is possible, even a conflict," he said.

Early on Tuesday, Molotov cocktails were thrown at a building in the southern Macedonian town of Bitola where the Albanian alphabet was standardized in 1908. "We do not need these kind of incidents," said Nuser Arslani, head of the museum, as Tirana urged Albanians in Macedonia "not to fall into the trap of provocations". Ali Ahmeti, a former rebel leader and now head of the main Albanian party in Macedonia, DUI, has called for "restraint" in order to avoid "inter-ethnic conflict". For analysts, only new elections or a broad coalition government can stem the spiral-two options that for now are hypothetical. —AFP

KIM'S DEATH SHEDS LIGHT ON MURKY WORLD OF WOMEN MIGRANTS

KUALA LUMPUR: Li Nang, a young migrant worker wearing hot pants and high heels, stood before the statue of a gilt goddess garlanded with marigolds and fairy lights in Kuala Lumpur as she prayed for good business and her own safety. Malaysia's underground community of undocumented female workers was thrust into the spotlight when news emerged that Kim Jong-Nam was assassinated by two women migrants using lethal nerve agent VX on February 13 at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Since then, a Malaysian police crackdown on undocumented workers like Li has escalated-making their already vulnerable existence even more precarious. Airport CCTV footage shows two women approaching the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un and apparently rubbing his face with a cloth. Indonesian Siti Aisyah, 25, and Doan Thi Huong, 28, from Vietnam, have since been charged with the murder and face the death penalty if found guilty. South Korea says Jong-Un ordered the killing of his estranged sibling, who had lived overseas for years but had voiced criticism of the regime, and engaged two outsiders to carry it out.

Both women have told diplomats from their countries they were duped into believing that they were taking part in a TV prank show but Malaysian police



KUALA LUMPUR: People make their way to enter the forensic department at Kuala Lumpur Hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia yesterday. Malaysia's Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said the government hopes to begin formal talks with North Korea in the "next few days" on solving a diplomatic dispute that has seen the two countries bar each other's citizens from leaving. — AP

have rejected their claims. Little is known about them, with police saying that Huong worked at an "entertainment outlet" while Aisyah was a masseuse at a spa, but immigration experts say the secrecy surrounding their lives illustrates the clandestine existence led by thousands of undocumented Southeast Asian

women migrants. Many migrants travel to Malaysia through formal labor contracts, but thousands more take advantage of being allowed to work in Singapore and Malaysia for 30 days at a time, travelling back and forth between two or three countries and trying to earn as much as possible before their luck

runs out. Taking up jobs as cleaners, waitresses, masseuses and prostitutes, they live in the grip of a murky system, vulnerable to exploitation and harassment by police looking to shake them down for bribes.

As she prepared for work, Li, a 25-year-old Vietnamese prostitute, kept up a steady exchange of messages with her sister in Ho Chi Minh City, in an attempt to reassure relatives even as she herself feared for her safety. "I texted her saying 'I have to take the risk. What choice do I have? I need the money,'" Li told AFP inside a dimly lit bar. The arrests of her compatriot Huong and Indonesian Siti have brought unwelcome attention to a community which already has much to fear from Malaysian authorities.

'Constant fear'

At a pub in the Petaling Jaya suburb, Filipina waitress Mika (not her real name) said that police had intensified their efforts to hunt down illegal workers like her following Kim's assassination. Three of her friends working in the same bar were recently arrested by police. "Fortunately I was off on that day. I think God saved me," the single mother said. "I am now living in constant fear. I do not want to be caught."

The 35-year-old previously paid 3,600 ringgit (\$800) to an employment

agent to secure a long-term work visa, but he stole the money. "Now I have a monthly visa. Before it expires I head to Thailand where I spend three nights. I give an agent a fee of 1,000 ringgit and he gets a new visa for another month," she said. "Life goes on like this every month." Malaysia, Southeast Asia's third largest economy, is highly dependent on foreign labor. According to a World Bank report in 2015, the country hosts some 2.1 million registered migrants and likely more than one million others who are undocumented.

Women are especially vulnerable, with agents or employers forcing some of them to live together in the same house under constant surveillance, leaving them isolated and with little to no contact with the outside world, migrant rights' activist Aegile Fernandez said. Often, their passports are withheld so they have no means of running away, leaving them open to abuse and exploitation, said Fernandez, co-director of Tenaganita, a Malaysian non-profit focusing on migrant worker protection. "Some are even threatened by their employers that they will be handed to immigration, or even threatened with rape," she said. "If you were in that situation, you would be in fear. You know there's no way out, you just continue working." — AFP

'DISGRACED' SOUTH KOREAN LEADER LEAVES BLUE HOUSE

PARK STRIKES A DEFIANT TONE, SAYS TRUTH WILL BE REVEALED

SEOUL: Disgraced South Korean leader Park Geun-hye left the presidential Blue House yesterday, two days after a court dismissed her over a corruption scandal, facing life as a private citizen and the possibility of jail. Park struck a defiant tone upon arriving at her private home in the

responsibility for the outcome of all this," Min quoted her as saying. Park, 65, is South Korea's first democratically elected leader to be forced from office. A snap presidential election will be held by May 9. Her dismissal followed months of political paralysis and turmoil over the scandal

'Justice, common sense'

Park's ouster marked a dramatic fall from grace for South Korea's first woman president and daughter of Cold War military dictator Park Chung-hee. It was not the first time she has had to leave the Blue House compound of traditional-style buildings at the foot of a hill in Seoul. In 1979, after a nine-day funeral following the assassination of her father, the young Park left the Blue House with her siblings for a family home. She had been acting first lady after her mother was shot and killed in an earlier failed assassination attempt on her father.

Now, having lost presidential immunity, she could face criminal charges over bribery, extortion and abuse of power in connection with allegations of conspiring with her friend, Choi Soon-sil. Both women denied wrongdoing. The liberal politician likely to become the next president, Moon Jae-in, promised to work for justice and common sense. "We still have a long way to go. We have to make this a country of justice, of common sense through regime change," Moon, who advocates reconciliation with North Korea, told a news conference. Moon is leading in opinion polls, which show South Koreans are likely to throw out the conservatives after nearly a decade in power and turn to a liberal leader.

Moon called on Park to publicly accept the court ruling. Park's dismissal has exposed fault lines in a society long divided by Cold War politics. Thousands of Park's jubilant opponents celebrated in Seoul on Saturday, where they have been gathering every weekend for months, and demanded that she be arrested. The former president's conservative supporters also took to the streets not far away, though fewer in number. Police were out in force but there was no trouble. On Friday, two Park supporters were killed as they tried to break through police lines outside the court, shortly after the verdict. One was believed to have had a heart attack and the other died as the Park supporters attacked police buses. A third, a man aged 74, suffered a heart attack and died on Saturday. — Reuters



SEOUL: A car (left front), carrying South Korea's impeached ex-president Park Geun-Hye (center - in the car) heads to her private residence yesterday. — AFP

Gangnam district of the capital, Seoul, after leaving the Blue House compound in a motorcade of fast-driving black cars, flanked by police motorbikes. "I feel sorry that I could not finish the mandate given to me as president," a spokesman for Park, member of parliament Min Kyung-wook, quoted her as saying. "It will take time, but I believe the truth will be revealed," Park said in her first public comments since her dismissal.

She accepted responsibility for the events that culminated in the Constitutional Court on Friday upholding a parliamentary impeachment vote over an influence-peddling scandal that has shaken the political and business elite. "I take

that also landed the head of the Samsung conglomerate in jail and facing trial.

The crisis has coincided with rising tension with North Korea and anger from China over the deployment in South Korea of a US missile-defense system. Throngs of flag-waving supporters crowded the street outside Park's home as she arrived there about 30 minutes after leaving the presidential palace. She waved through her car's tinted window as it inched its way down the street, with security men in suits walking alongside. She stepped out smiling, the public's first glimpse of her since her dismissal, and greeted supporters.



BEIJING: Two delegates in ethnic minority dress pause while walking towards the Great Hall of the People to attend a plenary session of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing yesterday. China's top leadership as well as thousands of delegates from around the country are gathered at the Chinese capital for the annual legislature meetings. — AP

CHINA 'DOING POOR JOB AT POLITICAL EDUCATION'

CLASSES ARE OUTDATED AND UNFASHIONABLE

BEIJING: China is doing a poor job at political education for university students because the classes are outdated and unfashionable, the education minister said yesterday in a rare admission of the difficulties faced enforcing a key government policy. Beijing has campaigned against the spread of "Western values" at universities, and the ruling Communist Party's anti-corruption watchdog last year sent inspectors to monitor teachers for "improper" remarks in class. In December, President Xi Jinping called for allegiance to the party from colleges and universities, the latest effort by China to tighten its hold on education.

Speaking on the sidelines of the annual meeting of parliament, Education Minister Chen Baosheng said Xi had made "important comments" on political education for students in December, but that there were problems on the ground. "When we go and investigate at colleges and universities, attention levels at thought and political theory classes are not high. People are there in body but not in spirit," Chen said. "Why is this? The contents do not suit their needs. Perhaps mainly the formula is rather outdated, the tools are rather crude and the packaging is not that fashionable," he added.

Students need to be led by the core values of Chinese socialism to ensure their healthy moral growth, and they should also study traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture and "advanced socialist culture," Chen said. That is the best way to get students ready to shoulder their responsibilities to society, he added. Crackdowns on what academics and students can say and should think are nothing new in China. Curriculums and speech at universities, in particular, are tightly controlled by the government, fearful of a repeat of the prodemocracy protests in 1989 that were led by students.

In 2013, a liberal Chinese economist who had been an outspoken critic of the party was expelled from the elite Peking University. A year later, the university, once a bastion of free speech in China, established a 24-hour system to monitor public opinion on the internet and take early measures to control and reduce negative speech, according to a party journal at the time. China aims to build world-class universities and some of its top schools fair well in international rankings by various standards. However, critics argue constraints on academic freedom could inhibit those ambitions. — Reuters



QUEZON: Protesters hold slogans during a rally outside Camp Aguinaldo, headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), in Quezon city, north of Manila to protest the alleged 'all out war' being waged by the military and police against communist rebels following the collapse of the peace talks. — AP

PHILIPPINES GOVT, MAOIST-LED REBELS AGREE TO RESUME TALKS

MANILA: Negotiators from the Philippine government and Maoist-led rebels have reached an agreement to resume formal peace negotiations next month, a month after an angry President Rodrigo Duterte cancelled talks after rebels ambushed soldiers. The two sides would hold talks in the first of April to work out a bilateral ceasefire, Duterte's peace adviser Jesus Dureza said after two-day informal talks in Utrecht over the weekend.

"I am pleased to announce that the peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National

Democratic Front which broke down weeks ago, are now back on track again," Dureza said on his Facebook post yesterday. "The parties are expected to start discussions on the bilateral ceasefire during the planned resumption of the negotiations during the first week of April, this year."

A second meeting was set for June. The talks are brokered by Norway to end nearly five decades of conflict, which has killed more than 40,000 people. The communist rebellion is one of Asia's longest-running insurgencies. The firebrand leader scrapped peace talks last month due to the New People's Army's increasing attacks in the countryside, a violation of its own

unilateral truce. He said he would only agree to resume talks if rebels stopped the attacks and extortion activities on mines and plantations.

In Baguio City, a mountain resort city north of Manila, the president said the government will reciprocate the "valor and courage" of soldiers by providing them with modern weapons and financial benefits. "In the next two to three years, the Armed Forces of the Philippines will have flight simulators, fast boats, radars, assault vehicles, as well as new surveillance and fighter aircraft so you can patrol our borders and seas," he said. He also promised to upgrade the army so it will be "at par with the rest of the world." — Reuters

CHINA VOWS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR FAKED DATA, FALSE INFO

BEIJING: China's top statistician said yesterday anyone caught falsifying economic data would face zero tolerance and be punished under the law. There has long been scepticism about the reliability of Chinese data, especially as the government has sought to reduce expectations of a protracted slowdown in the world's second-largest economy. In January, the "rustbelt" northeastern province of Liaoning said in its annual work report it had falsified reporting of fiscal data from 2011 to 2014. Speaking on the sidelines of the annual meeting of parliament, Ning Jizhe, head of the National Statistics Bureau, said violations would be investigated and punished.

"As soon as there are statistical cases

that break the law or faked, it will be voted down, there will be zero tolerance, no appeasement," said Ning, who is also Vice Chairman of the planning body the National Development and Reform Commission.

The combined economic output of China's provinces has long exceeded national output measured by the National Bureau of Statistics, raising suspicions that local officials were overstating performance. The gap has been narrowing, but the discrepancy between provincial GDP and the national figure was still 2.76 trillion yuan (\$399.71 billion) last year, roughly equal to the GDP of Thailand, according to a Reuters calculation. — Reuters

SAUDI KING ARRIVES IN TOKYO FOR 4-DAY VISIT

TOKYO: Saudi Arabia's King Salman arrived in Tokyo yesterday, making the first visit to Japan by a monarch from the oil-rich nation in nearly five decades. King Salman, who was greeted by Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito at Haneda airport, will meet Prime Minister Shinzo Abe today as he kicks off the Japanese leg of a broader tour of Asia. Salman, who will visit Emperor Akihito tomorrow, is travelling with an entourage estimated at over 1,000 people.

Some 1,200 rooms at Tokyo's luxury hotels have been booked by the delegation for the three-night stay through Wednesday, according to local media, which has also reported that hundreds of limousines have been brought into the capital to accommodate the visitors. Saudi Arabia is the largest

provider of oil exports for Japan, which relies on Middle East for energy to power the world's third largest economy.

Japan hopes to use the visit to widen its relations with Saudi Arabia and help the country's efforts to diversify its economy, including exploring ways to increase Japanese investments in non-energy sectors such as manufacturing, according to officials. King Salman's arrival marks the first visit to Japan by a Saudi leader since the 1971 visit to Japan by then-King Faisal. King Salman himself, however, last visited Japan in 2014 as a crown prince. The king is on a month-long tour of Asia, which has already taken him to Malaysia and Indonesia. After Japan, he is scheduled to visit China and the Maldives. —AFP

MP THREATENS TO GRILL PREMIER...

Continued from Page 1

Muwaizri said that it is no longer acceptable to see squandering of public funds and corruption continue unchecked, and that Kuwaitis continue to be humiliated to get their deserved rights. He also charged the government of demanding very difficult conditions for Kuwaitis to get jobs.

The lawmaker recalled the issues of Dow Chemical, Shell and agricultural and industrial plots that involved corruption cases and infringement on public funds, adding that the continuity of these issues means that the government does not respect the people and their representatives in the Assembly.

Muwaizri did not name the ministers who will be targeted, but said their number could even increase.

MP Faisal Al-Kandari also said that he is not committed to the temporary halt in grilling the prime minister because the measure is not in line with the constitution. Kandari blamed MPs for forgetting key popular issues like scrapping hikes in petrol and electricity prices and focusing instead on the issue of revoked citizenships. The National Assembly holds weekly sessions tomorrow and on Wednesday and is scheduled to debate key issues including a special debate on housing, the issue of Khor Abdullah and debating the proposed increases of charges on public services and commodities.

JORDAN RELEASES JAILED SOLDIER

Continued from Page 1

The attack came less than three years after Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty. Dakamseh was driven home yesterday in a convoy of dozens of cars whose drivers were honking their horns, a video shared on social media showed.

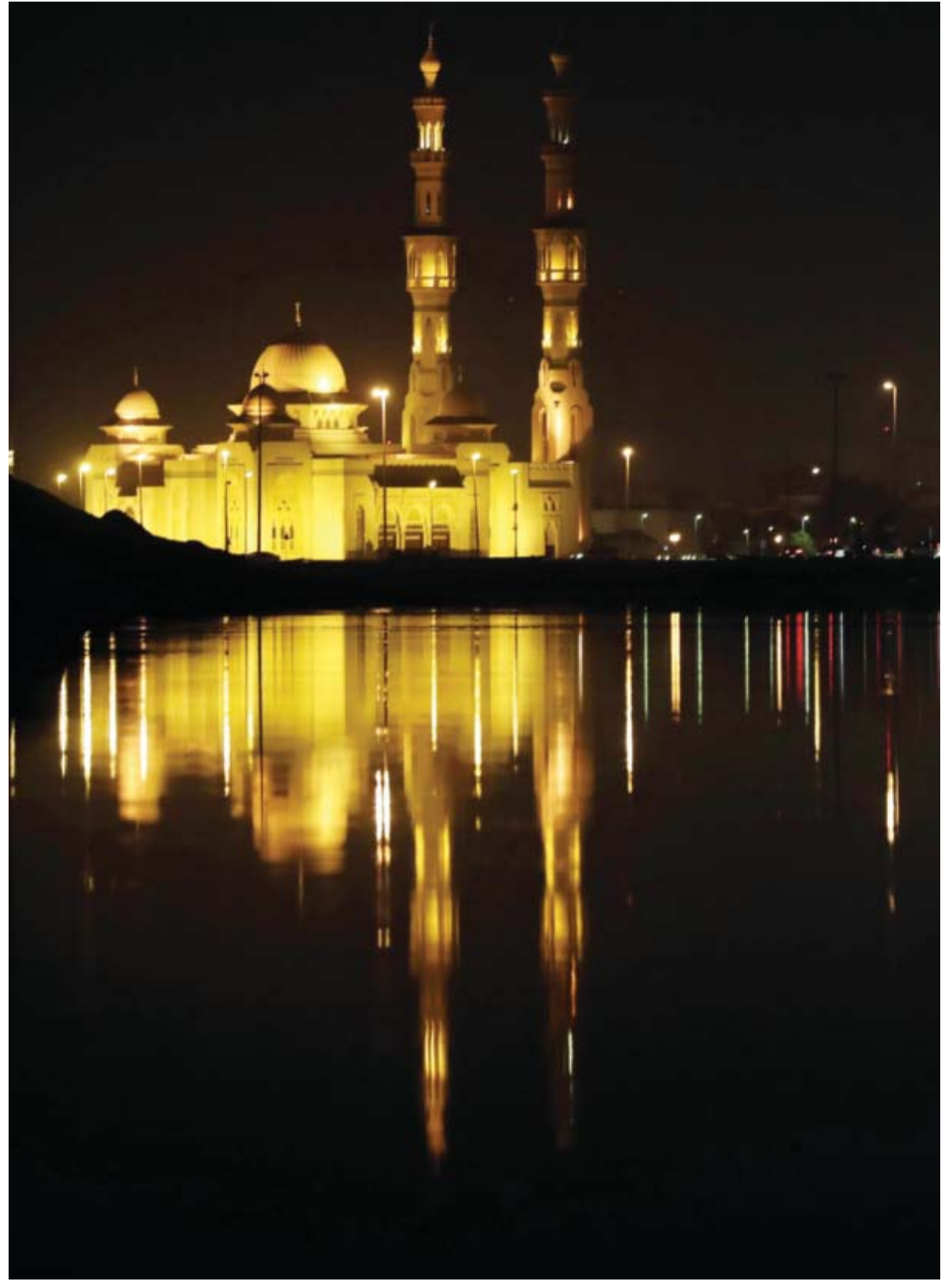
Dakamseh's brother Bassem said the family home was full of well-wishers. "He is in good health, wearing a black suit among his relatives and close family including his 78-year-old mother," his brother said. Videos circulated on social media showed Dakamseh greeting relatives and posing for selfies with visitors. Dakamseh told Jordanian media yesterday that he was "against any destabilization in the country", but that his opinion of Israelis had not changed. "As for my position on the Zionists, you all know... what I did 20 years ago," he said.

There was no immediate official reaction from neighboring Israel, but relatives of the slain schoolgirls slammed Dakamseh's release. "This morning takes us back 20 years, to that horrible day," said Hezi Cohen, whose daughter Nirit was shot dead in the attack. "I'd like to tell the (Israeli) prime minister and defence minister: Our children's blood should not be worthless," he told

Israeli news website Ynet. "You should have acted vis-a-vis Jordan to prevent this release at any cost."

Orit Cohen, whose sister Keren was killed, said: "Who says that tomorrow he (Dakamseh) won't carry out another attack and murder more Israelis?" Israel Fatihi, whose daughter Sivan was killed in the attack, said the Israeli ambassador to Jordan had warned them of the Jordanian's release. Dakamseh "was called a hero in the Jordanian parliament at the time of the murder," he said. "If that's what they said in parliament, what can we expect from the family?" Israel's "peace with Jordan is between us (Israelis) and the royal family - not the people or the parliament," Fatihi said.

After the 1997 killings, Jordanian police said they prevented 100 people including two Islamist members of parliament from paying a solidarity visit to Dakamseh's family. But 21 other lawmakers in a statement condemned the massacre, saying the holy war mentioned in the Holy Quran did not authorize the killing of children. Dakamseh, who suffers from high blood pressure and diabetes, was hospitalized in 2014 after he went on a five-day hunger strike to demand his release. — AFP



A picture taken yesterday shows a partial view of the Emirati city of Sharjah. —AFP



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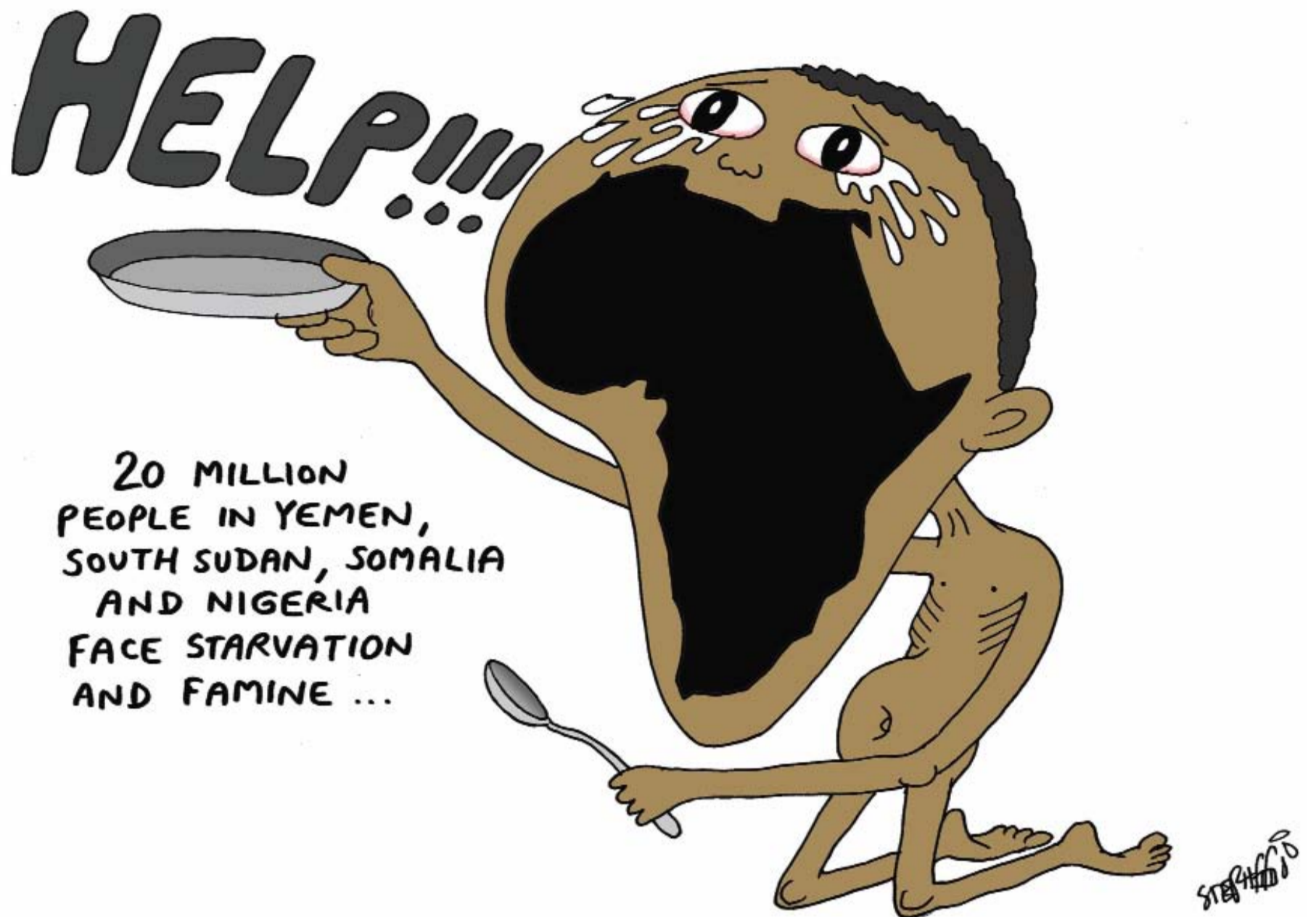
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STARGAZING KEEPING TOURISM LOOKING UP

With urbanization gaining pace and air pollution clouding the view in major cities, contemplating the stars in a pitch-black sky is fast becoming a rarity that tour operators are banking on as a new selling-point. From a total solar eclipse to the Milky Way to the Northern Lights, many experts at Berlin's ITB, marketed as the world's leading travel trade show, were making the case for astronomical experiences this year. "Astro-tourism is really an increasing business. We now see a lot of travel agencies which offer this kind of tourism," Andreas Haenel, an astronomer and director of the planetarium museum in north-western Germany's Osnabrueck, told AFP.

While space tourism may be the holy grail for the most committed of stargazers, its astronomical price tag puts it out of reach for most, not to mention health and safety concerns over forays beyond the atmosphere. Enter astro-tourism, which allows enthusiasts of celestial movements to experience the natural phenomena with both feet firmly on planet Earth. With few places sufficiently dark for observations, some European and US national parks have now classed certain areas as "dark sky preserves".

Meanwhile, deserts in Namibia, Botswana and Iran are marketed as ideal stargazing sites that also offer the exoticism of sandy dunes. Keyvan Lankarani, the European representative of an Iranian tour company, said the sector started developing in his country due to domestic demand. "It really started within the Iranian market itself because of the vast central desert, we have pretty big spaces of darkness," he said.

Northern Lights

But beyond just searching for familiar favorites like Orion's belt or the Big Dipper, Haenel says recent years have seen a boom in "event astro-tourism" - travel to witness an eclipse, a meteor shower, or the Northern Lights. At the ITB show, the brochure promoting Canada's Yukon sold the moment that "you will never forget" when skies suddenly light up with colourful streaks as a result of gaseous particle collisions.

Known commonly as the Northern Lights, the Aurora Borealis has become a major selling point for towns around the Arctic Circle. "There has been an increasing interest since the last four years. It has to do our marketing of course and an awakening," said Ellen Kachel of the Northern Norway Tourist Board, noting that demand has grown in particular among Asian clients.

The northern Norwegian city of Tromso has seen the number of visitors explode, and every photo shared on social networks only serves to fuel further interest for the region. But this year, the big astro-tourism seller is the Aug 21 total eclipse of the sun, which will only be visible along a stretch running from Oregon to South Carolina, cutting diagonally across the United States.

"Nobody knows how many tourists are going there, the estimations go from several hundred thousands to several million people. But it seems to be becoming a great event," said Haenel. In Idaho, the tourism sector is already in full gear to welcome an influx. "We are almost sold out," said Nancy Richardson of Idaho Tourism, adding that "we've been selling this product (the solar eclipse) for two years already."

Be patient with the 'diva'

Illustrating how magical such experiences can be, Richardson recounted the story of a tourist from a polluted Chinese city who had tears in his eyes when he saw the Milky Way from the dark Idaho mountains for the first time. After all for some on the planet, starry skies are already a thing of the past. Defenders of the "dark sky" warn that the space available is shrinking faster and faster due to light pollution, not just for star gazing, but also for nocturnal animals that thrive in the dark.

Harald Bardenhagen, an astronomer and director of the Stars without Borders workshop, noted that "many Europeans have never seen properly the Milky Way". "In 2024 you won't be able to see the stars anymore if nothing is done against the light pollution," he said. As the sector's popularity grows, some warn that it should be careful not to fall victim to its own success.

For Kachel, the sector will have to find a balance of moderate growth that respects nature. At the same time, astro-tourism may not be for everyone as it not only calls for patience, but also the acceptance that tonight may just not be the night.

"We never promise, that's why we call it 'hunting the Lights', you are looking for it but you don't know if you'll see it," said Kachel. After all, she went on, the Aurora Borealis "is a diva" - sometimes just not in the mood to perform. — AFP

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TRUMP TESTS DEALMAKER IMAGE TO SELL BILL

US President Donald Trump has launched a charm offensive of the type not seen before in his brief and chaotic tenure, forcefully rallying behind legislation to repeal the Obamacare healthcare law while trying to placate the bill's opponents. In doing so, the often blustery Trump faces a test of credibility for the voters that catapulted him into office: How does a celebrity outsider, the CEO president, cut deals in Washington? Does the New York businessman live up to the image of dealmaker in chief?

Interviews with more than a dozen White House and congressional aides, members of Congress and conservative activists offer a glimpse into his attempts at conducting the most formidable, high-stakes negotiation of his presidency. They show a more circumspect Trump than many see publicly. While they acknowledge he can make his points with a blunt and combustible style, he appears to be doing more listening than talking, they said, trying to appease both supporters and critics by signaling flexibility over legislation that faces criticism on multiple fronts.

Democrats and some influential Republicans say it would rip health insurance away from millions of Americans and increase costs for many others, including voters who helped elect Trump - a problem that could haunt his fellow Republicans in 2018 congressional elections. Conservatives say it does not go far enough in gutting the Affordable Care Act, President Barack Obama's signature healthcare reform passed by Democrats in 2010. Republicans have long sought to dismantle the law, which they see as government overreach. Trump has called Obamacare a "disaster" and made its repeal and replacement a key

campaign pledge. The political stakes are immense for an eight-week-old presidency marked by instability, infighting, battles with the media, questions over temperament and a stubborn investigation into ties between his campaign and Russian intelligence. "A lot of times you have politicians who gather in a room to pontificate. That's not why he has gathered people in the room," a senior White House official said of Trump's negotiation style this week. "He's gathered people in to hear their opinions. I think that's lost a little bit because he does speak so forcefully. He definitely does let them say their piece, and he listens."

The president has reached out to influential conservatives such as U.S. Senator Ted Cruz and groups such as the Heritage Foundation and Americans for Prosperity, which have expressed skepticism about the bill. "He was gregarious, reasonable. He listened. It was a not a lecture," said Tim Phillips, president of AFP, a group backed by billionaires Charles and David Koch and part of a small group of conservative leaders who met with Trump in the Oval Office on Wednesday night. "He said: 'This is a negotiation. Let's figure out ways to make this proposal better,'" Phillips said of Trump.

Trump has indicated he will only go so far to make conservatives happy, insisting the core elements of the bill must remain intact if it has any chance to pass the House of Representatives and then the Senate, both controlled by Republicans. One sticking point involves the use of tax credits to help consumers purchase health insurance, which Trump favors. "He's made it clear this is the vehicle to finally undo the damage of Obamacare and repeal and replace it," said another senior White House official. "And if

it can be improved in this process, he has encouraged that."

Thin margin for success

Trump is operating with a razor-thin margin for success. A defection by 20 or so Republicans in the House could sink the bill's prospects. There is already discontent among some in the Senate, where Republicans hold an even slimmer edge. Democrats and groups such as AARP, which advocates for older Americans, and the American Medical Association have come out strongly against the bill.

Conservatives in the House and advocacy groups opposed to the bill would like to slow the process and rework its fundamentals. They argue the legislation retains basic facets of Obamacare, including federal assistance to purchase health insurance and penalties if coverage lapses. House Speaker Paul Ryan is hoping to pass the legislation within two weeks so the House can move on to other priorities. That leaves little time for wholesale alterations.

Representative Kevin Brady, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said he expected the bill would largely remain in its current form. "I know lots of people have good ideas. That's terrific. And those will fit in future bills." The White House has tried to persuade conservatives that the House bill is just the first step in a three-step process, and will soon be joined by a companion bill that would embrace some of their policy priorities. Regulations put in place by Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price will also address their concerns, aides said.

The challenge for Trump is whether he can convince enough wary conservatives to back the first step of the plan without being

able to guarantee the other phases will come to pass. It could leave them on the record voting for a bill they do not feel adequately dismantles Obamacare. Some conservatives may also not see the point of sticking their necks out backing a bill that may die in the Senate. "This is a futile effort," said Rachel Bovard, a policy analyst for the Heritage Foundation, which opposes the bill.

'Making people feel loved'

The White House is aggressively making the case that the House bill is the best chance to do away with Obamacare. Moving too far rightward to placate conservatives could stir up opposition from moderate Republicans and lead to a bill that stokes a powerful backlash among millions of Americans who would lose health insurance - including many Republicans. Many Democrats are already planning to run campaigns on the issue.

The White House was busy this week trying to reassure moderate Republicans as well. Vice President Mike Pence is holding meetings in Congress, including with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican aide said. Trump's budget director, Mick Mulvaney, a former House member, has invited conservative lawmakers to dinner at the White House next Tuesday. Trump plans to leverage the power of his office in another way, making trips to Kentucky and Tennessee in coming days to sell the House bill to the American public. Earlier this week, Trump welcomed about 30 Republican House members, many of whom said they had never been in the White House before - a contrast in style from Obama, who was often criticized for not attempting to engage more fully with Congress. — Reuters

POLISH AMBITIONS HIT BY EU HUMILIATION

Poland's ambition to be central Europe's leader within the EU suffered a humiliating blow when Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic defied its call to block the re-election of Donald Tusk as European Council president. The lack of support from the other three "Visegrad" countries left Prime Minister Beata Szydlo in uncomfortable isolation at an EU summit on Thursday - one leader out of 28 refusing to back Tusk, a former Polish leader who is loathed by her Law and Justice (PiS) party.

The emphatic defeat exposed the Polish conservatives' inability to unite their ex-communist neighbors under a shared wish to gain more sway for the region in Brussels. Particularly painful was the desertion by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has defended the PiS against EU accusations it is undermining the rule of law by seeking more control over the justice system and the media. "We are disappointed by Prime Minister Orban's attitude," said Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the co-founder and head of the PiS who has never hidden his enmity towards Tusk. Polish Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski said the Visegrad four (V4) group continued to function, and Poland, by far its largest member, "didn't have to be the leader." "We can be its spokesman," he told reporters.

Divisions among the four, which joined the EU in 2004 in the bloc's biggest expansion into ex-communist Europe, are numerous. They differ on relations with their former communist master Russia, ties with Germany, membership of the euro currency and the place of religion in society. All three of Poland's regional peers view Tusk as a safe pair of hands who can forward the region's agenda in Europe. Poland's official reason for wanting to veto him was that he had unfairly criticized the government from his seat in Brussels.

"Tusk understands our world view and our view of how the European Union should work," Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka told reporters. He added that Poland would also have to explain its refusal to sign off on the official record of the summit in protest against Tusk's reappointment, suggesting a potential new rift within the V4. "Poland will have to explain it well because it simply is not possible for one member state to veto European Council conclusions without giving specific, factual reasons," Sobotka said.

Andrzej Rychard, sociologist at the Polish Academy of

Sciences, said: "The PiS has paid a tremendous amount of attention to the V4 group but (the Tusk vote) was a spectacular demonstration of how the V4 is divided and how Poland is alone."

'Consequences are dire'

The PiS' euroscepticism and what some western capitals see as Poland's tilt towards authoritarianism had already pushed it towards isolation in Brussels. Among other issues, Warsaw is frustrated about its failure to find support in a push against EU action on global warming, which it sees as a menace to its coal-powered energy industry.

While EU officials and diplomats also consider Hungary's Orban an authoritarian, they generally see him as a more cunning player who would eventually sit down for talks to hammer out deals, whereas Poland's Kaczynski is seen as a rigid ideologue that people outside Poland do not understand. Even so, the two come together more often than Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which have strong economic ties with Germany and are often con-

cerned about Kaczynski's nationalist rhetoric against Berlin.

Orban's Fidesz party belongs to the same political grouping in the European Parliament as Tusk, the European People's Party. Kaczynski's PiS is part of the European Conservatives and Reformists, a smaller centre-right group that is more sceptical on EU integration. In the coming years, Warsaw will need to build alliances in negotiations over how much of Europe's budget will go to Poland's poorer regions and how big a hit it will take when Britain leaves the bloc and stops paying its dues.

Poland, the biggest recipient of EU funds, and Hungary, stand to lose more than Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which are somewhat richer in per capita terms. "The V4 group has been struggling for a long time, though I wouldn't say it's dead," said Anna Materska-Sosnowska, a political scientist at Warsaw University. "(But) the consequences are dire," she said of the Tusk vote. "Not only did the government expose itself to ridicule but it also showed it doesn't understand diplomacy and EU rules, and doesn't know how to forge alliances." — Reuters



Donald Tusk

Viktor Orban

Beata Szydlo

CHAWRASIA RETAINS INDIAN OPEN CROWN

NEW DELHI: Local favourite SSP Chawrasia made history after retaining his title at the Hero Indian Open with a remarkable seven-stroke win in New Delhi yesterday. Chawrasia, 38, became the first Indian to successfully defend a European Tour title and the first player to win their first four events in their home country. The five-time Asian Tour winner started the day with a joint lead at the DLF Golf and Country Club and ended at four-under when the third round of the weather-hit tournament was completed Sunday morning. He did not look back in round four, carding a one-under 71 to finish with a 10-under 278 for the tournament and push Gavin Green of Malaysia into second place with 285. Chawrasia had finished runner-up four times at the tournament before finally triumphing last season. "I'm winning back-to-back so I'm really very happy," said Chawrasia. "This is a very tough course so I was just trying to play straight and in the right places. I played very consistently this week." Chawrasia had to return to complete seven holes of his third round on Sunday morning after a storm hit play on the first two days. —AFP



TAYLOR KICKS PAU TO CASTRES WIN

PARIS: Former All Black Tom Taylor kicked Pau to an important Top 14 victory over Castres yesterday, keeping the team in the hunt for a play-off place with an 18-12 win. The victory lifts Pau to at least temporarily into fifth in the table ahead of Montpellier as the race to a top-six finish and the play-offs heats up. Montpellier clash with second-placed Clermont later in other Top 14 game. Pau started the day in sixth place and badly needed a win with tough fixtures ahead including a visit to Clermont next weekend followed by a clash with top-of-the-table La Rochelle with a visit to Toulon also on the agenda. Taylor, 28, capped three times for the All Blacks in 2013, kicked the home side 12-6 up at half time and added two more kicks after the break for a try-less win in a tight game which looked as if it could have gone either way until the dying minutes. However, Castres failed to capitalise on their few scoring chances and squandered their kicks, with Julian Dumora firing wide in the 73rd minute in their last chance to close the gap. — AFP

JAPAN'S 'KAZU' FIRST PLAYER OVER 50 TO SCORE IN J-LEAGUE

TOKYO: Japan's oldest professional footballer Kazuyoshi Miura tallied another record yesterday, with a match-winning goal making him the first player over 50 to score in the J-League. Nicknamed "King Kazu" for his spirited grit and style, Miura sent a left-footer flying into the goal in the 40th minute, securing Yokohama FC's 1-0 victory against Thespakusatsu Gunma. "I am always looking for opportunities to score goals. I was feeling particularly good today, and had a hunch that I might score," Miura said in a statement released to local media. The former international celebrated his 50th birthday in February and has since sprinted into footballing history, with several professional appearances, eclipsing the record of former England great Stanley Matthews who was 50 when he turned out for Stoke City against Fulham in 1965. Though the pin-up looks have been replaced by a few tell-tale wrinkles and greying hair, Miura has signalled his intent to play until he's 60. Miura shot to fame in the early 1990s as Asia's best known footballer, helping to put the Japanese game on the map after the professional J-League was launched in 1993. —AFP



LATE SHEIKH ABDALLAH AL-MUBARAK AL-SABAH SHOOTING TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The tournament of the late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex concluded Saturday in the presence of representative of tournament patron Sheikh Abdallah Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting

Federations Eng. Duaij Al-Otaibi, Secretary General of KSF, ASF Obaid Al-Osaim, and Kuwait Shooting Sport Club board members. KSSC Assistant Secretary Eng. Mohammad Al-Ghurba said the tournament enjoyed large participation by club, and National Guard shooters who competed hard in a friendly atmosphere and results were promising. He said Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak's

traits represent the man who loves his country and was an example of forgiveness and humbleness. Al-Ghurab thanked the family of the late Sheikh for supporting shooting and shooters.

Results of the tournament were as follows:
In the Skeen men: Salah Al-Mutairi won first place, followed by Saud Habib in second

and Zaid Al-Mutairi third.
In the trap men: Khalid Al-Mudhaf was first, Talal Al-Rashidi second and Saad Al-Hubaida third.
In the double trap: Ahmad Al-Afasi first, Saad Lafi second and Meshal Al-Thafiri third.
In the trap women: Sarah Al-Hawal was first, Shahad Al-Hawal second and Fatima Fawzi third.

In the Skeet women: Eman Al-Shamma took first place, Afrah Adel in second while Sheikha Al-Rashidi third.
In the Juniors Skeet: Hamad Al-Ablani first, Hamad Al-Khalidi second and Ahmad Al-Azmi third.
In the juniors trap: Bader Al-Adwani, won first place, Faris Al-Mutairi second and Rashid Al-Rashidi third.



MOTOR RACING

WILL POWER WINS POLE AGAIN AT ST PETE FOR INDYCAR OPENER

ST PETERSBURG: Will Power won the pole for IndyCar's season-opening race at St Petersburg, proving he still is the best driver at navigating the temporary street circuit. It was a record seventh pole in eight years at St. Pete for Power, who also won the pole for this race last year. He's a two-time winner at St. Pete and will try for win No. 3 in Sunday's opener. Power ran the course Saturday in his Team Penske Chevrolet with a lap of 1 minute, 1.0640 seconds (106.118 mph). "It takes obviously a very good team," the Australian said. "Very happy to be on pole. Can't believe it's now seven times." Power did not race in last year's opener. He became ill after his qualifying lap and IndyCar ultimately benched him for the race because of concussion-like symptoms. It turned out Power had an ear infection, and not racing in the opener likely cost him a chance to win the championship. Power finished second in the IndyCar standings last year to Team Penske teammate Simon Pagenaud. Scott Dixon qualified second Saturday in the new Honda that Chip Ganassi Racing is fielding this year, followed by James Hinchcliff. New Penske driver Josef Newgarden qualified fourth while Takuma Sato, now driving for Andretti Autosport, and Tony Kanaan round out the final six for Sunday. It wasn't all smooth sailing for the Penske group, despite two drivers in the top four. Reigning series champion Simon Pagenaud and Helio Castroneves failed to advance to the second round of qualifying. Pagenaud will start 14th, Castroneves

16th. Although a Chevy won the pole, Honda qualified nine drivers in the top 12. The manufacturer has been overshadowed by Chevy since Chevy returned to IndyCar in 2012. One Honda driver who had expected better qualifying results but failed to get it was Marco Andretti, who qualified 15th. Andretti is trying to be looser in the car and stop overthinking the decade of struggles he's had searching for success. "This is hard to swallow, Andretti said. "This one hurts. We're faster than this - last year we went to the back of the field and had the pace to come back through, so we're going to have to do that." The third turn of the circuit was reconfigured Thursday evening, the day before Indy cars hit the 1.8-mile, 14-turn temporary street circuit. What once was a fast, sweeping right-hand turn now has curbing that changed the apex and made the corner a traditional braking area. Also, 180 feet of wall on the drivers' left side was moved back almost 40 feet. "I would say turn three is going to be the biggest difference on passing," Graham Rahal said. "Turn three is obviously so much tighter now with a brake zone there and stuff. It will be interesting to see." The track has retained its character, although it was repaved last month, with new asphalt on about 70 percent of the circuit. "It's definitely different," Kanaan said. "I was expecting there to be a little more grip and for it to be smoother. In other words, I was expecting you to lose a little of the beauty of this track." — AP

NBK, MASTERCARD OFFER CARDHOLDERS OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND 'UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL CARDIFF 2017'

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has launched its annual campaign to reward NBK Mastercard Credit Cardholders by offering them four chances to win two tickets to the semi-final and final matches of 'UEFA Champions League Final Cardiff 2017' held in Wales. As the official sponsor of the UEFA Champions League, Mastercard will be sponsoring the tickets provided to winners. The campaign, which runs through April 30, 2017, provides NBK Mastercard Credit Cardholders with the chance to be a part of the most popular sporting event in the world, with two winners getting the opportunity to attend the Semi-finals, and two winners attending the Final to be held on June 3, 2017. The fully-paid trips, which include a roundtrip airline ticket, hotel accommodation and game tickets, in addition to roundtrip transportation to and from the stadium, are all offered by Mastercard. NBK Assistant General Manager - Consumer Banking Group, Hanadi Khazal, said that NBK is always keen on rewarding its customers by presenting them with the best exclusive and innovative services and products, and through its collaborations with the most prominent and leading companies worldwide. NBK is the only bank in Kuwait to run such a campaign for its cardholders. "I added that this campaign is extremely popular in Kuwait and there is an ever-growing interest to follow its uniquely enthusiastic games. "Thanks to our exclusive collaboration with Mastercard, football fans will have an exclusive chance to attend the most sought-after final games of the UEFA Champions League, directly on the stadium's grass field." Pankaj Kathuria, Area Business Head, Northern Gulf, Mastercard, said: "Mastercard has a rich history of supporting globally renowned football events, and we have always endeavored to bring cardholders unique experiences that take them to the heart of their favorite games. We are excited to offer our cardholders rewarding incentives that give them the opportunity to embark on exceptional and priceless experiences." NBK Mastercard credit cardholders will be entitled to one entry into the draw for every KD1 spent using their credit cards locally, and three chances when they use their cards abroad during their travels out-

side of Kuwait or when they make a purchase online. Cardholders can boost their chances of winning by increasing the usage of their credit card during the length of the campaign. NBK firmly establishes its leadership in the credit card domain in Kuwait through its continuous dedication to providing more preferential services and benefits to NBK Credit Cardholders, and its constant keenness for innovation and presenting rewarding offers that meet the expectations and aspirations of its clients. NBK credit cards have a worldwide global acceptance, as they are considered the most convenient method of payment, while providing numerous distinctive benefits, discounts, and rewards. For more information, visit our website at nbk.com or NBK social media pages on Instagram @NBKPage and on Twitter @NBKPage.



Hanadi Khazal



SHARAPOVA SHOULD 'START FROM BOTTOM': WOZNIACKI

INDIAN WELLS: Maria Sharapova's planned return from a 15-month drugs ban at Stuttgart next month is "disrespectful" to other WTA players, former world number one Caroline Wozniacki said Saturday.

The tournament will already be underway when five-time Grand Slam champion Sharapova's suspension ends

on April 26, and she'll play her first match that day. "I think it's very questionable, allowing no matter who it is a player that is still banned to play a tournament that week," Wozniacki said. "I think it's disrespectful to the other players and the WTA." Wozniacki said she had no problem with Sharapova, whose ban for a positive test for meldonium was

reduced by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, returning to the game.

But she said the Russian star, whose world ranking has been wiped out by her absence, should play her way back into tournaments. "I think everyone deserves a second chance, and I think that she's going to come back and she's going to fight her way back," Wozniacki

said. "I'm sure she's going to play well. But at the same time, I feel like when a player is banned for drugs, I think that someone should start from the bottom and fight their way back, because it's different from an injury where someone is out because they had hurt themselves."

"When someone has been banned for drugs and something that is per-

formance enhancing, I think that you deserve a second chance like everybody else, people make mistakes. But I think you should fight your way back from the bottom." Wozniacki spoke after securing her third-round berth at the Indian Wells hard court tournament with a brisk 6-3, 6-0 victory over Poland's Magda Linette. — AFP

VENUS BATTLES BACK TO BEAT JANKOVIC

INDIAN WELLS: Venus Williams saved three match points as she roared back for a 1-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 victory over old foe Jelena Jankovic on Saturday and a place in the third round at Indian Wells.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion, her right arm bandaged and her serve speed down, surrendered the first set in just 20 minutes and was quickly down a break at 3-1 in the second.

"I definitely wasn't able to do everything



INDIAN WELLS: Venus Williams of the United States serves against Jelena Jankovic of Serbia on Center Court at Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Saturday. — AFP

I wanted to," she said. "Took me some time to kind of get my head around that."

"You have to get disciplined and just try to deal with what's at hand and try to use the tools you have on this particular day," said Williams, who did so with a vengeance.

She broke Jankovic twice to take a 5-4 lead in the second set before the Serb veteran, like Williams a former world number one, broke in the 10th game to pull level at 5-5. Serving to save the match, Williams was on the ropes in the 12th game but she saved three match points to force the

decider. Once she came through it, she ran away with the third, buoyed by an enthusiastic crowd.

"It ain't over til it's over," she told her ecstatic fans of her determination to stick with it until the end. "And I didn't see no fat lady singing." Williams next faces Czech Lucie Safarova, a 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 winner over American Coco Vandeweghe.

Safarova denied Vandeweghe a chance to avenge her semi-final loss to Williams at the Australian Open, where Williams fell in the championship match to her sister Serena. Jankovic, meanwhile, could only regret her missed opportunities, especially her first match point that Williams saved with a volley winner. "When she was at the net I was supposed to play that cross forehand but I played down the line and right to her and she made a winner," Jankovic said. "I had everything under control and I just let it slip away."

KERBER IN CONTROL

There was no such drama for second-seeded Angelique Kerber, who raced into the third round with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over fellow German Andrea Petkovic. Kerber, who is assured of reclaiming the number one world ranking when the tournament ends thanks to Serena Williams' injury withdrawal, reversed a run of poor fortune in the California desert, where she hadn't made it out of her tournament opener since 2011. "Of course, it was not so easy to play against her, we know each other very long," Kerber said. "I was trying today just to focus more on my side of the tennis court. Just being focused on my game, because I think the last three years I lose here in the first round, so that was also something in my mind that I would like to change this year and just go through it." Kerber next faces France's Pauline Parmentier, who ousted 27th-seeded Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan 6-2, 6-3. Women's fourth-seed Simona Halep of Romania cruised through her opener, downing Croatian wild card Donna Vekic 6-4, 6-1. Sixth-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska beat Spain's Sara Sorribes 6-3, 6-4 and ninth-seeded American Madison Keys made a successful return to competition with a 6-1, 7-5 victory over Colombian Mariana Duque. Keys was playing in her first match of 2017 after missing two months in the wake of left wrist surgery.

"It felt really good," Keys said. "I really, really missed competing and being able to go out there and get a win on top of it was amazing." — AFP

GOLF

CANADA'S HADWIN STAYS AHEAD IN SEARCH OF FIRST PGA WIN

MIAMI: Canada's Adam Hadwin fired a bogey-free four-under par 67 Saturday to seize a four-stroke lead over American Patrick Cantlay after the third round of the US PGA Valspar Championship. The 29-year-old from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan-seeking his first PGA crown — stood on 14-under 199 after 54 holes over Innisbrook's Copperhead course in Palm Harbor, Florida.

"I've been really proud of myself grinding things out. I just have to come out and do the same thing tomorrow," Hadwin said. "I'm going to play well tomorrow if I give myself a chance to win on 18 — if I've got to be 5-over or 2-under, I just want a



PALM HARBOR: Adam Hadwin putts on the 16th green during the third round of the Valspar Championship golf tournament Saturday, at Innisbrook in Palm Harbor, Fla. — AP

chance to win." Cantlay, also seeking his first PGA title, roared into second with the day's low round, a 66, to reach Sunday's final pairing on 203, one ahead of compatriot Jim Herman, who led Thursday after an opening 62, and two better than American Dominic Bozzelli.

"I'm not going to worry about anything else, fairways and greens and make as many putts as I can," Cantlay said of his Sunday strategy. "Try not to have too many expectations, try to stick to my program, hit fairways and greens, try to stick to my deal and not have a whole lot of doubts."

British Open champion Henrik Stenson of Sweden and American J.J. Henry shared fifth on 206. Hadwin eased his nerves with an opening birdie, finding the fringe with his second shot and two-putting from there. "I felt really good on the golf course," Hadwin said. "A little nervous on the putting green. Got over that pretty quickly, made a good drive, a good swing and two putts for a birdie. That relaxed me really quick." Hadwin added a six-foot birdie putt at the seventh, then dropped a 33-foot birdie putt at the par-4 12th thanks to some help from being able to read a similar putt from playing partner Herman.

"He putted right on that line just before me," Hadwin said. "I had a good look at it and judged the speed right."

The Canadian followed with a 55-foot birdie putt at the par-3 15th and sank a testy six-foot par putt at the 18th to keep his four-stroke advantage. "It was huge," Hadwin said. "To end on that, a ton of momentum coming into tomorrow."

"With this ball striking coming around, the sky is the limit. I have to stay patient and just keep playing my game."

Cantlay birdied the par-5 first, fifth and 11th holes as well as the par-3 eighth but the 30-foot birdie putt he sank on the par-4 18th to close a bogey-free round brought an extra-special smile. "It was nice to see that one go in, a little bonus," he said.

Herman stumbled with bogeys at 15 and 16 before sinking a 16-foot birdie putt at the par-3 17th and closing with a par to finish on 71. His lone PGA victory came at last year's Houston Open, a title he defends in three weeks. — AFP



INDIAN WELLS: Vasek Pospisil of Canada plays a backhand during his straight sets victory against Andy Murray of Great Britain in their second round match during day six of the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Saturday in Indian Wells, California. — AFP

TENNIS

POSPISIL VANQUISHES MURRAY AT INDIAN WELLS

INDIAN WELLS: World number one Andy Murray crashed out of the ATP Indian Wells Masters on Saturday, topped in straight sets by 129th-ranked Canadian qualifier Vasek Pospisil.

"I felt like I had the ability to do it, but going through it is another thing," Pospisil, a former Wimbledon doubles champion, said after notching the biggest singles win of his career 6-4, 7-6 (7/5). "I just tried to stay composed."

Murray, coming off his first title of 2017 at Dubai, was again brought up short in Indian Wells, where his best showing is a 2009 runner-up finish to Rafael Nadal. He was at a loss to explain his erratic results in the California desert. "I don't know exactly why it is, because in practice here normally I play pretty well," Murray said. "And then some years I played well. Some years it just hasn't quite happened for me."

Murray was particularly disappointed to have dropped the first set after twice going up a break. But a lackluster service effort, including seven double-faults, spelled disaster in the face of Pospisil's aggressive attack.

The 26-year-old Canadian had the Stadium Court crowd solidly behind him as he battled at the net. Trailing 4-2 in the first set, Pospisil won

six straight games as he went up a break in the second before Murray broke back to knot the score at 2-2. They went with serve to the tiebreaker, in which Murray's double-fault gave Pospisil a 3-1 lead. Murray saved one match point with a service winner before holding off Pospisil on two more on the Canadian's serve.

But Pospisil finally put it away with a forehand winner. "I started a little bit kind of tentative, just trying to get into the match," Pospisil said. "I felt like I was playing better as the match was going on," he added. "I was just kind of sticking to the game plan and kind of distracting my mind with what I wanted to do on the court."

"Of course still some thoughts come in, especially in the second set. It's not every day you're close to beating the number one player in the world. So I did well to kind of stick with the process and not really get distracted."

Murray, who endured a disappointing fourth-round exit at the Australian Open, was left to regroup before the fast-approaching Miami Masters. Pospisil, meanwhile, was looking ahead to a meeting with Serbian qualifier Dusan Lajovic, a 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (7/2) winner over Spain's Feliciano Lopez. "I'm going to enjoy this tonight,

and obviously tomorrow morning I'm going to wake up and almost try to forget about it as much as possible," he said.

FOGNINI TOPPLES TSONGA

French seventh seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga also fell at the first hurdle, stunning 7-6 (7/4), 3-6, 6-4 by Italy's Fabio Fognini.

Fognini, ranked 43rd in the world, notched his first win over eighth-ranked Tsonga in five career meetings. He also ended the Frenchman's nine-match winning streak that had seen him lift trophies in Rotterdam and Marseille.

Third-seeded Swiss Stan Wawrinka advanced without incident, downing Italian Paolo Lorenzi 6-3, 6-4 to set up a third-round meeting with Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber, who was trailing 6-7 (3/7), 1-1 when Alexandr Dolgoplov retired from their match. Eighth-seeded Austrian Dominic Thiem also advanced on cue, easing past France's Jeremy Chardy 6-2, 6-4 while Japanese lucky loser Yoshihito Nishioka upset 19th-seeded Ivo Karlovic 6-4, 6-3.

Nishioka withstood a dozen saves from the Croatian veteran, breaking him three times while saving all seven break points he faced. — AFP



DIMITRIVIC REACHES FINAL OF KUWAIT EIGHTH TENNIS TOURNEY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Eighth Tennis Tournament has reached its final rounds as it will conclude Thursday. Zoran Dimitrovic reached the final of the pioneers above 55 by defeating Majdi Khamis 6-2, 6-3.

In the pioneers individuals above 45: Mohammad Tounaih defeated Krishna Kumar 6-2, 6-3 and Jarkola Chowdary defeated Simon Atkinson 6-2, 6-0.

In the men's individuals: Abdelrahman Al-Awadhi defeated Abdelreda Al-Shath 6-4, 4-

6, 10-5. Meanwhile Hassan Al-Mousa defeated Ali Ibrahim 6-4, 7-6, while Nasser Abdelsalam defeated Hadi Mansour 6-1, 6-0.

In the 4-17 Juniors: Essa Qabazard defeated Abdelwahab Al-Sharaf 6-3, 6-1, Ahmad Khamis defeated Hussein Abdellatif 6-2, 6-2 and Daniel Ghassan defeated Talal Antar 6-4, 6-2. In the Juniors individuals 4-11: Bader Antar defeated Ali Al-Shatti 7-5, 6-4, Abdelwahab Abdellatif defeated Fawzan Al-Khashan 6-4, 6-2. In the women individuals: Sarah Behbehani defeated Yasmeen Al-Shamali 6-1, 6-0, Dana Al-Fulaj defeated

Dalal Behbehani 6-0, 6-0. In the women 418: Farida Al-Ayyat defeated Cavni Ranpar 6-0, 6-0, Rena Al-Samrani defeated Sai Adivi 6-1, 6-0. In the men's doubles Abdelrahman Al-Awadhi and Abdallah Rashid Al-Mukaimi defeated Dawood Hashim and Mahmoud 6-2, 6-0. Tamim Al-Hallaq and Ghulam Rasoul defeated Ali Al-Shatti and Badar Antar 6-3, 6-2, Hassan Al-Mousa and Enam Khan defeated Ahmad Al-Rabee and Ali Ibrahim 6-3, 6-2, Mohammad Khalid Sadiq and Bigon Rinquest defeated Nasser Abdelsalam and Abdelhameed Al-Shatti 6-2, 6-0.

WARNER BITES HIS TONGUE, HOPES TO LET BAT DO THE TALKING

NEW DELHI: Australia's David Warner is refusing to take the bait after being publicly sledged by India's cricketers, but even if he wanted to fire back the struggling opening batsman has few runs to back up any fighting words.

The lefthander has cobbled together just 98 runs from four innings in the first two Tests of the series in India and has fallen three times to spinner Ravichandran Ashwin-twice in last week's defeat at Bangalore, which levelled the series 1-1.

Warner has regularly punished India's bowlers on the seam-friendly wickets back home, belting them for nearly 50

runs on average, but he has been neutered by the subcontinent's flat pitches where he averages 24.41.

India have seized upon Warner's woes, with top-order batsman Cheteshwar Pujara poking fun at the vice captain's struggles against Ashwin, who has dismissed him nine times in his career, the most by any bowler.

"They were always under pressure when they walk into bat," Pujara said in a video interview with Ashwin posted on the Indian cricket board's website. "I wanted to make sure their batsmen are thinking about it," Pujara added. "Especially

David Warner. Whenever he walks in to bat, Ash is always happy.

"So I always keep reminding him that Ash is the one." Warner plundered India for 457 runs in the 2014/15 home series, which Australia won 2-0, and was involved in a number of verbal battles with the tourists, earning him a code of conduct fine in the second Test in Adelaide.

'SPIRIT OF CRICKET'

Warner, who has since shed his image as Australia's chief aggressor under captain Steve Smith, was unimpressed by the video but said the tourists would not

respond in kind ahead of the third Test in Ranchi this week. "It's just a rule of the cricketing world you keep everything on the field ... but that's up to them. From our point of view, we'll never do that," he said. "At the end of the day we're professionals and you have to move on from that stuff. Hopefully both teams will come out and play with the spirit of cricket." The Bangalore Test ended on a sour note, with India captain Virat Kohli alleging his counterpart Smith and Australia had flouted the rules when deciding to review umpire decisions. Cricket Australia boss James Sutherland labelled the accusations as

"outrageous" and the affair threatened to sour relations for the rest of the series before the rival boards called a truce on Friday. Warner said he would be "pretty upset" if any Australian players aired grievances publicly in the manner Kohli had, but he was keen to move on.

"There's going to be a lot of niggles here and there around certain things, and I think just a few people got out of hand and I think everyone has reined it back in again," he said.

"So we're looking forward to getting out to Ranchi and playing a great brand of cricket." — Reuters

NHL

FLAMES BLANK JETS TO EXTEND WINNING STREAK TO NINE GAMES

WINNIPEG: Brian Elliott made 31 saves for his second consecutive shutout as the Calgary Flames extended their winning streak to nine games with a 3-0 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Saturday. Mikael Backlund and Michael Frolik each scored on the power play as the victory also gave Calgary points in 11 straight games. The Flames also jumped in the NHL standings. Their 80 points tied them with Anaheim, but Calgary moves into second place in the Pacific Division because they have three more wins than the idle Ducks. Alex Chiasson also scored, while Frolik added one assist and Dougie Hamilton, a game-time decision, had three assists.

SENATORS 4, AVALANCHE 2

Craig Anderson made 14 saves to set the franchise wins mark as Ottawa defeated Colorado for its sixth consecutive victory. Alex Burrows and Mike Hoffman each had a goal and an assist for Ottawa, which tied Montreal atop the Atlantic Division with 84 points. Anderson earned win No. 147 with Ottawa and passed Patrick Lalime for the top spot. Fredrik Claesson and Ryan Dzingel also had goals for the Senators. Calvin Pickard stopped 27 shots and Matt Nieto and Sven Andrighetto scored for the Avalanche.

KINGS 4, CAPITALS 2

Adrian Kempe scored his first NHL goal with 11:14 to play and captain Anze Kopitar had a goal and an assist in Los Angeles' victory over NHL-leading Washington. Marian Gaborik also scored and Jonathan Quick made 17 saves in a big win for the Kings, who have won three of four as they fight to stay in the playoff race. Jeff Carter added an empty-net goal as Los Angeles won back-to-back games for the first time since early February. The Kings are in ninth place in the Western Conference, trailing St. Louis by three points. Jakub Vrana and T.J. Oshie scored for the Capitals, who have lost three straight regulation games for the first time in their outstanding season.

PENGUINS 3, CANUCKS 0

Matt Murray made 27 saves as Pittsburgh beat Vancouver. Jake Guentzel, Ian Cole and Conor Sheary scored for the Penguins, who have won five straight and are in sole possession of second place in the Metropolitan Division ahead of Columbus. The Canucks took another hit to their already bleak playoff outlook, slipping 10 points back for the second wild card in the Western Conference. Vancouver goalie Ryan Miller was outstanding despite the loss, making a season-high 45 saves.

BRUINS 2, FLYERS 1

Drew Stafford scored with 5.6 seconds left in the third period when his dump-in shot tipped off Philadelphia defenseman Brandon Manning's stick, lifting Boston to the win. David Pastrnak had a power-play goal, and Tuukka Rask made 26 saves for Boston, which improved to 10-3 under interim coach Bruce Cassidy, who replaced fired Claude Julien on Feb. 7. Jordan Weal had the Flyers' goal, and Steve Mason stopped 25 shots. Philadelphia may be sliding out of a chance at a playoff berth with its ninth loss in 14 games (5-8-1).

PREDATORS 3, SHARKS 1

SAN JOSE, California (AP) - Ryan Johansen and James Neal scored goals to help Nashville snap a four-game losing streak with a victory over San Jose. After starting their California swing with a

shootout loss in Anaheim and an overtime defeat in Los Angeles, the Predators head home on a high note by beating the defending Western Conference champions. Backup goalie Juuse Saros made 25 saves for the win. Paul Martin scored the lone goal for the first-place Sharks, who lost for just the second time in seven games.

MAPLE LEAFS 3, HURRICANES 2, OT

Morgan Rielly scored 2:13 into overtime to lift Toronto over the Carolina. Rielly's wrist shot past Cam Ward gave Toronto its third straight victory and moved them one point ahead of the New York Islanders for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. Mitch Marner and James van Riemsdyk also scored for Toronto and Frederik Andersen made 36 saves. Victor Rask and Teuvo Teravainen scored for Carolina, which has lost 11 of 15 games. Ward made 23 saves but couldn't steer aside Rielly's shot, which bounced off his left leg pad and angled into the back corner of the net.

SABRES 5, BLUE JACKETS 3

Evander Kane scored a power-play goal with 2:29 remaining as Buffalo rallied from a three-goal deficit to beat Columbus. Sam Reinhart, Matt Moulson and Jake McCabe scored to tie it and Jack Eichel added an empty-netter for Buffalo. Robin Lehner stopped all 24 shots he faced after taking over for Anders Nilsson to start the second period. Nilsson was yanked after giving up three goals on 12 shots. Nick Foligno, Oliver Bjorkstrand and David Savard scored for Columbus. Joonas Korpi also scored for Florida while James Reimer stopped 31 shots.

LIGHTNING 3, PANTHERS 2

Ondrej Palat scored with 2:23 left to give Tampa Bay a victory over Florida. Palat redirected Andrej Sustr's shot to complete Tampa Bay's comeback from a two-goal deficit. Andrei Vasilevski made 32 saves and Nikita Kucherov and Yanni Gourde also scored for the Lightning. Jaromir Jagr and Mark Pysyk scored for Florida while James Reimer stopped 31 shots.

COYOTES 5, DEVILS 4

Tobias Reider and Anthony DeAngelo each had a goal and an assist as Arizona handed New Jersey its 10th consecutive loss. The Coyotes led 4-0 early in the second period but needed the goal from the rookie DeAngelo with 6:29 to play for what proved to be the winning margin. DeAngelo's goal, a patient shot through traffic from the slot, put Arizona up 5-3 before John Moore's backhanded upper shelf shot past goalie Mike Smith cut it to 5-4 with 4:58 remaining. Smith preserved the victory by blocking Taylor Hall's penalty shot with 2:38 to play. Devils goalie Cory Schneider was lifted after allowing four goals on 10 shots in the first 24:13 of the game. Radim Vrbata, Brendan Perlini, and Jakob Chytrun also scored for Arizona. Kyle Palmieri scored twice and Beau Bennett added goals for New Jersey.

BLUES 4, ISLANDERS 3

Vladimir Tarasenko scored twice to lead St. Louis over New York. Alexander Steen and Patrik Berglund also scored as the Blues won their fourth straight game. Carter Hutton stopped 21 of 24 shots. New York's Thomas Greiss stopped 14 of 18 shots in the first two periods before being pulled in favor of Jean-Francois Berube to start the third with the Islanders trailing 4-1. Brock Nelson, Anthony Beauvillier and Nick Leddy scored for the Islanders.— AP



DUNEDIN: Protective covers lay on the pitch as play is delayed because of rain on the final day of the first cricket Test at University Oval, Dunedin, New Zealand, yesterday. — AP

CRICKET

NZ, SA TEST ENDS DRAWN AFTER FINAL DAY WASHOUT

WELLINGTON: The first test between New Zealand and South Africa ended in a draw yesterday after heavy rain washed out the fifth and final day's play in Dunedin, leaving both sides frustrated at losing the chance to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

The match had been delicately poised entering the final day with South Africa 224 for six in the second innings, a lead of 191 runs, with captain Faf du Plessis on 56 and Vernon Philander on one at University Oval.

Heavy rain that began early yesterday, however, ensured a delayed start and after the scheduled lunch break was taken at 1 p.m. (0000 GMT), umpires Kumar Dharmasena and Bruce Oxenford decided there was no chance of any play. "I think the game was shaping up quite nicely for all three results," New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said. "The game was certainly in the balance and it's just a shame not to get any play today."

"But it's nice going into the second match with both teams having played some good cricket." New Zealand will enter the second match at Wellington's Basin Reserve without batting stalwart Ross Taylor, who tore his calf muscle during the first innings, while left arm pace bowler Trent Boult is under an injury cloud.

"It's a real shame to lose Ross, our premier

SCOREBOARD			
Scoreboard at close of play on the fifth and final day in the first Test between New Zealand and South Africa yesterday in Dunedin, New Zealand.			
South Africa 1st innings 308 (D. Elgar 140, T. Bavuma 64, F. du Plessis 52; T. Boult 4-64)		Q. de Kock b Patel	4
New Zealand 1st innings 341 (K. Williamson 130, J. Raval 52, B. Watling 50; K. Maharaj 5-94)		V. Philander not out	1
South Africa 2nd innings (Overnight: 224-6)		Extras (b-1 lb-3 w-1)	5
S. Cook c Watling b Boult	0	Total (for 6 wickets, 102 overs)	224
D. Elgar c Williamson b Patel	89	Fall of wickets: 1-0 S. Cook, 2-39 H. Amla, 3-113 J. Duminy, 4-193 D. Elgar, 5-206 T. Bavuma, 6-218 Q. de Kock	
H. Amla c sub b Wagner	24	To bat: K. Maharaj, M. Morkel, K. Rabada	
J. Duminy lbw b Wagner	39	Bowling: T. Boult 15-4-34-1, N. Wagner 27-7-57-2 (w-1), M. Santner 19-6-37-1, J. Patel 36-15-72-2, J. Neesham 5-0-20-0.	
F. du Plessis not out	56	Result: Draw	
T. Bavuma b Santner	6		

batter, but therein lies an opportunity for someone else," Williamson added.

"(Trent) does have a little niggles but we don't know how serious it is yet. He will travel with us to Wellington and hopefully he will recover. He is a big player for us."

Du Plessis felt his side could also have won the game had they set New Zealand a target of about 250 runs in 60 overs.

"It was set up to be a great finish," du Plessis said. "We were looking to get about another 50 or 60 runs and on this wicket the ball is turning

nically and (left-arm spinner) Keshav (Maharaj) got five in the first innings.

"The nature of the wicket was you could either get wickets quickly or it's slow scoring and we were favouring our chances because Ross was not going to bat and Trent was injured."

South Africa's opening batsman Dean Elgar, who scored 140 in the first innings and 89 in the second, was named man of the match.

The second game in Wellington starts on March 16, before the third match at Seddon Park in Hamilton begins on March 25. —Reuters

DU PLESSIS SURPRISE AT ICC OVER INDIA SPAT

DUNEDIN: South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said yesterday he was surprised no one had been charged by the ICC after the ugly spat which blighted the Australia-India Test series.

"I was, yes. Purely from the reason of what I went through in Australia for something I feel was a lot smaller, so (am) surprised with it," he said in Dunedin following the washed-out end to the first Test against New Zealand. Du Plessis was fined his match fee during a Test against Australia in November for sucking on a mint and rubbing saliva into the ball. ICC (International Cricket Council) chief executive David Richardson had described it as "an obvious breach" of the ball-tampering law. However, the ICC decided not to take action against the warring India and Australia captains-Virat Kohli and Steve Smith-following cheating accusations during the second Test in Bangalore last week.

Kohli accused Smith of abusing the decision review system (DRS) after he was seen looking to the Australian dressing room for advice on whether to ask for a review after being given out lbw. Smith described his breach as a "brain-fade". Du Plessis has always denied ball tampering and said the reaction from the ICC was different to the way he was treated.

"Definitely it was different. I'm surprised by the way it happened," he said.

"Maybe it's because I speak on a personal point of view and felt I was treated very harsh. When you see something like that you'd hope it (the treatment) would be exactly the same."

Du Plessis said it was very unlikely there would be a similar dust-up between the South African and New Zealand players. "When you play teams like India and Australia obviously that can happen and it's easy for something like that to blow up," he said. "For me, it's just been good

to be on the other side of it this time and see how things unfold."

The first Test between New Zealand and South Africa ended in a draw when rain prevented

any chance of play on the final day with South Africa 224 for six in their second innings, leading New Zealand by 191. The second Test starts in Wellington on Thursday. — AFP



WINNIPEG: Joel Armia #40 of the Winnipeg Jets checks Matthew Tkachuk #19 of the Calgary Flames during NHL action on Saturday at the MTS Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. — AFP



Du Plessis

CYCLING

GIRO BLOW AS SICK ARU ABANDONS TIRRENO

MILAN: Giro d'Italia contender Fabio Aru's pre-race build-up suffered a blow yesterday when he was forced out of Tirreno-Adriatico with a bout of bronchitis. Aru is one of several contenders for the three-week Italian epic in what is its centenary edition, alongside former champions Vincenzo Nibali and Nairo Quintana.

But his team Astana announced: "Unfortunately, Fabio Aru has suffered,

even in the night, of a tracheobronchial acute bronchitis, with fever. "Therefore, in accordance with management and medical staff of the Astana Pro Team, it was decided not to start the fifth stage of Tirreno-Adriatico today to allow him to recover from the illness."

Tirreno-Adriatico was only one of two stage races Aru had targeted as part of his Giro preparations along with next month's Tour of the Alps. The illness

caused him to lose nearly five minutes to Quintana on Saturday, when the Colombian raced to victory on the summit of stage four. Although climbing specialist Quintana will be a big focus as he attempts the first part of a Giro-Tour de France double this summer, the rivalry between Aru and Nibali threatens to steal the spotlight.

Aru was Nibali's trusted teammate when the latter won a dramatic 2013

edition, after racing through a snow blizzard on the Tre Cime di Lavaredo climb in the Dolomites to secure overall victory. Nibali, the 2014 Tour de France champion who also won the Tour of Spain in 2010, now races for the Bahrain team. Aru has moved up to become the team leader at Astana.

The pair have largely avoided each other in Grand Tours since 2013, meaning the 2017 Giro d'Italia sets the scene

for a potentially epic battle for the pink jersey. Organisers went to great lengths to make sure both compete at the May 5-28 race. The 100th edition starts on Aru's native island of Sardinia, taking in three stages before crossing over to Nibali's home island of Sicily for stages four and five.

Aru is now set to attend a training camp in Sierra Nevada and line up in the Tour of the Alps on April 17-21. —AFP



MIAMI: Dominican Republic's Carlos Santana follows through on a single to score Robinson Cano during the sixth inning against the United States in a first-round game of the World Baseball Classic, Saturday, in Miami. At left is US catcher Jonathan Lucroy. — AP

BASEBALL

CRUZ MISSILE LIFTS DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO 7-5 WIN OVER US

MIAMI: Nelson Cruz smashed a three-run home run in the bottom of the eighth inning to lift Dominican Republic to a 7-5 victory over the United States in the World Baseball Classic (WBC) in Miami on Saturday. Cruz sent the pro-Dominican crowd of more than 37,000 at Marlins Park into a frenzy when he sent a line drive off left-hander Andrew Miller rocketing into the bleachers to give the Dominicans their first lead of the game.

Center fielder Starling Marte added a solo homer later in the inning to pad the margin as the reigning champions fought back from a 5-0 deficit in the sixth inning.

New York Mets closer Jeurys Familia pitched a clean ninth to seal the victory and put the Dominicans (2-0) top of Pool C ahead of the United States (1-1), Colombia (1-1) and Canada (0-2).

The United States plays Canada later, with a place in the next round at stake.

Cruz said he was delighted to give the Dominican fans a moment to remember with his home run, in front of the largest crowd at the home of Major League Baseball's Marlins.

"It was crazy, it was loud, the fans they never give up. They deserve it," the Seattle Mariners player said in an interview.

"We (Dominicans) love baseball. We breathe baseball 24/7. We have so much

talent, it's unbelievable. It was nice to get it done today." Earlier on Saturday, Colombia recorded their first WBC win, beating Canada 4-1 in Miami.

Atlanta Braves pitcher Julio Teheran was dominant for five innings for Colombia, retiring the final 13 batters he faced.

Canada struck first, scoring their only run in the first inning, but they did not get another hit until the seventh and by then Colombia were ahead 3-1.

In Pool D, Francisco Lindor had three RBIs as Puerto Rico beat Mexico 9-4.

Javier Baez hit a three-run home run in the ninth inning to give Puerto Rico some insurance in Jalisco, Mexico. Puerto Rico (2-0) heads the pool ahead of Venezuela (1-1) and Italy (1-1), with Mexico (0-2) eliminated. Venezuela pushed across a run in the 10th to edge Italy 11-10, with Martin Prado collecting five hits, including the game-winning RBI double.

Venezuela trailed 5-0 in the fifth before rallying. Catcher Salvador Perez drilled a go-ahead homer with one out in the ninth inning but was forced to leave the game when Drew Butera collided with him on a play at the plate after Italy (1-1) tied the score in the ninth. Venezuela closer Francisco Rodriguez was also injured on the play. In Tokyo, Israel beat Cuba 4-1 in the opening game of Pool E. —Reuters

RUGBY

JONES WANTS SIX NATIONS KINGS ENGLAND TO SEIZE 'GREATNESS'

TWICKENHAM: England coach Eddie Jones challenged his side to achieve "greatness" by completing back-to-back Grand Slams after they retained their Six Nations title with a round to spare following a 61-21 thrashing of Scotland at Twickenham on Saturday.

Jonathan Joseph scored a hat-trick as England ran in seven tries, with Owen Farrell overcoming a leg injury to kick 26 points as they overpowered Scotland in posting a record score in the 135th edition of rugby union's oldest international fixture. Victory also saw England equal New Zealand's record of 18 successive Test wins by a leading nation. England will break the world champions' mark if they beat Ireland in Dublin next weekend, where a win would also see them complete a second straight clean sweep in the Six Nations. No side has done that in the Six Nations era, with France achieving consecutive Five Nations Grand Slams in 1997 and 1998. England last managed the feat in 1992 and 1993 "We've got a fantastic opportunity," said Jones, yet to lose a match as England coach since taking charge following the hosts' first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup.

"It (would) mean for the players they've achieved greatness," the Australian added. "How many times in your life do you get to be great? It's exciting. They're in the dressing room now talking about it. They want to do it." Next Saturday's match takes place on St Patrick's weekend, with Ireland looking to bounce back from a 22-9 loss to Wales in Cardiff on Friday.

'VULNERABLE ENGLAND'

Jones said Ireland, who ended New Zealand's winning streak, would love

nothing more than to spoil England's party. "Ireland, psychologically, are in a very strong position," he added.

"They're beaten, they're out of the tournament and they love spoiling parties. "And the party they'd love to spoil the most is the England party," insisted Jones, coach of the Australia side beaten by England in the 2003 World Cup final.

"We're vulnerable, because we've won, we're champions of the Six Nations. "We're going to have to work really hard to get ourselves right for the game. And we will."

Having established a 30-7 lead at half-time, England didn't let up and added 31 more points after the break on Saturday. "The number one team in the world goes on and finishes that off," added Jones, whose ultimate ambition with England is to dethrone the All Blacks by winning the 2019 World Cup in Japan. "We're not beating our chests and saying we're the number one team in the world, but we aspire to be the number one team in the world." Scotland kicked off one win away from a Triple Crown and with high hopes of a first victory at Twickenham since 1983. But they were never in the game, with their wafer-thin defence repeatedly ripped apart. However, a win over Italy at Murrayfield next weekend could still see them finish second for the first time since the tournament became the Six Nations.

That would be a fitting way for Scotland to see off coach Vern Cotter. The New Zealander is leaving to join French club Montpellier after Scotland felt they had to get Glasgow boss Gregor Townsend — 10 of whose players were in the starting XV at Twickenham — on board as coach of the national side or risk losing him to an overseas offer. —AFP



England coach Eddie Jones

BASKETBALL

SPURS ROLL TO 107-85 VICTORY OVER WARRIORS

SAN ANTONIO: Patty Mills had 21 points as the San Antonio Spurs rolled to a 107-85 victory over the Golden State Warriors on Saturday night in a game short on star power to pull within a half-game of the NBA's top record. The big showdown between the league's top two teams turned into a huge letdown with both teams missing their star players. Already without Kevin Durant due to a knee injury, Golden State opted to rest Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green and Andre Iguodala. The Spurs were expecting to be without Kawhi Leonard, Tony Parker and Dejeunte Murray due to injuries, but received a jolt when they were informed that LaMarcus Aldridge will be out indefinitely with a minor heart arrhythmia. Aldridge underwent tests Saturday and will have more today. Ian Clark had 36 points to lead Golden State, which has dropped three in a row and five of seven.

WIZARDS 125, TRAIL BLAZERS 124, OT
John Wall scored 39 points as the Wizards picked up a controversial road win. It looked as if Markieff Morris stepped out of bounds before making a go-ahead baseline jumper with 0.4 seconds left in overtime. The crowd at the Moda Center howled in protest and the players pointed to the video replay to no avail. Bradley Beal added 26 points for the Wizards, who have won five straight. CJ McCollum scored 34 points for Portland, which had won four in a row. Damian Lillard had 33.

HEAT 104, RAPTORS 89
Dion Waiters scored 20 points while Tyler Johnson added 16 as the Heat improved to 21-4 over their last 25 games. Goran Dragic scored 15 and Hassan Whiteside added 12 points and 14 rebounds for Miami. Dragic played only 41 seconds in the second half, leaving after taking an elbow from Toronto's Cory Joseph. Dragic eventually returned to the bench with an icepack over his right eye, which appeared to be swollen nearly shut. DeMar DeRozan scored 17 points for the Raptors, who have lost 15 of their last 24 games. Toronto, still without injured All-Star point guard Kyle Lowry, managed only seven assists — an NBA low for any team this season — on 32 field goals.

THUNDER 112, JAZZ 104
Russell Westbrook had 33 points, 14 assists and 11 rebounds for his 32nd triple-double of the season, leading Oklahoma City to the victory. Westbrook broke a tie with Wilt Chamberlain (1967-68) for the second-most triple-doubles in a season. Oscar Robertson set the record of 41 in 1961-62. Victor Oladipo added 22 points to help the Thunder win for the third time in four regular-season meetings with the Jazz. Utah was without center Rudy Gobert and forward Derrick Favors because of leg soreness while Gordon Hayward played only 21 minutes, finishing with nine points — 13 below his average.

PELICANS 125, HORNETS 122, OT
Anthony Davis had 46 points and 21 rebounds as the Pelicans defeated the Hornets with DeMarcus Cousins sitting on the bench during crunch time. Davis had 15 points in the fourth quarter and nine more in overtime, including a three-point play on an offensive rebound to put the Pelicans ahead for good with 1:11 left. Davis finished 18 of 31 from the field and was 4 of 5 from 3-point range. Jordan Crawford had 19 points and Jrue Holiday added 15 points and 13 assists as the Pelicans improved to 3-6 since adding Cousins. But Cousins didn't play a big role in the win. He didn't play after picking up his fifth foul with 9:35 left in regulation. The Pelicans' win offset an impressive night from Marvin Williams, who had a season-high 27 points to go along with 10 rebounds for Charlotte.

CAVALIERS 116, MAGIC 104
LeBron James had 24 points, 13 assists and 12 rebounds as Cleveland stopped a three-game losing streak. Kyrie Irving scored 22 points and Tristan Thompson added 14 points and 13 rebounds for the Eastern Conference-leading Cavaliers, who had dropped four of five overall. The Magic played them close for much of the game, but couldn't match shots with James and the defending NBA champions down the stretch. Orlando had four players score in double figures, but lost for the fourth time in five games. Nikola Vucevic had a team-high 20 points and 16 rebounds after missing the previous four games with a sore right Achilles.

BUCKS 102, TIMBERWOLVES 95
Tony Snell scored 19 points while Giannis Antetokounmpo had 18 as the Bucks earned their season-high sixth consecutive victory. Milwaukee had seven players score in double figures. Matthew Dellavedova scored 16 points and Greg Monroe finished with 12. Karl-Anthony Towns had 35 points and 14 rebounds for Minnesota, which was coming off a victory against Golden State on Friday night. Ricky



SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Spurs forward Kyle Anderson, left, attempts to shoot against Golden State Warriors center JaVale McGee during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, in San Antonio. San Antonio won 107-85. —AP

Rubio added 22. The Timberwolves got within two with just under three minutes remaining on a Rubio jumper but the Bucks held off the late challenge.

SUNS 100, MAVERICKS 98
Devin Booker hit a 19-footer with 1.4 seconds left to lift Phoenix to the road win. Booker scored 25 of his 36 points in the second half. He scored the Suns' final eight points, twice making tying baskets. After the Mavericks' Wesley Matthews missed a 3-point attempt, Booker hit the winner. The Mavericks failed to get off a shot before time expired. Dirk Nowitzki had 23 points and 11 rebounds for Dallas. Harrison Barnes also scored 23 points for the Mavericks, making a career-high 13 free throws in 14 attempts.

CLIPPERS 112, 76ERS 100
Chris Paul scored 30 points and DeAndre Jordan had 19 points and 20 rebounds, helping the Clippers to their fourth win in five games. Paul also had seven assists and Blake Griffin added 15 points and 10 rebounds. The Clippers trailed 79-75 after three quarters but opened the final period with a 10-0 run. Los Angeles has beaten Philadelphia in 10 of their last 11 meetings. Richaun Holmes led Philadelphia with 24 points and nine rebounds. Dario Saric added 16 points, and Jahli Okafor had 14. The Sixers have lost four in a row and seven of eight overall.

HAWKS 107, GRIZZLIES 90
Taurean Prince scored a career-high 17 points as the Hawks handed the Grizzlies their fifth straight loss. Prince had three of Atlanta's 15 3-pointers. Paul Millsap had 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Hawks, and Dennis Schroder finished with 16 points, eight assists and seven

rebounds. JaMychal Green led Memphis with 20 points and 11 rebounds, while Mike Conley scored 16. Brandon Wright finished with 10 points.

NUGGETS 105, KINGS 92
Jamal Murray scored 11 of his 14 points in the fourth quarter as Denver held on for the road win. Gary Harris had 24 points and Nikola Jokic added 20 points and 14 rebounds as the Nuggets beat the Kings for the second time in six days to even the season series. It also was Denver coach Mike Malone's second straight win over his former team after going 0-4 against Sacramento. More importantly for Denver, the Nuggets increased their lead to two games over Portland for the final playoff spot in the West. Buddy Hield had 17 points for Sacramento, which lost its eighth straight. The Kings are 1-8 since trading All-Star DeMarcus Cousins to New Orleans.

PISTONS 112, KNICKS 92
Tobias Harris scored 23 of his 28 points in the first half, leading Detroit to the victory. The Pistons have had some issues with slow starts lately, but they raced out to an 18-point lead in the first quarter against New York. Harris finished the period with 11 points in what was an encouraging effort by Detroit, which was coming off an emotional win over Cleveland on Thursday night. The Pistons are 12-6 since the start of February and they've boosted their post-season hopes in the process. Andre Drummond had 24 points and 15 rebounds for Detroit while Reggie Jackson had 19 points and eight assists. Kristaps Porzingis scored 18 points for the Knicks, who had six players in double figures but lost for the fourth time in five games. —AP

NHL results/standings

Denver 105, Sacramento 92; Washington 125, Portland 124 (OT); Atlanta 107, Memphis 90; Phoenix 100, Dallas 98; San Antonio 107, Golden State 85; Milwaukee 102, Minnesota 95; Miami 104, Toronto 89; New Orleans 125, Charlotte 122 (OT); Cleveland 116, Orlando 104; Detroit 112, NY Knicks 92; LA Clippers 112, Philadelphia 100; Oklahoma City 112, Utah 104.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	41	25	.621	-	Utah	41	25	.621
Toronto	38	28	.576	3	LA Clippers	37	29	.561
NY Knicks	26	40	.394	15	Denver	31	35	.470
Philadelphia	23	42	.354	17.5	Portland	28	36	.438
Brooklyn	11	53	.172	29	Minnesota	27	38	.415
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	43	21	.672	-	Golden State	52	14	.788
Indiana	33	32	.508	10.5	LA Clippers	40	26	.606
Detroit	33	33	.500	11	Sacramento	25	41	.379
Milwaukee	32	33	.492	11.5	Phoenix	22	44	.333
Chicago	31	34	.477	12.5	LA Lakers	20	45	.308
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Washington	41	24	.631	-	San Antonio	51	14	.785
Atlanta	37	29	.561	4.5	Houston	45	21	.682
Miami	32	34	.485	9.5	Memphis	36	30	.545
Charlotte	29	37	.439	12.5	Dallas	28	37	.431
Orlando	24	43	.358	18	New Orleans	26	40	.394

PREVIEW

UNITED CONFIDENT OF AVENGING CHELSEA MISERY SAYS FELLAINI

LONDON: Marouane Fellaini insists Manchester United are confident of avenging the worst moment of Jose Mourinho's reign when they return to Chelsea in the FA Cup quarter-finals today. Mourinho's first visit to Stamford Bridge since his sacking as Chelsea boss last season ended in humiliation as his former club romped to a 4-0 victory over United in October. United have used the memory of that painful loss to fuel a dominant period which has seen them lose just twice in all competitions since then. They lifted the first major trophy of the Mourinho era with a League Cup final victory against Southampton last month and remain in contention for further silverware in the FA Cup and Europa League.

Chelsea have been equally powerful, opening up a 10-point lead at the top of the Premier League and advancing to the last eight of the FA Cup as boss Antonio Conte chases a double in his first season as Mourinho's permanent replacement in west London. Although United are 17 points behind Chelsea, United midfielder Fellaini is adamant they can turn the tables with a place in the semi-finals up for grabs. "Obviously we lost there a few months ago, but now it is the FA Cup and we will see what happens," Fellaini said. "It will be tight, I think. It is the FA Cup, it is one game. They are top of the league, they have confidence, they have great players, but we will show our quality there and see what happens.

"Of course they are confident so let's go there and see what we can do."

FATIGUE

Chelsea's hopes of securing a club record 13th successive home win may have been boosted by the contrasting preparations the two teams have had this week. While Conte and his players have been able to plot Mourinho's downfall at their training base since Monday's win at West Ham, United were forced to embark on a draining trip to Russian club Rostov on Thursday in the Europa League. Mourinho bemoaned the poor quality of the pitch in Russia and, with his players not arriving home until the early hours of Friday morning, it would

be no surprise if they showed signs of fatigue at Stamford Bridge. Even so, Conte doesn't anticipate an easy ride from a team with United's strength in depth. "Manchester United, together with (Manchester) City, has the best squad in the league," Conte said. "They have a lot, a number of great players, with great talent and great experience to win. We have a good identity, our team. But for sure it will be a really tough game for us and for them." Conte's wild touchdown celebrations of his team's goals irked Mourinho in October and the United boss accused his rival of deliberately stirring up the Chelsea fans, who taunted their former idol with chants of "you're not special anymore."

It will be fascinating to see what sort of reception Mourinho gets from Chelsea's supporters this time. But despite Mourinho's protests, Conte has no intention of toning down the touchline theatrics that have become his trademark this season. "I've shown at Chelsea, not only Chelsea, every team that I managed that I live the game with great passion," Conte said. "Sometimes I want to share my enthusiasm, my passion with my players, with my staff, also with the fans. I think it's normal." "I'm very focused on the pitch. The mind games (with Mourinho) don't bring you the win. For me the most important thing is to try to win, then to think for another celebration." — AFP

English Premier League table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	27	21	3	3	57	20	66
Tottenham	27	16	8	3	53	20	56
Man City	27	17	5	5	53	29	56
Liverpool	28	16	7	5	60	35	55
Arsenal	26	15	5	6	55	31	50
Man United	26	13	10	3	39	22	49
Everton	28	13	8	7	47	30	47
West Bromwich	28	11	7	10	36	37	40
Stoke City	28	9	9	10	32	40	36
Southampton	26	9	6	11	32	34	33

West Ham United	28	9	6	13	38	49	33
Burnley	28	9	4	15	31	42	31
Watford	27	8	7	12	33	47	31
Bournemouth	28	8	6	14	40	54	30
Leicester City	27	7	6	14	30	45	27
Swansea City	28	8	3	17	36	61	27
Crystal Palace	27	7	4	16	35	46	25
Hull City	28	6	6	16	26	54	24
Middlesbrough	27	4	10	13	19	30	22
Sunderland	27	5	4	18	24	50	19

ICARDI, BANEGA HIT HAT-TRICKS AS INTER MILAN PUMMEL ATALANTA

MILAN: Argentinians Mauro Icardi and Ever Banega struck a hat-trick apiece as Champions League-chasing Inter Milan demolished high-flying Atalanta with a defiant 7-1 romp yesterday.

Atalanta travelled to the San Siro confident of causing an upset having beaten Inter, Napoli and Roma at home in a season that is turning out to be their best to date.

But Gian Piero Gasperini's men, who have got used to being welcomed back to Bergamo by hundreds of ecstatic fans whenever they play away, are set for a scolding after a dismal display that saw Atalanta drop two places to sixth.

Gasperini said: "We got a lot of things wrong today, but in the kind of season that we're having, we can allow ourselves the odd slip-up."

"We're still targeting the Europa League."

Icardi completed his hat-trick in nine first-half minutes including one from the spot when he was tripped in the area to fire the Nerazzurri to a 3-0 lead by the 26th minute, with Banega netting twice and Remo Freuler hitting a 42nd-minute consolation as Inter took a 5-1 half-time lead. The hosts twisted the knife seven minutes after the restart when ex-Atalanta midfielder Roberto Gagliardini slammed the ball past stricken goalkeeper Etrit Berisha and into the top corner, before Argentina midfielder Banega completed his hat-trick with a deflected free-kick on 68 minutes.

Inter moved up to fourth to sit five points behind Roma, who occupy the third and final Champions League qualifying place, although the capital club will pull eight points clear of Inter with a win away to struggling Palermo later.

work hard. Today we had the perfect approach, let's keep it that way."

Champions Juventus took another step towards a record sixth consecutive Serie A title with a controversial 2-1 win over AC Milan on Friday, when Argentinian starlet Paulo Dybala hit a controversial, last-gasp penalty for the hosts.

Massimiliano Allegri's men are now 10 points ahead of Napoli, who saw Lorenzo Insigne hit a brace, one from the spot, and Belgian forward Dries Mertens add another from the penalty spot in a 3-0 home win over struggling Crotona. Days after crashing out of the Champions League following a 6-2 aggregate loss to Real Madrid, Napoli captain Marek Hamsik said the pressure is now on Roma. "This win has put them under a little bit of pressure, we'll see what happens," said the Slovak.

"Now, we have to turn our attention to our trip to Empoli, who are never easy to play at home." Elsewhere, Croatia striker Nikola Kalinic saved Fiorentina's blushes when he struck in the dying seconds to secure a 1-0 home win over Cagliari.

Chievo got back to winning ways following a 3-1 reverse at AC Milan two weeks ago with a 4-0 romp over Empoli in Verona where Roberto Inglese, Sergio Pellissier, Valter Birsa and Bostjan Cesar were all on target. Chievo remain in midtable, with Empoli edging dangerously towards the relegation zone. They are only seven points ahead of third-from-bottom Palermo, although the Sicilians will start as underdogs against Roma later. —AFP

Live Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE
Chelsea v Watford 23:00
beIN SPORTS

SPANISH LEAGUE
Osasuna v SD Eibar 22:45
beIN SPORTS

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE
SS Lazio v Torino FC 22:45
beIN SPORTS



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder Dele Alli (L) vies with Millwall's English-born Jamaican defender Shaun Cummings (R) and Millwall's Irish midfielder Shaun Williams during the English FA Cup quarter-final football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Millwall at White Hart Lane in London, yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

SON TREBLE STEERS SPURS INTO FA CUP SEMIFINALS

LONDON: Son Heung-Min's hat-trick fired Tottenham into the FA Cup semi-finals, but his side's 6-0 victory against Millwall was overshadowed by Harry Kane's potentially serious ankle injury. Kane limped off in the 10th minute at White Hart Lane after his ankle twisted awkwardly.

The England striker was sidelined with another ankle problem earlier this season and the injury is a major worry for Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino. England manager Gareth Southgate will also be concerned as he is due to name his squad for forthcoming fixtures against Germany and Lithuania. Tottenham are looking to win the FA Cup for the first time since 1991 and close the gap on Premier League leaders Chelsea, but those ambitions would be much harder to achieve without their leading scorer. Despite Kane's absence, Tottenham were too strong for third tier Millwall and they marked the last FA Cup tie at the Lane before the stadium is demolished, with a commanding quarter-final display. Christian Eriksen opened the scoring and Dele Alli and Vincent Janssen were also on target, but it was Son who took centre-stage with his treble. Tottenham will discover their opponent for next month's Wembley semi-finals today, but news of Kane will be anticipated even more eagerly. Given the notorious reputation of Millwall's support, much of the pre-match focus had been on the possibility of crowd trouble. There was a tense atmosphere outside the stadium before kick off, but a huge police presence managed to contain the threat of serious violence despite bottle throwing and minor scuffles. Inside, a large segregated area was used to keep Millwall and Tottenham fans apart, with a line of stewards wearing orange hard hats in case missiles were thrown.

Millwall arrived with a 17-match unbeaten run that included FA Cup upsets of Bournemouth, Watford and Leicester, but facing a team of Tottenham's class was a different proposition altogether. Dominating possession with ease, Pochettino's side battered Millwall from start to finish as they cruised to a 16th win from 18 home games this season.

INESSANT PRESSURE

Kane's injury came early, the England star's ankle twisting badly after Jake Cooper slid into him. After several minutes of treatment, Kane limped off to be replaced by Danish winger Eriksen. It was a big blow for Tottenham given Kane's red hot form had brought him eight goals in his last four appearances and 24 for the season. As Tottenham regrouped, Millwall striker Steve Morison curled wide from 20 yards in a rare moment of alarm for the hosts.

But Tottenham's incessant pressure was rewarded in the 31st minute when Alli chested down a high clearance and Eriksen pounced to drill a low shot into the far corner from just

inside the area. Victor Wanyama powered a header against the crossbar as Tottenham pressed for the second goal, which arrived in spectacular fashion from Son in the 41st minute. Picked out by Eriksen on the edge of the area, Son cut inside and curled a sublime shot past King. Son's first goal since January was the perfect way to silence some unsavoury taunts aimed at him by Millwall fans, and the South Korean wasn't finished yet. Making a perfectly-

timed run onto Kieran Trippier's pass, Son got in behind the Millwall defence in the 54th minute and volleyed a fine finish past King. Alli tapped in Eriksen's cross for the fourth in the 72nd minute and Janssen made it five seven minutes later with his first goal from open play for Spurs since signing last year.

There was still time for Son to be gifted his treble in stoppage-time when King let his shot slip through his legs into the net. — AFP

RANGERS DENY CELTIC IN OLD FIRM DRAW

GLASGOW: Clint Hill's late goal rescued a point for Rangers in the Old Firm derby and ended a 22-match winning run for Celtic in the Scottish Premiership.

Rangers, with under-20s coach Graeme Murty in charge as new manager Pedro Caixinha watched on from the stands, started brightly but it was Celtic who took a 35th minute lead through Stuart Armstrong. With time running out, veteran defender Hill popped up in the 88th minute to grab an equaliser as Celtic dropped points for the first time since 18 September last year when they were held to a 2-2 draw with Inverness Caledonian Thistle.

Celtic, however, remain unbeaten in 35 domestic matches and still hold a 25 point advantage over Aberdeen, who are eight clear of Rangers in the race for second place. Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers felt his side were denied a chance to win it late on. "We obviously should have had a penalty right at the death, it was a clear cut penalty," Rodgers said of a late challenge by Hill on Leigh Griffiths. "But I am proud of the team today. It was a tough game." Rangers interim manager Murty was pleased with the spirit shown by his players.

"I thought the players showed a degree of tenacity and grit that they have been questioned about and challenged about for a long time," Murty said. "They stood up in a difficult environment and managed to get something from the game and I thought without two outstanding saves from Craig Gordon they could have had more."

CELTIC FURIOUS

The Rangers players looked eager to impress their new on-watching manager and pegged Celtic back in the opening 25 minutes. Martyn Waghorn picked up a yellow card for a nasty challenge on Nir Bitton but

worse was to come for the Rangers striker as he blew a golden chance to fire his side in front. Kenny Miller's headed knock-on sent the Englishman clean through on goal but Craig Gordon showed why Celtic handed him a new three-year contract during the week as he blocked the effort with his out-stretched foot. Celtic came closer moments later when Armstrong's 20-yard free-kick was turned on to the post by Wes Foderingham with the keeper also tipping a fierce strike from Kieran Tierney round the post.

Armstrong then won possession from Jason Holt and fed Mikel Lustig down the right before collecting the return pass and lashing a shot beyond the keeper from the edge of the box.

The Rangers keeper had to be alert at the start of the second half to tip away a fierce angled strike from Armstrong after the midfielder had been played in by a clever reverse pass from Scott Sinclair.

Celtic were well on top but a quick break-away presented Rangers with a chance to equalise as Miller delivered the ball into the box from the left with Waghorn's effort on the turn stopped by the feet of the advancing Gordon. Dembele, who had scored in the previous three meetings of the sides, came close to adding to his tally of five Old Firm goals when he hit the post with a shot across goal. Rangers threw men forward and it saw them claim an 88th minute equaliser. Emerson Hyndman's shot was kept out by Gordon but the loose ball fell to 38-year-old Hill who made no mistake from close range.

Celtic were furious when Hill then appeared to bring Griffiths down in the box but the referee waved play on before the defender then headed a shot from the Scotland striker off the line as they denied the Hoops a fourth straight Old Firm win this season. — AFP



MILAN: Inter Milan's forward from Argentina Mauro Icardi (L) fights for the ball with Atalanta's defender from Brazil Rafael Toli during the Italian Serie A football match Inter Milan vs Atalanta at "San Siro" Stadium in Milan yesterday. —AFP

Sports

Pospisil vanquishes Murray at Indian Wells



Son treble steers Spurs into FA Cup semifinals



MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2017

CRUZ MISSILE LIFTS DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO 7-5 WIN OVER US

Page 18



MADRID: Barcelona's Sergi Roberto, centre, drives the ball past Deportivo's Raul Alcantara during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Deportivo and Barcelona at the Riazor stadium in A Coruna, Spain, yesterday.—AP

BARCA SUFFER PSG HANGOVER IN DEPORTIVO DEFEAT

MADRID: Barcelona lost 2-1 at relegation-threatened Deportivo La Coruna yesterday in its first match after its amazing win over Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League, giving Real Madrid a chance to retake the Spanish league lead.

Without some of the starters from the 6-1 victory on Wednesday, Barcelona lacked the same intensity that it had at the Camp Nou as its 19-game unbeaten streak in the league ended. Defending champion Barcelona stayed on 60 points, one ahead of Madrid, which hosts Real Betis later.

Deportivo, which moved further from the relegation zone with victory at the Riazor Stadium, scored once in each half off corner kicks. Luis Suarez netted Barcelona's lone goal, and Lionel Messi missed one of the team's best chances to salvage a draw when his free kick in stoppage time sailed over the crossbar.

The game came four days after Barcelona scored three times in the final minutes to reverse the 4-0 first-leg loss to PSG in the Round of 16 of the Champions League.

Coach Luis Enrique didn't start Rafinha, Samuel Umtiti and Neymar, who was decisive on Wednesday with two goals and two assists. Andres Iniesta and Ivan Rakitic only entered Sunday's match in the second half.

Sergi Roberto, who scored the clincher against PSG in the fifth minute of stoppage time, played from the start in La Coruna. Andre Gomes, Denis Suarez and Arda Turan also got a chance to play.

Striker Joselu opened the scoring for Deportivo in the 40th minute with a close-range shot after Barcelona defender Javier Mascherano failed to clear a loose ball inside the area after a corner. Joselu had missed a chance just seconds earlier on a shot that required a remarkable save by goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Suarez equalized less than a minute into the second half with a right-foot strike after Gomes' attempt was blocked. But the hosts went ahead again in the 74th with a firm header by midfielder Alex Bergantinos off another corner. The goal came just moments

after another great save by Ter Stegen to a header by Alejandro Arribas. Deportivo, which had won only one of its last 10 matches, moved to 15th place with 27 points, eight clear of the relegation zone.

Barca boss Luis Enrique accepted it had been "difficult" for his side to lift themselves from the tiredness and euphoria of pulling off the biggest comeback in Champions League history from a 4-0 first-leg deficit.

However, despite missing the injured Neymar, Suarez claimed Barca had enough recovery time to put in a better performance than they showed at Riazor. "There was enough time to recover and we were aware that the league game was coming," added the Uruguayan.

Barca now lead Real Madrid at the top of La Liga by just a point having played two games more. Madrid can move top later with victory at home to Real Betis. And Enrique claimed it will take a "very strong" end to the season in Barca's remaining 11 league games to deliver a third consecutive title.

"Now we have to think that we still have matches against our rivals for the title to come," said Enrique. "We are going to have to have a very strong end to the season to be able to opt for trophies."

REAL SOCIEDAD 0, ATHLETIC BILBAO 2

Real Sociedad's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League took a hit after a home loss to Athletic Bilbao in the Basque derby.

Real Sociedad needed a victory at its Anoeta Stadium to stay within one point of fourth-placed Athletic Madrid, the first team in the qualifying zone for next season's European competition.

Seventh-placed Athletic got on the board with a 28th-minute penalty kick converted by Raul Garcia and added to the lead with Inaki Williams in the 56th after a mistake by defender Alvaro Odriozola. His pass back to a teammate came up short and was intercepted by Williams. The hosts had a goal disallowed in the 70th after a foul was called on the attack. It was Real Sociedad's third-straight game without a win at Anoeta. — Agencies

CAN THE MAN AS LIVERPOOL BEAT BURNLEY

	Liverpool	2
	Burnley	1

LIVERPOOL: Emre Can's superb shot guided Liverpool to a 2-1 home win over Burnley yesterday and maintained their bid to qualify for next season's Champions League. Ashley Barnes, with his club's first goal at Anfield since 1975, had given Burnley a deserved early lead only for Georginio Wijnaldum to equalise in first-half injury-time.

And Can struck just after the hour mark to secure victory for Liverpool, although it was a far from convincing performance by Jurgen Klopp's side. German international Can collected a short pass from Divock Origi and was allowed space to unleash a right-foot shot from 25 yards which the Burnley goalkeeper, Tom Heaton, might have been expected to save before it reached the bottom left-hand corner of his net.

Liverpool had gone in at the half-time interval level although it was a scoreline that even the most ardent home supporter would have admitted was harsh on Burnley. With just two away points to their name all season from a still impressive tally of 31 — Sean

Dyche's team opened the game aggressively and took the lead in just the seventh minute.

Right-back Matt Lowton crossed low into the area from the wing and, after Andre Gray narrowly missed making contact, Barnes slid in ahead of his marker to force the ball past Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet. Burnley, without a victory at Anfield since 1974, would have hoped to reach the interval without conceding an equaliser and looked well on course for that target for the majority of the half.

UNLIKELY EQUALISER

Not until the 45th minute did Liverpool enjoy a 'shot' on target and that was actually an over-hit defensive header from Burnley's Joey Barton which forced Heaton into a comfortable diving save, his first of the game. But a minute into first-half injury-time, Liverpool claimed an unlikely equaliser which raised the mood around the stadium. Origi, starting in place of the injured Roberto Firmino, crossed from the left and Wijnaldum made a lazy attempt to control the ball, flicking out a boot and benefitting from a fortunate rebound from defender Ben Mee, before drilling home an unstoppable finish from six yards.

Considering recent dominant home wins over Tottenham and Arsenal, it was a disappointing start from a Liverpool side which has struggled against the Premier League's lower-placed clubs this term. Unbeaten against the top six all season, Liverpool's five league defeats this term have come against teams

currently in the bottom half of the table—including 12th-placed Burnley, who won 2-0 when the sides met at Turf Moor in August. The first half offered little evidence those troubles were about to change.

Even before the goal, Burnley's crosses from the right had caused concern, with Gray's chip almost finding Barnes after five minutes. Solid at the back, Burnley also looked the more likely to score a second goal after Barnes's opener.

After 25 minutes, Barnes yet again slipped his marker, Ragnar Klavan, but was offside as he volleyed wide and Gray shot just over from a difficult angle after a Lowton throw-in had flicked off James Milner's head. But the second half opened with Liverpool in far more determined mood, although their suspect defending always gave Burnley hope.

Barnes sent a speculative first-time shot wide soon after the restart before Liverpool finally started to threaten, with Joel Matip seeing a shot blocked from a Philippe Coutinho cross.

Can's goal was still harsh on Burnley, although the visitors almost found a route back into the game just three minutes later, when Mee headed a free-kick across goal and Barnes's effort was blocked by Klavan.

Both teams squandered late chances for further goals. Sadio Mane had only Heaton to beat but saw the Burnley keeper tip his 12-yard shot over the bar in the closing stages before Lowton missed a glorious opportunity to equalise, shooting wide from a scramble in the area in stoppage-time. — AFP



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Georginio Wijnaldum scores his side's first goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Burnley at Anfield, Liverpool, England, yesterday. — AP

Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary BUSINESS

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Nissan Al-Babtain wins 2 gold medals at 2016 Nissan Skills Contests

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2017 Cadillac XT5 crossover earns 2016 Top Safety Pick+ rating

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Ivanka Trump is exception to dad's 'Buy American' rule

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WARBA PARTNERS WITH AL-GHANEM AUTO FOR FINANCING ON FORD CARS

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KUWAIT: Zain Group holding its annual Ordinary General Assembly at the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh yesterday.

ZAIN GROUP APPROVES CASH DIVIDEND OF 35 FILS

MOHANNAD AL-KHARAFI ELECTED ZAIN GROUP CHAIRMAN, BADER AL-KHARAFI VICE-CHAIRMAN AND CEO

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa announces holding its annual Ordinary General Assembly at the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh, Kuwait yesterday and after satisfying the legal quorum requirements with 66.79 percent, approved the distribution of a cash dividend of 35 fils (\$0.11) per share for the financial year ended 31 December, 2016. Additionally, after passing a number of items on its agenda, the meeting saw the election of the Group Board of Directors for the next three years.

The incoming Board members now constitute the following:

Mohannad Mohammad Al-Kharafi; Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi; Ahmed Tahous Al-Tahous (the representative of the Kuwait Investment Authority); the corporate entities: Fajer Al-Nasim for selling and buying stocks represented by Houssam Fawzi Al-Kharafi; Nasim Al-Delta for selling and buying stocks represented by Khaled Ali Al-Ghanim; Abeer Al-Shorouq for selling and buying stocks represented by Talal Jassem Al-Kharafi; Jawharat Gibla for selling and buying stocks represented by Faisal Nizar Al-Nusif; and Dana Al-Qebala for selling and buying stocks represented by Khaled Waleed Al-Falah.

The newly-elected board of directors met immediately after the election and appointed Mohannad Mohammed Al-Kharafi as the Chairman of Zain Group, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi as Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Zain Group, and appointed Scott Gegenheimer in a new role as Chief Executive Officer of Operations.

During the General Assembly, Zain Group reported an increase in net profit by 2 percent year-on-year to reach KD 157 million (\$519 million), reflecting earnings per share of 40 fils (\$0.13). Total annual consolidated revenue for the year amount-



Zain Group Vice Chairman and CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi



Zain Group Chairman Mohannad Mohammed Al-Kharafi

Group \$92 million in revenue, and \$38 million in EBITDA. Most notably, net income was affected by \$140 million due to currency variance loss in 2016.

The Chairman commented, "The Group continued its strategy to diversify its business amid large shifts in the telecommunications industry. We also made tremendous progress in focusing on the operational efficiency, strengthening our plans to rationalize costs and capital expenditures. With respect to total capital expenditure, this totaled \$635 million for the year (excluding Zain Saudi Arabia)."

Al-Banwan continued, "Zain has succeeded in building a solid foundation for its strategic business initiatives, ensuring all of our strategic investments are geared towards maximizing shareholder wealth."

During the annual General Assembly, the Vice Chairman, Bader Al-Kharafi said, "The result of several factors beyond our control negatively impacted our overall operational performance in 2016, as we witnessed worsening social economic develop-

reaching a negotiated settlement with the country's Finance Ministry related to an imposition of a capital gains tax on its acquisition of Iraqna in 2007. This resulted in the lifting of restrictions on the trading of Zain Iraq's shares, access to the company's bank deposits, and the waiving of penalties and interest on taxes.

The Vice Chairman revealed that the Group currently enjoys a strong presence geographically, with a balanced range of markets that are at different stages of growth. Zain continues to be a market leader with respect to market share in five of its eight markets of operation.

cities space and in B2B/enterprise sector as significant growth areas and has been investing accordingly. Such developments fall under the Zain Digital Frontier and Innovation (ZDFI) business strategy, a unit that was established in 2014, and charged with launching Zain into the digital space with the view to growing the company through new innovative business streams, which add to its financial viability and market capitalization.

Al-Kharafi concluded, "We are committed to our strategy to leverage our strengths, including our people, brand, customer experience, cutting edge technology innovations, and geographic coverage

The newly-elected board of directors met immediately after the election and appointed Mohannad Mohammed Al-Kharafi as the Chairman of Zain Group, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi as Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Zain Group, and appointed Scott Gegenheimer in a new role as Chief Executive Officer of Operations

Al-Kharafi added, "Zain Group continues to focus on innovation in digital services, and to invest in the business sector, and we expect our investment program to drive us in new areas as we collaborate with innovative technology players."

Zain has identified service provision in the smart

in our bid to become a diversified and innovative digital lifestyle operator."

The company's 2016 Annual Report can be downloaded in Arabic and English from this link: <http://www.zain.com/investor-relations/financial-reports>.

- Zain Group held its annual Ordinary General Assembly in a gathering that constituted a quorum of 66.79% and approved a cash dividend of 35 fils.
- Vice-Chairman Bader Al Kharafi: "Investments in emerging technologies will diversify our revenue streams."
- New Board of Directors elected for three years; Scott Gegenheimer given new role as CEO of Operations.

ed to KD 1.1 billion (\$3.6 billion), while EBITDA grew 3 percent to KD 512 million (\$1.7 billion). Zain Group's customer base grew by 3 percent during the year, reaching more than 47 million customers.

Also during the General Assembly, Chairman Asaad Ahmed Al-Banwan explained that Zain's financial results were affected by social unrest and security risks in several of the company's markets, along with fluctuations in currency exchange rates and monetary policies that were imposed in some markets. For the full-year 2016, foreign currency translation impact, driven by the 60 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from 6.4 to 15.9 (SDG / USD) at the beginning of November 2016, cost Zain

ments affecting Zain operations in Iraq and Sudan."

Al-Kharafi continued, "Amidst these difficult circumstances, Zain still made strategic and operational progress, and in Saudi Arabia, for example, the decision from the Communications and Information Technology Commission to extend Zain Saudi Arabia's license for an additional 15 years was a significant boost to the operation there. This decision will have a positive impact on the financial and operational performance of Zain Saudi Arabia, which will contribute in reducing the amortization license charges estimated at approximately SAR 433 million (\$115 million) a year."

Al-Kharafi explained that Zain Iraq succeeded in



Asaad Al-Banwan (left) and Zain Group Vice Chairman and CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi attend their general assembly meeting.

WARBA PARTNERS WITH AL-GHANEM AUTO FOR FINANCING ON FORD CARS

KUWAIT: Warba Bank - the best investment bank in Kuwait as well as the Best Corporate Advisory- revealed its new partnership with Al-Ghanem Auto - the exclusive dealer for Ford cars in Kuwait. By the terms of this sponsorship, customers willing to own the brand new Ford have the opportunity today to own it through a flexible monthly installment plan with cash price.

This partnership is the second between both institutions out of which Warba seeks to cater to customers' needs, expand its banking solutions while further distinguish its clients with smart banking solutions complying with

Islamic Sharia. Warba cars' financing solution are tailor-made based on flexibility and convenience; the installment plan will have the original value of the car with no profit added. The maximum financing value is 15K KD with up to 5 years' settlement. In addition, the bank has facilitated the procedure and conditions of car financing where no down payment is needed nor salary transfer.

The offer include selected array of 2016 & 2017 Ford cars' models such as: Figio, Fiesta, Focus, Fusion, Taurus, Ecosport, entirely new Edge, Explorer, Expedition & F150. A warranty of 5 years or 100K Km is included in order to

ensure peace of mind to all owners of Ford. Such amazing prices and special facilities can definitely pave the way to easily take the decision of buying a new Ford car via monthly installments.

This new offer has been custom-designed based on Warba's deep understanding of customers' preferences in obtaining American-made automotive cars, which are hugely popular in the Kuwaiti market in observance of their comfort, modern designs, high-end technology, durability and grandeur. A professional team from Warba Bank is available at all automotive agencies

across Kuwait where they effectively answer the customers' inquiries, give a broad explanation about the banks' leading financial solution as well as the offers related to cars' financing.

The new partnership between Warba Bank & Al-Ghanem Auto is an important addition to the bank's existing partnerships with leading automotive agencies in Kuwait. By which, Warba seeks to provide its customers with distinguished offers through diversifying its offerings, giving them more options to choose their preferred new car model according to flexible settlement

methods to ease their financial burdens. Warba Bank was established pursuant to Amiri decree and officially registered as an Islamic bank by the Kuwaiti central bank on 5 April, 2010. It offers a bundle of comprehensive integrated services and banking solutions that comply with the Islamic sharia jurisdiction, and such services are offered through three groups or services, namely, the Banking Group, the Company Financing Group and the Investment and Treasury Group. The bank has 10 branches in strategic locations with over 400 employees working under its umbrella.

UK BUILDER BOVIS IN TALKS WITH GALLIFORD TRY AFTER REJECTING BIDS

LONDON: British homebuilder Bovis has rejected a bid approach from rival Galliford Try but remains in negotiations about a possible deal, the firm said yesterday, adding it had also rejected a proposal from another suitor, Redrow. A tie up between Galliford and Bovis would see the country's sixth- and eighth-biggest housebuilders combine in search of economies of scale in an industry which has reported rising profits in recent years and so far shown little vulnerability to Britain's exit from the European Union.

Bovis, which lost its CEO in December following a profit warning, said in February it would slow construction this year and focus on improving the quality of its homes after complaints from some buyers. "Discussions with Galliford Try are ongoing," a Bovis statement said. It said an initial all-share offer had been rejected, alongside a share and cash bid from Redrow because neither reflected the underlying value of the firm. Galliford confirmed it was in talks over a possible purchase, saying it had made an offer that would value the entire issued equity of Bovis at 1.19 billion pounds (\$1.45 billion), or 886 pence per share.

Bovis shares closed at 828 pence on Friday. Galliford said a merger could "create a new major housebuilder with national scale and geographic coverage" as well as delivering synergies from combining the two firms' operational structures, sourcing

and operating practices." Its offer proposed an equity split in the combined group of 52.25 percent to Galliford shareholders and 47.75 percent to Bovis shareholders.

NO TO REDROW

Bovis said it had terminated discussions with Redrow after the firm indicated it was not willing to improve its offer. "The board also concluded that the Redrow proposal was not in the interests of Bovis shareholders as the cash element of the offer would require shareholders to crystallise value at the current Bovis valuation," the Bovis statement said.

Earlier this year, Bovis said it saw little logic in a merger with another rival, Berkeley, after a media report said an influential Bovis shareholder wrote to Berkeley asking it to consider such a step.

The last major consolidation in the market occurred nearly a decade ago when Taylor Woodrow and George Wimpey merged to form Taylor Wimpey, becoming Britain's biggest housebuilder at the time. The sector has been buoyed by a lack of new housing supply which has pushed up prices and spurred several government schemes designed to support home buying. But Bovis has struggled to capitalise on these conditions, and in February announced a 7 million pound hiring spree in response to the complaints about poor quality housing. — Reuters

NIGERIA CB GOVERNOR DEFENDS POLICY OF LIMITING IMPORTS

LAGOS: Hard currency curbs imposed by Nigeria's central bank have helped boost local food production, central bank governor Godwin Emefiele was quoted as saying by two newspapers yesterday. Entrepreneurs have criticized a halt to hard currency allocations by the central bank for the import of almost 700 goods to prop up the naira hammered by a fall in oil revenues and boost local food production.

"This policy was basically borne out of necessity to conserve foreign exchange," Emefiele said in a speech, referring to the import ban, according to Vanguard newspaper. "This policy needs to be supported not just in response to the pressure on the naira but as an opportunity to change the economy's structure, resuscitate local manufacturing and

expand job creation for our citizens," he added. Emefiele also said Egypt's experience with a free float of its currency did not convince him Nigeria should follow suit as it might increase inflation. "I have heard commentators suggest we should follow Egypt's example and free the naira," Emefiele said, according to THIS-DAY newspaper.

"What they do not tell you is that following their currency adjustments inflation today in Egypt is over 30 percent. Is that what we want in Nigeria?" he said. The central bank has faced criticism from investors for keeping the naira at a rate some 30 percent above the black market where entrepreneurs are forced to go amid dollar scarcity on official channels. The central bank was not immediately available for comment. — Reuters

BERLIN AIRPORT WORKERS TO STRIKE AGAIN TODAY

BERLIN: Ground staff at Berlin's two airports will start a 25-hour strike today, the Verdi union said yesterday, stepping up action in a pay dispute that has already caused the cancellation of around 1,000 flights.

Workers at Berlin's Tegel and Schoenefeld airports will walk out at 4 am local time (0300 GMT) today and end the action tomorrow morning at about 5 am local time (0400 GMT), said Verdi in a statement. Lufthansa said it would cancel all flights today from Frankfurt and Munich to Berlin, and from Germany's capital to those cities. It did not say how many flights that involved.

The union wants an increase in pay for ground staff to 12 euros (\$12.80) an hour from about 11 euros as part of a one-year collective agreement.

The employer is offering about 10 cents more an hour over four years. As well as Lufthansa, carriers including Air Berlin, easyJet and Ryanair serve the two airports. Ground staff jobs include checking in passengers, loading and unloading planes and directing aircraft on the tarmac.

Tens of thousands of passengers were stranded in Berlin on Friday as the last strike by ground staff led to the cancellation of nearly 700 flights. — Reuters



ADDIS ABABA: This file photo taken on April 3, 2015 shows view due west from the Meskel Square station of the Addis Ababa light rail. Electric light railway tracks soar over Ethiopia's capital, a rare example of mass transit infrastructure on a continent ruled by ramshackle, diesel-spewing buses.

LIGHT RAILWAY FAILS TO FIX ETHIOPIA'S TRAFFIC WOES

ROADS ARE STILL CLOGGED AFTER OPENING OF MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM

ADDIS ABABA: Electric light railway tracks soar over Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, a rare example of mass transit infrastructure on a continent ruled by ramshackle, diesel-spewing buses.

But despite government promises, the roads below are still clogged with traffic 14 months after the light rail system's opening, and for many residents the city's network of overcrowded minibus taxis remain the only option. "It's better than nothing," said retiree Zerayakob Assefa, dismissing the half a billion dollar investment with a shrug as he waited for a train to the city's eastern suburbs. When one did arrive, 15 minutes later, it was so packed he could not board.

"I will never get on it again!" said one exasperated passenger as she squeezed from the jammed car. Opened in September 2015, the light rail was supposed to ease traffic in the capital of Africa's second most populous country. It is the first system of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa, and has caught the attention of other cities such as Lagos and Nairobi which are planning their own traffic-reducing tramways.

Ethiopian officials have touted the two-line, 34-kilometre system as a sign of the dividends the country's rapid economic growth is paying to its people. One of the continent's best-performing economies, Ethiopia grew by nearly 10 percent in 2015, according to the World Bank.

Excitement fades

But growth is expected to slow due to a drought and a recent series of anti-government demonstrations that have targeted foreign businesses. That has not stopped Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn's administration from ploughing money into Chinese-built infrastructure projects including dams, airport terminals and highways. The light railway was built by the China Railway Engineering Corporation (CREC) at a cost of \$475 million (447 million euros), 85 percent of which was covered by China's Export-Import Bank.

Excited commuters queued for hours to be the first to ride the tramway when it opened but now say it is not the transportation game-changer they had hoped for. With ticket prices from \$0.10 to \$0.30, the train is comparable to the cost of a bus ride but the light rail is overcrowded and the network reaches only certain neighborhoods, commuters said.



ADDIS ABABA: Despite government promises, the roads below the electric rail system are still clogged with traffic for 14 months after its opening. —AFP photos

Many in the city of four million are left with no choice but to rely on the "blue donkeys," as Addis Ababa's cramped minibuses are known. "They are full inside," electronics salesman Andulam Alemu said of the light rail as he waited in a queue to board a minibus in the Kazanchis neighborhood. "Still there is the problem of transport."

Some even blamed the light railway for increasing traffic. While the tracks are elevated in parts of town, in others they cut between and through lanes of traffic, leaving thoroughfares snarled with cars, complained minibus driver Amari Ansar. "Even in the places where the rails are located, it's made traffic worse, because you can't cross to the other side," Ansar said.

No quick fix

Awoke Mulu, a spokesman for the Addis Ababa Light Rail Transit Service, said the trains have already carried 50 million passengers and made a "positive impact" on their commute but that the city's large and rapidly growing popula-

tion makes the job difficult. "We cannot say we are eliminating the transport problem, because the number of people in the city is increasing," Mulu said. Wear and tear is also taking its toll with around a third of the 41 light rail cars out of action and undergoing repairs, exacerbating delays and overcrowding.

Elias Kassa, a professor of railway science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, said planners had failed to integrate the new light rail with the pre-existing bus system. Whether rail or bus, commuters have to walk long distances and scramble across busy roads to catch public transport, a flaw Kassa warned could ultimately undermine the network if not corrected.

Still, he called the system a good start for a growing city trying to keep up with its transport needs. "The goal was to alleviate shortage of transport system, mainly for people of lower income," Kassa said. "If you think of that, I'd say it has obtained the goal, not fully, but to some extent." —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.691
Indian Rupees	4.598
Pakistani Rupees	2.921
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.026
Nepali Rupees	2.880
Singapore Dollar	218.110
Hongkong Dollar	39.469
Bangladesh Taka	3.825
Philippine Peso	6.094
Thai Baht	8.750

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.775
Qatari Riyal	84.224
Omani Riyal	796.388
Bahraini Dinar	814.270
UAE Dirham	83.490

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	22.400
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.170
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.231
Tunisian Dinar	134.110
Jordanian Dinar	431.710
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.043
Syrian Lira	2.185
Morocco Dirham	30.799

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	306.450
Euro	325.760
Sterling Pound	376.470
Canadian dollar	229.810
Turkish lira	82.980

Swiss Franc	304.470
Australian Dollar	235.050
US Dollar Buying	305.250

GOLD

20 Gram	252.380
10 Gram	129.110
5 Gram	65.400

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	306.350
Canadian Dolla	227.680
Sterling Pound	374.005
Euro	324.165
Swiss Frank	312.830
Bahraini Dinar	812.110
UAE Dirhams	83.800
Qatari Riyals	85.025
Saudi Riyals	82.620
Jordanian Dinar	433.255
Egyptian Pound	17.453
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.025
Indian Rupees	4.588
Pakistani Rupees	2.921
Bangladesh Taka	3.850
Philippines Peso	6.078
Cyprus pound	168.231
Japanese Yen	3.675
Syrian Pound	2.431
Nepalese Rupees	3.865
Malaysian Ringgit	69.600

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.715
Thai Bhat	9.655
Turkish Lira	82.090

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.368223	0.378223
Czech Korune	0.003978	0.015978
Danish Krone	0.039543	0.044543
Euro	0.318667	0.327667
Norwegian Krone	0.032007	0.037207
Romanian Leu	0.071375	0.071375
Slovakia	0.009195	0.019195
Swedish Krona	0.029918	0.034918
Swiss Franc	0.296184	0.307184
Turkish Lira	0.077284	0.087584
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.225073	0.237073
New Zealand Dollar	0.208300	0.217800
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.223351	0.232351
Georgina Lari	0.138411	0.138411
US Dollars	0.302350	0.306750
US Dollar Mint	0.302850	0.306750
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003505	0.004089
Chinese Yuan	0.042973	0.046473
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037378	0.040128
Indian Rupee	0.002656	0.004753

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002604	0.002784
Kenyan Shilling	0.002979	0.002979
Korean Won	0.000257	0.000272
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065174	0.071174
Nepalese Rupee	0.002967	0.003137
Pakistan Rupee	0.002682	0.002972
Philippine Peso	0.005999	0.006299
Sierra Leone	0.000038	0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.211859	0.221859
South African Rand	0.017665	0.026065
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001668	0.002248
Taiwan	0.009809	0.009989
Thai Baht	0.008398	0.008948
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.806293	0.814793
Egyptian Pound	0.013840	0.023093
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000195	0.000255
Jordanian Dinar	0.426566	0.435566
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020184	0.044184
Nigerian Naira	0.000403	0.001038
Omani Riyal	0.789553	0.795233
Qatar Riyal	0.083633	0.084813
Saudi Riyal	0.800633	0.081933
Syrian Pound	0.001300	0.001520
Tunisian Dinar	0.130288	0.138288
Turkish Lira	0.077284	0.087584
UAE Dirhams	0.082011	0.083711
Yemeni Riyal	0.000996	0.001076

SOONER THAN EXPECTED, US FED FEELS IT'S TIME TO HIKE

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve this week is poised to raise its benchmark interest rate amid burgeoning job growth and a surge of market optimism since President Donald Trump took office.

Central bankers on Friday likely got the final push they needed, if they were in any doubt, after a strong employment showing 235,000 net new jobs created in February and the unemployment rate moving down a tenth of a point to 4.7 percent. Even before the jobs report, and despite lingering questions about Trump's economic agenda, key figures on the Federal Open Market Committee, which sets the federal funds rate, were sending clear signals that a rate increase was likely.

The FOMC is due to announce its decision at the end of the two-day meeting on Wednesday. Fed Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said recently that if there had been a "conscious effort" among Fed members to

raise the public's expectations, "I'm about to join it." Analysts who are widely expecting a move note the central bank largely has met its targets for unemployment and inflation, despite some sour notes in other data. "They've virtually achieved their dual mandate," Mickey Levy, chief Americas economist at Berenberg Capital Markets, told AFP. "This is really a simple decision."

On Friday afternoon, the Fed fund futures market put the probability of a 25-basis-point increase at 93 percent. The world's largest economy has steadily pumped out new jobs since mid-2016, with the three-month average for job creation at 209,000 for December through February. And the unemployment rate has remained below five percent since May.

Meanwhile, in January the price index for personal consumption expenditures, the Fed's preferred inflation measure, hit its fastest annual pace in more than four years, reaching 1.9 percent, just shy of the two per-

cent target. And consumer confidence in February was at a 15-year high.

Reasons for caution

However, in remarks earlier this month, Fed Governor Lael Brainard, among the most dovish of FOMC members, said there could be "room for further improvement" in the economy. While generally supportive of raising rates, Brainard said so-called core PCE, an inflation measure that excludes volatile food and fuel prices, has been below the Fed target for most of the past eight years.

And too many prime-age workers remain outside the labor force and too many part-time workers were struggling to find full-time employment, she added. Steven Ricchiuto of Mizuho Securities agreed that, beyond hiring and inflation, some economic data were less than convincing.

"To me, it makes the appropriate sense to wait until May" for a rate hike, he told AFP.

Ricchiuto pointed to a sharp slowdown in fourth quarter growth, which hit a sluggish 1.9 percent, and a widening trade deficit, which is likely to weigh on growth this quarter. January also saw a decline in personal consumption, with warm weather depressing utility bills, and industrial production, not to mention disappointing auto sales and falling housing starts. Furthermore, given the upheaval in Congress, it is not clear when or if Trump's expansionary policies will get off the launch pad, he added.

"I don't think it's coming right down the pipeline," Ricchiuto said. The Fed has indicated it may need to raise rates faster if the Trump administration passes its promised tax cuts and spending program.

Policy too easy

However, Berenberg's Levy said that, adjusted for inflation, the real federal funds rate was actually negative, and the Fed still

has a "bloated" balance sheet because of all the securities it bought during the crisis to try to boost the economy. "Don't lose sight of where we are now. That's just excessive monetary ease," he said, adding that even if Trump's stimulus measures founder in Congress, a rate hike could still be in order.

Jon Faust, a former advisor to the Federal Reserve Board, agreed. "The economic data are always mixed. You never wait until all signs are pointing in the same direction," he told AFP. "It's not that you'd be late, you'd be never." "As of now, this move is not premised on some big stimulus passing. The data have been solid. It warrants another tiny step," he said. "A quarter point, given where we are right now, is not stepping on the brakes."

Fed officials have made the same point, saying even with an increase, interest rates will still be low and supportive of growth, but they are gradually trying to get back to normal. —AFP

CHINA'S ECONOMY IS SET FOR STEADY GROWTH: DATA

BEIJING: The risk of a steep slide in China's economy has reduced, the head of a government research centre said yesterday, adding the country had moved through an "L-shaped" pattern of slowing to now "horizontal" growth.

China's economy grew 6.7 percent last year, according to the government, the slowest pace in 26 years. The country met its growth target with support from record bank loans, a speculative housing boom and billions in government investment. But as Beijing moves to cool the housing market, slow new credit and tighten its purse strings, China will have to depend more on domestic consumption and private investment. The government last week trimmed its economic growth target to about 6.5 percent for this year.

Li Wei, the director of the Development Research Center of the State Council, China's cabinet, said many positive economic signs were emerging domestically and internationally, and the risk of a large slide in economic growth had "clearly lowered". China's economic development has gone from a "downward stroke in the L-shape to the horizontal stroke", the official Xinhua news agency said, citing Li's comments on the sidelines of China's annual session of parliament. The horizontal trend points to long-term steady development, but does not eliminate the possibility of short-term fluctuations, or mean the eco-

nomical transformation is complete, Li said. "Our economy still has many difficulties to resolve, so we must prepare to respond to the emergence of possibly relatively large risks," Li said.

Earlier yesterday, a vice chairman of the state economic planner said China's industrial output grew more than 6 percent in January and February, and that the survey-based unemployment rate in 31 major cities was about 5 percent for the two months.

National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) Vice Chairman Ning Jizhe gave the approximations, which were in line with expectations for official data set to be issued on Tuesday. Fixed asset investment growth kept pace with the final few months of last year, Ning said.

"China's economic growth still mainly relies on domestic demand," he said. January and February data will be released together in a bid to smooth out seasonal factors caused by the timing of the long Lunar New Year holidays, which began in late January this year but fell in February last year.

China unexpectedly posted its first trade gap in three years in February as a construction boom pushed imports much higher than expected. That upbeat import reading reinforced the growing view that economic activity in China picked up in the first two months of the year. — Reuters



NEW YORK: This file photo taken on December 11, 2016 shows a woman looking over rings for sale at the Ivanka Trump store in Trump Tower in New York. In his January inauguration speech, US President Donald Trump made a seemingly straightforward pledge: "We will follow two simple rules: buy American and hire American." — AFP

IVANKA TRUMP IS EXCEPTION TO DAD'S 'BUY AMERICAN' RULE

8 SHIPMENTS OF IVANKA-BRANDED GOODS REACH US FROM CHINA

BEIJING: In his January inauguration speech, US President Donald Trump made a seemingly straightforward pledge: "We will follow two simple rules: buy American and hire American." His daughter is the exception: even as he spoke, at least eight shipments of Ivanka Trump-branded shoes, bags and clothes—more than 53.5 tons—were steaming towards American ports from China, according to US Customs bills of lading examined by AFP.

Trump uses his presidential pulpit to censure manufacturers—both domestic and foreign—for using overseas labor to make goods for American consumers, but the Ivanka-branded orders have kept rolling in. More than two tons of ladies' polyester woven blouses, 1,600 cowhide leather wallets and 23 tons of made-in-China footwear were among at least 82 such shipments that passed US Customs—almost one per business day—from Trump's November 8 election win through February 26, records showed. The goods were made in China by three US companies holding licenses to manufacture products for Ivanka Trump's fashion line: garment maker G-III, Mondani Handbags and Marc Fisher Footwear.

Marc Fisher told AFP it had no comment, while the others did not respond to requests. The first daughter's business has come under scrutiny since major US department store chain Nordstrom announced in February it would stop carrying her products, citing poor sales.

That provoked a scathing attack from Trump and his advisers and even prompted senior counsellor Kellyanne Conway to urge Americans to go out and buy his daughter's products.

The Washington Post reported this week that many had done just that, with February proving a banner month for the brand, in terms of sales.

'Very hypocritical'

More than 1,200 shipments of Trump-branded products have flowed into the US from China and Hong Kong over the past decade, according to an examination of US import data last year by anti-Trump political action committee Our Principles PAC. During his campaign, Trump defended the licensing of the Trump name for goods made in China—from shoes to ties to dress shirts—as smart business.

But at the same time he frequently accused China of stealing US jobs through unfair trade practices and currency manipulation, while also slapping US firms such as Ford and Nabisco for



NEW YORK: This file photo taken on January 11, 2017 shows US President-elect Donald Trump talking to his daughter Ivanka during a press conference at Trump Tower in New York. —AFP

off-shoring. Since taking office, he has kept up the pressure, vowing to punish domestic and foreign companies that manufacture abroad with massive tariffs of as much as 45 percent. His frequent fusillades have led some companies to second-guess decisions to build production facilities overseas. In February, Japanese firm Nishinbo Holdings, a leading global maker of automobile brake parts, dropped plans to open a factory in Mexico, saying it was due to Trump's trade policies. But the president has been notably silent on his daughter's products, which are sold in American retailers like Macy's, Lord & Taylor and TJ Maxx. G-III alone sold \$29.4 million of the goods in 2015, and sales in the first nine months of 2016 were up \$13.3 million over the same period the previous year, according to the company's public filings. But rather than chide his daughter's partners for making their products abroad, Trump instead lashed out at Nordstrom last month after it announced it would stop carrying Ivanka's fashion range.

"My daughter has been treated so unfairly by @Nordstrom," he tweeted. Christopher Balding, an expert on Sino-US trade relations at Peking University, called it "very hypocritical to make (bringing jobs back to the US) a policy plank and manufacture her products in China".

But "in their defense... she couldn't get those products manufactured in the US at a reason-

able price point." However, a long-time garment industry executive who spoke on condition of anonymity told AFP simple products like polyester dresses could "definitely" be made in the US at a similar price once savings from transportation and tariffs are factored in.

"The less labor involved in making the garment, the more they can compete with Asian manufacturers."

'Tough policies'

Late last month, Ivanka sat in on a White House meeting where her father discussed "tough policies" to bring "our jobs back". "Everything is going to be based on bringing our jobs back," the president said, as he addressed a group of manufacturing moguls from a dozen American firms.

Following the meeting, a spokesperson for the Ivanka Trump brand told AFP the company has "consistently expressed that we share industry leaders' interest in bringing more manufacturing opportunities to the US and are looking forward to being a part of the conversation". Just not yet: two days later, more than 5,000 Ivanka Trump polyester blouses arrived in Newark, New Jersey. And at least one shoe factory in southern China has received an order for 10,000 shoes for next season, according to Chinese newspaper the Global Times. — AFP



SUINING CITY: In this file photo, a worker examines an LED light bulb at a factory in Suining city in southwestern China's Sichuan province. China's factory activity picked up pace last month, surveys showed adding to recent evidence that a key sector of the world's No 2 economy is stabilizing. —AP

GLOBE EXPRESS SERVICES SEEKS TO EMPOWER UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN

'ONE SHIPMENT ONE DOLLAR' INITIATIVE

KUWAIT: Globe Express Services (GES) has revealed that its commitment to 'Make a Difference' and give back to the community has widely been reflected in its newly launched 'One Shipment One Dollar' social campaign, an initiative that seeks to help underprivileged children in pursuing their right to an education. The global Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program will bring hope and joy to young generations worldwide.

Under the initiative, GES will donate \$1 for every executed shipment across any of their international offices throughout the period of March 1st to August 31st, 2017. The total proceeds of this campaign will be contributed to selected NGOs coming from respective countries that deal with building and securing a safe learning environment for kids.

Mustapha Kawam, GES President & CEO, said: "Globe Express Services believes that education is a key factor in building stronger and sustainable communities. Each one of us should feel responsible towards helping children develop their personal identity through getting a proper education. By doing the latter, we will contribute to the society's overall well-being. Despite all the social barriers and limitations in having access to quality education especially in deprived areas, GES plays a leading role in providing its educational support. The team behind our campaign will collaborate with relevant organizations to guar-

antee a proper implementation of this initiative where all children will be receiving the needed assistance."

Through this six-month 'One Shipment One Dollar' campaign, GES will provide underprivileged children with the opportunity to obtain a proper education and develop their full potential in a safe environment away from any harm. On top of that, GES encourages its employees and loyal customers worldwide to support this CSR initiative by donating their unwanted clothes, shoes, toys and accessories to these children.

"Smiles and joy will fill those kids' hearts, some of whom do not even have the basic essentials of life. Through our 'One Shipment One Dollar' initiative, we look forward to do whatever it takes to transform their lives into a better future. Children will feel empowered and will gradually be able to uplift their country and promote peaceful communities. Real giving means Making a Difference in an individual's life and eventually his surroundings. We invite everyone to join hands and be part in this noble act," Kawam added.

This campaign will leverage GES international networks and strengthen its position as one of the world's leading logistics companies. The campaign will also encourage new business collaborations and strategic partnerships with corporations that share a common goal of investing in less fortunate societies and secure a decent future for them all.



Mustapha Kawam

IN WAKE OF FED RAIDS, CATERPILLAR DENIES SKIRTING TAX LAWS

WASHINGTON: Caterpillar, a week after its headquarters and other facilities were raided by a number of federal agencies including the Internal Revenue Service, denied that it had broken any federal tax laws. "The IRS has challenged Caterpillar's taxes for years 2007 - 2012," the company said Friday. "We disagree with the IRS' position, have cooperated for requests for information, and believe that we are compliant with tax laws and stand by our financial reporting."

Caterpillar has been challenged for some time by federal agencies

in regard to its accounting practices and last week the company said that the raids may have been related to a Swiss business, called CSARL. In a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission last month, Caterpillar said that the IRS had informed the company that it owed \$2 billion in additional taxes for the years 2010 to 2012 because of profits from that Swiss unit.

"Caterpillar takes very seriously its obligation to follow tax law and pay what it owes," the company said Friday.

The raids came two days after

the New York Times cited a report by Dartmouth College accounting professor Leslie A. Robinson, which stated that Caterpillar "did not comply with either U.S. tax law or US financial reporting rules." The Times said the report was commissioned by the government but it's not clear which agency wanted it, and the report has not been made public.

Caterpillar had not been furnished with a copy of the report until Thursday morning, it said, a week after the raids and more than a week after the New York Times story was published.

Officials at Dartmouth would not discuss the report or release it officially to The Associated Press. Other than the IRS, the agencies involved in raids on three properties where Caterpillar operates included the US Department of Commerce Office of Export Enforcement and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.'s office of inspector general.

Caterpillar is one of the world's largest makers of construction and other heavy equipment and had revenue of \$38.54 billion last year. —AP



NISSAN AL-BABTAIN WINS 2 GOLD MEDALS AT 2016 NISSAN SKILLS CONTESTS

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized agent of Nissan vehicles in the State of Kuwait, has once again underscored its commitment to excellence in providing outstanding customer service by achieving first place in the prestigious Nissan Regional Skills Contests in the categories of Technicians and Parts.

The Nissan Regional Skills Contest is an annual event conducted by Nissan Middle East in Dubai, UAE, and showcases the talents of Nissan employees across the region as well motivates Nissan dealerships to develop their workforce. Contestants are tested on the basis of NISSAN's global selling standards with the objectives of improving their capabilities, advancing their skills and ensuring the experience provided to customers is in line with Nissan standards, thus providing customer service

excellence in the Sales & Service process. The awards comprise every aspect of the business - from knowledge of Nissan genuine parts, service advice, sales acumen, and technical expertise.

This year's contests were conducted in 5 different languages with 11 Nissan distributors sending their top personnel to compete in four different categories: Technician, Service Advisor, Parts Executive and Sales Executive. Nissan Al-Babtain was bestowed the following awards:

1. Nissan Parts Executive Excellence Competency Award (NIPEC) - GOLD medal winner: Jethin Jose, as well as receiving Best performance in Order Taking category.
2. Nissan Service Technician Excellence Competency Award (NISTEC) - GOLD medal winner: Ramesh Rajan, as well as receiving Best performance in Electrical System

trouble diagnosis & repair category.

Saleh Al-Babtain, CEO - Al-Babtain Group, congratulated the winners and thanked the team for their support, hard work and dedication. As a sign of appreciation, he announced the management's decision to reward the winners with a special cash incentive.

Mohamed Shalaby, Chief Operating Officer - Al Babtain Group, commended the winners and said "At Al-Babtain, we pride ourselves in ensuring that we have the highest level of talent in the business. By developing our workforce through a continuous training program, aimed at helping our professionals grow, we are ensuring that our customers experience highest level of service. At Nissan, we thrive to achieve the industries' 'best practice' standards every day, on a regional and global level; we contin-

ue to stand out in whatever we do."

Group HR General Manager, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain remarked "We believe that people are our biggest asset and our continuous pursuit of achieving high standards means we are investing heavily in our people to help them reach their full potential through mentoring, training and support activities."

In 1948, late Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain established a small automotive business. Today Al-Babtain Group is a conglomerate organization located in the State of Kuwait. Al-Babtain Group integrated honesty, integrity and dedication in all aspects of the business. The Group has established strongholds in the local, regional and international market. Al-Babtain Group experienced continuous success throughout the past 60 years.



MEXICO CITY: In this Nov 10, 2016 file photo, a banner with an image of Donald Trump to promote an exhibition that features dozens of works by Mexican and international cartoonists, mocking amongst other things the US president derogatory statements about Mexicans and his plans to build a wall between the two countries, in downtown Mexico City. — AP

MEXICO OKS TRUMP TRADEMARKS FOR HOTELS AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

MEXICO CITY: On Feb 19, 2016, at a campaign rally in North Charleston, South Carolina, then-candidate Donald Trump gave a stump speech in which he railed against American jobs moving to Mexico: "We lose our jobs, we close our factories, Mexico gets all of the work," he said. "We get nothing."

That same day a law firm in Mexico City quietly filed on behalf of his company for trademarks on his name that would authorize the Trump brand, should it choose, to set up shop in a country with which he has sparred over trade, migration and the planned border wall.

The Trump trademarks have now been granted by the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property, or IMPI for its initials in Spanish. Records show the last three were approved Feb 21, just over a month after Trump took office, and a fourth was granted last Oct 6, about a month before the US election.

Trump's company has notched several trademark wins recently. The Associated Press reported Wednesday that the Chinese government recently granted preliminary approval for 38 trademarks to Trump and a related company. That sparked outrage from some Democratic senators and critics, who have been pushing Trump to sever financial ties with his global businesses to avoid potential violations of the emoluments clause of the US Constitution, which bars federal officials from accepting anything of value from foreign governments unless approved by Congress.

The Mexican trademarks cover a broad range of business operations that can roughly be broken down into construction; construction materials; hotels, hospitality and tourism; and real estate, financial services and insurance. They are all valid through 2026.

The same four trademarks were previously held in the name of Donald J. Trump and expired in 2015, a year before the new applications. The new approvals list the trademark owner as the company DTTM Operations LLC, with an address in the Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue in New York.

As president Trump has handed management of his business to his two adult sons and vowed to strike no new deals abroad while he is in office. However critics say questions remain about possible conflicts of interest, noting that foreigners could still seek to influence Trump by helping his

existing foreign operations or by easing the way for future ones after he leaves the Oval Office.

Trump Organization General Counsel Alan Garten said the Mexican government's decision was not a special favor to the president.

"We're not being granted anything we didn't have before," he said. The original trademarks came "years before (Trump) even announced his candidacy."

Garten said the Mexican trademarks originally had two purposes: laying the ground for possible new ventures and keeping other people from using Trump's name for their own businesses.

He said the trademarks are wholly defensive now. "Circumstances have changed," Garten said. "He's been elected and we agreed not to do foreign deals."

Richard Painter, the chief White House ethics lawyer under George W. Bush, said the Mexican grants are in an ethical "gray" area: defensive in nature now, perhaps, but setting the president up to profit when he leaves office. "To what extent is this appropriate? I don't know," Painter said. "We never had Obama running around the world looking up his name, or Bush."

Intellectual property lawyer Enrique Alberto Diaz Mucharraz is listed on the trademark filings. A junior partner at the Mexico City law firm Goodrich Riquelme y Asociados, he declined to comment citing client confidentiality rules. Phones rang unanswered at the public relations office of IMPI, and there was no response to an emailed request for comment on a list of questions.

Trademarks can prove enormously valuable to companies, especially in countries with a growing number of middle class consumers who recognize the brand, said Ashwinpaul C Sondhi of A C Sondhi & Associates, an investment consultancy in Safety Harbor, Florida. Mexican political analyst Alejandro Hope said IMPI is generally considered to be apolitical and the trademark concession was most likely a political decision.

More remarkable, Hope said, was that the application was filed during a heated campaign when "he had already started using Mexico as a pinata" for political purposes.

"What I find striking is that these guys were thinking about doing business in Mexico while they were trashing Mexico on the campaign trail," Hope added. — AP

IN FIRST BUDGET, TRUMP TO PUSH CONSERVATIVE VIEW OF GOVT PRESIDENT MAY ASK FOR PAINFUL CUTS

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump sends Congress a proposed budget this week that will sharply test Republicans' ability to keep longstanding promises to bolster the military, making politically painful cuts to a lengthy list of popular domestic programs.

The Republican president will ask his adopted political party, which runs Capitol Hill, to cut domestic agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the departments of Education and Housing and Urban Development, along with grants to state and local governments and community development projects. The spending plan, set for release Thursday, would make the Pentagon the big winner with a \$54 billion boost to defense spending. Trump has promised to "do a lot more with less," but his blueprint faces a reality test with Republicans, many of whom are already protesting.

Republicans have groused about some of the preliminary plans, including elimination of the \$3 billion community development block grant program that's popular among local GOP officials, a 25 percent cut to the EPA and elimination of 3,000 jobs, and essentially scuttling a \$300 million per-year program to clean up the Great Lakes.

Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, is joining with Democrats to push back on that last proposed reduction. Cuts to the Coast Guard are meeting Republican resistance. Trump's plan to eliminate community development block grants was dismissed on Capitol Hill by those who remember how a modest cut to the program sank a spending bill not long ago. "The money has to come from someplace," White House budget chief Mick Mulvaney said on the "Hugh Hewitt Show." "The question is this: What's more important? What's more important - defending the border, defending the country or doing those things?"

Democrats are unlikely to support the cuts, and Republican defections raise the possibility of a congressional train wreck and a potential government shutdown when the 2018 budget year begins Oct. 1. Preliminary reports on the budget show some domestic Cabinet agencies, such as the departments of Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs, would see increases, including \$3 billion for Trump's promised wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. Trump said repeatedly during the campaign that Mexico would pay for that project, but Mexico has said no.

Those intended spending increases, however, would mean deeper cuts elsewhere. People familiar with the budget who spoke on condition of anonymity in advance of the public release say the White House is seeking a 30 percent cut from an Energy Department office that promotes energy efficiency and renewable ener-

gy. The office has funded research on projects such as LED light bulbs, electric trucks, advanced batteries and biofuels.

The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy is targeted for at least \$700 million in cuts from its current \$2.1 billion budget, said Scott Sklar, chairman of the steering committee of the Sustainable Energy Coalition.

Steep cuts

The Energy Department could see steep cuts for its 17 national laboratories, which conduct cutting-edge research on topics from nuclear power to advanced materials for energy generation, storage and use. Trump's preliminary budget, delivered in secret to agencies last month, proposes a 37 percent cut to the State Department and foreign aid budgets. Those cuts and others were subject to revision in the back and forth that the White House had with agencies leading up to the coming release this week.

Trump's submission won't tell the complete story. It will be limited to the discretionary, \$1 trillion-plus portion of the \$4 trillion annual federal budget that pays for Cabinet agencies and departments. These annually appropriated programs have been squeezed in recent years while the costs of mandatory programs such as

Medicare and Social Security have risen each year, mostly unchecked.

The remainder of Trump's budget - proposals on taxes, mandatory spending and deficits and projections on the economy - won't come out until May. That document is sure to upset members of the GOP's once-proud and large band of deficit hawks, because Trump's full plans are sure to show large, permanent budget deficits, even with all of the tricks and tools available to the White House Budget office. The government ran a \$587 billion deficit last year that required it to borrow 15 cents of every dollar it spent. Looking ahead, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says the government is on track for accumulated deficits of more than \$9 trillion over the coming decade.

CBO Director Keith Hall warns that such huge deficits are putting the government on a long-term path that "would have serious negative consequences for the budget and the nation, including an increased risk of fiscal crisis."

But Trump is promising to leave the government's two largest programs, Medicare and Social Security, virtually untouched. He's also promising \$1 trillion in infrastructure spending, even as pressure is building to finance tax cuts with borrowed money. — AP



WASHINGTON: In this Feb 2, 2017 file photo, budget director Mick Mulvaney speaks to reporters at the White House in Washington. President Donald Trump unveils a proposed budget on March 16 that will sharply test Republicans' ability to keep longstanding promises to beef up the military by making politically painful cuts to a lengthy list of popular domestic programs. — AP

CHINA VOWS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR FAKED DATA

BEIJING: China's top statistician said yesterday anyone caught falsifying economic data would face zero tolerance and be punished under the law.

There has long been skepticism about the reliability of Chinese data, especially as the government has sought to reduce expectations of a protracted slowdown in the world's second-largest economy.

In January, the "rustbelt" northeastern province of Liaoning said in its annual work report it had falsified reporting of fiscal data from 2011 to 2014. Speaking on the sidelines of the annual meeting of parliament, Ning Jizhe, head of the National Statistics Bureau, said violations would be investigated and punished. "As soon as

there are statistical cases that break the law or faked, it will be voted down, there will be zero tolerance, no appeasement," said Ning, who is also Vice Chairman of the planning body the National Development and Reform Commission.

The combined economic output of China's provinces has long exceeded national output measured by the National Bureau of Statistics, raising suspicions that local officials were overstating performance. The gap has been narrowing, but the discrepancy between provincial GDP and the national figure was still 2.76 trillion yuan (\$399.71 billion) last year, roughly equal to the GDP of Thailand, according to a Reuters calculation. — Reuters

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLS SHARPLY FOR RECENT VETERANS

WASHINGTON: Recent veterans found jobs in February, helping reduce their unemployment rate to its lowest level in five months. The jobless rate for veterans who have served in the armed forces anytime since September 2001 dropped to 4.6 percent from 6.3 percent in January. More of these veterans began looking for work last month and were hired.

The unemployment rate also declined across ethnic groups, including whites, Asians and Hispanics. For black Americans, though, unemployment rose to 8.1 percent from 7.7 percent, exacerbating a stubborn employment gap by race. The jobless rate for African-Americans is nearly double that of whites. All told, employers added 235,000 jobs in February. The overall unemployment rate dipped to 4.7 percent from 4.8 percent in January.

The data for demographic groups came from a survey of households that is part of the Labor Department's monthly jobs report. — AP



2017 CADILLAC XT5 CROSSOVER EARNS 2016 TOP SAFETY PICK+ RATING TSP+ IS IIHS' HIGHEST RATING FROM INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

KUWAIT: The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) announced that the 2017 Cadillac XT5 crossover has earned a rating of 2016 Top Safety Pick+ (TSP+) when equipped with optional front crash prevention. A rating of TSP+ is the highest rating a vehicle can earn from the IIHS.

To qualify for a TSP+ rating, a vehicle must earn good ratings in the five crashworthiness tests - small overlap front, moderate overlap front, side, roof strength and head restraints - and an advanced or superior rating for front crash prevention. Read more on the crash test results from the IIHS here.

"Passenger safety was one of our top priorities when we engineered the XT5," said Paul Spadafora, XT5 chief engineer. "We equipped the XT5 with Cadillac's full set of driver awareness and driver assistance systems to aid collision avoidance. Just as importantly, we designed an advanced structure that is both stiffer and lighter, for excellent crashworthiness. This included a revised front structure that specifically targets the challenging offset barrier scenario."

The 2017 XT5 is standard with seven airbags. OnStar's suite of emergency services, including Automatic Crash Response, is available. The XT5 also offers numerous advanced safety systems included in the Driver Awareness and Driver Assist Packages.

The Driver Awareness Package includes the Safety Alert Seat, Forward Collision Alert, Lane Keep Assist with Lane Departure Warning, front pedestrian detection, Front

Automatic Braking and IntelliBeam headlights (automatic high beam). It is available on the XT5 Luxury trim level and is standard on XT5 Premium Luxury and Platinum.

The Driver Assist Package includes adaptive cruise control, Automatic Safety Belt Tightening, Automatic Park Assist, Automatic Collision Braking and Front and Rear Automatic Braking. It is available on the XT5 Premium Luxury and Platinum trims. These features are required for the XT5 to earn the TSP+ rating.

The front rails of XT5's body structure exemplify the design approach. Using extensive computer simulations and data from physical tests, engineers "splayed" the front rails on each side, widening and angling the structure slightly outward. This design alteration targeted offset barrier impacts and contact to the front corners of the vehicle, a vital aspect in safety testing and real-world collisions.

Premium Care Program

Yusuf Ahmed Alghanim & Sons Automotive showcases the company's commitment to enhance customers' unique Cadillac experience by offering customers peace of mind with a comprehensive insurance program. In addition, all Cadillac owners will enjoy service and maintenance for four years or 100,000 km, warranty for 4 years or 100,000 km, 24-hour roadside assistance anywhere in the Middle East for four years (unlimited miles) plus a courtesy transportation and a replacement vehicle upon availability.



RENAULT AL-BABTAIN CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Renault vehicles in the State of Kuwait, celebrated International Women Day with its female customers, in recognition of the remarkable role they play in society.

On March 8th, all female customers who purchased a new Renault vehicle received flowers from Renault Al-Babtain team, who proudly boasts a large number of female employees, across all the various departments. On the occasion of the International Women's Day, Renault Al-Babtain extends its best wishes to all women, and in particular to its female employees and customers, who play an instrumental role in the success Renault Al-Babtain enjoys today.

The latest initiative falls under Renault Al-Babtain's CSR commitment to honor all segments of the society, as each and every member adds value to the community as a whole.

In 1948, late Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain established a small automotive business. Today Al-Babtain Group is a conglomerate organization located in the State of Kuwait. Al-Babtain Group integrated honesty, integrity and dedication in all aspects of the business. The Group has established strongholds in the local, regional and international market. Al-Babtain Group experienced continuous success throughout the past 60 years. The contemporary and flexible management approach, aligned with the long term vision and well-studied strategies are the key factor for the groups' success. Al-Babtain Group businesses include; Automotive, Information Technology, Investment, Real Estate, Finance and Industrial.

The Group has licensing rights for some of the world's leading brands, international corporations and distributes a wide variety of products & services.

JOYALUKKAS LAUNCHES LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM WITH GULF AIR

KUWAIT: Global jewellery retail chain Joyalukkas has added Bahrain's national carrier, Gulf Air, to its roster of rewards partners giving the airline's Falconflyer (loyalty program) members an opportunity to earn points/miles with every Joyalukkas jewellery purchase and, as a launch offer, giving them the chance to earn double Falconflyer miles on any purchase from participating Joyalukkas showrooms in Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Singapore, Malaysia, the UAE, UK and the USA.

In a ceremony held at Gulf Air's Bahrain Headquarters, Joyalukkas Group Executive Director John Paul Alukkas and Gulf Air Chief Commercial Officer Ahmed Janahi, signed a partnership agreement forging new avenues for customers to earn more rewards. The ceremony was also attended by top executives from both companies, including Joyalukkas Head of Corporate Finance Thomas Scaria and Gulf Air Senior Manager Customer Experience, Kavita S. Al-Jassim.

"The success of Joyalukkas is largely due to the loyalty and support our customers have given us throughout our 30 years in the industry," said John Paul Alukkas, Executive Director, Joyalukkas Group. "Because of this, we strive to offer them the best value, world-class products and benefits that enhance their lifestyles. This partnership with Gulf Air is aimed at offering them even more rewards and opportunities to simply enjoy life."

Gulf Air Chief Commercial Officer, Ahmed

Janahi welcomed the agreement saying: "Our focus is on making Gulf Air's Falconflyer program as rewarding as possible. In line with this, we are delighted to broaden the Gulf Air FalconFlyer offering and give our loyalty program members access to greater privileges thanks to our partnership with global jewellery retail chain Joyalukkas."

Gulf Air operates one of the largest networks in the Middle East, serving 41 cities in 24 countries spanning three continents. The airline's Falconflyer Program is known for its high-value

promotions and partnerships making it one of the most sought-after frequent flyer programs in the world with special privileges both on the ground and in the air like special online booking bonuses, a generous baggage allowance, three years miles validity, unlimited lounge access, priority baggage handling and guaranteed seats etc.. Among many other benefits intended to make the traveling experience more enjoyable and rewarding. Further information about Gulf Air's Falconflyer program can be found online by visiting gulfair.com



BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Basel Matar Koubal Al-Otaibi
2. Fotouh Hamad Mohammed Al-Dalali
3. Fajer Ahmad Mohammad Hajeyah
4. Mohammad Abdullah Ali
5. Awadh Ghayadh Obaid Al-Enzi

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

For more information on opening a Yawmi account, the new quarterly draw or on any of the bank's products and services, customers are urged to visit their nearest

Burgan Bank branch. Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. "People come first" is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has its credit distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years. Burgan Bank, a subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), is a strongly positioned regional Bank in the MENA region.

AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al-Najma Account daily draw on 12th March 2017.

The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The winners of the Al-Najma daily draw are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Maher Mohammad Saleem | — KD 7000 |
| Malak Salman Al-Qalaf | — KD 7000 |
| Ali Abdullah Al-Baghli | — KD 7000 |
| Mariano Simplicio Furtado | — KD 7000 |
| Ali Ahmad Abdulhakeem | — KD 7000. |

Al-Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever with the revamped Al-Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000.

The new prizes scheme for Al-Najma account daily draw to win KD 7000. Quarterly draws to win great prizes that would start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1ST QUARTER | — KD 100 000 |
| 2ND QUARTER | — KD 150 000 |
| 3RD QUARTER | — KD 200 000 |
| 4TH QUARTER | — KD 250 000. |

With Al-Najma you have more chances to win greater prizes

- Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win
- Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw.
- Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you chance to enter the quarterly draw.

Additional features:

- ATM card
 - Issue a credit card against your account
 - Obtain all CBK banking services
- You deserve to win! Open an account now with just KD 500 and you will enter all draws.

CHEVROLET ANNOUNCES NEW HOTLINE 1800022 FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Kuwait: Chevrolet Alghanim seeks always to provide customers with quick and direct service. As part of that, it announces the new hotline 1800022 for one-to-one service to ensure the quality that meets the expectations of customers. Chevrolet Alghanim's new hotline reflects the continuous development of services aiming to satisfy Chevrolet's lovers, which is considered the key indicator of success.

Chevrolet Alghanim's customer service operates on a very high level of efficiency to serve the needs of the customers sufficiently. It consists of 15 qualified employees, who are dedicating their time only to serve customers. Their mission is to fulfil needs, solve problems and find instant solutions to meet the expectations.

Furthermore, Chevrolet Alghanim supports its employees by constantly training them on the different aspects of customer service. As a result, Chevrolet Alghanim's customer service

is considered one the leading services in the field of automotive.

With this leading service, the customer service is distinguished, as its employees communicate in both Arabic and English to maintain a fast and effective service. This reflected positively on sales as well.

The customer service includes providing general information about the showrooms and customer service centers' locations. It also assists customers with the working hours, and setting maintenance or test-drive appointments. In addition, the customer service is available to take any inquiries, complaints and suggestions. Therefore, the center receives more than 80,000 calls annually with a duration of nine seconds only for each call. Chevrolet Alghanim encourages customers to call 1800022 for any of the services mentioned, as it promises its customers with serving them the best quality to satisfy them and guarantee their comfort.



NEW DELHI: This file photo shows Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of US transportation company Uber Travis Kalanick as he speaks at an event in New Delhi. — AFP

DRIVING CHANGE: KALANICK, THE FORCE BEHIND UBER

SAN FRANCISCO: Uber's rise to the top of the ride-sharing industry is due in large part to its hard-charging founder and chief executive, Travis Kalanick. But while Kalanick has steered Uber to a valuation in the tens of billions of dollars with operations worldwide, he and the company have been bruised by this aggressiveness, prompting a search for a steadier hand at the wheel.

After a series of missteps and embarrassments for Uber and Kalanick, the San Francisco startup has acknowledged it is searching for a number-two executive to handle some of the day-to-day management tasks. Kalanick, 40, is known for taking a hard line in battles with regulators and taxi operators in markets opposing the entry of a new kind of competitor. But he has been humbled by the events of the past month, which included the release of a dash-cam video showing him berating and cursing at one of Uber's drivers.

"To say that I am ashamed is an extreme understatement," Kalanick said in a memo to employees after the incident. The video, he said, was "a stark reminder that I must fundamentally change as a leader and grow up. This is the first time I've been willing to admit that I need leadership help and I intend to get it." Uber has also been rocked by disclosures about a culture of sexism and its covert use of law enforcement-evading software. Kalanick also made a hasty exit from a business advisory panel for President Donald Trump after a consumer boycott campaign fueled by concerns that he was aiding a leader with divergent values.

But Kalanick has long been known as someone who drives close to the edge. The California native dropped out of the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) to start a file-sharing service called Scour, which predated the popular service Napster but ran into similar legal challenges. Scour faced lawsuits from major music and film industry groups claiming \$250 billion in damages, and was forced to

declare bankruptcy in 2000. After that failure, he launched another file-sharing service called Red Swoosh.

Despite legal issues, Kalanick ended his tenure at Red Swoosh a millionaire when the company was bought in 2007 by Akamai Technologies. Kalanick frequently recounts his story for the idea of Uber-saying he and co-founder Garrett Camp were unable to find a taxi during a 2008 visit to Paris, and dreamed up the idea of pushing a button on a smartphone to summon a ride, and called it UberCab.

The name was shortened to Uber, which launched in 2010 in San Francisco, and now is active in more than 500 cities around the world, with an estimated valuation of \$68 billion. According to Forbes magazine, Uber's lofty value gives Kalanick a personal net worth of \$6.3 billion.

Bumps in the road

The road has not always been smooth. Last year, Uber had to quit the Chinese market and agree to a partnership with the local market leader, Didi Chuxing.

Uber and Kalanick have faced protests and traffic tie-ups from angry taxi drivers, with demonstrators in Paris setting fire to some vehicles. Some Uber drivers have sued to be recompensed as employees, rather than independent contractors, and others have complained that the mobile app used by Uber lacks the ability to offer tips. Uber has also faced criticism for its "Greyball" software that may be used to avoid authorities, and its "God View" which could be used to spy on riders.

After revelations about "Greyball," Uber announced it would not use the program to evade regulators. Kalanick is known for being defiant in the face of criticism but his recent mea culpa is not the first time he has tried to soften his image. "I realize that I can come off as a passionate advocate for Uber," he was quoted as saying in 2015 by The Wall Street Journal.

"I'll be the first to admit I'm not perfect, and neither is this company." —AFP



This May 18, 2016 file photo shows a Google self-driving car on display at Google's I/O conference in Mountain View, California. — AP

CALIFORNIA GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO SELF-DRIVING CAR TESTS

SAN FRANCISCO: The US state of California is easing its rules for autonomous car testing, by allowing testing of vehicles in which there is no human driver. The new rules have yet to be submitted for public consultation, with a final version expected by the end of the year, according to its Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). "These rules expand our existing autonomous vehicle testing program to include testing vehicles where no driver is present," said DMV Director Jean Shiomoto.

"This is the next step in eventually allowing driverless autonomous vehicles on California roadways." California took some heat earlier for seeking to stop testing of fully autonomous cars—those in which a

human is not physically on board. Rules proposed at the end of 2015 required that a person with a permit always be present in the vehicle, and be able to regain control of it. And that person would be held responsible for traffic offenses or accidents.

The Federal Road Safety Agency NHTSA, however, differed a few months later saying that a computer system-based on the artificial intelligence of autonomous cars could be considered their "driver." California, and Silicon Valley in particular, is a key location for automakers and tech startups working on driverless cars. The change should help keep that the case. The DMV says it last permitted 27 manufacturers to test self-driving cars. —AFP

MILLENNIAL LOVE FOR SNAPCHAT EXTENDS TO THE STOCK

NEW YORK: For some millennial investors, loyalty to one of their favorite apps matters more than financial details in the case of Snap Inc. The stock of Snapchat's parent company has been on a roller-coaster ride since its market debut last week, surging more than 70 percent from the initial public offering price in the first two days of trading and plunging back down by a quarter since.

Some seasoned investors have been wary of the volatile, relatively high-priced stock of a company that has yet to report a profit. But novice investors said their deep affinity with the disappearing-message app prompted them to jump in. "I bought it even when I was pretty positive I would not make a profit in the short run, but just because I am a fan of the

product," said Chris Roh, a 25-year-old software engineer in San Francisco, who has only been trading stocks for about a month on Robinhood, a mobile trading app popular among millennials.

Snap sold shares at \$17 a piece in its IPO on March 1. The day after, on the first day of trading on the New York Stock Exchange, the stock popped as high as \$26.05. Roh said he bought the stock on that first trading day at \$25 a share. Trading activity on Robinhood jumped by 50 percent on the day of Snap's debut, with more than 40 percent of those who traded that day buying Snap shares. The median age of Snap shareholders on the platform were 26, the same age as Snap Chief Executive Evan Spiegel, according to Robinhood. — Reuters

TWIN MYSTERIES BEHIND LEAK OF CIA'S CYBERTOOLS

WIKILEAKS' RELEASE OF NEARLY 8,000 DOCUMENTS: WHO AND WHY

WASHINGTON: It's not just who did it, but why. WikiLeaks' release of nearly 8,000 documents that purportedly reveal secrets about the CIA's tools for breaking into targeted computers, cell-phones and even smart TVs has given rise to multiple theories about who stole the documents and for what reason.

Perhaps it was a US spy or contractor who felt jilted. Maybe the CIA was exposed by a foreign country that wanted to embarrass US intelligence. Could it have been a CIA insider worried about Americans' privacy rights? Some possible motives behind last week's disclosure:

From the source

In a statement released with the documents, the anti-secrecy group launched by Julian Assange in 2006 said the source told the organization that there are policy questions in urgent need of public debate. Among them were "whether the CIA's hacking capabilities exceed its mandated powers" and the "problem of public oversight of the agency."

The CIA, while not confirming that the documents are authentic, isn't necessarily buying that explanation. "As we've said previously, Julian Assange is not exactly a bastion of truth and integrity," CIA spokeswoman Heather Fritz Horniak said. She said the CIA's work would continue "despite the efforts of Assange and his ilk."

Robert Chesney, a national security law expert from the University of Texas School of Law, said WikiLeaks could have put the material online to damage the reputation of US intelligence agencies.

"Julian Assange is in the business of trying to reduce American power. That's just fact," he said. "It's about giving the CIA's reputation a black eye," he said. "I think they are trying to induce panic and make people even more skeptical of the intelligence agencies."

Assange said during an online news conference Thursday that it was "not true" that WikiLeaks was focused on the United States. He cited recent publications dealing with Germany and Turkey and numerous references to Russia and China throughout WikiLeaks' previous releases. "People raise this for distracting reasons, to try to question the messenger because the content itself is so powerful," he said.

Jilted contractor

Spies go rogue for many reasons: money, a quest for fame, ego, they are coerced or compromised. WikiLeaks said the material came from an "isolated high-security network" inside the CIA's Center for Cyber Intelligence. The group said the material "appears to have been circulated among former U.S. government hackers and contractors in an unauthorized manner" and that one of them gave WikiLeaks part of this cache. Assange suggested that spies, former intelligence officials and contractors had been sharing the material, potentially to feed a growing for-profit market in electronic espionage tools. He said it appeared that not only was it being spread among contractors and former American computer hackers for hire, but "now may be in the black market."

Traditionally, money has been a key motive. But Frank Cilluffo, who directs the Center for Cyber and Homeland Security at George Washington University, thinks leakers might leak



This April 13, 2016, file photo shows the seal of the Central Intelligence Agency at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va. WikiLeaks' release of nearly 8,000 documents that purportedly reveal secrets about the CIA's tools for breaking into computers, cellphones and even smart TVs has given rise to multiple theories about whodunit and why. — AP

for different reasons today. "If they were doing it to make money, why would they go to WikiLeaks?" he asked.

He said Edward Snowden, a former contractor for the National Security Agency who leaked classified material exposing US government surveillance programs, was not motivated by money. Likewise, Chelsea Manning, who was convicted of leaking many thousands of classified government and military documents to WikiLeaks while serving as an intelligence analyst in Iraq, said she did it not for money but to raise awareness about the war's impact on innocent civilians.

Foreign meddler

It's not impossible to imagine an insider walking out of the CIA with the data, said Bob Ayers, a retired US intelligence officer currently working as an international security analyst based in England. But Ayers, who appeared opposite Assange in a debate over whistleblowers in London several years ago, said his instincts are that a foreign country is involved. "I think the Russians are behind it, I really do," he said. James Lewis, a cybersecurity expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, also suspects a sleight of hand by the Kremlin, which he says has used WikiLeaks in the past.

He pointed to WikiLeaks' statement about receiving the material from a source who thinks there needs to be a debate about whether the CIA's hacking exceeds its mandated powers. Lewis said the source who believed that the CIA had gained too much power "probably lives in Moscow." "There is a long-term campaign by the Russians to damage the US and the intelligence community," he said. "It's too early to tell if this is another part of that - although it fits that pattern. I think the biggest concern is that we are in a new kind of fight with Russia and we are losing. The damage from lost tools can be repaired.

The damage to reputation takes longer." Assange has long denied claims, often made on flimsy evidence, that he acts on behalf of Russian interests. Asked Thursday by an American journalist whether he had received any money from the Russian state, Assange said no and that it was a "pretty sad question." And this past week, Russia Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denied any Russian involvement in hacking.

Americans' right to know

WikiLeaks said the source of the documents wants to start a public debate about "the security, creation, use, proliferation and democratic control of cyber weapons." Ben Wizner is Snowden's lawyer and the director of the Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project at the American Civil Liberties Union. He said if WikiLeaks is accurately representing the source's intentions, then there seems to be success in stirring a public debate about the balance between the need to protect networks used daily by Americans and the government's need to conduct surveillance operations against adversaries.

"To the extent that the documents help inform a public debate about what the balance should be between the government's offensive surveillance operations and defensive cybercapabilities, then the documents have contributed to an important public conversation," Wizner said. But he also wondered whether the source wanted the documents released with parts blacked out. WikiLeaks has previously voiced disgust with the idea of censoring documents, even in part, saying that doing so "legitimizes the false propaganda of 'information is dangerous.'"

WikiLeaks has not answered questions from The Associated Press about why it applied redactions this time or whether it was done at the source's request. Knowing the answer to those questions, Wizner said, might help with understanding what motivated the release. —AP

UNDER TRUMP, THE MOON REGAINS INTEREST AS POSSIBLE DESTINATION

WASHINGTON: Dismissed by former US president Barack Obama as a place explorers had already seen, the Moon has once again gained interest as a potential destination under Donald Trump's presidency. Private sector companies in particular are energized by the prospect of future space exploration missions beyond low-Earth orbit, where the International Space Station circles the Earth. Even though

Trump himself has said little about the subject, his close circle and some former NASA officials have made clear their interest in returning to the Moon by way of partnerships with the private sector. Billionaire Elon Musk, the president and chief executive of SpaceX, along with Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who also runs a rocket company called Blue Origin, have met with Trump's advisors several times since the Republican won the presidency. "There is certainly a renewed interest in the Moon in the Trump administration," said John Logsdon, former director of the Space Policy Institute at The George Washington University. Some of Trump's advisors worked on the Constellation program, conceived by former president George W. Bush with a goal to return humans to the Moon for the first time since the pioneering US Apollo missions of the 1960s and '70s.

Obama cancelled Constellation, deeming it too costly and repetitive in nature, opting instead to work toward new and unexplored destinations like an asteroid and, one day, Mars. "The people advising Trump on space in a sense are still angry at that and believe it was a mistake," said Logsdon. "If the Trump administration gets out of the current chaos and if their approach to the budget would allow it, I think within the next 12 months, we will see a major space initiative involving a public-private partnership—hopefully international

partnership-focused on a return to the Moon."

Bold

Eric Stallmer, president of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation, which represents the private sector of spaceflight, agreed. "I think the Trump administration wants to do something big and bold and the Moon is certainly that idea," he said. NASA's current focus on developing what will be the world's most powerful rocket, known as the Space Launch System, which will propel a new capsule, Orion, to deep space, one day carrying people around the Moon, to an asteroid or even to Mars by the 2030s. Stallmer described this program as "very expensive."

"I think you cannot proceed with a mission to the Moon and beyond at this point anymore without a partnership with the commercial industry," he added. Since the US-run space shuttle program ended in 2011, NASA has forged partnerships with private industry, including SpaceX and Orbital ATK, to resupply the International Space Station. SpaceX plans to start sending astronauts to the orbiting outpost as early as 2018. "I know that there is no backing down from the

commercial sector, from the commercial launch companies on their desire and vision to go to the Moon and beyond. These are very exciting times," said Stallmer.

SpaceX said last month it had signed its first contract to send two space tourists on a trip around the Moon at the end of 2018, but did not give many details, including the cost or their identities. SpaceX has also vowed to send an unmanned spacecraft on a journey to Mars in 2018, as a prelude to manned missions one day. Meanwhile, The Washington Post reported that its owner Bezos is working on an Amazon-like delivery service to the Moon. The proposal has not been made public, but was circulated to the Trump team and NASA in the form of a seven-page white paper, the report said.

Moon colonies

The goal of the project is to enable "future human settlement" on the Moon. "It is time for America to return to the Moon—this time to stay," Bezos was quoted as saying in an email to the Post. "A permanently inhabited lunar settlement is a difficult and worthy objective. I sense a lot of people are excited

about this." Oklahoma Republican lawmaker Jim Bridenstine, who has told Trump he wants to be the next NASA administrator, has praised cooperation between the US space agency and private industry, and called for a return to Moon mission as a way to boost needed resources on Earth, such as water.

Research has shown billions of tons of water ice can be found at each lunar pole. "Water ice on the Moon could be used to refuel satellites in orbit or perform on-orbit maintenance," he wrote in a blog post in December.

"Government and commercial satellite operators could save hundreds of millions of dollars by servicing their satellites with resources from the Moon rather than disposing of, and replacing, their expensive investments." This could translate into lower bills for users of satellite internet, television and radio services, he said. The lunar soil is also believed to be rich in rare Earth minerals that are widely used in electronic devices. The Google Lunar XPrize Foundation is also in on the action, recently announcing its five finalists for a \$20 million award to the first team to land a robot on the Moon. — AFP



HEALTH LAW'S WOES, REAL OR PERCEIVED, DRIVE CALL FOR REPEAL

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump and Republican leaders say drastic action is needed because the Obama-era health care overhaul is a disaster, with soaring premiums and insurers bailing out. It is true that major parts of the 2010 law are clearly troubled, but others are working fairly well.

The risk is that the GOP's 'rescue mission' will inflict collateral damage on what's working and cause new problems. Or that promised solutions might disappoint. The Affordable Care Act, or ACA, expanded coverage in two main ways. It offered subsidized private health insurance through online markets such as HealthCare.gov that cater to people without workplace coverage. It also allowed states to expand their Medicaid programs to cover more low-income adults.

Together, those features have helped push the nation's uninsured rate below 9 percent, a historic low. A look at some of the law's major elements, their current status, and how they might be affected by the repeal and replace legislation advancing in the House:

Medicaid

Status: Thirty-one states have expanded Medicaid under the health law. The federal-state health care program for low-income people now covers about 1 in 5 people in the United States, from newborns to elderly nursing home residents. About half of the expansion states have Republican governors. Gov. John Kasich, R-Ohio, says it has allowed his state to offer "a stable source of care" for the working poor, the drug-addicted, and the mentally ill. Although Medicaid is a notoriously stingy payer, hospitals have strongly supported the expansion as preferable to treating uninsured patients.

Impact: The House bill would repeal

the Medicaid expansion, which now covers about 11 million people. Currently the federal government offers a generous matching payment to states that expand their programs. Starting in 2020, that payment would only be available for beneficiaries already enrolled under the expansion, not for any new ones.

In an even bigger change, the bill would end Medicaid's open-ended entitlement status, moving to a system of limited federal financing. Washington would pay the states a fixed amount per

Individual health insurance

Status: The health law was meant to expand and stabilize the market for individual health insurance, through which roughly 20 million people get coverage. It's been a roller-coaster ride instead.

As sicker, costlier customers came into the market, premiums and deductibles shot up. Consumers eligible for the law's income-related financial assistance were cushioned, but millions who still pay their own way are in shock. Former President Bill Clinton, in a candid moment, called it a

status quo. More people would be eligible for the GOP subsidies, but the assistance may not go far enough for those with modest incomes. The GOP tax credits are not designed to keep pace with rising premiums, as the Obama subsidies do. Insurers would be able to experiment with redesigned plans that hold the promise of lower premiums. The pros and cons will become clearer as more detail and analysis emerges.

Online insurance markets

Status: HealthCare.gov froze up the day it was launched in 2013, an episode that embarrassed the Obama White House and prompted a high-tech repair job lasting weeks. Since then, the federal website has improved, now serving as the backbone of a system that insures about 12 million people nationwide. Several states operate similar websites.

Impact: The GOP bill does not repeal the provisions that created HealthCare.gov and its state counterparts, but their future is unclear nonetheless. "The federal and state marketplaces would likely shrink," said Larry Levitt of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. With smaller tax credits, there wouldn't be as many customers. The GOP bill allows consumers to use their tax credits for coverage purchased outside the government markets as well.

Coverage penalty

Status: As a way to get healthy people into the insurance pool, the law imposed tax penalties on uninsured people deemed able to afford coverage. Last year 6.5 million people paid penalties averaging \$470, according to the IRS. An additional 12.7 million people claimed exemptions for financial hardship and other reasons. Some young adults in good health decide

to pay the fine because they can't squeeze \$100 a month for premiums out of their already tight budgets. Experts argue about whether the unpopular requirement has been particularly effective.

Impact: The House bill repeals the tax penalties on individuals and employers that don't offer coverage. That would be retroactive to the end of 2015, meaning that those who owe penalties for last year would be off the hook. With the penalty gone, Republicans would try a different way to nudge healthy people into the coverage pool. Those who have a break in coverage would face a 30 percent penalty on their premiums.

Generational equity

Status: Obama's law limited what insurers could charge their oldest, pre-Medicare customers to no more than three times what they charge young adults. The GOP bill would raise that to five times, or more if states want to go higher.

Impact: Coverage would become more affordable for young adults, but premiums for older people would rise even as they contend with physical ailments that emerge with age.

Republicans say their bill reflects market realities, citing estimates that the cost of care is 4.8 times higher for older adults. Recognizing that older adults have higher health care costs, the tax credits in the GOP proposal are age-based. People over 60 would get \$4,000, double what someone under 30 would get.

But AARP says the GOP proposal would provide "substantially less assistance" for lower- and moderate-income older adults, particularly if expected higher premiums are taken into account. The lobby for older people has called the Republican plan an "age tax." —AP



WASHINGTON: In this Feb 9, 2017, file photo, the HealthCare.gov website, where people can buy health insurance, is displayed on a laptop screen in Washington. —AP

beneficiary, based on Medicaid spending in each state, adjusted annually for medical inflation. Supporters say the change would bring needed fiscal discipline and encourage states to innovate. Critics say it will ultimately harm the poor and goes far beyond addressing issues with the ACA.

"crazy system." Recently, Aetna CEO Mark Bertolini pronounced the ACA's health insurance markets in a "death spiral."

Impact: The House bill would rework the ACA's tax credit subsidies and loosen some of its major requirements on insurers. It would allow people to set aside more money in tax-sheltered health sav-

HOSPITALS WORRY ABOUT CARING FOR NEWLY UNINSURED IN GOP PLAN

FORT LAUDERDALE: When Colorado expanded Medicaid coverage under former President Barack Obama's health care law, the largest provider in the Denver region hired more than 250 employees and built a \$27 million primary care clinic and two new school-based clinics.

Emergency rooms visits stayed flat as Denver Health Medical Center directed many of the nearly 80,000 newly insured patients into one of its 10 community health centers, where newly hired social workers and mental health therapists provided services for some of the county's poorest residents.

according to the hospital's chief financial officer. Adding to the financial anxiety is that Denver Health and many other hospital systems and medical providers across the country still would be required to care for many of the same patients, even if they lost their health coverage. That would leave hospitals, state and local governments, or privately insured patients to foot the bill.

"If it is full removal of Medicaid expansion, we would have to make cuts on our system, and I really think that those cuts would roll back our progress and could paradoxically increase the cost of care by driving care

poor and lower-income people. It also would overhaul the framework of Medicaid generally so that in the future states would receive a limited amount per person based on enrollment and costs. Health care advocates have said such a change would mean less Medicaid money for the states.

The Republican proposal would boost one revenue stream for hospitals that had been cut under Obama's plan - a pool of money helping hospitals that care for a disproportionately high share of uninsured patients. But hospital CEOs say that money will not come close to making up for the revenue lost

The Affordable Care Act sought to get more people covered and give them access to primary care doctors, theoretically increasing the number of paying customers for hospital systems while diverting those people away from emergency rooms where they are more expensive to treat. About 22 million people have gained coverage through Medicaid and by buying private health insurance in the government-sponsored marketplaces that offer plans with subsidized premiums.

Historic low

The national uninsured rate is below nine percent, a historic low. Moody's Investors Service said it expects that the legislation's provision to cap federal Medicaid payments to the states, starting in 2020, will cause states to reduce payments to hospitals. The legislation also would saddle hospitals with more unpaid bills and uninsured patients, particularly older ones who could now face much higher premiums, according to Moody's.

"We believe that the effect of older enrollees losing coverage will outweigh the positive effect of younger people gaining coverage, given that older people have greater health care needs and as they lose coverage, hospitals would incur greater uncompensated care and bad-debt costs," the report states.

S&P Global Ratings wrote that the bill would add to existing stresses on hospitals, including rising costs for salaries and prescription drugs. NYC Health + Hospitals, the largest public health system in the country that serves mostly low-income people, made a rare decision to create its own insurance plans to help maximize revenue in the changing health climate. One of its plans, granted under the Affordable Care Act, offered premiums of \$20 or less per month to 70,000 low-income enrollees. An additional 96,000 people gained coverage in another insurance plan under Medicaid expansion. One plan would be eliminated entirely under the bill and tens of thousands would lose coverage on the other under the Republican bill.

Stanley Brezenoff, the health system's interim president, says it is "particularly appalling" for the expanded Medicaid patients who spent years going without insurance. Many of them have substantial medical needs and finally were able to get into a routine of receiving regular medical care. —AP



PHILADELPHIA: In this Friday, March 10, 2017 file photo, a woman walks through in a winter snow storm in Philadelphia. - AP

NORTHEAST BLIZZARD COULD DUMP UP TO 18 INCHES OF SNOW ON NYC

NEW YORK: The Northeast is bracing for winter's last hurrah - a blizzard expected to sweep the New York region starting today with possibly the season's biggest snowstorm dumping up to 18 inches on Central Park.

The National Weather Service issued a blizzard watch Sunday for coastal regions including New York City and surrounding areas of Long Island, Westchester County and Connecticut.

A winter storm watch was in effect for a larger area of the Northeast: New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New England.

In New York City, forecasters said the first snow is expected late Monday or just after midnight Tuesday, with up to 4 inches falling by dawn. Heavy snow the rest of the day could pile 10 to 14 inches more of white stuff, with sustained winds of about 30 mph and wind gusts of up to 50 mph.

"This would certainly be the biggest snowstorm of the 2017 winter season in New York City," said Faye Barthold, a

weather service meteorologist based on Long Island.

On Long Island, a snowfall of 12 to 18 inches was forecast along with equally strong winds and visibility of a quarter mile or less. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Sunday that the New York State Emergency Operations Center will be activated Monday evening, with stockpiles of sandbags, generators and pumps at the ready.

Other areas, including the lower Hudson Valley and northeastern New Jersey, also could get 12 to 18 inches of snow. But those areas were not under a blizzard watch because high winds and low visibility were not expected.

The severe weather would arrive just a week after the region saw temperatures climb into the 60s. Sunny days and T-shirt-wearing temperatures made it seem like winter had made an early exit. But the chilly weather and snow some areas got Friday may prove to be just a teaser. —AP



DENVER: In this Thursday, March 9, 2017, photo, Dr Michael Russum, left, checks patient Ruby Giron in Denver Health Medical Center's primary care clinic located in a low-income neighborhood in southwest Denver. —AP

Demand for services at the new primary care clinic was almost immediate.

The hospital system, like others around the country, now is facing enormous uncertainty under the health care overhaul proposed by congressional Republicans. The GOP plan would scale back the Medicaid expansion and take away direct federal subsidies to help consumers pay their health insurance premiums, replacing them with age-adjusted tax credits.

Denver Health could see revenue losses between \$50 million and \$85 million by 2020, which is between five and nine percent of their annual revenue,

back to where it should not be - in the emergency rooms," said Dr Bill Burman, interim chief executive for Denver Health. Similar sentiments are being shared by hospital CEOs across the country as President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans make good on their promise to undo the Affordable Care Act.

Federal money

The Republican plan would limit the amount of federal money available to states that opted to expand Medicaid, the state-federal program that provides health coverage to the

if large numbers of people lose their health coverage.

The American Hospital Association, which represents nearly 5,000 institutions nationwide and the Catholic Health Association of the United States, the nation's largest not-for-profit health provider, wrote Congress warning that the bill would lead to significant cuts in a program that provides services to the most vulnerable. "We are likely looking at situations where hospitals would close down service lines, shorten clinic hours and lay off staff," said Beth Feldpush, a senior vice president at America's Essential Hospitals.

Central entity

Unlike in France or Britain, there is no central public entity in the United States with the power to negotiate with private pharmaceutical companies. Rather, the US market consists of multiple systems for different populations, each with their own rules:

Private insurance: The biggest group of Americans get their health care through

their employers via private insurers who negotiate drug prices with pharmaceutical companies. Insurers also negotiate through intermediaries, such as pharmacy chains and pharmacy benefit management companies like Express Scripts.

Medicaid: The public health program for the low-income population negotiates for drug prices at the federal or state level through a private intermediary.

Medicare: The public health program for the elderly hires private companies to negotiate drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.

Veterans Administration: A public health insurance system for those who have done military service, this program comes closest to the model employed in

Europe on drug prices. "The administration specifies the drugs they are going to cover and they basically set prices for these drugs," Darius Lakdawalla, a professor at the University of Southern California, said of the VA.

Who sets drug prices?

Whether for generic drugs or those still under patent, drug companies have broad authority to set prices based on supply and demand, said Eric Lail of the insurance group Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

How are prices determined?

Pharmaceutical companies set prices on the basis of numerous factors, including costs in research and development, and in market-

ing. The United States is one of the few industrialized economies to permit drug companies to directly advertise to consumers. New Zealand is another.

Yet to a large extent, drug prices are determined not by research and development costs, or the effectiveness of remedies, but "on the basis of what the market will bear," concluded a 2016 paper by Harvard researchers Aaron Kesselheim, Jerry Avorn and Ameet Sarpatwari.

The paper said most blockbuster drugs are partly the result of public funding, either through subsidies or research funding. For example, the lucrative Sovaldi hepatitis C drug now owned by Gilead Sciences has its origins in academic labs that received public support. —AFP

SKYROCKETING DRUG PRICES KEY QUESTION IN TRUMP HEALTH CARE REFORM

NEW YORK: Amid the drive to repeal and replace Obamacare, the question remains whether President Donald Trump and the Republican-led Congress can bring down skyrocketing drug prices. Recent controversies surrounding dramatic increases for prices of EpiPen and HIV drugs have placed pharmaceutical costs near the top of American public policy debates.

Trump has railed against the industry and vowed to bring prices down. But experts say Trump will struggle to realize that goal due to a system that involves a complex web of players and incentives. On Friday, he tapped Scott Gottlieb, a physician who has deep ties in the pharmaceutical industry, to head the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a powerful regulatory agency.

US drugs often cost about two-and-a-half times what they cost in France or Britain, for instance. The difference is especially pronounced for cutting-edge remedies to treat cancer, rare illnesses and other maladies, such as hepatitis C. Why is there such a big difference between drug prices in the United States and in Europe?

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION TO DEVELOP SPECIALIZED SKILLS OF KUWAITI DOCTORS

ENCOURAGED BY PEDIATRIC EXPERT

KUWAIT: After four weeks of visiting Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) in London, Dr Abdullah Ali, who is currently undertaking a pediatric training program in Kuwait, addresses the importance of international collaboration with hospitals in developing the future of pediatrics in Kuwait.

It was after working in NBK Hospital's Hematology and Oncology ward in Kuwait for a few months when Dr Abdullah decided he was keen to advance his study in the field of Hematology and Oncology pediatrics. With GOSH's world-class facilities and particular expertise in both specialisms, Dr Abdullah saw a placement at GOSH as a great opportunity to further his passion for Hematology and Oncology, and to bring back ideas that will strengthen pediatric healthcare in Kuwait. The Ministry of Health sponsored Dr Abdullah on his visit to the hospital, allowing him the opportunity to develop his skills in hematology and oncology.

"What attracted me to GOSH is its international reputation. When I started my pediatric training, I saw many Kuwaiti patients coming back from GOSH from different specialties, mostly from the Hematology and Oncology department. Therefore, I thought it would be useful to get to know this hospital more, especially considering its reputation as one of the leading hospitals in the world. I spoke to one of the consultants at NBK hospital to express my interest in Hematology and Oncology. He recommended GOSH and put me in touch with Dr Phil Ancliff," Dr Abdullah said.

Despite feeling a bit lost to begin with when arriving in London, Dr Abdullah commented that this initial sense of unease quickly changed thanks to the friendliness of the team at GOSH. Dr Abdullah explains that by visiting GOSH, a hospital which sees over 1,500 children from the Middle East region each year; it has given him the chance to gain experience in conditions he would not usually get the chance to see back home, due to



Dr Abdullah Ali (left) and Dr Phil Ancliff.

Kuwait's smaller population. It has also given him the opportunity to take part in inclusive clinical discussions about the latest findings in hematology and oncology with leaders in the field.

"I especially enjoyed Thursday mornings as this is the time of the week where consultants discuss different cases and their different opinions. This collaborative approach was very enlightening and it was great to have my input valued even though I am a junior. On one occasion I

was talking to Dr Ancliff about acute leukemia and instantly, after about 30 minutes, he sent me an article about it. It's this sort of enthusiasm about learning and exploring techniques that ultimately forms better doctors. Speaking to consultants in the department made me realize how fascinating the field of leukemia is and all the areas where we could learn and explore. The past 4 weeks of collaborating with leading experts has made me think 'I really want to do this!'"

Crucial role

Speaking about the experience, Dr Ancliff, Consultant in Pediatric Hematology at GOSH, stresses how this collaborative work plays a crucial role in developing healthcare. "Collaborative work should always be encouraged amongst healthcare professionals. It helps promote a more educated, skilled and engaged workforce. It was a great privilege having Dr Abdullah choose to visit us in order to learn more about the areas of Hematology and Oncology. I

believe, through this active collaboration, together we have sparked his enthusiasm and passion for further specializing in the area which he will then be able to apply in Kuwait." Commenting on what he plans to bring back to Kuwait, Dr Abdullah mentions how he would like to promote the idea of a multidisciplinary team more amongst future physicians in Kuwait. Multidisciplinary working is when professionals from a range of specialties collaborate to deliver comprehensive care that addresses as many of the patient's needs as possible.

"The multidisciplinary area is not as established here in Kuwait as it is in GOSH; we have started it already but I think there's still more which could be done," explains Dr Abdullah. "It is important to analyze cases from a medical perspective and through the eyes of a Hematology expert, but what this experience taught me is the need to also cater to the non-medical elements of every case such as social support and education. It is widely reported by colleagues at GOSH that benefits of this collaborative working include improved health outcomes for patients, the more efficient use of resources and enhanced job satisfaction for team members."

Further, Dr Abdullah was amazed at the lengths GOSH go to in order to make the hospital like home for children and parents who visit. "It is the small details which make a big difference. For example, GOSH have a team of interpreters for all different languages available, and even have window cleaners who dress up in superhero costumes; it is a very friendly environment for children."

"I would definitely recommend this experience to other colleagues in Kuwait. The level of research and clinical experience at GOSH is more advanced when compared to Kuwait. It is always good to have a reference point, and GOSH has been a good benchmark to many of our doctors. I hope we can we can continue this collaboration in the future to further develop the skills and expertise of our doctors in Kuwait," Dr Abdullah concluded.

ANTIBIOTIC-FREE MEAT GETS A FOOTHOLD IN US

NEW YORK: Facing pressure from environmentalists and shareholder activists, major US food companies and restaurant chains are moving to limit antibiotics in farm animals raised for meat. Last month, Tyson Foods announced a "no antibiotics ever" pledge for all Tyson-branded chicken products, building on an earlier promise to restrict drug use on broiler chickens.

Analysts see the latest Tyson announcement as further evidence of a trend of large companies limiting pharmaceuticals that scientists believe increases drug-resistance for treating pneumonia, infections and other illnesses in humans.

The wave started in 2014 with Perdue Chicken and chicken-based fast-food chain Chick-fil-A, followed by McDonald's, Wal-Mart Stores, Pilgrim's Pride and others. The announcements vary in scope, with some companies, for example, still permitting use of ionophores, antibiotics not used in human medicine.

The shift follows warnings about antibiotic resistance from health officials and a September 2016 United Nations General Assembly resolution that pledged coordinated action to address overuse. "We're seeing a cry from consumers for meat that's responsibly raised," said Lena Brook, a food policy advocate for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

Still, the breadth of the movement should not be overstated. While an estimated 40 to 50 percent of US chicken now is antibiotic-free, the percentage is far lower for pork and beef. Moreover, several leading companies have resisted action. Kentucky Fried Chicken, part of Yum Brands, currently scores an "F" on an NRDC scorecard on antibiotics policy, while Sanderson Farms, a leading US chicken producer, has lampooned the trend. "There's certainly strong and growing demand for it today, but to what extent it's a fad or a long-term trend remains to be seen," said Zain Akbari, a food industry analyst at Morningstar.

Antibiotic-free premium

Experts in animal farm science say US farmers for decades routinely employed antibiotics as a means to speed growth rates for animals, and to prevent disease outbreaks on farms where animals are frequently packed in close quarters.

But an April 2014 World Health Organization report warned of the potential for a "post-antibiotic era" in which "common infections and minor injuries can kill" as drugs become ineffective. In voluntary guidelines that took effect in January, the US Food and Drug Administration said antibiotics in agriculture should

be limited to medically necessary uses and not for weight gain.

The call by public officials has dovetailed with heightened consciousness about food in broader American society that has also propelled organic food. Instead of antibiotics, Tyson is turning to probiotics and to botanicals such as oregano and thyme for routine treatment, while still employing antibiotics if birds become sick, a spokesman said.

Tyson, which has faced shareholder resolutions in recent years on its water policy and other sustainability issues, also plans to limit antibiotics in pork, beef and turkey, although it has not yet set target dates.

"We're eliminating human antibiotics because it's the most responsible approach to balance a global health concern and animal well-being," a Tyson spokesman said. "Antibiotics resistance is a very complex issue with no single cause and no single solution. It's a global concern and we want to be part of the solution."

As other companies have done, Tyson began with chicken, in part because chicken farms tend to be vertically organized within companies, compared with pork and beef, which involve contracts with outside farmers. That means the company would need to institute programs that impact its suppliers, analysts say.

Is beef next?

Advocates of stricter antibiotic use are pressing for action on beef and pork too, and are preparing a shareholder resolution for McDonald's annual meeting. Since beef already has more premium grades, adding antibiotic-free products could be another opportunity to introduce a pricier product, said Akbari, the Morningstar analyst.

Akbari said much of the current push is in response to millennials, who increasingly will "force retailers and producers to be pretty nimble." Still, organic-minded millennials are not the only key segment in the vast US food market.

Sanderson Farms last summer unveiled a marketing blitz in which a pair of folks, baseball-cap wearing consumers mock the antibiotic-free craze in television ads that question the scientific link of agriculture to the growth of drug resistance and the wisdom of paying more for antibiotic-free chicken.

Joe Sanderson, chief executive of the 62-year-old Mississippi company, defended the company's stance in a February 23 conference call. "Everybody does not want that product," Sanderson said. "And everybody does not believe the claims on that product and nor is that claim important to everybody." —AFP

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OMNIATY ORGANIZES OPEN DAY FOR KIDS WITH CANCER

On the occasion of National Day and Liberation Day Celebrations, Omniaty held an open day for kids with cancer and their parents in cooperation with Al-Sayer Group Holding and KACCH members. A large group of kids from National Bank Hospital for Kids and BACCH participated in the celebrations where "First Step" Team for Disease Prevention presented several entertainment shows, contests, games and gift distribution. The children also enjoyed national songs and raised the flags of Kuwait expressing their joy in this occasion with the participation of cartoon characters and face painting with the colors of Kuwait flag.

Omniaty extends its gratitude and appreciation to the team of volunteers from BACCH under the leadership of Mary Dembsi - Coordination Manager for their participation in organizing the celebration and ensuring their full cooperation and coordination with Omniaty team in order to bring happiness to the kids in this occasion. It is worth mentioning that Omniaty is the first national, non-profit project whose aim is to grant wishes to children who are less fortunate with terminal, and deteriorating illnesses aged between 3 - 18 years old according to the terms and conditions.

On this Occasion Mona Al Shetan - CEO of Omniaty Project declared that: "Since establish-

ment in 2011, we at Omniaty were able to draw a smile on the faces of more than 370 child with deteriorating illnesses. We have seen the impact of this charitable work on kids and their families, in addition that many institutions welcoming the idea of this project and its work as a type of corporate social responsibility contribution. I can only extend my gratitude to our founder partners, project board of directors: Al-Sayer Group - Tamdeen Real Estate Company - Al-Homaizi Group - Rai Medi Group - Abdulrazaq Al Sane and sons group - FASTelco - Al-Ghanim Industries - Easa Husain Al-Yousifi Sons Company - Al-Maousherji Group - Al-Markaz - National Bank of Kuwait."



NATIONAL AND LIBERATION DAY CELEBRATIONS AT IISM



National and Liberation Day celebrations of Kuwait was observed at India International School Mangaf with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervor. Special assembly was organized with an assortment of entertainment programs including dance and music performances. The attire of students and teachers in the flag colors, and the decorated corridors created a perfect ambience for the occasion. The tiny-tots of Kindergarten enjoyed the activity of coloring the national flag. Competitions in Arabic Handwriting, words making and conversation were held for the primary students. The event was graced by the school Director Malayil Moosa Koya, Principal F M Basheer Ahmed, Sr Vice Principal Narinder Kaur, Vice Principals Sophy John, Indulekha Suresh, Saleem and KG Head Nilofar Qazi.



'SEA FOOD NIGHT'

Millennium Hotel & Convention Center Kuwait is welcoming its guests at 'Lamar International Restaurant' - one of most prestigious buffets in the city - to celebrate its famous 'Sea Food Night' every Thursday evening from 7:30 to 11:30 pm. The restaurant will be serving a wide range of oriental and international seafood dishes for visitors to have a great weekend break with Lamar's upscale ambience and excellent cuisine.

Area General Manager of Millennium and Copthorne Hotels Kuwait - Dani Saleh, said: "As part of our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of hospitality, we now invite our guests to a spectacular seafood festival at Lamar International Restaurant, where they are sure to enjoy our extraordinary selection of mouth-watering lobsters, prawns, mussels and oysters of all kinds. Lamar's premium quality seafood buffet also includes an assortment of delicious appetizers, salads and sauces". Lamar's talented chefs will also be preparing the tastiest and most flavorful seafood dishes in front of their guests at a fascinating live cooking station, where they can choose to add from the varied selection of spices and toppings to offer for a more unique dining experience. Millennium Hotel & Convention Centre is one of the grandest emerging 5-star quality business hotels in the country strategically located on the 4th ring road in the heart of Al-Salmiya area, close to the main shopping malls, dining and entertainment spots around the block. It is also home to business conferences and trade exhibitions with varying capacities.

The hotel is designed for business and leisure travelers, offering 295 rooms and suites equipped with state-of-the-art technology, complimentary high speed Wi-Fi and luxury amenities. Millennium Hotel facilities also include a health club - with modern Technogym brand machines, an outdoor swimming pool, and sauna/steam rooms. The hotel's integrated business center offers secretarial services and comprehensive office facilities. With 3 different cuisines and a pool bar, guests are spoiled for choice when it comes to dining in the hotel's world-class restaurants.



KES VISIT TO FRENCH INSTITUTE OF KUWAIT

On Monday, the 13th of February, a group of KES students from years 10-11, visited the French Institute in Jabriya, Kuwait - the main francophone cultural center promoting French language and encouraging cross-cultural exchange and cultural diversity. The trip was organized by Head of French Naylor, and French teachers Kelly and Lorenzo also attended to accompany the students. The students received a very cordial wel-

come by Bulent Inan, Assistant Director, who provided them with extensive information about French qualifications, courses and resources available at the institute as well as information on attending French universities.

They were then given a tour of the centre and its facilities, followed by a visit to the French cafe, where they had the opportunity to taste some freshly made French desserts such as crepes and gauffres. At the cafe, they

were joined by Cedric Devais, director of the French Institute and Stefano Campopiano, Languages coordinator. The students enjoyed the visit and especially loved their experience in the Mediatheque Section, located in a cozy corner of the Institute. They found lots of great books to read in French, as well as magazines, CDs, DVDs, and comic books. What a great place to relax with a book or watch a movie!



Greetings



Happy birthday to Lebaka Banusri! Greetings from your loving parents Sumalatha and Narasimha Reddy, grandparents, uncles, aunts, friends and well-wishers.

OOREDOO SPONSORS GUST CAREER FAIR

Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, is participating in the Gulf University of Science and Technology's 19th Career Fair as platinum sponsor. The fair, which was inaugurated yesterday, will continue to receive students today. Ooredoo's Human Resources team will be available to answer queries of students from all majors and specialties regarding job and internship opportunities at Ooredoo.

In a statement to the press, Ooredoo Chief Human Resources and Administration Services Officer Omar Al-Bassam said, "We believe in the major role youth play in the future of our country, and our support for youth is deep-rooted within our strategy across the organization in Ooredoo. This is not the first time that Ooredoo has taken part in a job fair; we have successfully participated in several job fairs in the past. Our aim is to open new horizons for the ambitious youth by giving them an opportunity



to apply their educational knowledge to the professional world." Ooredoo Kuwait's Human Resources representatives will be present at Ooredoo's booth to brief students about the benefits of working for Ooredoo and the different career growth opportunities provided by the company, as well as internship opportunities. Ooredoo boasts a dynamic and fresh corporate culture where new ideas are nurtured and everyone is given a fair chance to grow and maximize their potential. Ooredoo employees are always given opportunities to develop their skills and enhance their knowledge through extensive training programs along with new challenges to develop their interests.



The Indonesian Embassy in Kuwait in collaboration with the Indonesian Badminton Club in Kuwait (IBCK) held an 'IBCK Open Badminton Tournament 2017' on Friday, March 10th 2017 in Riggae. More than 120 players from seven countries (Kuwait, Nepal, India, Philippines, Egypt and Pakistan) took part in the event. The event was officially opened by the Indonesian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Tatang Budie Utama Razak.

JOURNALISTS MUST ACT AS EYES AND EARS OF SOCIETY: EXPERT



Media must not try to become power-centers but act as the eyes and ears of the society by truthfully reporting the developments in a country, said BRP Bhaskar, a senior Indian journalist and a human rights activist on Thursday. Making a keynote speech on the emerging trends in media at the annual media conference of the Malayali Media Forum (MMF), Kuwait, he said, the new trend of looking at newspapers as yet another market products is not untenable. "The media has the power to influence the thought process of a person and help mold his or her opinion. This quality makes the fourth estate different from other institutions and a media organization distinct from other corporate entities," he said.

At the same time we have to realize the fact that there are power-centers outside governments. Today, many media houses dole out news reports from their own ivory towers under the false impression that the society is helpless without them. On the contrary, people are realizing their power today. "People are gradually attaining media literacy as evident in the emergence of the social media today so that they are able to decode the destiny of the media houses looking at their quality in discerning truthful and responsible news reports," he added.

Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain as chief guest inaugurated the conference. MMF General Convener Sam Painumoodu presided over the conference. Program Convener Nixon George introduced the guest of honor while Abdul Fattah Thayyil presented the first copy of the annual souvenir to Bhaskar who in turn released it. Convener Ismayeel Payyoli welcomed the gathering and Salim Kottayil proposed a vote of thanks. A music show led by Biju Thikkodi and Rafi Calicut entertained the invited guests at the Community Auditorium, Jleeb Al-Shoyoukh. Bhaskar also held a media workshop for MMF members from 10 am to 4 pm on Friday.



NATIONAL FORUM (NAFO-KUWAIT) LADIES WING RECONSTITUTED

National Forum (NAFO-Kuwait) democratically and unanimously re-constituted its Ladies Wing during 'Kudumbasangamam', conducted on February 17th, 2017, at the Indian Community School auditorium, Amman branch. This organizational task was successfully executed with the initiative of Out-gone LWCC and under the guidance of NAFO Advisory Board. A large number of NAFO family members attended and witnessed this event.

An overwhelming number of 17 ladies voluntarily offered to serve as members of the new Ladies Wing Coordination Committee, having its new tenure of three years. Smt Jayalakshmi Promod was elected as the Chief Coordinator, Smt Sreekala Dileepas Vice-Coordinator. Others include; GijiUnnikrishnan, Smt SreelaRaviprasad, Smt Sreevidya Dileepkumar, Smt Sreeranjini Ajay, Smt. ReshmaSubodh, Dr Asha N Menon, Smt ShyamaNandakumar, Smt ArunaRajagopal, Smt SreelathaSreejayan, Smt BinduBipin, Smt SmritiVinayan, Smt Sunanda Rajeev, Smt SheebaShaiju, Smt Beena Venugopal and Smt Darsana Jayadevan who were elected as coordina-

tors to the NAFO LWCC. Outgoing Ladies Wing Committee chief co-ordinator Smt Smitha Sashikumar presented a detailed activity report and widely appreciated for their commendable contributions for the past three year tenure and also for the initiatives taken for the smooth re-constitution of the new committee. Chief Coordinator, Smt Jayalakshmi Promod, while assuming the responsibility mentioned that the new ladies wing in accordance with the set policies of NAFO would perform its duties with a new outlook through unique ideas and contribute maximum towards its socio-cultural activities of NAFO.

It was mentioned that a meeting of the new ladies wing will soon be convened in order to plan programs mainly to revitalize NAFO Gurukulam so as to educate and empower children with India's traditional culture, civilization, philosophical values and social principles. NAFO Kuwait is a non profit, non political socio-welfare organization, registered with the Indian Embassy in Kuwait (INDEMB/KWT/ASSN/94) serving the Indian Community in Kuwait and back in India for the last thirteen years.



21:00 Gold Rush
21:50 Everest Rescue
22:40 Killing Fields
23:30 Fast N' Loud



00:50 Gator Boys
01:45 In Too Deep
04:00 Escape To Chimp Eden
04:25 Escape To Chimp Eden
06:02 In Too Deep
06:25 In Too Deep
06:49 Gator Boys
07:36 Call Of The Wildman
08:00 Call Of The Wildman
08:25 Preposterous Pets
09:15 Biggest And Baddest
10:10 Escape To Chimp Eden
10:35 Escape To Chimp Eden
11:05 Tanked
12:00 Preposterous Pets
12:55 Bondi Vet
13:50 Biggest And Baddest
14:45 Gator Boys
15:40 Escape To Chimp Eden
16:05 Escape To Chimp Eden
16:35 Tanked
17:30 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
18:25 Village Vets
18:50 Village Vets
19:20 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
20:15 Tanked
21:10 Escape To Chimp Eden
22:05 Village Vets
23:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
23:55 Gator Boys

00:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:50 E! News
02:50 Hollywood Cycle
03:30 Fashion Bloggers
06:00 Just Jillian
06:55 E! News
07:10 Just Jillian
08:10 E! News
09:10 Rob & Chyna
12:00 E! News
12:15 Celebrity Style Story
12:40 Celebrity Style Story
13:10 So Cosmo
14:05 So Cosmo
15:00 E! News
15:15 WAGs
19:00 E! News
20:00 Celebrity Style Story
20:30 Celebrity Style Story
21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 E! News
23:15 Botched



00:10 Hank Zipzer
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Violetta
01:45 The Hive
01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Hank Zipzer
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Violetta
04:15 The Hive
04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:10 Hank Zipzer
05:35 Binny And The Ghost
06:00 Violetta
06:45 The Hive
06:50 The 7D
07:00 Jessie
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 The Zhuzhus
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Stuck In The Middle
09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
10:25 A.N.T. Farm
11:15 Good Luck Charlie
12:05 Shake It Up
12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
13:15 Gravity Falls
13:40 Hank Zipzer
14:05 Star Darlings
14:10 Austin & Ally
14:35 Jessie
15:00 Bunk'd
15:25 Kirby Buckets
15:50 Sunny Bunnies
15:55 The Zhuzhus
16:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
16:45 Elena Of Avalor
17:10 Stuck In The Middle
17:35 Descendants Wicked World
17:40 Girl Meets World
18:05 Bizaardvark
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Best Friends Whenever
19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
19:25 The Next Step
19:50 Austin & Ally
20:15 Star Darlings
20:20 Shake It Up
20:45 Backstage
21:10 Liv And Maddie
21:35 Cracked
21:40 Dog With A Blog
22:05 Best Friends Whenever
22:30 Jessie
22:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
23:00 Kirby Buckets
23:05 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



BARELY LETHAL

BARELY LETHAL ON OSN MOVIES HD

20:30 Miles From Tomorrow
21:00 Unbungalivable
21:05 Goldie & Bear
21:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
22:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh

08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
09:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
10:30 Blood Relatives
11:20 Murder Comes To Town
12:10 I Am Homicide
13:00 The Locator
13:25 The Locator
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
15:30 Blood Relatives
16:20 Murder Comes To Town
17:10 Evil Online
18:00 The Locator
18:25 The Locator
18:50 I Almost Got Away With It
19:40 California Investigator
20:05 California Investigator
20:30 Blood Relatives
21:20 Murder Comes To Town
22:10 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
23:00 Obsession: Dark Desires
23:50 How (Not) To Kill Your Husband



00:20 Zoo Confidential
01:10 Extreme Animal Babies
02:00 Lion Warrior
02:50 Maneater Manhunt
03:45 Bear Nomad
04:40 Extreme Animal Babies
05:35 Lion Warrior
06:30 Maneater Manhunt
07:25 Bear Nomad
08:20 Extreme Animal Babies
09:15 Freaks & Creeps
10:10 Snakes In The City
11:05 Predator Falls
12:00 Australia's Deadliest: Shark Coast
12:55 Cheetah: Fatal Instinct
13:50 Hunter Hunted
14:45 Baby Animals In The Wild
15:40 Extreme Animal Babies
16:35 Wild Australia
17:30 Snakes In The City
18:25 Predator Falls
19:20 Baby Animals In The Wild
20:10 Extreme Animal Babies
21:00 Wild Australia
21:50 Snakes In The City
22:40 Predator Falls
23:30 Australia's Deadliest: Shark Coast



00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
03:25 Midsomer Murders
05:15 Broadchurch
06:10 The Chase
07:05 The Jonathan Ross Show
08:00 Midsomer Murders
09:35 Callie-Anne Cooks Into The Wild
10:00 Broadchurch
10:55 The Chase
11:50 The Jonathan Ross Show
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 The Chase
15:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
16:00 Murdoch Mysteries
16:55 Him
17:50 Broadchurch
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
21:00 Murdoch Mysteries
21:55 Him
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:15 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
01:05 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
01:30 Dog Whisperer
02:20 Carnival Eats
02:45 Carnival Eats
03:10 Home Strange Home
04:00 The Wine Show
04:50 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
05:20 One Man & His Campervan
05:45 Poh & Co
06:15 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
06:40 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
07:10 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
07:35 Dog Whisperer
08:30 Carnival Eats
09:00 Carnival Eats
09:25 The Wine Show
10:20 Home Strange Home
11:15 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
11:45 One Man & His Campervan
12:10 Poh & Co
12:40 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
13:05 Dog Whisperer
14:00 Carnival Eats
14:30 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
15:50 The Wine Show
16:45 One Man & His Campervan
17:15 One Man & His Campervan
17:40 Street Food Around The World
18:10 The Witch Doctor Will See You Now
19:05 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
20:00 The Wine Show
20:55 One Man & His Campervan
21:20 One Man & His Campervan
21:45 Street Food Around The World
22:10 The Witch Doctor Will See You Now

07:55 Hitler And The Occult
08:25 Nazi Underworld
09:20 Mega Breakdown
10:15 The Border
11:10 Highway Thru Hell
12:05 Mine Kings
13:00 Nazi Underworld
14:00 Inside: 21st Century Warship
16:00 The Border
17:00 Highway Thru Hell
18:00 Mine Kings
19:00 Mega Factories: Supercars
20:00 The Border
20:50 Highway Thru Hell
21:40 Mine Kings
22:30 Mega Factories: Supercars
23:20 80s: The Decade That Made Us



02:00 Camp Nowhere
03:45 After The Ball
05:45 Parenthood
08:00 Camp Nowhere
10:00 After The Ball
12:00 Parenthood
14:00 Indian Summer
16:00 Accidental Love
18:00 The Rewrite
20:00 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
22:00 Please Give



00:00 Damien
01:00 Scandal
02:00 Code Black
03:00 Scream Queens
04:00 Prison Break
05:00 The Night Shift
06:00 Good Morning America - Weekend
07:00 Agent X
08:00 The Family
09:00 The Night Shift
10:00 Prison Break
11:00 This Is Us
12:00 Agent X
13:00 The Family
14:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 The Night Shift
17:00 Prison Break
18:00 This Is Us
19:00 Rosewood
20:00 Criminal Minds
21:00 Homeland



00:00 Wrecked
00:30 Community
01:00 Community
01:30 Saturday Night Live
03:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
03:30 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
04:00 Malibu Country
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 Cougar Town
06:00 George Lopez
06:30 Galavant
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 Malibu Country
08:30 Cougar Town
09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
10:00 Superstore
10:30 Galavant
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 George Lopez
12:30 Malibu Country
13:00 Cougar Town
13:30 Galavant
14:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
14:30 The Last Man On Earth
15:00 Superstore
15:30 Community
16:00 Community
16:30 George Lopez
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
18:30 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
19:00 Dr. Ken
19:30 The Mindy Project
20:00 Wrecked
20:30 Wrecked
21:00 Community
21:30 Community
22:00 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia
22:30 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia



00:00 My Man Is A Loser
02:00 Camp Nowhere
03:45 After The Ball
05:45 Parenthood
08:00 Camp Nowhere
10:00 After The Ball
12:00 Parenthood
14:00 Indian Summer
16:00 Accidental Love
18:00 The Rewrite
20:00 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
22:00 Please Give



00:00 Two Mothers
02:00 The Help
04:30 Healing
06:30 The Search For Freedom
08:00 Memories
09:45 Ordinary People
12:00 The Help
14:30 Boychick
16:15 Wildlife
18:00 Rudderless
20:00 War Book
22:00 True Confessions



01:00 Garfield
02:30 Ghatotkach - Master Of Magic
04:30 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
06:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
07:30 Moomins And The Comet Chase
09:00 Rugrats Go Wild
10:45 Garfield
12:30 Ghatotkach - Master Of Magic
14:15 Memory Loss
16:00 Rugrats Go Wild
18:00 Bee Movie
20:00 Bolts And Blip
21:45 Memory Loss
23:30 Moomins And The Comet Chase



00:20 Married By Mum And Dad
01:10 Return To Amish
02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
02:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
02:50 Love, Lust Or Run
03:15 Cake Boss
03:35 Designer Darlings
04:20 Little People, Big World
05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
06:00 Ultimate Shopper
06:50 Say Yes To The Dress UK
07:40 Cake Boss
08:30 Little People, Big World
09:20 Kate Plus 8
10:10 Love, Lust Or Run
10:35 Cake Boss
11:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
11:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
11:50 Ultimate Shopper



01:00 Herbie Fully Loaded
03:00 Chilly Christmas
05:00 The Tigger Movie
07:00 A Bug's Life
09:00 Underdog
11:00 The Tigger Movie
13:00 Cars
15:00 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
17:00 Hannah Montana Movie
19:00 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
21:00 The Last Flight Of Noah's Ark
23:00 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws



00:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
01:00 The Haunting Of...
02:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
03:00 The Real Bronson
04:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
05:00 The Haunting Of...
06:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
07:00 The First 48
08:00 Deadly Wives
09:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
15:00 Deadly Wives
16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
17:00 Homicide Hunter
18:00 Killers
19:00 It Takes A Killer
20:00 The First 48
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
22:00 Deadly Wives
23:00 Homicide Hunter



00:20 Battle 360
01:10 Pawn Stars
01:35 Pawn Stars Best Of
02:00 Storage Wars: Barry's Best Buys
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 American Restoration
06:50 Shipping Wars
07:15 Shipping Wars
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars Texas
09:45 Storage Wars Texas
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
11:50 Time Team
12:40 Swamp People
13:30 Ax Men
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Shipping Wars
15:35 Shipping Wars
16:00 Counting Cars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Storage Wars: Barry's Best Buys
18:30 Pawn Stars
18:55 Pawn Stars Best Of
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
21:50 Hunting Hitler
22:40 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
23:30 American Pickers



00:00 Mystery Diners
01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:00 Man Fire Food



00:05 Destroyed In Seconds
00:30 Prototype This
02:10 Dirty Jobs
03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
06:20 How It's Made
07:00 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
07:25 Awesome Adventures
07:50 Bondi Vet
08:40 How It's Made
09:30 Prototype This
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Bondi Vet
12:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
12:50 How It's Made
13:40 Dirty Jobs
14:30 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
14:55 Awesome Adventures
15:20 Mythbusters
16:10 Prototype This
17:00 Kids Do The Craziest Things
17:50 Pick A Puppy



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



DRACULA UNTOLD ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters
21:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things
21:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things
22:00 Pick A Puppy
22:25 Pick A Puppy
22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor

03:00 Chopped
04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
05:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:00 The Kitchen
07:00 The Pioneer Woman
08:00 Siba's Table
09:00 Anna Olson: Bake
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 The Pioneer Woman
12:00 Siba's Table
13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:00 Chopped
15:00 The Kitchen
16:00 Anna Olson: Bake
17:00 Chopped
18:00 Guy's Grocery Games
19:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
20:00 Man Fire Food
21:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
22:00 Iron Chef America
23:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Zou
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopidoo
07:00 Zou
07:15 Calimero
07:40 Loopidoo
07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
08:05 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
08:15 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
08:30 Miles From Tomorrow
08:45 Goldie & Bear
08:55 The Lion Guard
09:20 PJ Masks
09:35 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
09:50 Doc McStuffins
10:00 Goldie & Bear
10:15 PJ Masks
10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
10:35 The Lion Guard
11:00 Sofia The First
11:30 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
11:55 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
12:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
12:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
13:15 Gummi Bears
13:40 Sofia The First
14:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
14:35 PJ Masks
15:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
15:30 The Lion Guard
15:55 Unbungalivable
16:00 Sofia The First
16:30 Doc McStuffins
16:55 Goldie & Bear
17:20 The Lion Guard
17:50 PJ Masks
18:15 Sofia The First
18:40 Doc McStuffins
19:05 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
19:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
20:00 Miles From Tomorrow



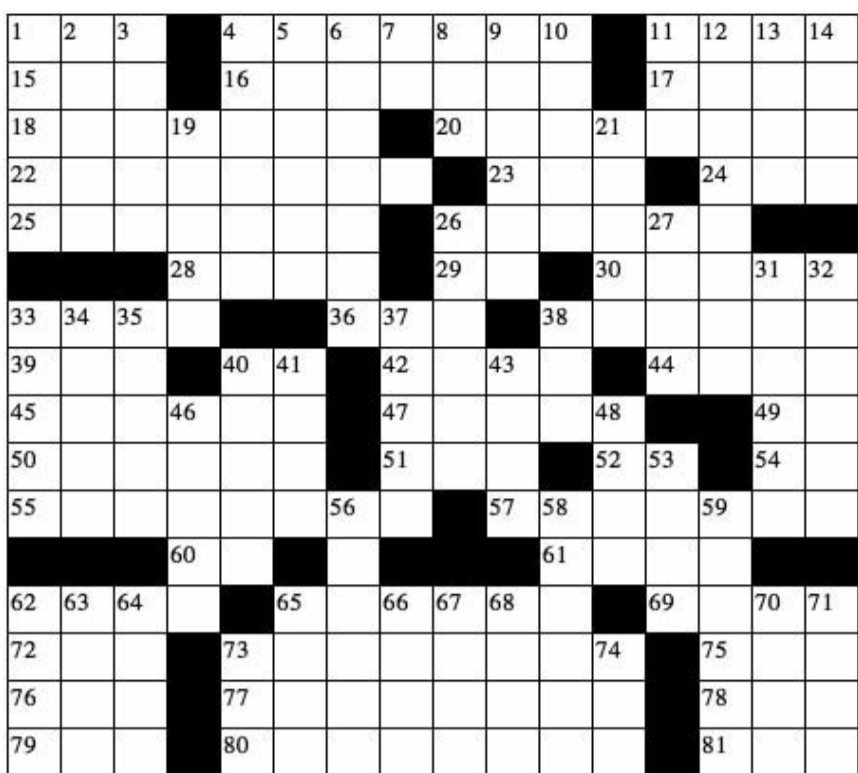
00:40 A Crime To Remember
01:30 Kindred Spirits
02:20 A Haunting
03:10 The First Kill
04:00 Long Island Serial Killer: People Magazine...
04:48 Blood Relatives
05:36 Blood Relatives
06:24 Blood Relatives
07:12 Blood Relatives
08:00 The Locator
08:25 The Locator

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THE SEARCH FOR FREEDOM ON OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

CROSSWORD 1546



ACROSS

1. Not reflecting light.
4. Capable of being acted.
11. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
15. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
16. Characteristic of the classical artistic and literary traditions.
17. (obstetrics) The number of live-born children a woman has delivered.
18. A town in southwest Mississippi on the Mississippi River.
20. Expanded in scope.
22. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
23. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
24. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
25. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Thailand and Burmese borderlands.
28. Give over.
29. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
30. Any of various large tropical carnivorous lizards of Africa Asia and Australia.
33. Castrate, used with animals.
36. An interest followed with exaggerated zeal.
39. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
42. 100 lwei equal 1 kwanza.
44. Altered from an originally straight condition.
45. An isogram connecting points having equal barometric pressure at a given time.
47. A diacritical mark (~) placed over the letter n in Spanish to indicate a palatal nasal sound or over a vowel in Portuguese to indicate nasalization.
49. A bivalent and trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
50. The state of being under the control of another person.
51. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
52. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
54. A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
55. An island in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa.
57. A compound containing nitrogen and a more electropositive element (such as phosphorus or a metal).
60. An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.
61. A small vessel for travel on water.
62. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
69. A small cake leavened with yeast.
72. The products of human creativity.
75. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
76. The United Nations agency concerned with the international organization of food and agriculture.
77. Someone who administers a test to determine your qualifications.
78. A strong emotion.
79. The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
80. Any of several malignant neoplasms (usually of the skin) consisting of melanocytes.
81. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.

DOWN

1. The capital of Belarus and of the Commonwealth of Independent States.
2. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
3. A member of the Mongolian people of central Asia who invaded Russia in the 13th century.
4. Small dry indehiscent fruit with the seed distinct from the fruit wall.
5. Predacious on other insects.
6. A parenteral cephalosporin (trade names Fortaz and Tazicef) used to treat moderate infections.
7. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
8. A fatal disease of cattle that affects the central nervous system.
9. In a straight unbroken line of descent from parent to child.
10. Enthusiastic approval.
11. The month following March and preceding May.
12. French inventor of the first practical photographic process, the daguerreotype (1789-1851).
13. (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
14. An informal term for a father.
19. The first decisive battle of the Hundred Years' War.
21. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
26. King of England who was renounced by Northumbria in favor of his brother Edgar (died in 959).
27. Clothing of a distinctive style or for a particular occasion.
31. An epic in Latin by Virgil.
32. The essential qualities or characteristics by which something is recognized.
34. A civil or military authority in Turkey or Egypt.
35. Fruit of the oak tree.
37. The table in Christian churches where communion is given.
38. Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.
40. A large and widespread genus varying in size from small shrubs to large trees.
41. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
43. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
46. A street of small shops (especially in Orient).
48. (prefix) Outside or outer.
53. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
56. Pertaining to or associated with agony (especially death agonies).
58. In the same place (used when citing a reference).
59. A republic in southern Europe on the Italian Peninsula.
63. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
64. On, to, or at the top.
65. A French marshal who distinguished himself in the War of the Austrian Succession (1696-1750).
66. Designer drug designed to have the effects of amphetamines (it floods the brain with serotonin) but to avoid the drug laws.
67. The seventh month of the Hindu calendar.
68. A floor covering.
70. A lyric poet.
71. In bed.
73. A spacecraft that carries astronauts from the command module to the surface of the moon and back.
74. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Directing, advising and encouraging others fill your day. This may mean you will be lecturing or teaching or performing some artistic talent. You are buoyed with confidence in any project you attempt. Make sure, however, that both your expectations and abilities are realistic before diving into something you may not be able to get out of without some embarrassment. You enjoy having opportunities to broaden your intellectual and spiritual horizons. This afternoon may be a good time to get the gang together for a little musical ensemble. If you do not have this talent, it could be you have a desire to get your group of friends together for a little spur of the moment gathering, particularly if you have several friends living close together with similar interests.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a good time to double your money. We are not talking about gambling but perhaps your eye for antiques or the resale value for some item will be the focus of your monetary gain. The day is working in your favor to create some extra savings or funds. You have a natural sense of what the public wants at this time. You will be dealing with young people this whole day. This may mean you run your own table at a flea market, or some other fun market place. Patience, persistence, fairness and a sense of limits are in order. This is a good time for new emotional beginnings, a fresh start, perhaps the establishment of new habit patterns-make sure they are good ones, because they will set the tone for you for quite some time to come!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Although this is a Monday, you may still have a schedule and a few appointments to keep. You may find yourself lecturing. Be on time for appointments and take a businesslike attitude towards any plans that have been made. You could be most persuasive with others and eloquent in your communication skills. New ideas and an independent or pioneering mental orientation take on more importance in your life at this time. Teaching, learning, communicating and social contact have a way of outlining new directions in your life; there is much activity and involvement with these kinds of issues. Today provides a natural opportunity for self-expression and lends itself to your particular ideas and thoughts. Your inner emotions are quite agreeable.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Puzzling over what to do to boost the appearance of the clothes in your closet, you may grasp the idea of a jacket that you can use to dress up a dress or slacks. You want to look your best and may spend some time looking through the magazines or the internet to see about getting some new addition to your clothes. Technical or scientific equipment has your attention today and you may find that the hours fly by as you work or play on some new equipment. . . . It could be a new musical instrument. New accomplishments and new insights and breakthroughs are in order. Fill up your inner spaces with something spiritual this evening-sing. Undereath your calm exterior there is a need for physical hugs and long talks. Express your needs to your loved ones tonight.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Everything points to your taking control of this day. You could feel great support from those around you, or circumstances may dictate your taking action. You feel healthy and natural. A new exercise program makes you feel like a new person. You grab hold of a few exercise dance ideas, teach them to others and agree to meet twice a week. You will soon have a mean, lean team. All will have fun when you gather and each will be pleased to see the result of healthy bodies. Good for you. Consider opening a class or just keep it the same and enjoy each time you gather. Tickets for an upcoming exciting event just fall in your lap today. Tonight there is time to enjoy a different sort of animal, perhaps a kitty or puppy or birds that enjoy a special treat.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Although this may not be a moneymaking day for most, you will find that money has a nice ring to it today. A little gambling, a good purchase, a hidden letter or any bonus from working a tough job is likely to land right in your lap. If you don't see green before the end of the day, you will be knocking yourself out to show someone how much you appreciate that person's help to do or give or share some very special time with you and, you know the old saying, time is money. Your humanitarian urges should be satisfied to help you find a balance. Consider some volunteer work now. An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of you at many levels is emphasized. Positive thinking, diet, exercise and work put you in the right places.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Making your mark on the world has a special significance. You have an increased desire to succeed in many avenues of your life. You are full of wit and sharp insights. This could be a time for real breakthroughs in the idea department. A financial increase is in the making. This is an excellent time to talk business or engage in discussions about philosophy, religion or the arts. Everything conspires to value and to bring out your unique and unusual qualities. You may find that someone close to you understands and is supportive of your future plans; this person may even have an idea or two that you had not considered. Good things happen all day long. Something that was lost will be found before this day is over.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Careful-you may be susceptible to all sorts of ideas to keep the family busy this summer. There are offers in the religious sector of your life to organize and perhaps help guide a young married group. This afternoon, you and a few of your friends may have set aside some time to learn a new dance step. Perhaps you have rented a video. Dance is a great way to express yourself and can be a good aerobic workout that will help to improve your overall health as well as reduce stress. You see people as they are and not as you want to see them, particularly in your circle of friends and loved ones. Your friends and loved ones give you some insight into the workings of different personalities. Later this evening there is time to just enjoy what you have.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is an easy, calm day that should find everything running smoothly. You can demonstrate a great deal of understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others. Ideas and interaction with the elder people in your family, neighborhood or a religious group may come to your attention. Perhaps you have researched or plan to research the options that are within your community to help the elderly. If there are no elderly in your family, there will be some day and you plan to have answers. This afternoon is spent with people that vary to have contact with animals. There may be a new animal born at your zoo or your very own animal has decided this afternoon is the time to give birth. Much is discovered, talked about and laughter can be heard.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Good luck may increase your finances now. You spend some time going over some of your records to see where you can improve your budget. The young people in your family are industrious, you might consider showing them what some of the household expenses are and allow them to ask questions. Just share enough so that they gain an idea of the responsibilities that come with family and earning money, etc. There can be more money talk later. A friend returns a favor this afternoon, giving you a great opportunity to catch up on the activities of each other. You may make some future plans to get together. A favorite meal and a few candles will help you enhance the evening with your beloved. Romance is probable.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You face tremendous responsibilities in relationship with loved ones and are apt to have difficulty expressing wants and desires openly at this time. Perhaps it is time to have a chat and talk about goals. If it is important to you, it will be important to your mate. This chat could be about goals of home, travel, profession, etc. Whatever the case, easy does it, no real answers just now, only thoughts and dreams and a promise to think on these things for deeper results later. You will be entering a period of heightened sensitivity- your creativity is inspired-exploit it. Having reruns on television this evening means you can catch up on some of the things you recorded last winter-if that is how you want to spend your time. A sense of harmony makes this a happy time.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

From the very moment of sunrise, you are swept away by good feelings and loving people and places and fun ideas. Some plans from the past come to mind this morning as you put together a few ideas for ways to store your favorite hobbies. This may mean a trip to the hardware store. If you complete this project, you might be very pleased at the response from others. Many will want your plans and some will want you to build for them what you have built for yourself. You won't want to quit your day job but you could see a little financial plus from this endeavor. There is some teasing about age, body and just good old fun today. Remember, popular and successful get the attention and you have the attention this evening.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Physics 2

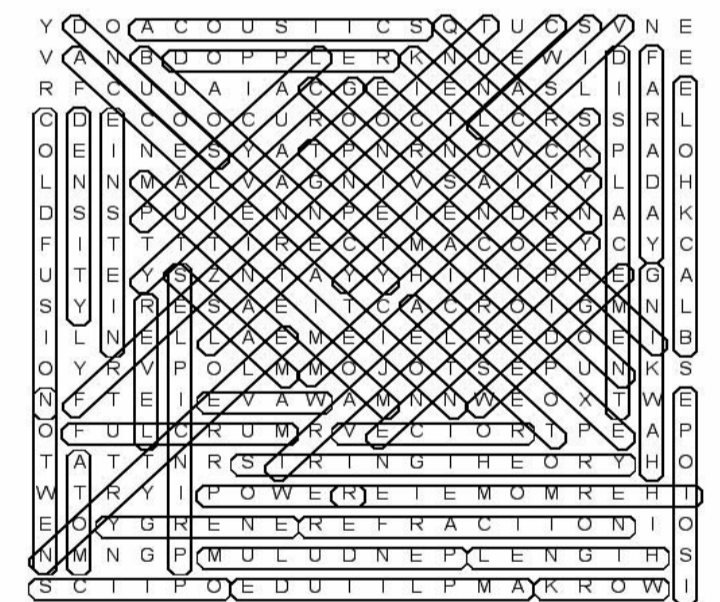
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 58 letters spell a Bruce Feirstein quotation.



- | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| ABSOLUTE ZERO | DRAG | IONIZATION | PROTON |
| ADHESION | ELASTICITY | JOULE | PULLEY |
| AERODYNAMICS | ELECTRONICS | KINETICS | REFLECTION |
| AIR MASS | ENTROPY | LIGHT | SCIENCE |
| AMPLIFIER | FARADAY | MATTER | SPEED |
| BIG BANG | FORCE | MOLECULE | TEMPERATURE |
| BOILING POINT | FRICTION | MOTION | TORQUE |
| CENTRIFUGAL | FUNCTION | NEUTRON | VACUUM |
| CHAIN REACTION | GALILEO | NIELS BOHR | VELOCITY |
| DECIBEL | HALF LIFE | PARTICLE | VOLUME |
| DIFFRACTION | HEAT | PHOTON | WAVELENGTH |
| DISTANCE | INERTIA | PRESSURE | WEIGHT |

Yesterday's Solution

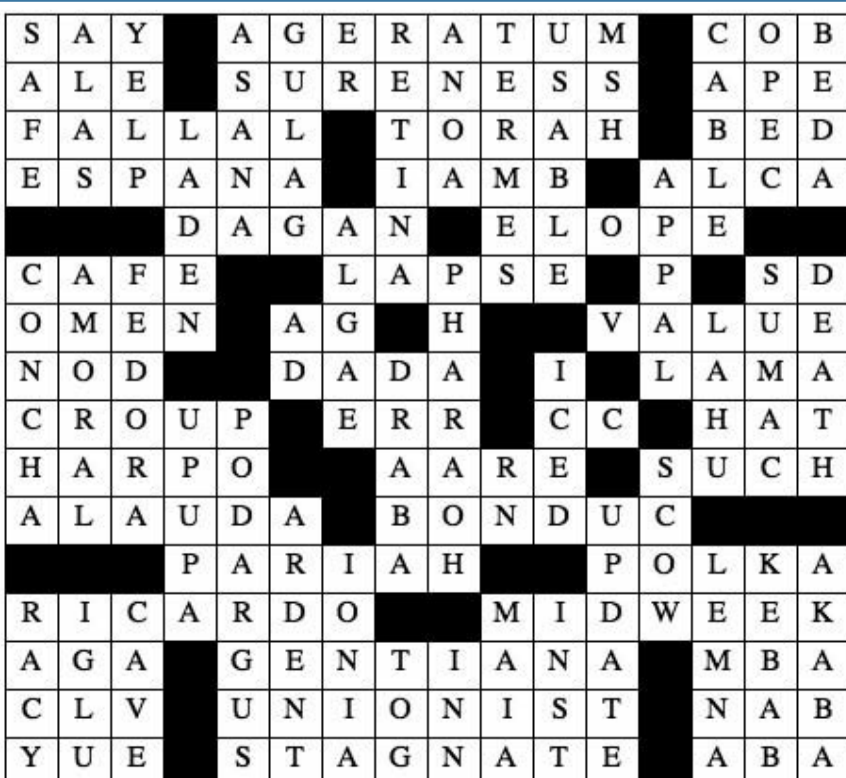
Physics 1



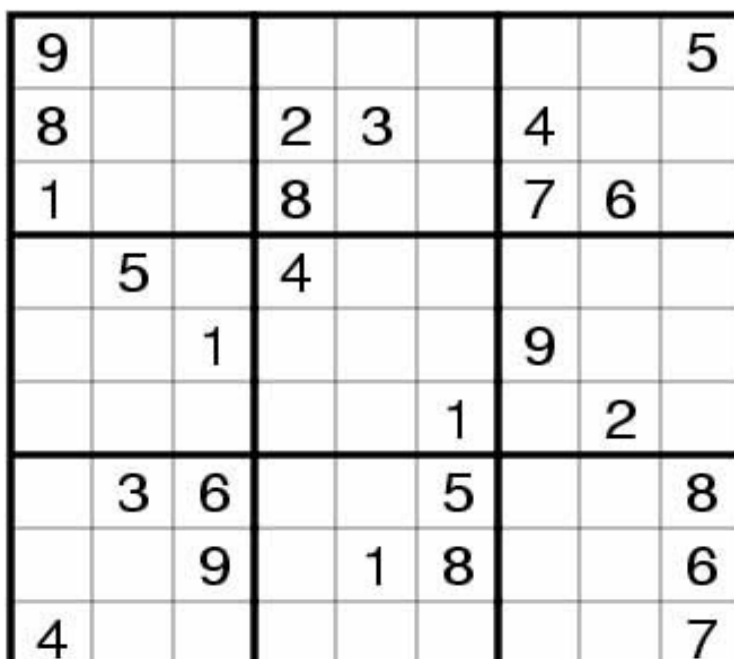
- | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| ACCELERATION | ELECTRON | LAWS | QUARK |
| ACOUSTICS | ENERGY | LENGTH | REFRACTION |
| AMPLITUDE | ENTROPY | LEVER | SOUND |
| ATOM | EXPERIMENT | MASS | STRING THEORY |
| BLACK HOLE | FARADAY | MECHANICS | TESLA |
| BUOYANCY | FREEZING POINT | MOMENTUM | THERMOMETER |
| CENTRIFETAL | FULCRUM | NEWTON | TRAJECTORY |
| COLD FUSION | GRAVITY | OPTICS | VECTOR |
| CONVECTION | HAWKING | PASCAL | VISCOSITY |
| DENSITY | IMPEDANCE | PENDULUM | WAVE |
| DISPLACEMENT | ISOTOPE | POWER | WEDGE |
| DOPPLER | KELVIN | PRINCIPLES | WORK |
| EINSTEIN | | | |

The hidden message is: YOU NEVER FAIL UNTIL YOU STOP TRYING

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Rita Ora and Calvin Harris have ended their feud

Following the former couple's messy split in 2015, the 33-year-old DJ refused to let Rita, 26, perform their song 'I Will Never Let You Down' but he has since had a change of heart. A source told The Sun on Sunday: "Late last year they got in touch and sorted things out. It was such a relief to both of them that they could move on and put things behind them. At the end of the day they had a lot of good times together and it was sad that was tainted by how bitter the split was at times. But things are really good now although they are not so close they're heading out to dinner anytime soon or anything. But Rita is now back in touch with a lot of Calvin's industry friends and able to work on music with them and, most importantly, able to perform 'I Will Never Let You Down'." She's gearing up for her second album soon and it's great to be able to perform arguably her biggest hit when she's doing promo for it." Last year Rita signed a new deal with Atlantic Records UK - a subsidiary of Warner Music Group - following her departure from Jay-Z's label Roc Nation and has insisted that the follow-up to her 2012 debut LP 'Oran' will be deeply personal. Talking about the themes on her next album, she said: "It's just everything from my personal life to what I couldn't do due to previous situations and now being free. I've never been freer than I am right now. It's about everything from being a refugee, from flying in from Kosovo and living in London, having this amazing city that's crazy and full of lights - talking about real stuff. I'm desperate to get my music out. I think I'm now at a point in my life where I have a new amazing label, we really have taken it to the next level. It's very song-based. It's very real - real instruments, believable lyrics. I've not only grown as an individual but as a woman. People are going to see that."

Ellie Goulding reportedly dating rower Caspar Jopling

The 30-year-old popstar - who recently called time on her romance with her personal trainer Bobby Rich - was spotted at a karaoke night in Mayfair, West London, with Caspar - who rowed for Great Britain in 2010 at the first Youth Olympics - where the pair reportedly looked "very coupley." An onlooker said: "Ellie had brought Caspar along as her date. They were very coupley and touchy-feely." However, an insider close to the 'Love Me Like You Do' hitmaker has claimed the blonde beauty is still "officially single", despite having reportedly "hooked up a few times" with Caspar. The source told The Sun newspaper: "Ellie and Bobby started cooling off before the Brits. It was a surprise to people as they seemed really serious at Christmas. They are still friends though. Things with Caspar are very casual but they have hooked up a few times and seem to like each other. But she's officially single. With Ellie it's hard to tell which romances will become serious as she's so focused on her music. It doesn't help that Caspar is based mainly in New York at the moment so it will be hard for them to see each other." The news comes after Ellie recently denied she had rekindled her relationship with her former flame and McFly bassist Dougie Poynter - whom she dated for

two years prior to their split a year ago - claiming the pair will "always be friends" with one another. She said: "There's absolutely no ... it's like we've always been friends. He's one of my really good friends. For me, when I've been in relationships with people, those are the people I will always hold dear to me. So if still maintaining a really awesome friendship with an ex is possible, then of course that's the best thing because you've shared so much with that person. You've created an amazing connection with someone and life's too short to completely ... unless something terrible has happened. I think it's important to share this life with people you have a genuine bond with and you've shared a lot with."



Caitlyn Jenner will give another tell-all TV interview

The 'I Am Cait' star plans to celebrate the two-year anniversary of her sensational chat with ABC anchor Diane Sawyer - in which she revealed her plans to say goodbye to her former identity of Bruce and undergo a gender transition - with another sit-down talk because she has changed so much over the last few years. She said: "I can't believe that in April it will be two years since I gave my interview to Diane Sawyer and came out as transgender. I'm giving another TV interview to celebrate the anniversary. It's crazy to think how time has flown. I feel so much stronger as a person and I've learned so much. I can't even recognise the person I used to be." And the 67-year-old reality star wants to share her own positive experiences in order to "give a voice" with others struggling with gender issues. She said: "Although I've changed physically, it's not about how I look, it's about how I feel. I've been through so much but I've come through it and I finally feel comfortable in my own skin. I've met people who have been suicidal about undergoing this big transformation. It's really humbled me and taught me what's important. I want to give a voice to people who have to deal with this." The former Olympian is relishing every minute of her new life thanks to her new-found confidence in herself. She told Closer magazine: "I love doing girlie things - putting on make-up and getting dressed up. I feel so confident and I love the way I look. I'm planning lots of adventures and I definitely want to pay a visit to London. I love the UK. The best thing is I don't have to feel insecure any more - I'm embracing life and everything it has to offer. Money and fame don't mean anything. It's about waking up in the morning and being happy."

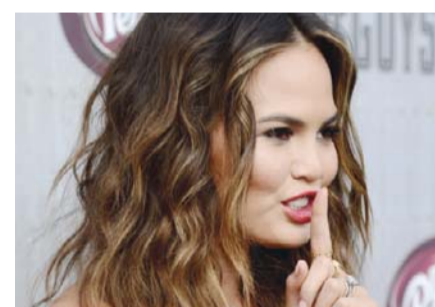


Olivia Palermo has never had a fashion disaster

The 31-year-old socialite is known for her sense of style and admits she can't ever remember wearing anything she's later regretted. Asked about her fashion disasters, she admitted: "Honestly, there is not one I can think of. But if I do think of any I will be sure to let you know." The former 'City' star's best fashion tip is always to opt for something "classic" when unsure of what to wear. Sharing her best style advice, she told HELLO! Fashion Monthly magazine: "Be confident and buy pieces that you like. Great tips are to go for the classics and use accessories to create different looks... I'm sure there can be a risk of [being over-polished]. A look doesn't need to be over-over-done, just very elegant." And Olivia never wastes time planning her outfits in advance as she prefers to dress to suit her mood. She said: "I put them together that day. My first suggestion is that it's important to dress for you mood." The brunette beauty believes the key to looking great at all times is to have everything tailored to fit, and she insists it's money well spent. She added: "It is important to have a good tailor, it doesn't matter where the garment is from - a little hemming or a tuck can make all the difference."



Chrissy Teigen has hit back at online mommy shamers



The 31-year-old star - who welcomed daughter Luna with husband John Legend in April 2016 - shared screenshots of a number of angry messages from online commentators slamming her par-

enting abilities and called them "the worst". The comments included: "Golden rule of dressing babies is however many layers you are wearing plus an extra one. Common sense really," and "That baby never shows emotions, she never smiles or cries. It's weird." Chrissy wrote: "Imagine being this miserable. We are fine, thanks. Some people are just hell bent on being the worst." Meanwhile, earlier this month, Chrissy opened up about her battle with postpartum depression, which left her unable to muster up the energy to leave the house. She said: "When I wasn't in the studio [filming 'Lip Sync Battle'], I never left the house. I mean, never. Not even a tiptoe outside. I'd ask people who came inside why they were wet. Was it raining? How would I know - I had every shade closed. Most days were spent on the exact same spot on the couch and rarely would I muster up the energy to make it upstairs for bed. John would sleep on the couch with me, sometimes four nights in a row."

George Michael's boyfriend Fadi Fawaz snubs George's family

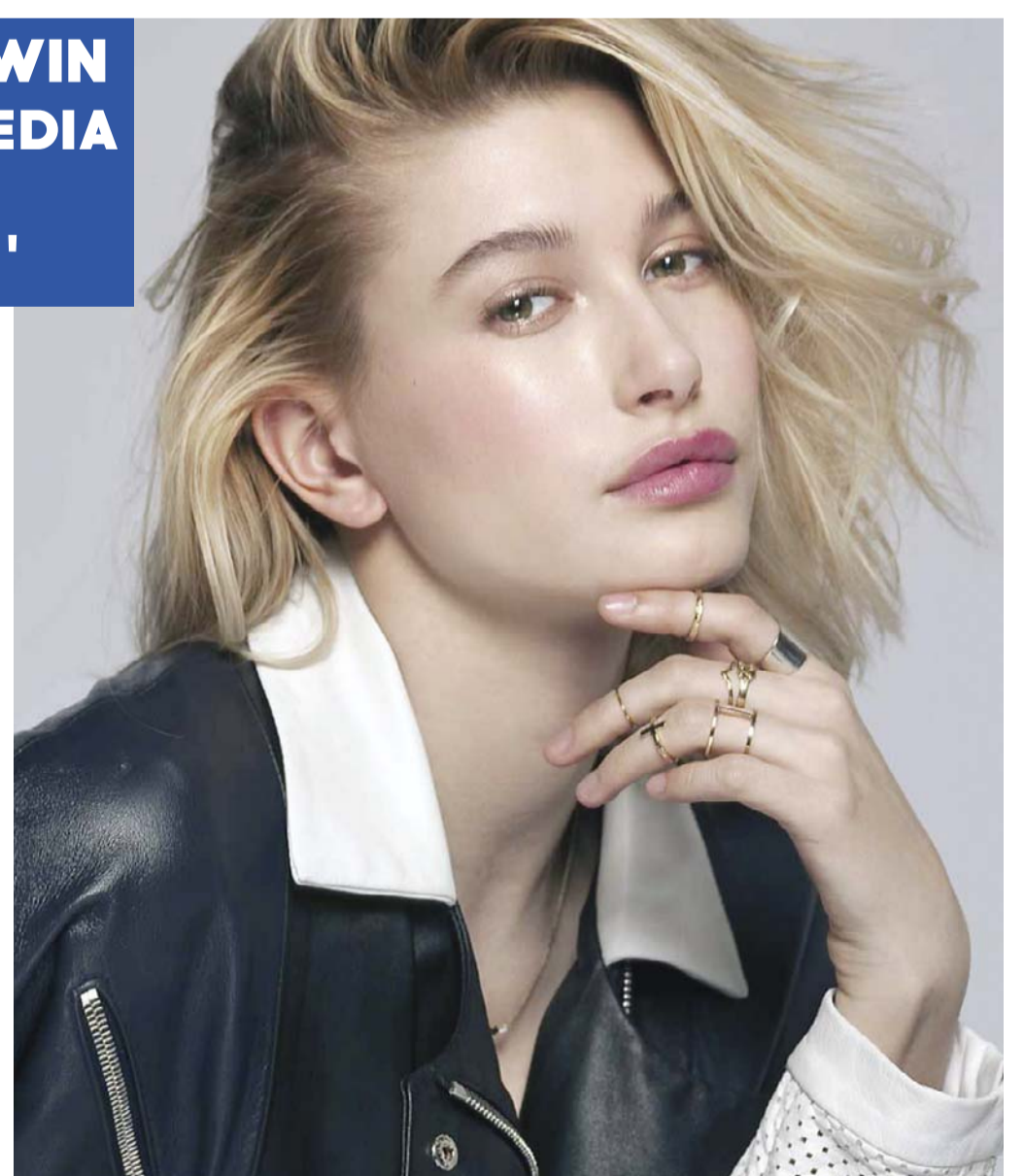


The boyfriend of the late 'Careless Whisper' hitmaker - who passed away on Christmas Day (25.12.16) aged 53 - has reportedly "disappeared" since George's death and has made no attempt to "get in touch" with George's family, according to the late star's cousin Andros Georgiou. Speaking about Fadi - who found the former Wham! singer's body in bed - Andros said: "Fadi disappeared after George's death. He was never a part of the family because he and George just had an arrangement. Fadi had a retainer of more than £10,000 a month, lived in his house and was supposed to be there when he wanted company, though last year he wasn't so available. It was just business, really. But he was still the last person to see George alive, and if he had any respect for the family he would have got in touch." And Andros, 54, believes the family are still

owed answers from the 43-year-old hairdresser. He continued: "There are still real questions he needs to answer. Why did he go in the house? Why did he wait so long to call 999 when his lover was upstairs dying? Instead of explaining to George's family, he is sitting in his £5million house in Regent's Park. You would have thought he might have decided, 'Out of respect, I'll go somewhere else.' But he is still living there. Why?" Andros also claims Fadi will not be written into the late star's will, and won't inherit George's house "in a million years." He told The Sun newspaper: "He isn't going to inherit it, not in a million years. I'm pretty sure he won't see any of George's money. After all, he was going to be out of his life. He would have been gone by now if Yogi was still alive. And he has done nothing but promote himself since he died."

HAILEY BALDWIN SAYS SOCIAL MEDIA MAKES HER 'DEPRESSED'

Although the 20-year-old model is a keen user of Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, she admitted she often doesn't like what she reads or sees about herself on the public platforms. Speaking to The Times Magazine, she said: "It definitely does something to the soul. There are times when I feel depressed or anxious and a big part of it comes from that. If we didn't have social media, we'd have a weight lifted off our shoulders. It does affect you. People tell me I'm ugly, fat. I try not to care but the fact is, everyone wants to see what people are saying about them. Whoever says they don't google themselves is a liar." And the star - who often attends a Bible group when she is at home in New York City - insisted that she believes some people can become possessed by demons. Speaking about her beliefs, she said: "It's not that hand-on-the-head, you pass out, weird kind of stuff. I believe in prayer and deliverance in a very intense way. I don't think the Devil exists as a person, but I do think people can become possessed by demons." Meanwhile, Hailey was not impressed when her actor father, Stephen Baldwin, publicly supported Donald Trump in the US presidential election last year but she insisted that their disagreements over politics have not soured their relationship. She said: "It was a very big issue for me, but my dad's still my dad. I would never let politics get in the way of family. It's over now, and his opinions have changed with how everything's now unfolding."





Watson's 'scheduling conflict' was to blame for 'La La Land'

Although Emma, 26, was originally attached to the leading role in the musical - which eventually went to Emma Stone - she insists reports that her "crazy demands" are the reason she didn't get the part, are untrue. Speaking during an interview with SiriusXM's Town Hall, she said: "It's one of these frustrating things where names get attached to projects very early on as a way to kind of build anticipation or excitement for something that's coming before anything is really actually agreed or set in stone. ["Beauty and the Beast"] wasn't a movie I could just sort of step into. I knew I had horse training, I knew I had dancing, I knew I had three months of singing ahead of me and I knew I had to be in London to really do that. This wasn't a movie I could just kind of parachute into. I knew I had to do the work, and I had to be where I had to be. So, you know, scheduling conflict-wise, it just didn't work out." However, Watson had nothing

but praise for the movie. She said: "I'm so thrilled that musicals are so celebrated at the moment! They seem to be back in the zeitgeist and people are kind of celebrating and loving music and singing and dancing again. I thought ["La La Land"] was wonderful. It's lovely." It was previously claimed that the 'Harry Potter' actress made a series of "crazy demands" and whilst producers "jumped through hoops" to give her what she wanted, she ultimately decided she wasn't right for the role. One insider said: "Watson was offered the lead female role, but she initially wouldn't commit. Then she began making all these crazy demands, like rehearsals for the film must be done in London - for a film called 'La La Land'! They jumped through hoops to make it work with her, but she just didn't feel the film was right for her. Producers finally cast Emma Stone - and once she was on board, Ryan Gosling jumped at the chance to work with her again."

Bieber tells fan she made him sick after she asked for a selfie

The 23-year-old singer was approached by 20-year-old Sabah Helal in Sydney, Australia, during the week but left her in tears after verbally lashing out after her request. Justin allegedly said to her: "You're invading my privacy, I don't want a photo. Look at you, you make me sick." Sabah's mother Houda Bennaoui told The Herald Sun: "My daughter was bawling her eyes out. She was dying to meet him and then he humiliated her. "After years of supporting him, my daughter will never see him again in concert." Justin's fan snub came after Adele defended him when he was booed at her recent concert in Sydney. Speaking during her gig at the ANZ Stadium, Adele, 28, asked concertgoers if they planned to attend Justin's upcoming show at the same stadium later this month, but her question was greeted by boos from her fans. However, she quickly rushed to defend the star, saying: "If you started out at 12, you'd be like that too, okay!" Justin has been a controversial figure since shooting to fame with his single 'Baby' in 2010 and has had a number of issues with the law, paparazzi and fans. Last year, Justin explained that he would no longer agree to take selfies with fans because he was sick of being treated like a "zoo animal". He wrote on Instagram: "If you happen to see me out somewhere know that I'm not gonna take a picture I'm done taking pictures. It has gotten to the point that people won't even say hi to me or recognize

me as a human, I feel like a zoo animal, and I wanna be able to keep my sanity. I realize people will be disappointed but I don't owe anybody a picture. and people who say 'but I bought ur album' know that you got my album and you got what you paid for AN ALBUM! It doesn't say in fine print whenever you see me you also get a photo (sic)."



Liam Payne is 'having sleepless nights'

The 23-year-old singer's girlfriend Cheryl is expected to give birth very soon and Liam has been frantically trying to complete his debut record, by putting in all night recording sessions at Sound Tracks studio in north London, before the baby arrives. A source told The Sun on Sunday: "Liam is in a real rush to get as much done before Cheryl goes into labor. "He did as much work on his music in LA as he could but obviously he will be a father any day now so he's in London and has his phone on loud so he can rush to her side immediately if he has to. "But until that happens he will continue spending as much time in the studio as he can. It's not ideal right now but it will mean he's completely free to dote on mum and baby when the time quickly comes. "But it's fair to say he's already completely knackered due to this schedule. People at the studio only see him at night and he locks himself away from 9pm until 4 or 5 in the morning, only taking an occasional cigarette break." Liam signed a record deal with Capitol in the UK and Republic in the US and is reportedly set to launch his solo career in September. Record label bosses are keen for Liam to get his music out as soon as possible after seeing how well his former One Direction bandmate Zayn Malik has done in the US. A source recently said: "The record company are eager for him to get his music out there after seeing how well Zayn is doing in America. "His record company are hoping to put him on big US chat shows to perform. They need him to spend some time in LA to show he's committed."

Billy Ray Cyrus has told fans not to 'jump the gun'

After the 'Achy Breaky Heart' singer shared a picture on Instagram of his 24-year-old daughter wearing a white dress and a huge smile, fans were quick to wonder if she had tied the knot with her fiancé Liam Hemsworth, 27. Billy Ray captioned the original picture: "I'm so happy...you are happy @miley Cyrus (sic)". However, Billy Ray later took to the picture sharing site to repost the picture and add a new message, which stated: "Whoa! Don't jump the gun. Been at work #StillTheKing Glad to see so many love @MileyCyrus the same as I do #happy (sic)." The couple began dating in 2009 when they met on the set of their movie 'The Last Song' before getting engaged three years later. However, things didn't go to plan and they split for a few years before reconciling in 2016, with insiders saying they wanted to be sure that their love would last. A source explained: "She is happy with how the relationship with Liam is going. She's adamant that she doesn't want to get divorced, so she wants to make sure when she eventually gets married it actually means forever." Along with rekindling their romance, Miley is also reportedly keen to work with Liam on the big screen again. A source recently said: "She wants to do some more movies in 2017 and would love to work with Liam. It could be a romantic thing, a comedy or something that they play as characters who hate each other."



Adele is missing her husband Simon Konecki

The 28-year-old singer told fans that Simon has not yet joined her and their four-year-old son Angelo on her Australian tour and she can't wait for her 42-year-old spouse to arrive. According to the Mirror Online, she confessed to her fans: "I miss my man. He's not here yet. I can't even find time to FaceTime him because when I wake up he's going to sleep and when I'm going to sleep he's going to work." Meanwhile, Adele confirmed their marriage while on stage in Brisbane last week. Introducing her song 'Someone Like You', she told the crowd: "I could see in people's eyes as they were listening to it on their headphones that it reminded them of something or someone. "I was trying to remember how it was I

felt at the beginning of the relationship that inspired that record because as bad as a break up can be, as bitter and horrible and messy as it can be, that feeling when you first fall for someone is the best feeling on earth, and I am addicted to that feeling. "Obviously I can't go through with those feelings because I'm married now. I've found my next person." Adele sent fans in a frenzy at the Grammy Awards when she appeared to reveal she had walked down the aisle, although some wondered if it was just a slip of the tongue as she later called Simon her "partner". Collecting an award, she said: "Grammys, I appreciate it, the Academy, I love you, my manager, my husband and my son - you're the only reason I do it."

Pregnant Ciara has praised 'God's grace' after accident

The 31-year-old singer - who is pregnant with her and husband Russell Wilson's first child together and already has son Future Zahir, two, with her former partner Future - was involved in a crash in Beverly Hills on Friday (10.03.17) but both Ciara and the unborn baby are fine. She tweeted: "Thankful For Gods Grace, and Amniotic Fluid (sic)." And her husband wrote: "Momma Wilson & Baby Wilson are feeling great! God is good!" Both the Los Angeles Police and Fire Departments responded to the scene after a "Volvo SUV slammed into the front passenger side" of Ciara's white Mercedes SUV. However, she was spotted walking

around after the accident as she made a phone call and a source close to the star insisted: "She's fine." A spokesperson from the Los Angeles Police Department added: "From what we can gather, it was exchange information only." Meanwhile, Ciara recently revealed her son Future "can't wait" to be a big brother. She shared: "He rubs my belly and he says, 'Hi baby. I love you, baby', ... and then he puts my shirt down and says, 'Bye, bye baby.' So, that's his own thing. "He sees a baby walking, smaller than him and walking - it doesn't matter, it's a baby. So, he goes, 'baby' and he looks at me and he goes, 'Mama, baby' - and he tries to pull my sweatshirt up."



The 47-year-old singer and the 41-year-old ex-New York Yankees player recently started dating and jetted off to the Bakers Bay Golf & Ocean Club in the Bahamas on Friday (10.03.17), the New York Post's Page Six reports. Jennifer and Alex flew from Miami to Marsh Harbour by private jet and are believed to be staying at the home of a friend for the weekend. A source said: "It's early days, but Jennifer and Alex are really into each other." The pair are believed to have met at one of the singer's shows in Las Vegas last month, and are said to be taking things slow and just enjoying a "good light-hearted time". A source recently explained: "This is very, very new. It's not serious at all. Jennifer is just dating. "Jennifer and Alex are both not looking for a relationship, just a good light-hearted time. They are on the exact same page." News of the relationship comes after Jennifer insisted she doesn't only date younger men, following her on/off romance with Drake, 30, earlier this year. She explained: "First of all, stop! I don't date younger men. I don't think men have to be younger. It's not about that. I just meet people, and if I go out with them, I go out with them. And if I like them, I like them, and if I don't, I don't. It's about the person, you know what I mean? It's about who they are. It has nothing to do with age! "There's this thing, because I dated Beau [her backing dancer Casper Smart], and he was younger, and he was the first guy I ever dated who was younger than me, but then I got labelled right away. For me, it isn't [about age]. If they're older, they're older. If they're younger, they're younger. It depends on whether or not I'm attracted to their spirit, their soul, their whatever... their energy."

Jennifer Lopez and Alex Rodriguez are on vacation



Swift's stalker has been bombarding her with tweets for years



Mohammed Jaffar was arrested on March 6 for stalking and burglary after having allegedly followed the 'Bad Blood' hitmaker for months, but TMZ reports that he has been sending Taylor messages online since 2014. And his messages in February 2017, revealed that he had been to her apartment building in New York, with one message saying: "security guard in your lobby today prevented us from sharing" candy. He also tweeted her on February 16 to say: "I need to meet you tonight". According to the New York Post newspaper's Page Six column, Mohammed, 29, had been lingering around her home in Tribeca, New York City, for the past three months in order to land a face-to-face meeting with the star. According to court papers obtained by Page Six, Mohammed started his campaign in December when he arrived at her home and asked for a meeting with Taylor, 27, before being turned away. He then allegedly turned up to her building four more times in the space of two months, with the most recent visit taking place on February 15. Documents also claim that on one

visit to the 'Shake It Off' singer's home, Mohammed rang the doorbell to the building for "an hour straight" in an attempt to get her attention. When no-one answered, the documents allege he returned the next day to try again, this time ringing for approximately 45 minutes. It was also alleged that on February 6, Mohammed managed to find his way into Taylor's apartment building, and was captured on CCTV footage lingering in the hallway outside her penthouse apartment door. During this time, he was reportedly also seen on the building's roof between 10am to 2pm, according to the court papers. Not content with the in-person approaches, the court documents also claim Mohammed made a whopping 59 calls to the 'Blank Space' musician's management team between January 27 and February 16, where he allegedly demanded a meeting with the pop megastar. Mohammed is currently being held on a \$20,000 bond, and Judge David Frey has reportedly signed off on an order of protection which prevents him from having any contact with Taylor.

Brie Larson wants to see more women in the director's chair



The 'Room' star is gearing up to direct her first feature film and would love to see other women step behind the camera. She said: "I love that we're seeing stronger women on the screen - but I don't think that's the end of this conversation. Because I think that we're more than just being strong or just being mothering. I think there's a whole lot that goes on in between for us to explore. "I think the best place to start would be more female film directors - more female filmmakers of every different type of race - and we need to get out of these binary ways of thinking. "We need more intersectionality. We need more unique voices because what directing is, is saying, 'This is how I view the world,' and I think the way we can connect and learn more is seeing the world through other people's eyes." And the 27-year-old actress is proud to be portraying journalist Mason Weaver in her latest movie 'Kong: Skull Island' because she thinks Mason comes from "a perspective we really need". She added to the BBC: "She has a very specific role in this film, being the only one who doesn't have a weapon, as the only one that's not trying to tear this creature or any of the other creatures on this island down. And I think that's a perspective we really need. "Being compassionate can actually unite all of us much better than to dominate and control. I think that women innately have that in them. "What's interesting about playing her is that she is both things in her own way. She's not afraid to speak up. She uses her voice and is willing to put her whole life on the line for what she believes in. But she also has that deep compassion and I think women do have that."

Ed Sheeran hasn't been really angry for five years



The 'Shape of You' singer hasn't inherited the fiery temper of his father and brother and admits his temperament is more like his mother's, who takes a long time to snap, but when she does it's explosive. He said: "I'd say my dad is number one in my life in terms of influence and advice. But I don't have his temper, I have my mum's temper. My brother Matthew has my dad's temper. "Me and my mum, once in two years we'll snap and the temper will come up. "My dad and brother have very short fuses. "Every now and then there's one thing [for me]. If on a scale of 100, my dad's temper is a 10 on a daily basis and he'll snap, my mum when she snaps will be like 110. And you don't want to go there. "To be honest, I don't know the last time I was really angry, not within the past five years." The 26-year-old singer admits he has some "strong" opinions but thinks it is important not to air them in public as he isn't as informed as he could be about big issues. Asked the best advice his dad has given him, he told Britain's OK! magazine: "For the music industry, don't talk about religion or politics. And it's working. "I have my own views I feel strongly about. I'm a 26-year-old boy who doesn't really spend a lot of time watching the news or reading the newspapers. "Therefore, my opinion is not as educated as it could be. So I'm keeping my mouth shut."

Luke Evans surprised he wasn't offered the role of the Beast

The 37-year-old actor has won over fans and critics with his portrayal of Belle's would-be suitor Gaston, but he admitted that he originally had his eye on the leading man role, taken by Dan Stevens. He told Digital Spy: "I did wonder why they hadn't offered me the Beast but they came straight for Gaston. "The casting director knew Gaston was for me. I came in at the 11th hour, and it was always going to be Gaston, but it was hard to get my head around because he's a freak of nature, isn't he? "He's a larger than life man." However, Luke is now thrilled that he got to play Gaston and relished portraying the character on-screen. He said: "I went with the Gaston character and relished every minute of who he is and what he stands for, and the bad parts of him, and all the funny parts of it. "I think people are going to love it, I really do. I've seen it and it just takes you to that place, that magical Disney place. It's so huge and the film is so beautiful and expansive and it just looks fantastic on the big screen. It just looks amazing." Meanwhile, Luke recently insisted it is a "compliment" to be "objectified" as a sex symbol. The actor is astonished by some of the comments he receives from fans online, and though he acknowledges he's sometimes been asked to flash the



flesh where it wasn't entirely necessary for a scene, he understands that "sex sells" and his "public persona" needs to be appealing. He said: "On social media, people are very brave and say things that if they were in a room with you, they probably wouldn't. "In terms of being 'objectified', there are certain jobs where I've been like, 'There's no need to do this scene topless.' But sex sells. I don't take it too seriously. "In our business, you have a public persona - fans are going to look at us in roles and maybe objectify us. It's a compliment and I take it as such."



Nick Cannon's decision to quit 'America's Got Talent' was 'calculated'

The 36-year-old star decided to stand down as host of the talent show after finding out executives had "threatened him with termination" for a joke he made on a comedy special, which they claimed could damage their brand but insists his decision was never "emotional". He said: "When peo-

ple start to put restraints on my creativity, as an artist, I just have to stand on my square and stand for something. I've never operated for monetary gain. Money isn't one of the things that moves me or inspires me. "I love [money]. I embrace it the way everyone else does on this planet, but I don't make decisions based off of it. [The decision wasn't emotional;] everything I do is calculated." And Nick is positive about the future and wishes everyone the best. He added to Entertainment Tonight: "I feel like change is growth. I wish everyone the best. I wish all the new people involved the best. "I wish the brand to continue to flourish. I've got love for the network, I've got love for the production, and I feel like I'm growing as an artist, and as a human being, to bigger and better things." Nick announced the decision in a lengthy message on Facebook last month. He wrote: "I write this from a deeply saddened and dolorous mindset. After days of deliberating over some extremely disappointing news that I was being threatened with termination by Executives because of a comedy special that was only intended to bring communities closer together, I was to be punished for a joke."



Sir Elton John has 'changed for the better' since becoming a father

The 69-year-old singer and his husband David Furnish have two sons, Zachary, six, and four-year-old Elijah - who were born to a surrogate - and he admits it is "unimaginable" how much his life is different now before he became a parent, and he couldn't be happier with the changes. He said: "It's unimaginable how the children have changed my life. Years ago I couldn't imagine becoming a dad, but the kids have changed me so much as a person and for the better. "I love them more and more every day and being a dad is now the most important thing in my life." And Elton loves seeing his filmmaker spouse dote on their boys. He said: "David is a great dad, he's fantastic because he knows he

comes second now and he doesn't mind. We're very hands on parents." However, the 'Rocket Man' hitmaker insists their family is complete and they don't want any more children. He told Closer magazine: "We're not going to have any more kids though - we're done. We're the perfect family unit now." Every year, Elton throws a party in aid of his self-titled AIDS foundation, which he launched in 1992, and is proud to do as much as he can to raise awareness of the disease. He said: "It's great to have this party every year. I just want to make sure people get the information about AIDS and what they can do to help. "It's not a life-threatening disease any more - you can live forever with the illness - but I want people to be aware."

Brie Bella says 'staying active' has helped her pregnancy

The 'Total Divas' star is expecting her first child with her husband Bryan Danielson this spring, and has said her active lifestyle - which sees her enjoy sports such as hiking - has helped her "feel so good" whilst she's still carrying their unborn daughter. She said: "I've really gotten into hiking. I think being in Arizona I'm lucky to have the desert and all the mountains. I was heavily active into Barre and I kept going, but in my first trimester, I all of a sudden was in Barre class and I'm like, 'I don't think I can keep up.' "You have to be really careful, which I want to be. I don't want to like body slam anyone through tables. But it's nice to stay active. It makes me feel so good and I feel like that's why I've had such a great pregnancy." The 33-year-old reality star added that she usually hikes three or four times a week, and will then hit the gym in between for slightly lighter workouts. And Brie also admits the one unhealthy pregnancy craving she's been having is bagels. She added to E! News: "I can't stand ice cream or pickles, but I love bagels and fruit. If you give me bagel every day, I'm just in heaven, so I guess it's carbs." Meanwhile, Brie recently revealed she has already decided on the name for her little one when she arrives, opting to call her Birdy. She said: "We're having a little girl, and her name will be Birdy Joe Danielson. Joe, her middle name, is after my grandfather - his name was Joseph, and he meant the world to me. "Birdy is because my husband and his whole family are B's. And he married me, a B too, so his one request was that our kids have B names. I didn't realise how hard it was to find girl B names, but we both came across Birdy and knew that was it!" — Bangshowbiz



'Ghostbusters', Hart win big at Kids' Choice Awards



Cena performs onstage.

Kevin Hart and the bad bunny he plays in "The Secret Life of Pets" were both winners at the Kids' Choice Awards on Saturday night. Hart was named favorite villain for voicing Snowball, who claimed the prize for "most wanted pet" at the fan-voted show in Los Angeles. Hart also shared the "BFF" award with Dwayne Johnson, his co-star in "Central Intelligence."

The "Ghostbusters" remake was a multiple winner, claiming the "favorite movie" award and acting honors for Chris Hemsworth and Melissa McCarthy. "Finding Dory" was named favorite animated movie, and star Ellen DeGeneres was the favorite voice from an animated film. Wrestler-turned-actor John Cena hosted the ceremony at the Galen Center on the University of Southern California campus.

Other winners at the Saturday ceremony:

- TV show (kids): "Henry Danger."
- TV show (family): "Fuller House."
- Reality show: "America's Got Talent."
- Cartoon: "SpongeBob SquarePants."
- Favorite frenemies: Ginnifer Goodwin & Jason Bateman in "Zootopia."
- Video game: "Just Dance 2017."
- Music group: Fifth Harmony.
- Male singer: Shawn Mendes.
- Female singer: Selena Gomez.
- Soundtrack: "Suicide Squad." — AP



Host John Cena gets slimed onstage at Nickelodeon's 2017 Kids' Choice Awards at USC Galen Center yesterday in Los Angeles. — AP/AFP photos



Kevin Hart gets slimed after accepting the award for favorite villain for 'The Secret Life of Pets'.



Recording artists Camila Cabello (right) and Machine Gun Kelly.



Camila Cabello performs onstage.



The cast of Fuller House accepts the award for Favorite TV Show - Family Show.



John Stamos is seen onstage.



Actor Nick Cannon performs onstage.



Actor Zoe Saldana speaks onstage.



Demi Lovato gets slimed.



Singer JoJo Siwa accepts the award for Favorite Viral Music Artist.



Ellen DeGeneres accepts the award for favorite animated movie for 'Finding Dory'.



(From left) Perrie Edwards, Jesy Nelson, Jade Thirlwall, and Leigh-Anne Pinnock of the group 'Little Mix' perform onstage.



Gwen Stefani appears onstage.



The cast of Power Rangers movie get slimed onstage.



Children perform onstage at the 30th Annual Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards.



Actor Hrithik Roshan



Actress Sunny Leone



Actress Sridevi



Actress Sonali Bendre



Actress Raveena Tandon

Bollywood stars shine at Zee Cine Awards



Actress Urvashi Rautela



Actress and singer Illa Arun



Indian Bollywood actor Salman Khan attends the Zee Cine Awards 2017 ceremony in Mumbai on Saturday. —AFP photos



Actress Pallavi Sharda



Actress Anushka Sharma



Actress Neetu Singh



Actress Gauhar Khan



Actor Bobby Deol



Actress Tina Ahuja



Actor Tiger Shroff



Actor Chunky Pandey



Actress Alia Bhatt



Actress Raima Sen



Actress Claudia Ciesla



The Chicago River is dyed a bright green color kicking off St Patrick's Day weekend festivities on Saturday in Chicago. Thousands of people were expected to attend the South Side Irish Parade yesterday. — AP

Indian magician fights archaic law

Star abroad, pest at home

For a brief moment Ishamuddin Khan had the world at his feet: A pioneer of the "Great Indian Rope Trick" - an illusion of such legend it was long believed to be impossible - he thought fame and fortune were assured. But some 22 years after he first dazzled crowds with his ability to conjure a length of coiled rope out of a basket and up 20 feet into the air for an assistant to climb, he is still battling for recognition - for himself, and his art.

Angered by India's lack of support for his industry he is taking on archaic laws that criminalize street performers. "I love to perform on the streets, but under the law I am not a busker but a beggar," Khan explained. "I can't fight the law on my own, but I am determined not to give up," he said, adding that he had enlisted the help of a legal center to challenge the antiquated regulations, a foreboding task in India's creaking courts and maze-like bureaucracy.

Khan's father had a monkey show, while his mother was a ragpicker. He grew up in Kathputli Colony, an enclave of conjurers, snake charmers and puppeteers in New Delhi's slums famously referenced in the Salman Rushdie novel *Midnight's Children*



as the "magician's ghetto". But such trades are not valued anymore, he said, pointing to the decades-old Bombay Beggary Act, which treats India's millions of street buskers as a public nuisance and forces them into a state of perpetual illegality, where they must stay a step ahead of the law.

Because of this, there is little opportunity for India's tribal performers to be celebrated, despite the country's rich history of mysticism and artistic tradition. "In India, if you're talented it doesn't make any difference," Khan told AFP, glancing wistfully at his rope basket and other magic props in his shanty

home tucked away down an alley reeking of sewage. "If you don't have enough money or a godfather with you, or (sponsorship) from the government or a businessman that is a big problem. And that makes me cry, sometimes I feel very bad."

Pursuing the impossible

Back in 1995, Khan became the first to perform the rope trick for the public in an outside space - considered a huge feat in the world of magic as it gives little option for props, lighting trickery or hidden aids. The trick was first mentioned by European writers during the British Raj era, Khan said. It was regarded so difficult that in the 1930s the Magic Circle offered a reward to anyone who could do it. Decades later, a version of the story reached Khan. Already well versed in the skills of the trade from childhood, where he'd learned tricks from family and friends, he was motivated to take on the impossible.

"I heard once that if somebody succeeds in doing the trick, he would get (money) from the British Magic Circle. So I spent six years to find the secret of the trick," he said. He delivered the performance, complete with a child seemingly climbing the levitating rope, at the historic Qutub Minar monument in New Delhi to an enraptured audience of hundreds. "Overnight I won international fame, I was world famous," he recalled, reminiscing how the crowd broke into thunderous applause at the sprawling Mughal-era ruins. News of his achievement spread - he was invited to perform abroad, sponsors took an interest, and even now foreign tourists seek him out when visiting New Delhi. And yet at home there has been little interest in his repertoire, which also includes transforming mango seeds into a shrub by sleight of hand and regurgitating iron balls. Performers such as Khan often have to eke out a living on the streets and risk daily harassment from police who demand bribes or threaten charges because they are in breach of the law.

Calls for the government to amend the dated legislation have fallen on deaf ears. And the slum that he and some 2,000 other families of street performers call home is being razed, ending decades of tradition. But Khan, who speaks fluent Hindi and English as well as a little French and Japanese, is hopeful he can bring about change. "I love to perform on the streets, and I should be allowed some public space so that I can entertain passersby. Is it too much to ask?" — AFP

Joni Sledge of 'We Are Family' group dies at 60



Joni Sledge

Joni Sledge, one of four sisters who together sang one of disco's most enduring songs with "We Are Family," has died, a representative said Saturday. She was 60. The singer died at her home in Arizona on Friday with the cause of death yet to be determined, publicist Biff Warren said. "We miss her and hurt for her presence, her radiance and the sincerity with which she loved and embraced life," a family statement said.

Daughters of two performers, Joni and her three sisters - Debbie, Kathy and Kim - grew up in Philadelphia and enjoyed moderate success touring in the 1970s with R&B songs. But the sisters found a major hit in 1979 with "We Are Family," which was written by Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards, who had emerged as key figures in the disco craze with their band Chic. Joni Sledge, in an interview last year with *The Guardian*, said the sisters had become professionally frustrated by the time they made "We Are Family" and had considered other careers, such as studying law. "Recording the track 'We Are Family' was like a one-take party - we were just dancing and playing around and hanging out in the studio when we did it," she said. Rodgers offered condolences on Twitter, saying, "We did something pretty amazing together." Despite the message of family unity, Kathy Sledge left the group to pursue a solo career and tensions ensued, with Joni and Debbie remaining the core members.

Sister Sledge came together in various forms for performances that included the massive Festival of Families by Pope Francis in Philadelphia in 2015 and last year's presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton. Joni Sledge, speaking in 2015 to *Women's Wear Daily*, said that the group's main hit - with its chorus, "We are family / I got all my sisters with me" - carried a time-tested message of unity. "It's just as powerful today. That's one of the good things about it. It teaches respect," she said. — AFP



These photos taken on Jan 5, 2017 show Indian street magician Ishamuddin Khan performing in New Delhi. — AFP