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THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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JAMADA ALTHANI 28, 1438 AH

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**Travellers to Germany urged to apply for visas early**

**Troubled EU renews vows on 60th anniversary**

**Purchase of 777-300ERs a 'game-changer' for KAC**

**Arrogate wins Dubai World Cup thriller**


## GOVT TO NAME, SHAME SLACK OFFICIALS AS STREETS DELUGED

**FIRE DEPT USES BOATS, DIVERS TO RESCUE TRAPPED MOTORISTS**


150 FILS

NO: 17179

40 PAGES


 Min 16°  
 Max 27°  
 High Tide  
 11:27 & 22:46  
 Low Tide  
 05:08 & 17:01

### WEARY FLYERS SHRUG AS LAPTOP BAN TAKES OFF

DUBAI: A controversial ban on carry-on laptops and tablets on flights from the Middle East to the United States and Britain went into effect yesterday - with less fanfare and frustration than expected. From Dubai to Doha, passengers on dozens of flights checked in their electronic devices, many shrugging off the measure as yet another inconvenience of global travel. "It's a rule. I follow the rules," said Rakan Mohammed, a Qatari national who flies from Doha to the US two to three times a year. "The bigger problem for my family is the no smoking. On a long flight, they become restless after three hours."

At Dubai International, one of the world's busiest hubs, flag carrier Emirates dispatched staff to guide passengers through one of the most intense travel weekends of the year. Around 1.1 million people are expected to pass through as the city marks UAE spring break, Dubai Airports said. An estimated 260,000 travellers were expected each day from Friday through tomorrow. Dubai International Airport expects 89 million passengers this year.

Staff in red suits could be seen at the airport yesterday carrying signs explaining the electronics ban, ready to appease travellers with games

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: Firefighters and rescue workers salvage vehicles submerged in rainwater on Fahaheel Expressway near Mangaf yesterday. Kuwait is experiencing unstable weather including thunderstorms, sandstorms and strong winds. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat (More pics on Page 3)

KUWAIT: The minister of public works announced yesterday that a panel would be formed to examine why some roads and public places were swamped with rainwater late Friday. Civil servants who were slack and failed to deal with the situation "would be exposed" along with those who were responsible for the wide-scale flooding witnessed in Kuwait due to heavy rain, Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa indicated.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Mutawa said he held an emergency meeting with officials of his department to discuss the causes of the problem. A special and neutral committee will be formed to examine the causes that led to accumulation of huge volumes of water on roads and public squares in the country, he added, indicating that names of the civil servants responsible for the problem would be publicized.

The slack personnel including contractors will be referred to the public prosecution, the minister declared. The relevant panel will prepare a report about the issue and refer it to competent authorities in two weeks. Some low-lying locations in the country were swamped with torrential rainwater late Friday, amid unstable weather gripping the entire Arabian Peninsula.

Meanwhile, the fire department's PR and media department said firemen dealt with 49 reports during the stormy weather. The department added that all land, marine and airport fire brigades were on full alert during the stormy weather, when rainfall reached 50 mm in Ahmadi and boats had to be used to rescue 20 people trapped inside their vehicles by the rainwater. KFSM added that divers made sure no one was trapped inside completely submerged vehicles. — Agencies

## TRUMP SUFFERS HUMILIATING DEFEAT TROUBLED OBAMACARE REPEAL BID COLLAPSES

### BUCK STOPS WITH TRUMP

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump sat in the Oval Office on Friday evening in an unfamiliar position - having to own failure. His healthcare reform, his very first significant legislative proposal, had fallen at the first hurdle in a friendly Congress. For sure, the 70-year-old businessman had faltered before - from bankrupt casinos to shuttered hotels. But until now bravado was enough to keep his brand intact, and carry him all the way to the White House.

Now - in the fiercest spotlight in the world, as president of the United States - there was nowhere to hide. Fittingly perhaps, Trump addressed his failure from behind a desk in the Oval Office. It was in that same spot that Harry Truman kept a sign that encapsulated all the pressures and accountability of an imperial presidency: "The buck stops here."

Trump was not ready to take quite that much ownership, although he did profess to be "a little surprised" by the plan's failure. We got close, he said, as if it mattered. But Trump offered surprisingly little criticism for his brothers-in-arms. That may come when the dust falls. His criticism of the Democrats - none of whom were ever going to vote for a bill that dismantled Barack Obama's signature health reform - felt almost formulaic.

At the end of the day Republicans control the House of Representatives, the Senate and the White House, they should not have needed Democratic votes. There was no avoiding it: The self-professed "closer" had struck out. "Trump, it turns out, is not actually able to put together any deal that he wants," wrote Julian Zelizer, professor

Continued on Page 13

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump faced the biggest blow yet to his young presidency as his bid to repeal Obamacare went down in flames at the hands of rebel Republican lawmakers. Barely two months into his term, Trump was forced to withdraw an embattled Republican healthcare bill Friday, moments before a vote, leaving his campaign pledge to dismantle his predecessor's healthcare reforms unfulfilled.

The stinging defeat showed the limits of Trump's power to deliver on an ambitious legislative agenda despite Republican control of both houses of Congress. Already rocked by a string of

damaging reversals and controversies, Trump must now consider how to move forward in the face of a fractured, rebellious Congress. "Trump will have a very hard time dealing with these divides because he does not understand them," said John Pitney, a professor of American politics at Claremont-McKenna College.

On Trump's agenda are a major overhaul of the tax system and a bill to upgrade infrastructure like roads and bridges. "We were very, very close" to securing enough support for the bill, Trump said in the Oval Office. But with no Democratic backing, "we couldn't quite get there?"

Continued on Page 13



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump, with Vice President Mike Pence (right) and Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, speaks from the Oval Office of the White House on Friday. — AFP

## FILIPINO RESCUED AFTER 56 DAYS ADRIFT

MANILA: A Filipino fisherman cast adrift in the high seas by a storm survived for nearly two months by drinking rainwater as he helplessly watched his uncle die beside him, the survivor's mother said yesterday. The PNG Post Courier newspaper, quoting local police, said a fishing vessel found Rolando Omongos, 21, adrift and without food on a boat on March 9. Weak and distressed, he was examined by doctors and held on the island of New Britain while arrangements are being made for his return home, it said, adding his ordeal lasted 56 days.

A January storm separated him and his uncle Reniel Omongos from their main fishing vessel, leaving the two stranded on a tiny boat without fuel, food or fishing tools, said Rosalie Omongos, the mother of the survivor and brother of the deceased. "Rolando told me they lost their voices after one week and my brother later died. My son said he cried but his eyes were dry," she told AFP, speaking by phone from the Philippine port of General Santos. "He told me he kept his uncle's body on the boat in case a ship came to rescue them, but there was nothing and so he threw it into the water when it started to smell," she added.

After the storm Rolando and his 31-year-old uncle relied on rainwater they gathered using a one-gallon jug, the woman said. "They endured hunger and thirst and their skin was burnt by the sun because the boat did not have any roof," she said. She said her son and her brother sailed off from General Santos on Dec 21 along with other fishermen aboard the bigger vessel.

But when the fishing boat and crew returned to port after the storm without the two men, the family feared the worst. "We did not hear anything from them for three months. We thought they were both dead," the woman said. The men's employer later reported the rescue and the death to the Philippine coast guard on March 10, General Santos coast guard officer Emma Ruth Consuelo told AFP.

His mother said she spoke to her son by telephone on March 12, three days after his rescue. "It is difficult for us to accept my brother's death, but we are overjoyed to learn that my son is alive," said the 40-year-old woman. The family and the Filipino coast guard both said they did not know when the survivor would return home. His employers could not be contacted by AFP yesterday. — AFP



MUSCAT: The lights on the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque are switched off for an hour yesterday as iconic landmarks and skylines plunged into darkness as the 'Earth Hour' switch-off of lights around the world got under way to raise awareness of climate change. — AFP

### WORLD'S CITIES, MONUMENTS SWITCH OFF FOR EARTH HOUR

SYDNEY: Sydney's Opera House and Harbour Bridge plunged into darkness yesterday to mark Earth Hour, as global landmarks began dimming their lights to draw attention to climate change. Millions of people from some 170 countries and territories were expected to take part in the annual bid to highlight global warming caused by the burning of coal, oil and gas to drive cars and power plants. The event, which originated in Sydney, has grown to become a worldwide environmental campaign, celebrated across all continents.

Conservation group WWF, which organizes Earth Hour, said great strides had been made in highlighting the dire state of the

planet. "We started Earth Hour in 2007 to show leaders that climate change was an issue people cared about," coordinator Siddarth Das said. "For that symbolic moment to turn into the global movement it is today, is really humbling and speaks volumes about the powerful role of people in issues that affect their lives."

In Sydney, many harborside buildings switched off their lights for an hour from 8.30 pm local time as the call for action began rolling out across the world. "I agree with the concept, 100 percent," said student Ed Gellert, 24, in Sydney. "I think people probably avoid the fact that climate

Continued on Page 13



DUBAI: The lights on the Burj Khalifa tower are switched off for an hour in downtown Dubai yesterday. — AFP

Local spotlight

## NATIONALITY LAW



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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More than 50 years after the promulgation of the Kuwaiti constitution and despite us being a modern state, I fully believe there are three fundamental issues that are still controversial in Kuwait until now - the Kuwaiti nationality law, the election law and women's rights.

Some people may think that this is only an objectionable opinion that lacks support by material evidence, because the nationality law is clear. As is the election law for those who reach the age of 21. We also have a female MP in the National Assembly and a minister in the government, so the three elements have been achieved.

I don't think this is totally accurate. If this is true, the controversy would not have continued over 50 years, until last week. The election law and women's right are not the aim of this article today, but the possible changes in the nationality law has sparked a heated debate in the society. The Kuwaiti political scene these days seems a little complicated due to the desire of some MPs in the current parliament to propose a law to amend some provisions of Amiri decree no. 15 of 1959 of the Kuwaiti nationality law.

Naturally, there is great sensitivity over these issues in the Kuwaiti society, which suffers from a large imbalance in the composition of the population, and therefore each category has a personal perspective of their own interests more than the interests of the state, and this is very unfortunate, because we are an urban and civil state. The individual is expected to integrate in the state and not vice versa, and disputes over such issues often raise suspicion, especially at this time and over the circumstances experienced by the Gulf region.

The new parliamentary proposal includes the following: Dual nationality is prohibited and the interior ministry must notify such a person that one of these should be relinquished within a period not exceeding two years from the date of notification. If the time limit ends without the announcement of the choice of one of the two nationalities, an Amiri decree must be issued on the proposal of the interior minister to withdraw the Kuwaiti nationality.

The proposal also includes a request to amend some articles related to the revocation of nationality of those who gained nationality by fraud. The proposal includes the clause that Kuwaiti nationality should be revoked for anyone in the following cases (after it has been confirmed by a final judicial ruling and based on a declaration submitted by the interior minister):

Firstly, if the person enters military service of a foreign country and remains there despite an order issued by the government of Kuwait to leave it. Secondly, if the person works for the benefit of a foreign state which is at a state of war with Kuwait. And finally, if the person joins a body or a group

*I don't think this is totally accurate. If this is true, the controversy would not have continued over 50 years, until last week.*

that undermines the regime in Kuwait. According to these incidences, the Kuwaiti nationality should be revoked from the suspect alone.

According to the proposal, the courts have the right to examine decisions issued to withdraw and revoke Kuwaiti nationality. Perhaps the most important point here is that it clearly targets restricting the authority of the cabinet minister in withdrawing and revoking nationalities, and subjects it fully to the judicial authority. But as a Kuwait citizen, I have my concerns. According to some press reports, the government has reservations regarding the proposal of the role of the judicial power on this.

Such action will lead to the inability of the executive authority to remove the person from the place where he works, and they can continue to harm the country's interests. Also, this may involve depletion of government funds unlawfully and litigation may take years in courts, as well as the possibility of the expiration of the case or the death of the perpetrator. These are eligible concerns.

The government is concerned over notifying every Kuwaiti citizen who has acquired another nationality by declaring the lawsuit in the newspapers, specifying the time and waiting for the expiry of the period stipulated in the declaration, then the publication in the official gazette, and then issuing an Amiri order for losing the Kuwaiti nationality, because the proposal puts many burdens on the ministry of interior and encourages people to acquire a new nationality in the hope that it will not be discovered. This is true, so the issue of lying and cheating will not be resolved.

I agree that everyone has to respect the verdicts of the judiciary, but I am in favor of the state opinion that the issue of nationality is a sovereign right of the country. It should not be left to any party in granting or withdrawing it. After all, let's not ignore that the procedures of litigation in courts are slow and this may threaten or harm the society and people's interests. The case may last years in court.

I believe the decision to grant or revoke nationality is a state authority, so we need to be careful. There seems to be a lot of anxiety and fear of allowing such amendments in a vital case affecting the future of Kuwait. I support the government's reservations, and the law of nationality should be handled with extra care.

# MORE CITIZENS TARGET PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Recent statistics released by the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) show that 81.1 percent of citizens registered for recruitment had fled to get private sector jobs. Statistics also showed that the total number of citizens registered for employment since the beginning of January is 1,010, including 820 applying for private sector jobs and 190 for public sector ones. MGRP is a state department primarily concerned with helping national manpower find jobs in the private sector.

## SME fund

The parliamentary budgets and final statements committee met to discuss the budget of the national fund for small and medium enterprises development (SME fund) for the new fiscal year 2017-2018 and its final statement for the fiscal year 2015-2016, in addition to the related

remarks of the State Audit Bureau (SAB). Committee Chairman Adnan Abdulsamad said the meeting was held in the presence of Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan. Abdulsamad added that SAB was about to withdraw its inspection teams for the second time because the SME fund did not show any cooperation. He also urged the minister to take serious measures to avoid the violations detected by SAB, especially since the SME fund's capital was KD two billion, which could be jeopardized unless regular bookkeeping is followed.

## Road projects

The Ministry of Public Works' (MPW) Assistant Undersecretary for Roads Engineering Affairs Ahmad Al-Hassan said a total of KD 311,674,482 of the 2016-2017 budget allocated for the road sector projects (KD 373,720,000) has been spent so far. Hassan explained that KD

70,274,949 was spent on various road projects during the first three months of the fiscal year - April, May and June. He added that KD 45,829,659 out of the total of KD 106,936,968 was spent during the final quarter of the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

## Expat teachers

The Ministry of Education's (MoE) administrative sector starts receiving applications to update the information of married expatriate female teachers this week to make sure none of them receive rent allowance while their husbands already receive it from another government body. MoE stressed that all concerned teachers would have to check with the ministry by the beginning of April so that the rent allowances could be resumed for them. Notably, the KD 60 rent allowance was suspended for expat female teachers in February and March pending updating their information.



## POWER CABLE THIEVES ARRESTED IN JAHRA

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) personnel apprehended a number of people on charges of stealing power cables in Jahra. The detainees were taken to the proper authorities for further legal procedures. MEW has last year established a division where personnel are given legal authority to investigate cases pertaining with power



cable thefts and arrest suspects involved in such cases. The cables are stolen for the copper they contain which thieves sell as junk metal. The division was established in response to the growing number of such thefts which has resulted in power cuts at various locations around the country. In other news, traffic police statistics about accidents over the weekend showed that over 10 people were injured in 23 different traffic accidents.

## GCC CONCOCTS PLAN TO FIGHT EXTREMISM: OFFICIAL

**RIYADH:** Kuwait's Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has devised a strategy to stifle the rise of violent extremism and promote temperateness in the Gulf region, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday. Speaking after the third meeting of Assistant Ministers of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fareed

Amadi said that the meeting "tackled a number of pivotal issues to set the stage for the meeting of GCC Ministers of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs slated for April 19-20 in Bahrain."

He also spoke of plans to open training centers that cater to the growing demand for increased dialogue among Islamic scholars, part of efforts to showcase the genuine image of Islam, one that has been

sullied by extremism and terrorism. Moreover, Amadi noted that plans are in the works to open an observatory in the Gulf region that would keep track of all anti-Islamic propaganda.

The meeting brought together delegations from across the Gulf region, as the Kuwaiti contingent comprised officials from Kuwait's Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. —KUNA

## MUNICIPALITY LAW NEEDS AMENDMENTS: COUNCILOR

By Meshal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of the structural plan committee at the Municipal Council Ali Al-Moussa called for re-studying the new municipality law 33/2016 because it includes many loopholes. Moussa added that practice showed that many of the law's articles need amendment. For example, he noted that the Municipal Council is currently incapable of holding ordinary meetings because of clause number 2 of article 13 of the law which states that "a municipal council member is deemed resigned from office if he files to run for parliamentary elections." Several Municipal Council sessions were called off due to lack of quorum since a number of members resigned to contest in National Assembly elections that took place late last year.



Ali Al-Moussa

## SPEAKER WRAPS UP 3-DAY VISIT TO SWEDEN

**KUWAIT:** National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, along with his entourage, concluded yesterday a three-day official visit to Sweden.

Speaker Ghanem and his associates were seen off at the airport in Sweden by the State of Kuwait Ambassador to the nation, Nabil Al-Dekheel.

The delegation, comprising a number of MPs, was in Rabat, Morocco, on Saturday, where the legislators took part in the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union conference, before they proceeded to Sweden on Tuesday for meetings with the nation's officials and counterparts. —KUNA



Marzouq Ali-Ghanem



Director General of KFAED Abdulwahab Al-Bader meets with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri.

## KFAED, LEBANON SIGN \$36.9 MILLION LOAN DEAL

**BEIRUT:** The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has offered Lebanon a loan at a cost of KD 11.2 million (\$36.9 million) to provide the country with a steady supply of water used for consumption and irrigation. The agreement was co-signed yesterday by KFAED's Director General Abdulwahab Al-Bader and the President of the Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction Nabil Al-Jassar.

Speaking after the deal was sealed, Bader said that the loan will fund efforts to deliver an adequate supply of water to the Lebanese town of Bsharri, where residents have long suffered from a dearth of fresh water. Moreover, he noted that the water will be instrumental in boosting local agricultural production, which in turn, will help buoy the Lebanese economy. The KFAED Director General added that the loan will also fund a project to build 11 tube wells with a production capacity of 10,000 cubic meters per day, to ensure a sufficient supply of water.

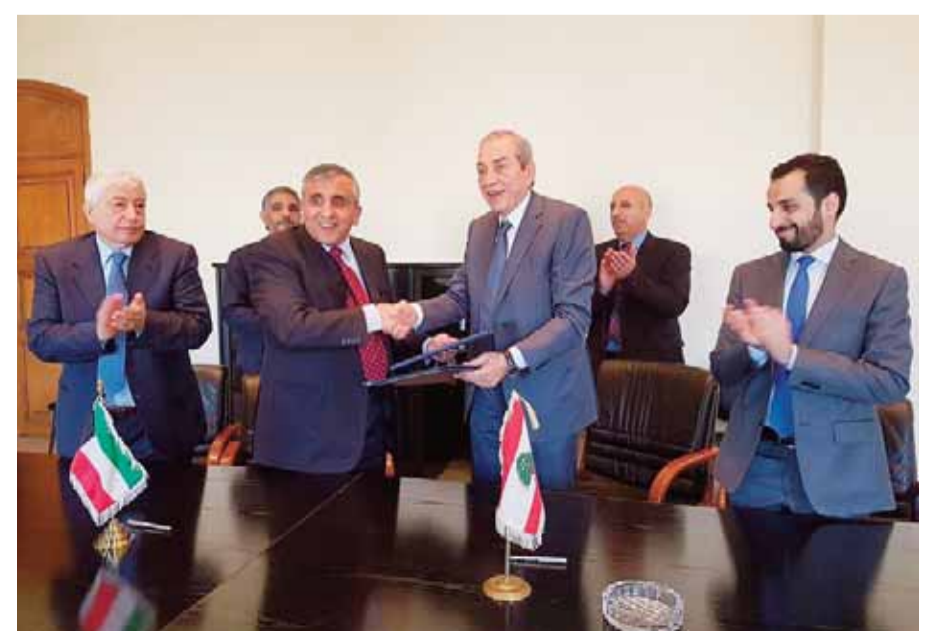
On the loan, he said that it will be paid over a 25-year timeframe with yearly

installments to cover the expenses of the projects. Copious amounts of Kuwaiti financial aid have trickled into Lebanon over the years to finance development projects in the country.

On Friday, Bader vowed to pursue support to development projects in Lebanon. Speaking following a meeting with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri, Al-Bader said he had discussed with Al-Hariri KFAED-funded development projects, primarily a sewage project in south Lebanon.

KFAED is also set to sign an agreement with the Lebanese government over a water and irrigation project in north Lebanon, he added. He reiterated KFAED's interest in aiding projects that could bring development and welfare to Lebanon.

The KFAED chief also met with Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Ghassan Hasbani and discussed with him health projects bankrolled by KFAED in Lebanon. During the meeting, they also addressed KFAED's \$86 million worth of aid to Syrian refugees, \$18.3 million of which goes to the country's health sector, he said. —KUNA



BEIRUT: KFAED's Director General Abdulwahab Al-Bader (left) and President of the Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction Nabil Al-Jassar shakes hands after signing the agreement. —KUNA



# RAINWATER FLOODS STREETS IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Photos taken yesterday morning show a tunnel on the Fahaheel Expressway leading to Mangaf completely submerged with rainwater after Friday evening's thunderstorm. Some low-level locations in the country were flooded with torrential rain water amid an unstable weather affecting the entire Arabian Peninsula. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat





KUWAIT: KFH and Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive officials pose for group photos at the company's showroom.

## KFH OFFERS UNPRECEDENTED DISCOUNTS ON BMW, RANGE ROVER, LAND ROVER, MINI COOPER IN COLLABORATION WITH ALI ALGHANIM AND SONS AUTOMOTIVE

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched a hefty marketing campaign in collaboration with Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive. The first of its kind in Kuwait, the campaign offers unprecedented discounts to KFH Elite, Ruwad and Tammayuz segments of customers on 21 models of the luxurious German cars; BMW Range Rover, Land Rover Discovery and Mini Cooper.

KFH offers several financing advantages to forward sale customers and to the financing leasing programs. The benefits are installment without profit 0% for a period of 5 years, free periodical maintenance, 5 year warranty and other benefits that reiterate KFH leading position in the car financing market, yet reflect its keenness to offer the best discounts and advantages to its customers and reinforce its ties and cooperation with the instrumental partners in the market.

Mohamed Ghandour, Group Deputy General Manager Products at KFH said that the campaign is a tip of the iceberg, indicating KFH strives to uniquely offer competitive discounts to its customers in continuation of its pioneering role in the field of auto financing.

Ghandour statement was made on the sidelines of the campaign launch in presence of Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive officials and the General Manager Yousef Al-Qatami.



He added that KFH has the largest market share and works tirelessly to strengthen its position in the market for the best interest of its customers. KFH spares no efforts in offering best discounts to customers in collaboration with its partners in this field. This campaign encompasses different global trademarks. It is considered as the biggest campaign in terms of cars diversity and number of models; SUVs, family, sports, luxurious, sedan etc. This comes in line with KFH strategy to aspire for customers ambitions and meet their needs.

He illustrated that the campaign includes different financing products such as forward sale, financing leasing and financing against securities. KFH, for the first time, offers free comprehensive insurance on the financing leasing (lease to own) throughout the 3-5

years leasing period. Ghandour stressed the importance of customer service, while meeting their requirements, boosting the market and strengthening ties with partners.

Meanwhile, Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive General Manager Yousef Al-Qatami praised the strong partnership with KFH, indicating that the long partnership with KFH contributed in offering best discounts and privileges to customers.

He added "our partnership with KFH will be a major pillar for Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive endeavors for the year 2017. KFH offers customers 0% profit on car financing, and we offer 5 year maintenance and warranty. This is a real opportunity to customers to own the cars. It's undoubtedly the best offer in the market."

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### Shoot & Win KUWAIT SCENERY & NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Till April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Rules & Conditions**

The photo contest begins on March 12, 2017 and ends on April 6, 2017. To ensure eligibility for the contest, please submit files in high resolution:

- Photographic Camera:** Please submit original files (entries should include metadata if possible) in jpg format on CD or flash memory with hard copy on photo paper (size 300 x 400 millimeters or 11.81 x 15.75 inches)
- Mobile phone or tablet Camera:** Please submit original files in jpg format on CD or flash memory with hard copy on photo paper (A4 size – 210 x 297 millimeters or 8.27 x 11.69 inches).
- All photographs** should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it appears. "High Dynamic Range" images are acceptable. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization (removal of dust, cropping, reasonable adjustments to exposure, color, contrast, etc.) will be disqualified.
- Caption information should include:**
  - Location - Detailed caption of subject matter
  - If you choose to include people in your submission, you are responsible for obtaining the necessary permissions from the individuals depicted, and must be able to provide copies of these to Kuwait Times upon request.
- Kuwait Times & Jazeera Airways** has all rights to use the photograph in internal and external communications materials including but not limited to websites and web publications, fact sheets, fundraising publications, advertising, multimedia, presentation and membership services, annual reports and Kuwait Times' magazines, or by other individuals and organizations for Kuwait Times' use in news stories, newsletters, reports, displays, web pages, videos, membership premiums and the like.
- Winners will be chosen by a panel of independent judges.
- Original coupon should be stuck on the back of each photo with complete information of the participant.**

**Prizes:**

- First prize:** Canon Camera EOS 5D MARK II BODY + free Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Second prize:** Canon Camera EOS 80D +18-55MM IS STM + free Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Third prize:** Canon Camera EOS 750D 18-135 IS STM + free Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Fourth prize:** EOS 750D 18-55 IS STM + Free Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Fifth prize:** EOS 750D 18-55 IS STM + Free Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Sixth prize:** Canon Camera Dsc bus 310 HS + Free Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Seventh prize:** Canon Camera PSD 30 BLUE + free Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Eighth prize:** Canon Camera PSD 30 BLUE + Camera Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Ninth prize:** Canon Camera IXUS 180 BLACK + free Camera Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.
- Tenth prize:** Canon Camera IXUS 180 BLACK + free Camera Bag. One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways.

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## 71% KUWAITIS SUSTAINED OR IMPROVED FINANCIAL CONDITIONS IN PAST 6 MONTHS ACCORDING TO LATEST BAYT.COM, YOUTOV SURVEY

**KUWAIT:** The latest results from the Middle East Consumer Confidence Index survey carried out by Bayt.com, the Middle East's number one job site, and YouGov, research and consulting organization, indicates that the majority of Kuwaiti residents (71 percent), have either experienced an improvement or no changes towards their financial condition during the past six months.

### National economic conditions

Nearly six in 10 respondents in Kuwait believe that their country's economy has either "improved" or "remained at the same level" during the past six months, while less than a third of respondents suggest that the economy has "receded." When asked about future expectations, 47 percent of Kuwait respondents said that they are optimistic about the economy improving, compared to only 14 percent who believe the opposite. 22 percent of respondents expect the economy to "remain the same."

When it comes to current business conditions, almost four in 10 Kuwaiti respondents believe that the business conditions are either "good" or "very good," 38 percent believe that the conditions are "average," while 19 percent believe they are "bad" or "very bad." Kuwaiti respondents are optimistic about the business conditions within the next year, where 55 percent believe that they will "improve." 21 percent expect business conditions to "remain the same" and only 14 percent said that they could get worse.

### Personal economic conditions

Seventy one percent of Kuwait respondents believe that their current financial position is now "better" or the "same as six months ago." Less than a quarter (22 percent) of respondents believe that it has become "worse." When it comes to future expectations, more than half (56 percent) of Kuwaiti respondents expect that their financial situation will "improve" in the next six months, and 21 percent believe that it will "remain the same as it is now." Only 13 percent of respondents expect it to become worse.

### Current job perspective

In Kuwait, over four in ten (42 percent) employed respondents reported that the number of employees in their companies has increased over the past six months. The majority of those who were surveyed (42 percent) expect the number of employees in their organization to increase over the next six months.

With regards to satisfaction levels, nearly six in 10 Kuwaiti respondents are satisfied with their career growth opportunities. When it comes to compensation, 42 percent of Kuwaiti respondents are satisfied and 45 percent are satisfied with the non-monetary benefits they receive. Nearly half (48 percent) of respondents in Kuwait are satisfied with the level of job security that they have in their current organization.

"As the leading job site in the Middle East, we find it vital to provide all professionals with insights on the economic and financial conditions and how they connect to the job market and availability of career opportunities," said Suhail Masri, Vice President of Employer Solutions, Bayt.com. "We want to always empower professionals, job seekers and employers alike, to address and overcome any economic changes and make room for improvements in their careers. Employers who are invested in attracting, hiring, and retaining quality talent, who help them maximize productivity, will find our tools, such as CV Search and Job Postings, to be exactly what they need. Similarly, job seekers who stand in face of tough competition will make use of over 10,000 jobs that are available on Bayt.com on any given day as well as the numerous job search tools and resources that help make them stronger candidates."

### Spending and investment

When it comes to future spending and investment plans, one third (33 percent) of Kuwaiti respondents claim that they are planning to buy a vehicle for personal use in the next 12 months. Of those who are planning to purchase a vehicle, 53 percent are planning to buy a new one, while 41 percent are planning to buy a used one.

Respondents were asked about their plans to invest in property, 35 percent of Kuwait respondents say that they are planning to purchase property in the next 12 months. Of those who are planning on making a property investment, 50 percent will be looking to buy a new property, while 39 percent plan to invest in a pre-owned property. In terms of the type of property, more than four in ten respondents are planning to purchase an apartment (42 percent), while 33 percent will buy a villa/townhouse/bungalow and 17 percent plan to invest in commercial property.

Regarding purchasing plans for consumer goods, 16 percent of Kuwaiti residents plan to purchase furniture within the next six months, 14 percent of respondents are planning to buy a tablet or a smartphone, and 13 percent plan to buy a desktop or a laptop.

Arleen Gonsalves, Associate Research Manager, YouGov, said: "It is important for us to regularly conduct thorough research regarding consumer sentiments and opinions and share that information with the region. The Middle East Consumer Confidence Index survey gives us many insights into the personal, business and economic conditions of the region. For instance, the majority of respondents are anticipating an increase in the cost of living and perhaps that signals a need to re-evaluate the stability of personal finances and plan income sources accordingly." Data for the Bayt.com Middle East Consumer Confidence Index survey was collected online from January 10 to January 31, 2017, with 2,750 respondents from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. Males and females aged over 18 years old, of all nationalities, were included in the survey.

## EXPERT PREDICTS OIL AT \$58 PB BY 2017'S END

**KUWAIT:** Oil prices are expected to touch the level of \$58 per barrel (pb) by end of 2017, if OPEC and non-OPEC countries commit to cutting output, Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Catalyst Company Hasan Qabazard said. Oil prices may drop to \$40 pb if non-OPEC countries fail to commit to their pledges aiming to reduce production, Qabazard said. He was a senior official at OPEC, said in an interview yesterday.

He added that average oil price depends on the commitment of OPEC and non-OPEC countries to cut output. Levels of commercial stocks in industrial countries will play a key role in determining oil prices in the forthcoming period, he noted.

Qabazard expected that price of Brent crude oil will be around \$55 a barrel in case only OPEC countries abide by the agreement to reduce output. He, however, stressed that if non-OPEC countries, mainly Russia, are committed to the agreement, which entered force beginning of this year and aimed at slashing over 1.5 million bpd, the price will rise to reach \$58 a barrel. "It cannot be said that OPEC has regained its influential status on global oil markets after the agreement, as it always have effective

position in these markets, and produces 35 percent of global oil output," he said.

Asked about results of reducing output, he said the outcomes have been 'good' so far, as prices rose to levels of \$53-56 for Brent crude. He anticipated that prices will be around the same levels or slightly lower during the forthcoming period, saying it depends on the development of commercial stocks. Qabazard said choosing Kuwait to head the monitoring committee on cutting oil output means that it is a 'neutral country'.

He pointed out that many member states have the same impression, as Kuwait was chosen in 1994 to chair the committee of monitoring output when OPEC decided to calculate OPEC states' production. He affirmed the necessity of abiding by the agreement to cut production to be in favor of prices and stability by the end of 2017. The official reiterated the importance of monitoring markets closely, and "I think OPEC is currently doing this job."

Asked about the Kuwait Catalyst Company, he said that it was formed in 1996 and started its production in 2000, adding that it is a leading industry in the country. He noted that international buyers required

5,500 tons of catalysts but the company was only producing around 5,000 tons a year.

He anticipated that production of the company would rise from 4,000 tons to 9,000 tons per year, with the operation of the two environmental fuel projects and the new refinery. He explained that catalyst is a substance which leads to a chemical reaction that can't be consumed in any chemical operations. He stated that catalyst is able to remove sulfur and other impurities from heavy oil and transfer its particles into light oil free of impurities to be easily refined to produce clean fuel.

Kuwait is chairing the joint ministerial committee which includes OPEC Algeria and Venezuela, and non-OPEC Oman and Russia. Last November, OPEC member states agreed, during a meeting in Vienna, on cutting oil production by about 1.2 million barrels per day as of the beginning of this year. OPEC also received pledges by non-OPEC countries to reduce their output by 458,000 barrels per day. The level of OPEC output is 32.5 million barrels per day, with the aim of supporting prices, which have declined due to the surplus of crude at global markets. — KUNA



Mohammed Jaafar Monther Al-Ansari Phoebe Al-Salem

## CALLS TO MAKE FORUM PLATFORM TO LAUNCH TOURISM COOPERATION

**KUWAIT:** On the eve of launching the first Kuwaiti Youth and Tourism Forum, more officials have called for efforts to make the event a real chance to launch a new era of cooperation amongst all parties concerned with tourism, development, small and medium enterprises, creating job opportunities, diversifying national sources of income, the environment and national heritage.

The forum takes place on March 27th and 28th at Kuwait Regency Hotel, under the patronage of Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. It will be held in collaboration between the information ministry's tourism sector and Leaders Group, which serves as the United Nations World Trade Organization's (UNWTO) representative in

Kuwait. Participants in the forum's activities include UNWTO, the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Youth Affairs, The Scientific Center, Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village, Bayt Al-Othman Museum, the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program, The Kuwait Hotels Union and the Vintage Vehicles Museum.

The forum also includes various workshops and lectures presented by successful young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs such as the founder of the first online restaurant delivery website 'Talabat' Mohammed Jaafar, Saudi Arabia's Tourism Authority Consultant Monther Al-Ansari, Planning Team Member at Kuwait Municipality Phoebe Al-Salem and many others.



A man applies for a visa at the Al-Qabas Assurex company.

## TRAVELLERS TO GERMANY URGED TO APPLY FOR VISA EARLY THIS YEAR

MORE KUWAITIS VISITED GERMANY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** As the peak summer travel season approaches, Al-Qabas Assurex (QAVISA) and the German Embassy in Kuwait held a press conference on Thursday at the QAVISA office to encourage travelers to Germany this summer to apply for their visa early to avoid delays.

Al-Qabas Assurex has been the exclusive visa application center for the German embassy in Kuwait since 2011. "Those who plan to travel to Germany this year should not wait till the last minute to apply for a visa as the procedure will take much longer. If they apply today, it will be much quicker," said Manager Ameera Mohammed during the press conference.

There are advantages of getting the visa issued at Al-Qabas Assurex. "The applicant will save time and effort by using the services of QAVISA, as we provide all services related to the visa requirements including fingerprinting, photos, insurance and other services here at the center. A Schengen visa entitles the holder to a stay not exceeding 90 days per six-month period, even if the Schengen visa has been issued with a validity of one year or more," she pointed out.

QAVISA does not provide long-term visas. "An expected duration of stay over 90 days is considered long-term stay. Long-term visa applications (eg for studying, work permits, family reunification) cannot be processed through Al-Qabas but have to be handed in directly at the embassy," explained Mohammed.

### 12,000 visas

Last summer, the visa section of the German Embassy processed almost 12,000 visas per month and waiting times lengthened due to the high number of short-notice applications. "Therefore, the German Embassy would like to call upon all travelers to start filing their Schengen visa applications for their annual vacation in Germany from now and not wait just a few days before their planned trip in order to avoid any inconveniences. At the



KUWAIT: Al-Qabas Assurex Manager Ameera Mohammed (left) and German Consul Marisa Kollenberg attend the press conference. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

moment, appointments at the application center can be obtained within 1-2 days. During the summer travel season, waiting times of one week or more for an appointment may occur due to high demand," noted Consul Marisa Kollenberg, head of the visa section at the embassy. The number of Kuwaitis travelling to Germany has increased in the past few years. "With almost 65,000 applications processed by the end of 2016, the German Embassy in Kuwait has recorded an impressive increase of over 100 percent for Schengen visas within the last four years," she added.

According to her, more students from Kuwait plan to study in Germany. "The majority of applicants consist of Kuwaiti citizens and their families wishing to travel for holiday, leisure and medical visits. Expatriates in Kuwait also show growing interest in Germany for holidays, trade fairs and business visits thanks to the continuously expanding business relationships between Kuwaiti and

German companies," she added.

### Popular destinations

"Cities like Munich, Berlin, Aachen and Frankfurt number amongst the most popular destinations. Many travelers, however, also like discovering the different regions of the country by car or train, where they can enjoy scenic landscapes, unique shopping experiences and premium healthcare facilities at the same time. Also, more Kuwaitis have bought houses and properties in Germany," stressed Kollenberg. Applicants from any nationality can apply for a German visa as long as they have valid passports. "After an application for a Schengen visa has been submitted, processing normally takes between 3-5 working days if the applicant is Kuwaiti national, or up to 12 days if the applicant has a different nationality. In individual cases, it can take up to two weeks after all the required papers have been submitted to receive the necessary clearances," concluded Kollenberg.



Secretary General of National Center for Culture, Arts and Letters Ali Al-Yoha

## FIRST KUWAIT FILM FESTIVAL KICKS OFF AMID DISTINGUISHED ATMOSPHERES

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait First Film Festival kicked off Friday amid distinguished atmospheres including shows of art and cinema. The shows outline the leading cinema march of the State of Kuwait that was launched in the beginning of the last century.

Addressing the festival, Secretary General of National Center for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Ali Al-Yoha said in a speech on behalf of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah that culture and arts are pillars of the modern state.

Yoha added that art industry has evolved in the State of Kuwait, and become a mirror of progress and development, referring to keenness of many countries on organizing festivals to brief their nations on latest development in cinema industry. Kuwait has made great strides in cultural fields, and been existing on area of cinema for 40 years, he said.

Meanwhile, Shaker Abul, head of festi-

val, said the event would not be based only in showcasing cinema works of directors but it will help participants share expertise and ideas. The festival will hold several lectures, seminars and workshops which feature some experts in this industry, he noted. It invited some guests from Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon, the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Canada, Germany, Malta and Czech Republic, he revealed. The event is held under the auspices of Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah, who is also Acting Information Minister and Chairman of NCCAL.

The pioneers of filmmaking, who have played outstanding roles on artistic arenas in Kuwait and all over the world, were honored during inaugurating the event on Dasma Theater. Directors Khaled Al-Nasrallah, Hashem Mohammad, Abdullah Al-Mekhyal and others were honored during the event which runs until March 28 at the National Library of Kuwait. — KUNA



## KUWAITI PLAYWRIGHT KICKS OFF WORLD PREMIERE OF 'PETROL STATION'

**WASHINGTON:** Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam will return to the Kennedy Center stage in Washington for the world premiere of the first work to his newest trilogy, "Petrol Station." The story takes place at a remote petrol station on the border of an unnamed country in the Gulf.

"It's a modern dystopian story which addresses the problems of human identity, borders, loyalty, betrayal, love, ambition and the struggle for power in a civil war-torn country where the currency of exchange is smuggled petrol and fleeing refugees," Bassam said.

"Petrol Station is the tragic backdrop to a familial standoff where the crimes and secrets of one generation make violent claims on the lives of the next," he added. The cast consists of only American actors who portray widely diverse characters ranging from migrant workers to greedy warlords.

"With various travel bans being imposed by the US I was faced with the fact that my usual troupe of pan-Arab actors probably couldn't perform in the United States at this time," Bassam explained. "So we are using an all-American cast to present a cross-cultural drama." Bassam's time as an artist in residence at New York University is what he says allowed him to develop an "American voice to tell an Arab story" in which he deliberately choose to write the story in English. "Choices around casting; African American and Spanish speakers, and the way the story might carry echoes of other stories and moments from American or Western politics will resonate with US audiences where it is no longer 'happening some-

where else' but on their own doorstep," he said. Bassam was inspired to write Petrol Station after finding interest in the "periodic violence of the human experience. "I first started writing it in 2003 at the start of the US-led invasion of Iraq where scenes reminded me of the burning oil fields in Kuwait from the withdrawing Iraqi army twelve years earlier," he said. "Petrol Station is a shift in the form

of spatial and temporal space where events in the play intersect with current and modern day events." Bassam's previous work includes his five part Arab Shakespeare Trilogy in which the second work, Richard III: An Arab Tragedy, was also presented at the Kennedy Center. He said he hopes to offer performances of Petrol Station to Kuwaiti and Arab audiences soon. —KUNA



Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam

Crime

Report

MOSQUE'S IMAM STABBED

**KUWAIT:** An Egyptian imam of an Um Al-Haiman mosque was rushed to Adan Hospital after a young citizen stabbed him in the shoulder in the area's co-op parking, said Ahmadi mosque manager Ahmed Al-Otaibi. He explained that the imam was driving his car inside the co-op's parking lot when the young man approached from the wrong side of the road and asked the imam to back off, which he was in the process of doing when the young man stepped out of his vehicle, angered by what he believed was a long time taken by the imam to reverse, and stabbed him. A case was

Fatal crash

A 49-year-old American man was instantly killed and a 35-year-old Pakistani national injured in a collision in Mina Abdullah. Security sources said that the injured man was medevacked to Adan Hospital for treatment. Separately, a female citizen was severely injured when she was trapped inside her wrecked vehicle in a collision along Fahaaheel Expressway. Security sources said that the woman was rushed to Adan Hospital's intensive care unit.

Brutal assault

A 17-year-old citizen narrowly escaped death when five others attacked him at a sport center in Sabahiya, breaking his skull and stabbing him in the chest and back. Security sources said that the assailants also injured a Somali man who tried to help the victim, before they fled the scene. The citizen was admitted to the intensive care unit while the Somali man is being treated at Adan Hospital. Eyewitnesses reported that the assaulted man told them the assailants were his schoolmates.

Pedestrian hurt

A search is on for an unidentified person who used an air rifle to shoot at pedestrians in Salmiya and injured an Egyptian in his forties. — *Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa*



EXPAT-O-PHOBIA

By Saqr Al-Ghaylani

**KUWAIT:** Accusations towards expats for draining out state resources and blaming them for demographic imbalances has been increasing recently. It was even suggested to ban providing medicines to expats at public hospitals and clinics in order to achieve 'social justice for citizens.' I have been wondering over the past few days how this will achieve social justice for the citizens. What do expats have to do with social justice? Do citizens actually lose social justice because of expats?

Social justice means equality amongst various social classes. Which means everyone should be treated equally without differentiating between wealthy and poor, regardless of affiliations or nationalities. When comparing citizens to expats in Kuwait, we find a great deal of inequality in so many aspects. For example, they both do not get the same wages, like in many countries where productivity is more important than nationality. Expats do not have access to so many services like citizens such as accommodation, education, health care and many others.

Therefore, there is no way to compare them both, and thus, raising the slogan of 'social justice for citizens' is illogical and misused, which only make citizens feel the feeling of injustice and instigates unnecessary provocative feelings. Though health insurance is a good idea, most expats work for ministries and governmental institutions. How can we then save anything from the budget if the government keeps paying health insurance for its employees? In addition, some doctors said that the cost of medical treatment in Kuwait is far more than that of the medicine. Nevertheless, some people still insist that banning medicine is the solution.

Some expats might come up with foul practices such as selling medicines or getting more than they need. Yet, it is unacceptable to punish them all because of the acts of a certain group. Why deprive a truly sick person who has a limited wage and in need of medicine from his/her simplest human rights? Moreover, subsidized food items given to citizens are smuggled to some expats for personal use or to sell. Who would guarantee the same will not happen with medicines?

Reducing expat population this way will not be useful and will not solve the true problem Kuwait is facing. Simply speaking, if all expats leave, we will not be able to cover all professions they currently occupy because we lack practical experience in some fields such as construction and others. In addition, some professions are socially unacceptable and need time to be accepted by the society. Moreover, claims that expats are taking citizens' jobs are also untrue because if you review employment methods followed in Kuwait, you will see that twice as much as needed are employed in a department that only needs 10 employees.

All countries hiring expatriates suffer from accompanying economic, social or other problems because such employment has its pros and cons. However, because of the government's mismanagement, many problems have come up and expats are being blamed for them.

German Chancellors Angela Merkel hosted many Syrian refugees in the name of humanity despite of all the problems that emerged in Germany including terrorism. The difference between them and us is that they accept both merits and demerits of their own decisions, unlike us. We do not accept expat-caused problems though expats had been brought to Kuwait according to regulations and laws. We do not view expats as partners in the construction process, we rather view them as opportunists who have come to take our wealth and then will run back to their home countries.

Accordingly, expats view citizens as racists who consider expats as servants, not as human beings who have rights and obligations. This eventually creates a big disagreement, causing disturbed relationships that might snowball into a crisis.

One of the negative reflections of our views for expats happened recently when an academic addressing members of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States made fun of Egyptians and spoke about the state's mismanagement. He made his remarks before students who should be qualified to build their own country instead of filling their minds with political opposition's ideas. So, this negative attitude of ordinary people also affected academic figures who ought to be wiser and more aware.

We are not against economic reform but only if it is done without provocation and through complete studies of pros and cons instead of using slogans that will only make citizens feel some kind of imaginary fake injustice because Kuwaitis are much honored and respected in their state. We need to reform the labor market, fight visa traffickers and set minimum wages so that expats will not feel oppressed and overburdened with high cost of living. We also need to deport marginal laborers. Only then will we find the true solution of the problem instead of resorting to temporary ones for the sake of getting more electoral gains.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

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- Competition is open to ages from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) (15 - 17) and Special needs.
- The competition is open for all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
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- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
- All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
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- Any school or individual interested to participate in this competition is welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheets.
- Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
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If you are interested to participate fill the form and send it to Kuwait Times.

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We would like to confirm our participation in the above mentioned activity with the total number of participating student's so the corresponding number of drawing sheets can be delivered to our school.

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Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of interested students are

6 - 8 years  9 - 11 years  12 - 14 years  15 - 17 years  Special need

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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UNCENSORED PLAYS

By Mudaffar Abdullah

Miserable theatrical approaches have been dominating most local issues and concerns, and the latest was that of Al-Mubarakiya Market. This issue came after a series of issues including the citizenships, solving demographic imbalances, amending article 79 of the constitution and compelling each human being in Kuwait to give a saliva specimen to undergo DNA tests via a silly law.

Yes, indeed, all such issues were staged, and were nothing more than the theatrical acts made by decision-makers proposing hollow projects that are followed by public opinion reactions and frightening people of such possible life-threatening decisions; before other decision-makers interfere and defuse the problem by annulling previous officials' decisions and so on. Eventually, the plays are concluded by expressing gratitude and appreciation to whomever defused the problem. This is absolutely the peak of taking people and the public opinion so lightly through creating fake heroism and suggesting one-sided incomplete topic for discussion, which does not require any courage.

The citizenship issue should be subject to the judiciary instead of exempting the prime minister from accountability because of a deal involving only three withdrawn citizenships. The issue of increasing fees requires a professional study so that justice can be achieved and state economy be protected in other manners than the comic one followed in Al-Mubarakiya Market.

Solving demographic problems require more due attention to Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) programs and fighting human traffickers instead of expelling expatriates, etc. We have had enough of such cheap scenarios. We have had enough of creating fake heroism by profiteers licking officials' boots and extending 'sincere gratitude and appreciation.'

Ironically, all this is happening at a time when we do not have a true theatre tackling socio-economic concerns; one that will surely be subjected to censorship, clipping and script mutilation. The entire show might even be banned for some reason. Liberties in Kuwait are decreasing and we now have prisoners of opinion.

However, only politicians have the right to impose their plays on us without any sort of censorship or tickets. This is probably happening because they have a kind of immunity that the law does not grant to true writers. However, the so many acts of this silly play will never falsify people's memory or derail them from focusing on the major problem in my beloved Kuwait; not applying the constitution. —Translated by Kuwait Times



ABK CELEBRATES MOTHER'S DAY WITH ITS STAFF AND CUSTOMERS

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) celebrated Mother's Day with its employees and customers on March 21, 2017, spreading the joy of this occasion across its branches with delightful gestures. The bank welcomed staff member with a box of chocolates as a token of appreciation for their ongoing efforts, and in recognition of the key role they play in supporting their families. ABK female customers were also recognized and were presented with fresh flowers upon entering any of the Bank's branches throughout the day.

The bank also celebrated this occasion with the elderly, as it sponsored the Ministry of Social Affairs' Mother's Day event, which was held at the elderly home. The event aimed to spread joy among senior citizens in the midst of a fun ambiance with live music and gifts, specially arranged for this special day. ABK continuously seeks opportunities that allows the Bank to

engage with its people and spread positivity in the surrounding communities in which it operates.



FAKE COP CAUGHT

A citizen was arrested for impersonating a police detective and robbing an Asian woman in Salmiya. According to the woman, the suspect and his Iranian accomplice stopped her in a Salmiya street claiming to be police detectives, then snatched her purse with KD 170 in it. The citizen was identified and arrested, while the Iranian is still at large.

Sheep thieves detained

A five-member gang was arrested in Jahra for stealing sheep and reselling them, said security sources, noting that investigations are underway to determine the number of thefts the suspect had committed.

Con artist arrested

A Syrian man wanted for multiple fraud cases filed by citizens was arrested by Hawally detectives. The suspect managed to lure the victims into starting a business with him before he took their money and vanished.

Fire

A fire broke out at Sulabikhat police station detention, said security sources, noting that the blaze resulted from a short circuit and a blanket caught fire. The flames were extinguished and no casualties were reported.



**Shiite Lebanese women waging custody battles**

**SOUTH SUDAN'S RAPE REACHES 'EPIC PROPORTIONS'**



**ROME: European leaders pose for a family photo during a special summit of EU leaders to mark the 60th anniversary of the bloc's founding Treaty of Rome yesterday at Rome's Piazza del Campidoglio (Capitoline Hill). Against a backdrop of crises and in the absence of the departing Britain, the leaders signed a new Rome declaration, six decades after the six founding members signed the Treaty of Rome and gave birth to the European Economic Community.— AFP**

**EU LEADERS RENEW FRAYING UNION'S VOWS**

**SUMMIT MARKS 60TH BIRTHDAY OF FOUNDING ROME TREATY**

**ROME:** Europeans must contain their squabbling and carping about the EU if the Union is to survive, leaders warned yesterday as they marked the 60th anniversary of its founding in Rome by signing a formal declaration of unity. Four days before Prime Minister Theresa May, absent from the ceremony in the Italian capital, delivers an unprecedented blow to the bloc's growth by filing Britain's formal exit papers, her fellow leaders hailed 60 years of peace and prosperity and pledged to deepen a unity frayed by regional and global crises.

But days of wrangling about the wording of a 1,000-word Rome Declaration, May's impending Brexit confirmation and tens of thousands of protesters gathering beyond the tight police cordon around the Campidoglio palace offered a more sober reminder of the challenges of holding the 27 nations to a common course. "We have stopped in our tracks and this has caused a crisis of rejection by

public opinion," said their host, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, noting Britons' repudiation of the EU.

He said the failure to push the project forward during a decade of economic slump had fueled a re-emergence of "blinkered nationalism". Rome offered a fresh start: "The Union is starting up again ... and has a vision for the next 10 years," he said. Others, however, are wary of such enthusiasm for giving up more national sovereignty and also of others in the Union moving faster with integration. Poland's nationalist government has led protests against a "multispeed Europe", which it fears would consign the poor ex-communist east to second-class status.

Leaders hailed the visionary "war generation" of leaders from old foes France and Germany who signed the Treaty of Rome in the same room on March 25, 1957, along with Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and the

Netherlands; some offered personal memories of their own generation's debts to the expanding European Union. Jean-Claude Juncker, the EU chief executive, recalled how his father in Luxembourg was forced into the German army in World War Two; Donald Tusk, the summit chair born in Gdansk a month after the Treaty was signed, remembered growing up in the ruins of war and yearning for freedom behind the Iron Curtain. "That really was a two-speed Europe," he said in a pointed dig at his domestic foes now ruling in Warsaw, who have tried to block a push by the western powers to deepen their integration. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the bloc's dominant leader who faces a re-election test in September, stressed the Union must also address the complaints of generations for whom war is fading into history. "We will in the future have to concern ourselves above all with the issue of jobs," she told reporters.

**'United, or not at all'**

Fearing that the departure of its second-biggest economy and major global power could prompt the unraveling of the bloc, many leaders argue that only forward motion can revive popular support for the EU by generating economic and security benefits. "Today we renew our vows and reaffirm our commitment to an undivided and indivisible Union," Juncker told them, urging the bloc not to get bogged down in details that alienated voters. Tusk, too, warned against the impression the EU was about petty regulations: "Why should we lose our trust in the purpose of unity today? Is it only because it has become our reality? Or because we have become bored or tired of it?" he asked.

Merkel said leaders wanted to respond to people's concerns, about the economy, welfare, migration and defense with "a protective Europe" that offered assurances on their well-

being. All 27 national leaders, along with the heads of Brussels institutions, signed a declaration which concluded: "We have united for the better. Europe is our common future." They promised to listen to citizens. But locked away behind rings of armed police, the leaders may hear little of what thousands of protesters have to say on Saturday.

Addressing right-wing supporters of the Fratelli d'Italia movement, its leader Giorgia Meloni denounced a "great EU deception". "The real enemies of Europe," she said, "are the bankers, usurers and technocrats." The Union, she added, must be replaced by a new alliance of "free and sovereign countries". But for Maximilien De-Wyse, 26, from the northern French city of Lille, that was the wrong answer. Taking part in a pro-EU march in Rome, he recalled his Polish immigrant grandparents and said: "It is only united that we can save peace."—Reuters

**POPE IN MILAN HINTERLAND**

**MILAN:** Pope Francis arrived in Milan yesterday to meet families on a working class housing estate, nap in a prison and hold a mass for hundreds of thousands of believers in nearby Monza. Bells in church towers across over 1,000 dioceses rang out as Francis landed at Milan-Linate airport outside the northern city. The Argentine made his first stop at the Case Bianche (White Houses), a run-down collection of concrete tower blocks from the 1970s on the edge of a wealthy city better known for its football clubs and fashion weeks. "It is a symbolic choice. The pope wanted to arrive at the heart of Milan by passing first through the outskirts," parish priest Augusto Bonora said, saying the parishioners were "wildly excited" when they heard Francis was dropping by.

Around 10,000 residents and people from neighboring districts turned out to see the head of the Roman Catholic Church, whose schedule included visiting a Muslim family. "The Case Bianche is a suburb like many others, with all the associated problems, from security to small-time trafficking," Bonora said. With its dirty stairwells, broken mailboxes and defective lifts, the neighborhood has become "a little ghettoised", said Mirella, 68, whose son lives on the estate in one of the forgotten corners of the country's economic capital. Bonora said that "like all suburbs, it's been somewhat forgotten by those in charge," but insisted there were social programs to help the young and care for the elderly.

**Jailbird nap**

After visiting the families, the pontiff performed a blessing near a small Virgin of Lourdes sanctuary. "The Church does not stay in the centre waiting, it goes out to meet all, on the outskirts. It also reaches out to non-Christians and also non-believers," said the pope. He thanked the crowds for gifts including a photo of the local Virgin of Lourdes statue, which was recently restored. "As your Madonna was restored, so

the Church always needs to be restored," added the Holy Father. Francis's visit is "a unique occasion. Many people, non-Christians included, came to ask for passes (to attend the blessing)," said Cesare Nera, who lives in a nearby neighborhood and has taken part in the preparations.

After a meeting with religious leaders, Francis pronounced the Angelus prayer in front of the Gothic Cathedral in Milan's historic centre, before heading to the 19th century San Vittore prison. There he will sit down with 100 inmates and staff for a lunch of risotto, escalope Milanese and panna cotta prepared by the prisoners. "Sometimes, a certain hypocrisy leads to people considering you only as wrongdoers, for whom

prison is the sole answer," he told inmates in November at a special audience for prisoners at Saint Peter's Basilica. "We don't think about the possibility that people can change their lives. We put little trust in rehabilitation ... into society. But in this way we forget that we are all sinners and often, without being aware of it, we too are prisoners," he added. The 80-year-old will take a short break in the packed program after lunch, with a likely siesta in the prison chaplain's quarters. Refreshed, he will then head to Monza, north of Milan, where he will celebrate mass in a giant park before an expected crowd of 700,000 people to the strains of over 9,000 hymn-singing chorists.—AFP



**MILAN: Pope Francis attends a meeting with members of the Catholic Church, inside Milan's Duomo Cathedral as part of his one-day pastoral visit to Monza and Milan yesterday. — AP**

**UAE SURPRISED BY LAPTOP BAN**

**ABU DHABI:** The United Arab Emirates, one of the world's top aviation hubs, has said it was surprised by the ban on laptops in plane cabins bound for the United States because UAE security was already tight, but it pledged to cooperate with US authorities. Washington announced the new measure on Tuesday, prohibiting electronic devices larger than smart phones in cabins on flights from 10 airports in countries including the UAE, Qatar and Turkey. That will hit Gulf carriers Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways but not US airlines, none of which fly to those airports.

In the UAE's first official response to the ban, Sultan bin Saeed Al-Mansouri, Minister of Economy and chairman of the General Civil Aviation Authority, said it was surprising because the UAE aviation sector and airports had proven themselves safe. "The UAE is the number one ranked country worldwide by the International Civil Aviation Organization regarding the UAE's compliance with international security and safety standards," he said in a statement late on Thursday. Mansouri also noted differences between the US ban and a similar step by Britain. The British restrictions do not include the UAE or Qatar, but will affect other carriers including Turkish Airlines.

However, the UAE's statement said its aviation authority and airlines would continue cooperating with authorities in the United States and around the world to ensure safety. The restrictions has

prompted speculations that the move, enacted by President Donald Trump's administration, is to protect US airlines by stifling the growth of the Gulf carriers and Turkish Airlines, a theory dismissed by US officials and many experts. The Gulf airlines have been battling a lobbying campaign in Washington by US carriers that accuse them of receiving unfair subsidies, charges that the Gulf carriers deny.

But Ian Bremmer, the president of political risk consultancy Eurasia Group, doubts these claims. He believes the decision behind the laptop ban lies with the Trump administration's policy on battling jihadist groups. "This is not being driven by an effort to gain competitive economic advantage. I would be very surprised if that was what drove the policy," he said. "I think that overwhelmingly, this is an administration and a president that is focused on radical Islamic terror. And they want to show that they are taking action," he told state-linked Abu Dhabi English-language newspaper The National.

UAE carriers Emirates and Etihad are bracing themselves with the new measures set to come into effect yesterday during the traditionally busy spring break travel period. Etihad is encouraging passengers to pack their electronics in with their check in luggage, however, will allow devices to be handed over at boarding in a similar move announced by Emirates earlier this week, an airline spokesman told Reuters in an emailed statement on Thursday.—Reuters

## SOUTH SUDAN'S RAPE REACHES 'EPIC PROPORTIONS'

**MUNDRI:** After months of being raped by her rebel captors in the middle of South Sudan's civil war, the young woman became pregnant. Held in a muddy pit, sometimes chained to other prisoners, she later watched her hair fall out and her weight plummet. But the child was a spark of life. And so she named him Barack Obama, she explains, now free. "I still have hope," she says, caressing the baby's cheek with a finger. "I just don't even know where to start."

The slender 23-year-old is one of thousands of rape victims in South Sudan's three-year-old conflict, which has created one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. Sexual violence has reached "epic proportions," says the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan. Reported incidents of sexual or gender-based violence rose 60 percent last year. Seventy percent of women sheltering in UN camps in the capital, Juba, had been raped since the conflict began, according to a UN humanitarian survey conducted in December.

Mundri, a city of 47,000 people in Amadi state, has been called the epicenter of the problem. Aid organizations



Refugees prepare food including maize porridge donated by USAID and known locally as posho, during the visit of UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi to a transit center for South Sudanese refugees in the remote northwestern district of Adjumani, near the border with South Sudan. — AP

blame it on the recent increase in fighting here between rebels and government troops, the latest shift of the war in an already devastated nation. The young woman didn't expect to become embroiled in South Sudan's conflict. "I

just came back to visit my home and I lost my dreams," she said in an interview earlier this month. "If I talk about it, I just cry." She had been visiting her family in the summer of 2015, with plans to return to school in the capital, Juba. She never

made it back. Instead, she was abducted by rebels loyal to an opposition group calling itself MTN, after a popular African telephone company. Their catch phrase riffs on the company's slogan, taunting: "We're everywhere you go." The rebels burst through the door of her mother's hut, firing their weapons and shouting, she said. They were searching for her uncle, who'd been accused of conspiring with government forces. "They beat my grandfather and aunt and then said if they couldn't find my uncle they'll take me instead," she said. "I told them I'd rather die than go with them."

But the rebels dragged her into the bush and brought her to their headquarters, where she was charged, tried and convicted for her uncle's "crimes." For the next 16 months, she was forced to live in large, muddy pits infested with snakes, she said. Subsisting on only vegetables, she wasted away. "I'm not attractive anymore," she says now, tugging at the waistband of her baggy pants. Shifting around in a plastic chair outside a coffee shop, she shyly adjusted her headscarf, covering what little hair she has left.

She said she was released in December

because she became ill. "They told me to get medicine and then changed their minds and told me to leave and never come back," she said. Mundri has many such stories. According to a recent Inter-Agency assessment by international and local organizations focused on gender-based violence, 29 rape cases were reported in Mundri between August and October. Local organizations say the number is likely double that, but most incidents go unreported because of stigma surrounding rape. "Realistically, it's more like over 50 cases," said James Labadia, founder of MAYA, a local aid organization that focuses on women's empowerment. He has been working with rape survivors for several years but said things have never been so dire.

"The end of 2016 was the worst quarter I've ever seen," he said. The group received funds from the US Agency for International Development last year and Labadia plans to seek more, a possibility which may be clouded by President Donald Trump's proposed budget cuts. Reports of rape and abduction are rampant on both sides in Mundri, which is under government control while neighboring villages are held by the opposition. — AP

## TROOPS PAUSE MOSUL PUSH OVER CASUALTIES

### UN STUNNED BY CIVILIAN DEATHS IN EXPLOSION

**MOSUL:** Iraqi government forces paused in their push to recapture western Mosul from Islamic State militants on Saturday because of the high rate of civilian casualties, a security forces spokesman said. The halt was called as the United Nations expressed its profound concern over reports of an incident during the battle on March 17 that killed or wounded dozens of people in the Islamic State-held Al-Jadidah district of Mosul, apparently involving air strikes by Iraqi or US-led coalition forces. "We are stunned by this terrible loss of life," Lise Grande, the humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, said in a statement. Civil defense officials and residents have said many people lay

chief Brigadier Mohammed Al-Jawari told reporters on Thursday that rescue teams had recovered 40 bodies from collapsed buildings. The coalition is investigating the reports. Residents escaping besieged western Mosul have told of Iraqi and US-led coalition air strikes demolishing buildings and killing civilians in several cases.

The insurgents have also used civilians as human shields and opened fire on them as they try to escape Islamic State-held neighborhoods, fleeing residents said. "The recent high death toll among civilians inside the Old City forced us to halt operations to review our plans," a Federal Police spokesman said on Saturday. "It's a time for

Islamic State leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi declared a caliphate spanning large areas of Iraq and Syria in 2014. "We need to make sure that taking out Daesh (Islamic State) from the Old City will not cost unwanted high casualties among civilians. We need surgical accurate operations to target terrorists without causing collateral damage among residents," the Federal Police spokesman said. An army statement published in the al-Sabah state newspaper said that future operations would be carried out by ground troops highly trained for urban combat.

"Our heroic forces are committed to the rules of engagement which ensure protection of civilians" the statement said. A US deputy commanding general for the coalition said on Friday that the solution could lie in a change of tactics. The Iraqi military is assessing opening up another front and isolating the Old City, where the militants have put up fierce resistance, US Army Brigadier General John Richardson said. Fleeing residents have described grim living conditions inside the city, saying there was no running water or electricity and no food coming in. Aid agencies say as many as 600,000 civilians remain in the western half of Mosul.

But families are streaming out of the northern city, Iraq's second largest, in their thousands each day, headed for cold, crowded camps or to stay with relatives. Hunger and fighting are making life unbearable inside. The Iraqi Observatory for Human Rights said that since the campaign on western Mosul began on Feb. 19, unconfirmed reports said nearly 700 civilians had been killed by government and coalition air strikes or Islamic State actions.

The militants have used car bombs, snipers and mortar fire to counter the offensive. They have also stationed themselves in homes belonging to Mosul residents to fire at Iraqi troops, often drawing air or artillery strikes that have killed civilians. The United Nations' Grande said civilians were at extreme risk as the fighting in Mosul intensified and all sides must do their utmost to avoid such casualties. "International humanitarian law is clear. Parties to the conflict - all parties - are obliged to do everything possible to protect civilians. This means that combatants cannot use people as human shields and cannot imperil lives through indiscriminate use of firepower," she said. — Reuters



MOSUL: Relatives and friends dig the graves of two civilians killed during fighting between Iraqi security forces and Islamic State militants on the western side of Mosul yesterday. — AP

buried in collapsed buildings after air strikes against Islamic State insurgents triggered a big explosion. The exact cause of the collapses was not clear but a local lawmaker and two residents said the air strikes may have detonated an IS truck filled with explosives, destroying buildings in the heavily-populated area. Reports on the numbers of civilian casualties have varied but Civil Defense

weighing new offensive plans and tactics. No combat operations are to go on. The US-backed offensive to drive Islamic State out of Mosul, now in its sixth month, has recaptured the entire eastern side of Mosul and about half of the west.

But advances have stuttered in the last two weeks as fighting enters the narrow alleys of the Old City, home to the Al-Nuri mosque where



HODEIDAH: A Yemeni boy rides a donkey to school in the Yemeni port city of Hodeidah. — AFP

## DECLINE OF ANCIENT TRADE ROUTE DEEPENS YEMEN'S FOOD CRISIS

### IMPORT-DEPENDENT NATION ON BRINK OF FAMINE

**SHARJAH:** Captains of small wooden dhows are carrying food and wares from the United Arab Emirates to war-torn Yemen. But supplies are falling even from this centuries-old Arabian sea route that is one of the last lifelines to a country on the brink of famine. A two-year-old civil war has severely restricted the flow of food into the main Yemeni cargo ports of Hodeidah and Salif on the Red Sea, where all the large grain silos are located.

The small wooden boats sailing from souks in the UAE are moving small but vital supplies by making for the smaller ports to the south coast that are of little use to larger vessels - and often sidestepping military inspections that choke traffic by dropping anchor at secluded coves nearby. The deals originate in the sprawling Al Ras Market, a collection of dusty alleyways near the Dubai Creek where an array of food and spices are on display including colorful sacks of Pakistani and Indian rice.

The dhows - plying the ancient trade route that once carried the likes of pearls, frankincense and myrrh - supply 14,000 to 18,000 tons of foodstuffs a month to Yemen, according to traders. That represents a drop of about 30-40 percent over the past year because of problems with payment, as well

as adverse sailing conditions. "The Yemeni currency is destroyed, sometimes we can't get paid enough. We can only go once a month because the seas are too rough," said trader Mohammed Hassan, at a docking station at nearby Port Khaled in Sharjah "Sometimes we have to wait 40 days." The volumes of food carried on this route represent a small fraction of the supply to Yemen, which relies on imports for 90 percent of its food. But it has become increasingly important as fighting has raged, the economy has collapsed and Yemen has needed all the help it can get.

### Port damage

Thousands of people have been killed in the civil war pits the Iran-allied Houthis group against a Saudi-backed coalition - which includes the UAE - fighting to restore the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. The conflict has choked imports. Sixty percent of Yemenis, or 17 million people, are in "crisis" or "emergency" food situations, according to the United Nations. While vessels seeking access to Houthi-held areas must face inspections for smuggled weapons, the government-controlled south has less restrictions. — Reuters

## FACTS ON IS-HELD SYRIA CITY

**BEIRUT:** As an international coalition prepares a final push to drive the Islamic State (IS) group from Raqqa, here are five facts about the northern Syrian city:

### Ancient capital

In an area inhabited since antiquity, Raqqa reached its heights under the Abbasid caliphate. From 796 to 809, the powerful caliph Harun Al-Rashid transferred the capital of his empire from Baghdad to Raqqa, which sat at the crossroads of key trade routes. Major works were ordered and the city was dotted with grand palaces and mosques. The caliph's court returned to Baghdad in 809 and Raqqa remained a major administrative centre for the western part of the empire. In 1258 the city was destroyed by the Mongol invasion.

### Strategic location

Raqqa and its eponymous province occupy a strategic location where several major roads intersect on the banks of the Euphrates River. It is east of Syria's second city Aleppo, 90 kilometers (55 miles) south of the Turkish border, and less than 200 kilometers (125 miles) from the border with Iraq. Raqqa previously prospered from agriculture in the fertile river valley and benefited from nearby hydroelectric dams that generated power for much of Syria.

### First major city to fall

Two years after the start of Syria's civil war in 2011, Raqqa was the first provincial capital to fall to rebels, among them the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda's then-affiliate in the country. But tensions soon erupted into clashes between Al-Nusra and fellow jihadists of a precursor of IS. On January 6, 2014, fierce fighting between the rival groups ended when IS' predecessor seized control of the city. Five months later, Mosul in Iraq fell to the jihadists and

### IS bastion, gruesome theatre

Raqqa became a key city in IS's self-declared caliphate, a hub for the organization's activities and attacks in Syria, Iraq and further afield. IS took over all levels of civil administration, rewriting school curriculums, establishing Islamic courts and creating police units to implement Islamic law. Raqqa also became the scene of some of IS's worst atrocities, including gruesome executions, public displays of bodies and the selling of sex slaves.

### Coalition target

The city has long been a target of the US-led coalition that launched operations against IS in Syria and Iraq in mid-2014, and it has also been hit by Russian airstrikes. IS has since suffered a string of territorial defeats at the hands of US-backed forces in Syria and Iraq. On November 5, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a US-backed Arab-Kurdish alliance, launched a major offensive dubbed "Wrath of the Euphrates" to take Raqqa, where some 300,000 civilians are believed to live. IS is also under pressure on other fronts from a Russian-backed Syrian government offensive, and an assault by rebels supported by Turkey. Ankara considers the Kurdish component of the SDF a "terrorist" force linked to the banned Kurdistan Workers Party. The US says the 30,000-strong SDF now comprises mainly Arab fighters and has provided airlift and artillery support. French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Friday that Raqqa was now surrounded and that the final push would begin "in coming days." But an SDF spokesman was more circumspect saying several weeks of preparatory work was still needed. — AFP



GAZA: The body of Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas' official Mazen Faqha is carried by members of the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, during his funeral in Gaza city yesterday. — AFP

## HAMAS SUPPORTERS CALL FOR 'REVENGE,' MOURN OFFICIAL

**GAZA:** Thousands of Hamas supporters yesterday called for "revenge" during the Gaza funeral of an official from the Palestinian Islamist movement gunned down the previous day. "Revenge, revenge!" called participants at the procession for Mazen Faqha, 38, who was shot dead by unknown gunmen in the Gaza Strip on Friday. Hamas-nominated attorney general Ismail Jaber yesterday blamed Israel for the killing.

"This assassination has the clear marks of Mossad," he said, referring to the Jewish state's

spy agency. According to Israeli media, Faqha was responsible for cells of Hamas's military wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Israel arrested Faqha and sentenced him to prison over suicide attacks that killed hundreds of Israelis during the second intifada, or uprising, between 2000 and 2005.

He was released in 2011 along with more than 1,000 other Palestinians in exchange for Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier Hamas had

detained for five years, and transferred to Gaza. Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar, the new leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, headed the procession from the Shifa morgue to the Omari mosque, an AFP photographer said. Khalil Al-Haya, a deputy to Sinwar, promised retaliation. "If the enemy thinks that this assassination will change the power balance, then it should know the minds of Qassam will be able to retaliate in kind," he said. Hamas has ruled the Gaza Strip for 10 years. — AFP



## SCHOOL RAPE FUELS TRUMP-ERA DEBATE ON IMMIGRATION



Photo provided by the Montgomery County, Md Police Department shows Henry Sanchez. Henry Sanchez, 18, one of two students charged with raping a 14-year-old girl in a Maryland high school bathroom entered the US illegally. The crime became part of a national debate on immigration. — AP

**WASHINGTON:** A rape at a Washington area high school has drawn intense scrutiny as part of the immigration debate launched under President Donald Trump, since the two alleged attackers are Latinos who entered the United States illegally. Under normal circumstances, a case like this would not make national headlines. But these are not normal times in America. The attack feeds perfectly into the Trump narrative that the United States has porous borders and does not give priority to native-born Americans, and that unauthorized immigrants mean more and more violent crime.

Jose Montano, 17, and Henry Sanchez Milian, 18, are accused of brutally raping a 14-year-old classmate in a bathroom during school hours. They have been arrested and are in custody as they wait to go before a judge. The rape took place last week at a public high school in Rockville, Maryland, a Washington suburb in Montgomery County, which is strongly pro-Democratic. Seventy-six percent of the county's voters went with Hillary Clinton in the November election.

News reports say Sanchez Milian was born in Guatemala and in August 2016 crossed the Rio Grande separating Mexico from the United States, as do many Latinos seeking to escape poverty and find a better life in the United States. He was picked up by border control agents. A few days later, he was let go to join his father, who was living in Maryland while the youth waited to appear before an immigration judge. That hearing has not even been scheduled yet, because of a huge backlog in the courts: half a million cases involving unauthorized immigrants waiting to see if they can stay or will be deported. An estimated 11 million people live in the country illegally, most of them Mexicans and other Latinos.

### Xenophobia

The rape unexpectedly threw gasoline on the red hot national immigration debate, including plenty of xenophobic commentary on social media. Many Republican lawmakers wondered aloud how an authorized immigrant who does not speak English and is legally an adult,

like Sanchez Milian, can be placed in a public school in contact with much younger people. Fox News, which is popular with conservatives, has provided blanket coverage of the rape in all its ugly, violent detail. The television network also claimed there were links between the rape and so-called sanctuary cities, where local authorities do not cooperate with their federal counterparts on immigration and deportation matters.

The case took on national dimensions Tuesday, when White House spokesman Sean Spicer called the sexual assault "shocking, disturbing, horrific." "I think part of the reason that the president has made illegal immigration and crackdown such a big deal is because of tragedies like this," Spicer said. Rockville "should look at its policies," he added. Under Maryland law, anyone aged 5 to 21 has the right to go to school, even if they are in the country illegally.

The Trump administration is accused of trying to score political points at the expense of Montano, who was born in El Salvador, and Sanchez Milian. Trump

often links immigration to higher crime rates, although no serious studies back up this claim. In announcing his candidacy in June 2015, Trump famously said that some of the Mexicans who cross the border illegally are rapists and drug dealers. He has also called Latino migrants "bad hombres." The controversy deepened when the Republican governor of Maryland, Larry Hogan, urged Montgomery County officials to cooperate fully with the probe into the rape. This was seen by some as a veiled criticism that they had been dragging their feet.

### Totally indecent

Jack Smith, the Montgomery County Public Schools superintendent, said it is "totally inappropriate to suggest that we're going to deny a 14-year-old, a 16-year-old, an 18-year-old an education because of a horrible thing that happened in our schools last Thursday." He defended putting 17- or 18-year-olds in class with younger kids if the former's educational level requires some catching up. — AFP

## US SPEAKER RYAN DENTED BY HEALTHCARE DEBACLE

**WASHINGTON:** US House Speaker Paul Ryan on Friday acknowledged the unthinkable for a Republican leader: he could not deliver the votes to repeal and replace Obamacare, even though he and his fellow Republicans had vowed to do so for seven years. Nevertheless, Ryan's job did not seem to be under immediate threat, at least not in the House of Representatives he leads.

Ryan's long-time news media nemesis, the website Breitbart, said Republicans were "openly discussing" finding a replacement for him after he pulled a bill to roll back Obamacare from the House floor just minutes before an intensely awaited final vote. The Breitbart article did not quote anyone by name. In the House, just after the bill was pulled, several lawmakers brushed aside suggestions that the failure spelled trouble for Ryan, the 2012 Republican vice presidential candidate, who many have speculated has presidential ambitions.

Ryan, 47, has been speaker since October 2015. Under the law, he is next in line to the presidency after Vice President Mike Pence. Republican Representative Justin Amash, a harsh critic of the ill-fated healthcare bill, told reporters, "We can do better with the legislative process." But, he added, "Nobody is talking about" trying to oust Ryan as speaker. Amash had disparagingly dubbed the Republican healthcare bill "Obamacare 2.0," after Democratic

former President Barack Obama's signature domestic policy achievement, the 2010 Affordable Care Act, popularly known as Obamacare.

Amash is a member of the hard-line conservative Freedom Caucus, which in 2015 ousted Ryan's predecessor as speaker, John Boehner, from the post. The caucus played a key role in the demise of the healthcare bill. Ryan chose to make healthcare reform the first target on a list of legislative goals for the new Republican-majority Congress. He admitted on Friday that he was disappointed by the outcome. Republicans faced resistance to the healthcare bill from both conservatives and moderates, making the process of winning passage difficult for the leadership.

Republican Representative Joe Barton, asked about the impact of Friday's loss on Ryan, told reporters: "The speaker is a human being. He's not Superman." Republican Representative Barry Loudermilk, who backed the healthcare bill, said he didn't think the loss weakened the speaker's hand. One Republican lawmaker who has been considered potential speaker material, Representative Jeb Hensarling of Texas, effusively praised Ryan, saying he had shown "phenomenal leadership." "It is my hope that we can regroup and rally behind him (Ryan) and the president as a conference to deliver on our promise" to dismantle Obamacare, Hensarling said in a statement. — Reuters



House Speaker Paul Ryan

## IMMIGRANTS FIND SANCTUARY IN AUSTIN CHURCH NETWORK

**AUSTIN:** Senior Minister Meg Barnhouse knows she'll need beds, a dresser, chairs and a mirror to make the classroom at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin feel more like a home for a mother and her young daughter who are still deciding whether they will become the latest immigrants seeking sanctuary from deportation by moving into a church. It would be the second time Barnhouse's congregation had offered sanctuary. She was hesitant in 2015 because of the unknown legal and insurance risks, but this time she agreed immediately.

There is growing fear in the city's immigrant community as President Donald Trump's immigration and executive orders go into effect. And as more than 50 Austin area residents were detained in US Immigration and Customs Enforcement deportation raids last month, a growing number of churches in the Austin Sanctuary Network are volunteering to offer physical shelter or support to churches that do. The Austin Sanctuary Network has broadened in the last year from a handful of churches and advocates to more than two dozen congregations and religious groups, three labor unions, several nonprofit groups and dozens of individual volunteers.

This mirrors the loosely organized national sanctuary movement that has grown to more than 800 churches and congregations, with a good portion of those joining since Trump was elected. "It's bewildering for people at this point. It's like trying to repair furniture when the house is on fire," said Pastor Jim Rigby, whose congregation at St. Andrew's Presbyterian

Church in Austin has provided sanctuary to Guatemalan immigrant Hilda Ramirez and her 10-year-old son, Ivan, for more than a year. "Opening our arms to our neighbors goes without question."

### Sensitive areas

Pastor Laura Walters's small Presbyterian congregation in Bee Cave, 12 miles west of Austin, hopes her church can expand the network to reach immigrant communities outside city limits. They are still discussing whether the small church has room to offer shelter or whether they could get a permit to build a temporary shower. "Our faith calls us to live this out," Walters said. "In the near future we'll be at the very least helping support refugees and asylum seekers."

The churches are relying on a 2011 ICE policy directive telling agents to avoid "sensitive areas" such as churches, hospitals and schools when conducting deportation actions under most circumstances. Federal immigration officials said that policy is still in effect, but recent immigration arrests around the US, including inside courthouses, are increasing fears.

Austin, a liberal enclave in a conservative state, has had a strong base of immigration activists for years in opposition to a previous sheriff, who cooperated with ICE requests to hold inmates for possible deportation. During the city's involvement in the Secure Communities Program 7/87/8- a federal-local partnership on deportation ended in 2014 by the Obama administration - an average of 19 people were deported from Travis County each week. — AP



PHILADELPHIA: Stacy Biscardi searches the grounds of Mount Carmel Cemetery for a relatives' grave in Philadelphia. Volunteers helped clean up and restore the Jewish cemetery where vandals damaged hundreds of headstones. — AP

## JEWES, ISRAELIS FEAR FALLOUT FROM BOMB HOAX ARREST

JEWISH TEEN ACCUSED OF MASTERMINDING ANTI-SEMITIC THREATS

**JERUSALEM:** Israel's arrest of a Jewish teenager accused of masterminding dozens of anti-Semitic threats could encourage racism and ease pressure on US President Donald Trump to tackle anti-Semitism, Jewish groups have warned. Far-right groups claimed vindication that attacks previously blamed on rightwingers and alleged hatred resulting from Trump's election may actually have been carried out by a young Jewish American Israeli.

Jewish organizations and Israeli media said the arrest was likely to boost conspiracy theories, while others worried it would weaken responses to a rise in anti-Semitic attacks in the US. More details emerged Friday about the suspect, who holds dual Israeli American citizenship, though identifying details are subject to a gag order. He was arrested Thursday in Israel and accused of making dozens of anti-Semitic bomb threats in the United States and elsewhere, including one against a major airline.

His lawyer said he is 18 and suffers a brain tumor that may cloud his judgment. His health prevented him attending public school or doing mandatory military service, she said. Over the past two to three years, Israeli police said he carried out a series of hoax threats from his family home in southern Israel. In February 2015, he is alleged to have made a bomb threat against Delta Airlines, forcing a plane to carry out an emergency landing. "In a short time, a large number of Jews are going to be slaughtered.

Their heads are going to be blown off," one of the threats read, according to a recording obtained by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Israel's Haaretz newspaper said Friday the net started to tighten after a threat in New Zealand in 2016, with police identifying the IP address as originating from Israel. Using an antenna, the suspect allegedly accessed other people's computers to commit the crimes, the newspaper said, leading police to question a number of innocent suspects before eventually netting him. His alleged motive remains unknown. His father has also been arrested, with their next court hearing set for March 30.

### Jewish threats

The discussion Friday turned to the impact of the arrests, with Trump's response to anti-Semitism at the forefront. More than 150 threats have been carried out against Jewish institutions in America since the start of the year. At some locations swastikas were scrawled on walls and cemeteries desecrated. It is not known what percentage of the threats the teenager is alleged to have been involved with. Trump received significant criticism from Jewish Americans for his perceived slow response to the uptick.

He even suggested some of the threats might be false to discredit his movement. He later explicitly condemned anti-Semitic threats. Trump-supporting far-right websites hailed the arrest in Israel as well as a hoax case in the United

States, where the FBI in early March arrested a former journalist suspected of making bomb threats to Jewish community centers and institutions. He was allegedly cyberstalking an ex-girlfriend, using her name to make the threats.

The Daily Stormer, a prominent anti-Semitic website that had long alleged such threats were a Jewish plot, has claimed vindication. Alt-right website Breitbart News, formerly run by Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon, also saw vindication, but for Trump. "When the president suggested that some of the anti-Semitic hate crimes could be hoaxes, the (leftwing) Huffington Post claimed he was echoing 'white nationalists and far-right conspiracy theorists,'" it wrote. "However, the arrests thus far suggest that most of the threats were indeed hoaxes."

"The US Jewish leadership owes @POTUS an apology," Marc Zell, vice-president of Republicans Overseas, tweeted. US Jewish organizations have tried to downplay the political fallout, saying the arrest did not end legitimate fears. "No arrests have been made in three cemetery desecrations or a series of other anti-Semitic incidents involving swastika graffiti and hate fliers," the Anti-Defamation League's CEO Jonathan Greenblatt said in a statement. But Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice president of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, told The Jerusalem Post the arrest in Israel posed a risk "that people won't take the ongoing concerns seriously." — AFP

## SACRAMENTO MAN ARRESTED IN KILLING OF 2 ADULTS, 2 JUVENILES

**SACRAMENTO:** Police arrested a 56-year-old man who works for the state Friday on suspicion that he killed two adults and two children in a quiet Northern California neighborhood. Authorities did not release the names of the victims, but friends and relatives of a young family that lived in the Sacramento house feared the worst.

Rita Munoz, who lives in the neighborhood, said her grandchildren played with an 11-year-old boy and 14-year-old girl who lived with their mother in the house. Munoz said her neighbor's mother arrived at the house shortly after the bodies were found Thursday and was heard crying "Oh my gosh, my only baby. My grandbabies are all gone," after she learned what happened.

Later Munoz said she overheard the woman say: "I told her not to go back to him." Sacramento police declined to discuss the suspect's relationship with the victims and said they haven't determined a motive. "It's a horrible thing," Munoz said. Police originally detained Salvador Vasquez-Oliva in San Francisco about 90 miles (145 kilometers) away on Thursday afternoon and formally arrested him Friday morning. He was being held in the Sacramento County Jail, police spokesman Sgt. Bryce Heinlein said.

The four victims were discovered Thursday morning when police broke into the home after a relative reported that something might be wrong. Vasquez-Oliva was quickly singled out by investigators on Thursday. Police said he is from Sacramento, but records show he is also associ-

ated with an apartment near the University of San Francisco, six blocks from where police found him. The building is in a nice neighborhood, but is worn and run down. There was no answer at the door, though a light remained on inside.

The California Employment Development Department, which administers the state's unemployment checks, said it has employed Vasquez-

Oliva as an office technician since 2014. The single-story beige home with sculpted shrubbery where the bodies were found had a basketball hoop in a driveway that police blocked with yellow crime scene tape. It's located in a tree-lined residential neighborhood of neatly maintained homes near a church. Police have not said when or how the victims were killed. — AP



SACRAMENTO: Investigators gather outside a home where four people were found dead, in Sacramento, Calif. A suspect is being held in San Francisco. — AP

# LONDON ATTACKER: 'JACK THE LAD' TURNED KILLER

**LONDON:** Khalid Masood, the Briton behind this week's terror attack on parliament, was a Muslim convert with a history of violence who was known to security services but only as a "peripheral" figure. Police said the 52-year-old father, who also used the names Adrian Elms and Adrian Russell Ajao, was not under investigation when he went on the rampage in Westminster on Wednesday, killing four people. They believe he was acting alone, but described the attack as "Islamist-inspired", while the Islamic State group claimed he was one of their "soldiers".

Masood was born on Christmas Day 1964 to a single mother, who remarried when he was young and brought him and his step-brothers up in a middle-class area of Kent, in southeast England, according to media reports. Former schoolmates said he had been a popular student who excelled academically and at sport, and that he was a "happy-go-lucky" character. His first brush with the law came in 1983, with a conviction for criminal damage, while further convictions

for assault and possession of offensive weapons would follow over the next 20 years.

Mark Ashdown, an old schoolfriend, described "Ade" as he knew him as a "Jack-the-lad" character with whom he used to go out partying, drinking, taking drugs and chasing girls. But he said he was changed by a fight in his local village pub in Sussex, southern England, after which Masood was jailed in 2000 for slashing a man's face. "When he first came out he told me he'd become a Muslim in prison, and I thought he was joking," Ashdown told The Sun.

"Then I saw he was quieter and much more serious. I gave him some cash-in-hand work for a few months as a laborer. Another man who witnessed the pub attack, Lee Lawrence, told the tabloid that Masood told him: "I just want blood, I dream about killing someone." He soon got into trouble again. Police said his last conviction was in 2003, for the possession of a knife, in what reports said was another violent attack on a man.

## Saudi link

Prime Minister Theresa May said Masood was once investigated by British domestic spy agency MI5 in relation to "concerns about violent extremism", but was not part of the current "intelligence picture". Masood spent time as an English teacher in Saudi Arabia, including year-long stints starting in November 2005 and again in April 2008, and returned for the Hajj in 2015. But the Saudi embassy in London said in a statement: "During his time in Saudi Arabia, Khalid Masood did not appear on the security services' radar and does not have a criminal record in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." The Islamic State group claimed that one of its "soldiers" had carried out the London attack following a call to target countries fighting the jihadists in Iraq and Syria. Police said they were seeking to establish if Masood was inspired by terrorist propaganda, or if "others have encouraged, supported or directed him". — AFP



The attacker, Khalid Masood is treated by emergency services outside the Houses of Parliament London. — AP



TUNIS: A Libyan traveler packs his laptop in his suitcase before boarding his flight for London at Tunis-Carthage International Airport yesterday. — AFP

## LONDON ATTACK - A REMINDER OF FEARS FOR POST-BREXIT SECURITY COOPERATION

### EU BOOSTS INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND SHARING

**BRUSSELS:** Hours before Wednesday's attack in London, the head of the European Union police agency Europol warned that a large group of radicalized individuals posed a constant threat to Britain and Europe. "Some of these are likely to succeed in the future," Rob Wainwright, who is British, wrote in a blog to commemorate the attacks in Brussels that killed 32 people on March 22, 2016. In the year between those incidents and the attack that killed three people and injured dozens near Britain's parliament, European security officials say intelligence sharing on potential threats has increased 10-fold.

More work is being done to tighten security by streamlining databases, clamping down on identity fraud and making reporting of suspicious individuals obligatory. Britain is one of the top three users of Europol data. But as it leaves the EU, there is a risk that it will be shut out of this cooperation, becoming more vulnerable to Islamist radicals who have killed 300 people across Europe over the past two years. The suspect in the London attack was British-born, and Britain is not part of the EU's open-border Schengen zone.

But London still shares with its EU peers fears - and information - about Islamists, often radicalized online, returning home after going to train or fight with jihadists in the Middle East, North Africa or Afghanistan. British security officials warned parliament last year of the dangers of leaving Europol and the agreement covering the European Arrest Warrant, which requires all EU

governments to arrest a suspect wanted in another EU country.

## 5,000 extraditions

A year ago, when she was interior minister, Theresa May said that Britain's close intelligence relationship with the United States "does not mean we would be as safe (outside the EU) as if we remain". May, now prime minister, said the Warrant had enabled Britain to extradite more than 5,000 people in the previous five years. Being outside Europol, which was founded in 1998 to help combat organized crime, cybercrime and militant groups across borders, would leave Britain reliant on individual links with each of the other 27 EU governments, former officials say.

Before Europol existed, coordination was done "on the basis of who you knew and who you could ring up", according to Bill Hughes, ex-director-general of Britain's now defunct Serious Organized Crime Agency. He told parliament it was a "labyrinthine exercise". Besides Europol, Britain is also party to intelligence-sharing protocols of the Schengen agreement, and to a deal to exchange airline passenger data between EU security forces. EU diplomats have refused to discuss Britain's future defense and security cooperation until London triggers the formal exit proceedings, but one senior British diplomat said the government was likely to seek a "special relationship". "The European Union is not good at involving third parties and we need to be able to talk intimately," the diplomat said.

May, expected to start two-year EU exit proceedings next Wednesday, has said she wants to retain a close relationship with the EU on security and defense, and the EU has expressed similar sentiments, but tensions are apparent. She said in January that Britain's intelligence capabilities were "unique in Europe" and that its military and counter-terrorism resources should help it to secure a better exit deal. But EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier is dismissive. "Security cannot be weighed off against economic and commercial interests," he said in a speech in Brussels on Wednesday.

## Limits of cooperation

Britain does already have additional bilateral security agreements with fellow EU members France and Germany, as well as the long-standing "Five Eyes" intelligence sharing pact with the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. But cooperation agreements between Europol and non-EU countries Russia, Turkey and Ukraine took several years to negotiate, and there are limits on what data can be shared. Under EU agreements, transferring fingerprints and DNA data can take minutes. With Britain outside the EU, the Global Risk Insights think-tank says it could take months. Some critics do note that information-sharing within the EU is still far from perfect. While France and Germany have large, well-staffed intelligence agencies, years of neglect in Belgium's secret services were exposed by last year's airport and metro blasts. — Reuters

## 2 CHARGED OVER SUPPLYING GUN TO AIRPORT ATTACKER

**PARIS:** French anti-terrorism judges have charged two men suspected of involvement in supplying a weapon to the gunman killed at Paris's Orly airport after attacking soldiers, a judicial source said yesterday. The suspects, aged 30 and 43, were charged Friday for "association with terrorist criminals" over the March 18 incident, the latest in France which remains on a state of emergency after a series of deadly jihadist attacks. Both men are being held in custody, the source said. The younger one was also charged with arms possession related to a terror plot.

They are both from the Paris area and lived close to the assailant, Ziyed Ben Belgacem, but neither of them had links with any radical Islamic movements, according to a preliminary investigation. The 30-year-old detained Friday is suspected of having given Ben Belgacem a revolver a few days before the attack, while the older suspect was present when it was handed over. The younger man admitted once in custody having been in possession of the gun and kept it at his home, before Ben Belgacem came to get it, a source close to the investigation said. Questioning of both of them revealed no further details about Ben Belgacem's plans, said the source. The Orly attack, which came a month and a half after a similar assault at the world-famous Louvre museum in Paris, bears the hallmarks of the Islamic State (IS), but has not been claimed by the jihadist group.

## 'Die for Allah'

Ben Belgacem was under the influence of drugs and alcohol when he attacked the capital's

second busiest airport, according to judicial sources. The 39-year-old, born in France to Tunisian parents, grabbed a soldier on patrol at Orly's southern terminal and put a gun to her head and seized her rifle, saying he wanted to "die for Allah". His father insisted his son—who had spent time in prison for armed robbery and drug-dealing—was not an extremist.

He had, however, been investigated in 2015 over suspicions he had been radicalized while serving jail time, but his name did not feature on the list of those thought to pose a high risk. The

attack at Orly came with France still on high alert following a wave of jihadist attacks that have claimed more than 230 lives in two years. The violence has made security a key issue in France's two-round presidential election on April 23 and May 7. Soldiers guarding key sites have been targeted in four attacks in the past two years but escaped with only minor injuries. In mid-February, a machete-wielding Egyptian man attacked a soldier outside Paris's Louvre museum, injuring him slightly, before being shot and wounded. — AFP



ESSONNE: A grab of a surveillance video footage from Paris Orly airport shows a man (center) attacking a soldier on patrol at Paris's Orly airport and grabbing her rifle before being shot dead. — AFP

## TILLERSON TO MEET ALLIES AS NATO RACES TO SAVE TALKS

**WASHINGTON:** US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will meet with NATO members next week in Brussels, officials said yesterday, as alliance diplomats worked to nail down the date. "We are currently planning to hold the meeting of NATO foreign ministers on 31 March. Consultations on scheduling among Allies are ongoing," a NATO official in Brussels said. The NATO foreign ministers meeting had been planned for April 5-6, but that was thrown into chaos on Tuesday when Tillerson revealed he would not be attending.

Skipping the meeting was especially awkward because the former Exxon-Mobil CEO is to travel later in April to Russia, which has had fraught relations with NATO since the start of the Ukraine conflict in 2014. So Tillerson will head to Brussels on Friday next week, a day after meeting in Ankara with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to "discuss the way forward with our campaign to defeat ISIS in Syria and Iraq," acting State Department spokesman Mark Toner said.

## Long-planned talks

Officials suggested that a complicating factor for the NATO meeting might be the agenda of Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, who might not be able to make it to Brussels on March 31. "The date is almost certain. It's now mainly a question of timing," a diplomat in Brussels said Saturday. The alliance's 28 member states have until Monday to work out the details of their plans. The last minute preparations are not typical for NATO which normally has plans in place weeks ahead of time for these highly orchestrated meetings.

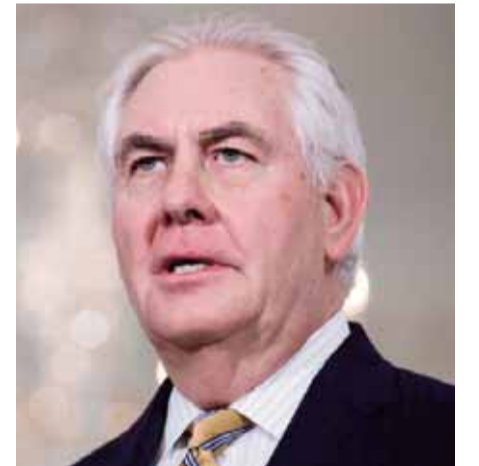
"The allies are trying to find a solution. It is understood that there are substantive reasons why Tillerson cannot come April 5 and 6," a diplomat said. Chinese leader Xi Jinping is expected to visit President Donald Trump in the United States in early April, and Tillerson would be expected to attend their meetings. But his office has not confirmed that engagement, and word that Tillerson would stay away from the NATO talks stirred doubt about US commitment to its allies.

"Everyone is aware that this would send a bad message and people were not eager to have a meeting with a downgraded (US) representation," said the diplomat, speaking

to AFP on condition of anonymity. After almost two months in the job, Tillerson has yet to appoint a deputy or any assistant secretaries, has largely avoided the media and works with a small inner circle of advisers. The administration, meanwhile, has been scrambling to reaffirm its commitment to US military alliances after Trump called into question their usefulness during the presidential campaign. Last week, after meeting Chancellor Angela Merkel, Trump claimed Germany owes "vast sums of money to NATO and the United States," reviving his charge that allies do not pay their way.

## Obsolete alliance?

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, a former Marine general, has declared US support for NATO, and last week Tillerson reaffirmed ties with Asian allies Japan and South Korea. The United States has worked with NATO to shore up support for the pro-western government in Kiev after Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support for a bloody uprising in eastern Ukraine. Combined with economic sanctions, the deployment of more NATO



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

troops from Western members to frontline Eastern allies in the Baltics and Poland was intended to send a signal to Moscow. But during his presidential campaign, Trump raised eyebrows by expressing admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin and dismissing NATO as "obsolete". — AFP

## LONDON ATTACK: WHAT WE KNOW

**LONDON:** Four people died in an Islamist-claimed attack outside parliament in London this week when a British-born killer rammed his car into pedestrians then stabbed a police officer before being shot dead. Here is what we know so far about the attack, which was the deadliest in Britain since 2005 and was claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group.

## What happened?

At around 2:40 pm (1440 GMT) on Wednesday, the attacker ploughed his car into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, one of the city's busiest tourist spots for its views of parliament and its famous clock tower. After crashing into the railings outside parliament, he leapt out with a large knife and ran into the courtyard where he stabbed a policeman before being shot dead by officers. Policeman Keith Palmer, 48, died of his injuries along with three civilians who were hit by the speeding car: 43-year-old mother-of-two Aysha Frade; Kurt Cochran, an American in his 50s; and 75-year-old Leslie Rhodes from south London who died late Thursday. At least 50 people were wounded, including tourists from 12 different countries. One person is fighting for their life and two are in critical condition.

## Who was the attacker?

Police have identified the perpetrator as Khalid Masood, a 52-year-old Briton who was born in the southeastern county of Kent under the name Adrian Russell Ajao. So far, police have not yet released an image of Masood although media footage of the attacker lying on a stretcher showed a bearded, burly man wearing black clothes. He ran into trouble with the law in his late teens, chalking up a string of convictions for assault and possession of offensive weapons between 1983 to 2003, but

none of them terror related. According to The Sun tabloid, he married a Muslim woman in 2004 and a year later moved to Saudi Arabia to teach, returning in 2009.

Police said he went by "numerous aliases", including, reportedly, Adrian Elms, while reports suggest he lived all over England, including in Luton and east London. Prime Minister Theresa May has said Masood was known to intelligence services as a "peripheral" figure some years ago but there was no warning of his intention to mount an attack. When he hired the car, he told the Birmingham-based rental company he was a teacher, the BBC said. But an education ministry spokesman said he was not a qualified teacher and had not taught in any state schools. A former neighbor from Winson Green in Birmingham described him as "a nice guy", telling the Birmingham Mail newspaper he lived next door with his wife and a small child until Christmas and liked to work in his garden.

## Did he act alone?

The attack was claimed by Islamic State which said Masood was one of its "soldiers" acting on a call to target countries fighting the jihadists in Iraq and Syria. Counter-terror chief Mark Rowley said police were trying to establish whether Masood acted totally alone "or if others have encouraged, supported or directed him". So far, police have arrested 10 people in connection with the attack. They initially arrested five men and three women "on suspicion of preparation of terrorist acts". One of the women was later released on bail. Two more "significant arrests" were made overnight Thursday. Police have so far searched 16 addresses, mainly in London and Birmingham, seizing 2,700 items including "massive" amounts of computer data. Five more raids are currently under way, Rowley said. — AFP

SINGAPOREAN TEEN DISSIDENT GRANTED US ASYLUM

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean teenager who was jailed twice after insulting the island's late leader Lee Kuan Yew and religious groups has been granted political asylum in the United States, his US lawyer said yesterday. Amos Yee, 18, shocked Singaporeans in March 2015 after posting an expletive-laden video attacking Lee as the founding prime minister's death triggered a massive outpouring of grief in the city-state. He was jailed for four weeks for hurting the religious feelings of Christians and posting an obscene image as part of his attacks on Lee-whose son Lee Hsien Loong is now the prime minister-but served 50 days including penalties for violating bail conditions. He was jailed again in 2016 for six weeks for insulting Muslims and Christians in a series of videos posted online, but critics claim the real reason was to silence him. Yee's lawyer Sandra Grossman of Maryland-based Grossman Law LLC told AFP by telephone that US immigration judge Samuel B. Cole had granted her client's application for asylum. "Yee has met his burden of showing that he suffered past persecution on account of his political opinion and has a well-founded fear of future persecution

in Singapore," the judge said in the decision, a copy of which was seen by AFP. The judge said evidence presented during the hearing "demonstrates Singapore's persecution of Yee was a pretext to silence his political opinions critical of the Singapore government". The US Department of Homeland Security had opposed Yee's asylum application, saying he was legally prosecuted by the Singapore government. It now has 30 days to appeal the judge's decision. In a statement yesterday, Singapore's home affairs ministry, which looks after internal security, said Yee had engaged in "hate speech" but noted that such rhetoric is allowed in the United States. "It is the prerogative of the US to take in such people who engage in hate speech. There are many more such people, around the world, who deliberately engage in hate speech, and who may be prosecuted," the statement said. "Some of them, will no doubt take note of the US approach, and consider applying for asylum in the US" it added. Singapore, a prosperous island republic of 5.6 million which has long been criticized for strict controls on dissent, takes pride in its racial and social cohesion, which it

regards as essential for stability in a volatile region. Several government critics have sought refuge overseas, including in the United States and Britain, among them Gopalan Nair who was granted US asylum for political persecution in the 1990s and now holds American citizenship. Yee, a filmmaker-turned-activist, was detained by US authorities after he arrived in Chicago in December. Speaking by telephone from Maryland, lawyer Grossman, who has represented Yee for free, said the US government "has the right to appeal this decision" within the next 30 days. "The law agrees that he is eligible for immediate release," Grossman said. 'Political dissident' The lawyer said she was told by the US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office that Yee will be transferred to an ICE detention facility in Chicago on Monday and will be considered for release. Phil Robertson, campaign group Human Rights Watch's deputy Asia director, lauded the US judge's asylum decision. "There was never any doubt that Amos Yee is the quin-



SINGAPORE: This file photo shows Amos Yee leaving the state court in Singapore. Yee, a Singaporean teenager who was jailed twice after insulting the island's late leader Lee Kuan Yew and religious groups, has been granted political asylum in the United States, his US lawyer said yesterday. — AFP

essential political dissident, escaping from the sort of a pressure cooker environment that city-state Singapore excels in devising for dissidents who challenge its prerogatives," Robertson said. Activist Shelley Thio, of the rights group Community Action Network Singapore, said Yee's mother, Mary, received the news of the decision "with much relief". In Yee's video attacking Lee, he compared the late leader, who was prime minister from 1959 to 1990, to Jesus, saying "they are both power-hungry and malicious but deceive others into thinking they are compassionate and kind". It was watched hundreds of thousands of times before being taken down from Yee's YouTube page. — AFP



WASHINGTON: House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of Calif (right) and Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Md react at a joke from Rep Eric Swalwell, D-Calif (center) on Capitol Hill. Republican leaders have abruptly pulled their troubled health care overhaul bill off the House floor, short of votes and eager to avoid a humiliating defeat for President Donald Trump and GOP leaders. — AP

THE HOUSE DIVIDED: REPUBLICAN RIFT THREATENS TRUMP AGENDA

WASHINGTON: The Republican Party's longstanding ideological divisions were laid bare in very public fashion this week, sinking US President Donald Trump's Obamacare repeal plan and threatening other elements of his agenda. The health care bill fell victim to bickering between two competing groups in Trump's party: a band of grass roots conservatives, centered around the House Freedom Caucus, who routinely buck leadership; and establishment-leaning moderates who are more likely to seek consensus over confrontation. The president's failure to get them together and bring the American Health Care Act across the finish line highlighted how the internal fracturing has yet to heal. That could spell trouble for the party in power, as Washington gears up for several legislative battles in the months ahead. "Like Southern California, the GOP has many fault lines," John Pitney, a professor of American politics at Claremont McKenna College said. "They run in multiple directions and any one of them could cause an earthquake." Tremors are already being felt. Congress must pass a spending bill by April 28 that funds federal operations, or government could tumble into a shutdown. It will also begin debate in coming months on raising the US debt ceiling. The factions are often far apart on such issues, with conservatives balking at debt ceiling hikes and moderates far more willing to consider compromise on social issues when it comes to the budget. Disputes between the two factions is nothing new. In 2010, ecstatic grass-roots Tea Party candidates rode into Congress on a wave of anti-establishment fervor, as Republicans seized control of the House of Representatives. The following year, bitter Republican battles over raising the debt ceiling nearly drove the United States into a calamitous default. In October 2013, rancorous fights over spending led to a 17-day government shutdown, largely

blamed on conservatives like Senator Ted Cruz. Getting Republicans to line up on issues has often been like herding cats. One need only look back to 2015, when the far-right managed to drive House speaker John Boehner into retirement after he tried to drag them into line on multiple fronts. Many conservatives openly celebrated Boehner's departure-he once called Cruz a "jackass." But Boehner was replaced by the workaholic, rising young star Paul Ryan, a consummate establishment Republican and former vice presidential candidate. While he faced criticism from far-right legislators, Ryan managed to tamp down the uproar by conservatives-until the 2016 presidential race and the emergence of Trump, the populist candidate. Dealing with divides Trump's November election victory has clearly emboldened core conservatives and far-right ideologues, leaving some middle-of-the-road Republicans in political purgatory on issues like health care and immigration. Republicans would most likely need to be far more united than Friday's debacle if the party is to successfully tackle the coming legislative laundry list. Immediately after Friday's health bill collapse Trump declared that "now we're going to go for tax reform," an issue as complex and thorny as health care reform-and to date more elusive. Mo Brooks, a Freedom Caucus congressman, downplayed the divisions as he looked ahead. "I see no impact whatsoever from the failure of this bill today with respect to what the prognosis may be for tax reform, border security or any of those other issues. They're entirely different," he said. But sniping within the ranks was spilling into the open Friday. "The House Freedom Caucus just single-handedly saved #Obamacare," tweeted Adam Kinzinger, a moderate House Republican, blaming intransigent conservatives for the health bill's failure. — AFP

VEHICLE ATTACKS: EASY SUCCESS FOR IS, A CHALLENGE FOR POLICE CAR AND KNIFE ATTACKS AGGRESSIVELY PROMOTED BY IS

BASEL: In the battlefields of Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State group became infamous for its spectacular variations on explosive vehicles. For attacks in the West, it has advocated the use of the same tool but suggested a simpler method, encouraging its followers to use regular vehicles to achieve bloodshed. Experts say that vehicle attacks - whether IS-inspired or coordinated - present a unique challenge for law enforcement officials as they are nearly impossible to predict and easy to pull off. They require no advanced training, no specialized materials. Almost anyone can own or rent a vehicle. Some feel that these low-tech, lone wolf operations can have the same psychological impact as larger, more sensational attacks. Four people were killed in London on Wednesday with this tactic in what was the worst attack on British soil since the transport network bombings on July 7, 2005. Charlie Winter, a senior research fellow at the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, says what makes such attacks so frightening is the relatively low barriers to entry. The method was embraced by Al-Qaeda before being revitalized by IS. "It makes for a very effective unsophisticated high impact, very frightening form of an operation," he said. "You don't need to know someone who can make you a bomb or buy you a gun in order to carry out an attack. It's a very difficult thing to fight against. There is no quick fix." British authorities on Thursday identified Khalid Masood as the man who mowed down pedestrians with an SUV and stabbed a policeman to death outside Parliament. The British national wasn't on a terrorism watch list although he was once investigated for extremism. IS claimed the attack. Rita Katz, director of the SITE Intelligence group, says it is almost impossible for law enforcement agencies to stop IS-inspired attacks, especially vehicular-style ones like the one in London. Since 2014, this simple but effective method has been laid out repeatedly and in detail in IS propaganda material which continues to circulate online. "It's not a style of attack that you can monitor by increasing security and intel on who has weapons or other attention-grabbing variables," Katz told The Associated Press. "Every car suddenly turns into a possible weapon, so it's really very difficult to stop." Vehicle attacks, like knife attacks, are aggressively promoted by IS and its online supporters. In its November issue of its online magazine Rumiya, IS extolled the virtues of the car as a weapon of attack and offered guidance to its followers, suggesting the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade as a possible target. "Vehicles are like knives, as they are extremely easy to acquire," points out the online magazine issue. "But unlike knives, which if found in one's possession can be a cause for suspicion, vehicles arouse absolutely no doubts due to



NICE: In this July 14, 2016 file photo, authorities investigate a truck after it plowed through Bastille Day revelers in the French resort city of Nice, France, killing 86 people. In Britain, a man drove a car into pedestrians in London on March 22, 2017, in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group. The extremist group is encouraging its followers to use vehicles to achieve bloodshed. — AP

their widespread use throughout the world." Two weeks later, an Ohio State University student rammed his car into a group of pedestrians on campus and then got out and started stabbing people with a butcher knife before being gunned down by a police officer. IS claimed the attack, which left 11 people wounded. The devastating potential of such violence was dramatically illustrated last summer in the French beach town of Nice when a cargo truck took to the crowds celebrating Bastille Day in an attack that left 86 people dead and hundreds of others wounded. A truck was also used in last year's Christmas market attack in Berlin that killed 12 people, including the driver of the truck that was commandeered. In the London attack on Wednesday, the weapon of choice was an SUV. Katz sees the similarities between these attacks as evidence that IS propaganda is taking hold and that more needs to be done to counter it. Winter says that the impact of propaganda is overplayed and a copycat effect is also a factor. Omar Ashour says these attacks are gaining traction precisely because authorities have their defenses up. The IS leadership began urging attacks on the West after the US-led coalition launched airstrikes on the group. The message then evolved to spell out the best ways to use a knife or inflict the most damage possible with a car. IS may provide "very detailed tactical information that helps the attackers to create more damage but there is a ceiling to that. They could not do as much damage as firearms or bombs would do. The capacity to execute largish, more complex operations is extremely limited," says Ashour, a lecturer in security studies at the University of Exeter. Anne Giudicelli, director of the security risk consultancy firm Terrorisic, says that such attacks are becoming a signature approach for IS in Europe. While not much more can be done to boost security on the ground, more can be done to fight the spread of IS ideology online, and cooperation between European countries confronting this threat can be tightened. "At the level of strict security, the maximum is done," she said. "The authorities are confronted to the fact that all the outward signs, what we call indicators, the criteria for surveillance, are today very volatile because individuals adapt, they know what will get them detected." — AP

BRITAIN'S UKIP LOSES ONLY MP

LONDON: The anti-EU, anti-immigration UK Independence Party (UKIP) will no longer be represented in the British parliament after its

only MP announced yesterday he was quitting to become an independent lawmaker. Douglas Carswell said his membership was

no longer necessary following last year's referendum vote to leave the EU, saying: "I will leave UKIP amicably, cheerfully and in the knowledge that we won."

2014 to stand again as a member of UKIP in the south-eastern English seat of Clacton. "Like many of you, I switched to UKIP because I desperately wanted us to leave the EU," he wrote in a blog posting yesterday, entitled "Job Done".

The announcement comes just days before Prime Minister Theresa May is due to formally notify the European Union of Britain's intention to leave the bloc, starting a two-year countdown to Brexit. Carswell's ties had long been strained with the rest of the party, in particular its founder Nigel Farage, who has repeatedly tried and failed to win election to the 650-seat House of Commons. Farage, one of UKIP's 20 members of the European Parliament, last month publicly asked Carswell to leave the party, saying he "actively and transparently seeks to damage us". But his resignation is a blow after months of infighting in the party, which is struggling to find a winning platform beyond its core message of euroscepticism and opposition to mass immigration. Carswell was first elected to parliament in 2005 as a member of May's Conservative party, but resigned in



LONDON: In this file photo, newly-elected UK Independence Party member of Parliament Douglas Carswell gives a double thumbs-up as he poses for the media upon his arrival to take his seat at the Houses of Parliament in London. Carswell said yesterday that he's leaving UKIP and will serve in Parliament as an independent. — AP

SEWOL FERRY LIFTED ONTO SALVAGE SHIP

JINDO: South Korea's sunken Sewol ferry has been successfully hauled onto a giant heavy lifting ship, officials said yesterday, a step towards returning the vessel to port. Nearly three years after it went down killing more than 300 people, the wreck was safely placed onto a semi-submersible ship that will finally bring it to shore. Almost all the victims were schoolchildren and it is thought that nine bodies still unaccounted for may be trapped inside. "The vessel was successfully loaded onto the semi-submersible as of 4:10 am," completing one of the most delicate stages of the salvage operation, said Lee Cheol-Jo, a Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries official in charge of the salvage. The 145-metre ship was brought to the surface in a complex salvage operation believed to be among the largest recoveries ever of a wreck in one piece. After being pulled up to the surface by wires lowered from two large barges, a

flotilla of powerful tugs towed the wreck towards the semi-submersible. It was placed over the deck of the semi-submersible, which will then rise throughout the day to expose the hull of the Sewol completely. "It will take three to five days to prepare the Sewol to be towed to Mokpo," a large port on the southern coast, some 87 kilometers, Lee said. Once secured on the vessel, it will take a day to reach port. The Sewol is likely to be docked at Mokpo early April, where the wreck will be searched for bodies. After the ferry safely leaves the accident site, the ministry said divers will search the waters and seabed for any remains. Underwater fences have been installed surrounding the area where the Sewol sank. The salvage came as the third anniversary approached of one of the country's worst-ever maritime disasters, which dealt a crushing blow to now-ousted president Park Geun-Hye. — AFP



## BUCK STOPS WITH TRUMP

Continued from Page 1

of history and public affairs at Princeton University, on CNN.com. "In this case, he was the loser."

That leaves Trump, after just two months in office, facing a dilemma that may define the rest of his presidency: Can he continue with the bareknuckle, alpha male approach that brought him to the summit of global politics. His erratic tweets have already called his credibility into doubt, most seriously when he accused his predecessor Obama - without proof - of wiretapping his phones. His approach to policymaking - all about speed, with little consultation - has also shown its limits as his order to curb immigration from some Muslim-majority nations was twice frozen by the courts.

Some lessons from the healthcare debate offer ominous signs. Amid threats of retribution and orders to "march or die", more than two dozen Republicans still refused to back what Trump touted as the "greatest" healthcare plan. "Donald Trump played a game of chicken with House Republicans. Then he blinked. Bigly," headlined the Washington Post's editorial on the health care debacle.

Trump's bluff can be called, after all, and many Republicans who supported him only reluctantly, may now smell blood. Not to mention foreign leaders like those in North Korea, China, Russia or Iran, who owe him no allegiance and are playing a higher stakes geopoliti-

cal game. And Trump is unlikely to get any relief from Democrats, loath to back a president mired in scandal over his team's links to Russia, even if they backed his proposals.

It is unclear whether the septuagenarian could change if he wanted to. Domestic allies and friendly diplomats report that in private Trump shows little mastery of the details needed to push policy forward. In one recent discussion, an ally painstakingly outlined an urgent problem item-by-item, only for Trump to promptly change the subject. Even aides admit Trump showed more interest in making the healthcare sale than in what he was selling.

When it comes to substance, the ill-fated health care bill put contradictions between free market Republicans and the economic populism embodied by Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon into sharp relief. The bill, if successful, would have left millions of the Americans who voted for Trump without coverage, leaving some inside the White House to wish it dead.

The ideological gap within the Republican party, masked by years united in opposition, was just too big to span. And bridging that divide will prove just as difficult when it comes to choosing between paying for programs for the poor and tax cuts for companies and the wealthy. After just over 60 days in office, Trump is in many ways still learning on the job. He could yet steady the ship: George H W Bush and Bill Clinton saw similar turbulent starts before shuffling staff and buckling down. —AFP

## WORLD'S CITIES, MONUMENTS SWITCH OFF FOR

Continued from Page 1

change is happening, so it's good to see the city grouping together to support Earth Hour."

From Australia, it moved westward through Asia, with many of the skyscrapers ringing Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour going dark in solidarity while at Myanmar's most sacred pagoda, the Shwedagon, 10,000 oil lamps were lit to shine a light on climate action. In Singapore, some 200 organizations, including buildings along the city-state's iconic skyline, went dark to mark the occasion. Organizers said about 35,000 people watched performances and participated in a "carbon-neutral run" which saw some runners in panda and tiger costumes to raise awareness of wildlife protection.

And in Japan, Tokyo's famed Sony Building in Ginza extinguished its bright lights to honor the occasion. The event was also marked throughout Africa, Europe and the Americas. Monuments including the Empire State Building, the Kremlin, Big Ben, the Leaning Tower of

Pisa, the Eiffel Tower and Egypt's pyramids were scheduled to switch off. Lisbon hosted a concert by candlelight, Singapore a "carbon-neutral run", and Tanzania organized a tree-planting ceremony.

Homes and businesses were also asked to join in, and individuals could commit to the cause on Facebook. WWF said teams around the world would use Earth Hour this year to highlight climate issues most relevant to individual countries. In South Africa, the focus would be on renewable energy while in China, WWF said it was working with businesses to encourage a shift towards more sustainable lifestyles.

Last year, scientists recorded the Earth's hottest temperatures in modern times for the third year in a row. Nations agreed in Paris in 2015 to limit average global warming to two degrees Celsius over pre-industrial temperatures. That is the level at which many scientists say humankind can still avoid worst-case climate outcomes in terms of rising sea levels, worsening droughts and floods, and increasingly violent superstorms. — AFP

## WEARY FLYERS SHRUG AS LAPTOP BAN TAKES OFF

Continued from Page 1

and activities for children. Government-owned Emirates, which operates 18 direct flights to the US daily, also began a service to enable passengers to use their electronic devices after check-in and until boarding.

Samuel Porter, who was travelling out of Dubai with his family, nonetheless decided to "avoid delays" at the airport by putting his laptop in the hold. "The only issue is the kids. I have two kids and the iPad is always in their hands. Maybe they will watch a documentary and learn something useful this time," he told AFP.

The United States last week announced a ban on all electronics larger than a standard smartphone on board direct flights out of eight countries across the Middle East. US officials would not specify how long the ban will last, but Emirates told AFP that it had been instructed to enforce the measures until at least Oct 14. The ban covers electronics sold at Dubai Duty Free, Dubai Airports CEO Paul Griffiths said earlier this week.

Adding to the disruption yesterday, a number of flights out of Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports were delayed due to thunderstorms, including an Emirates flight to Houston. Travellers using 10 airports across the Middle East and North Africa are subject to the ban. Britain has also announced a parallel electronics ban, effective yesterday, targeting all flights out of Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Lebanon.

Passengers readying to fly to the UK out of Tunisia yesterday were skeptical, but compliant. "I think it's bizarre. I don't get it," said Paul, a British tourist on his way home. "I'm also concerned about the security of my own computer...but what can you do." "You do what they tell you to do and keep quiet," said Khairi, a British-Libyan dual citizen flying out of Tunisia.

Royal Jordanian, which operates direct flights to London, New York, Detroit and Chicago, poked fun at the ban on its social media accounts. The airline suggested alternative in-flight activities, including doing "what we Jordanians do best... stare at each other!"

The restrictions have come under criticism for targeting majority-Muslim countries. The US ban in particular has raised eyebrows for covering airports from which American airlines do not operate direct flights. But the United States and Britain have cited intelligence indicating passenger jets could be targeted with explosives planted in such devices. Turkish airports began enforcing the ban yesterday, with national carrier Turkish Airlines offering a similar laptop stowage service to Emirates. Abu Dhabi, home of UAE national carrier Etihad Airways, is one of the few international airports with a US Customs and Border Protection Facility, which processes immigration and customs inspections before departure. But those flying to the US from Abu Dhabi will still need to check in their electronics, Etihad said. — AFP

## TRUMP SUFFERS HUMILIATING DEFEAT

Continued from Page 1

Trump had thrown his full political weight behind the measure, spending days arm-twisting recalcitrant Republicans, and he declared himself "disappointed" and a "little surprised" by the defeat.

The battle was an eye-opening experience for Trump, a billionaire real estate tycoon who entered the White House with no experience in politics or government, including the delicate navigations of Congress. The bill's defeat marked a second major policy setback for the new president, who has seen his attempt to curb travel from Muslim-majority countries twice frozen by the courts.

Instead of projecting humility, Trump went on the offensive Friday, branding Democrats as the real "losers" of the failed repeal bid because "now they own Obamacare. They own it, 100 percent." The president met with House Speaker Paul Ryan earlier in the day, then spoke with him by telephone when it was clear the party did not have the votes to get its plan across the finish line. "I told him that the best thing I think to do is to pull this bill and he agreed with that decision," Ryan said. But while Trump was quick to blame Democrats for not giving "a single vote" for his plan, Ryan owned up to the failures. "I will not sugarcoat this. This is a disappointing day for us," said the top Republican in Congress.

The Trump-backed plan, intended to expand free-market competition in the insurance industry and lower the cost of premiums for most Americans, would also have slashed public assistance to people who have no health coverage through their employer. Some 14 million people stood to lose their coverage starting next year, according to congressional forecasts. Basic benefits covered under Obamacare - such as maternity care and emergency room visits - would no longer have been considered essential

and required for insurers to provide. The bill now appears dead, with Republican lawmakers urging a return to the drawing board. "Clearly, the votes weren't there," said Congressman Charlie Dent, one of several moderate House Republicans who expressed concerns over the bill's impact on poor and elderly Americans. "So I think it's important now that we start over, and we do a durable, sustainable health care reform and it be done in a bipartisan way," he added.

By pulling the bill, Ryan flew in the face of a White House that had declared negotiations over and demanded a vote on Friday. Trump had put his reputation as a deal-maker on the line with the high-risk vote. Congressman Mo Brooks, a member of the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus that largely opposed the measure on grounds it was too similar to Obamacare, said he was "pleased as could be that the legislation has failed", arguing it would have been bad for Americans. But he refused to place blame on the president. "I don't think this reflects on the president in any way, shape or form," Brooks said.

But some conservative centrists expressed frustration with recalcitrant hardliners. "The House Freedom Caucus just single-handedly saved #Obamacare," Republican Congressman Adam Kinzinger charged on Twitter. It was not clear when Congress would return to health care, as Trump said he would shift quickly toward tax reform, another longstanding goal of Republicans. "Obamacare is the law of the land. It's going to remain the law of the land until it's replaced."

Democrats said they were open to cooperation - provided Republicans wanted to help fix the existing law. "We're ready to work with the president," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said on CNN. "Take repeal off the table," and "we'll work with them on improving Obamacare." — AFP

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## OBAMACARE JUST ON A SLOW BURN

US President Donald Trump said on Friday that Obamacare was "exploding" after Republican lawmakers shelved legislation that would have dismantled the healthcare law. That's not going to happen this month. Probably not even this year. The more than 12 million people who bought 2017 health insurance plans on HealthCare.gov and other websites the law created are not in danger of losing their healthcare or having their premiums go up right now, experts say.

But 2018 is another story. Republicans could choose to pass a budget that defunds Obamacare's cost-sharing subsidies, which help low-income people cover out-of-pocket and other medical costs. But that would be highly unpopular among consumers who would likely blame the president and Congress for skyrocketing healthcare costs, experts said. "That is one of the ways that is available to monkey wrench the Affordable Care Act," said Morgan Tilleman, an associate with the law firm Foley & Lardner, who represents insurers.

Obamacare, former Democratic President Barack Obama's signature legislation created by the Affordable Care Act of 2010, has had a tough beginning. The mix of sick and healthy customers has been worse than expected, and premium rates on the individual insurance market went up 25 percent this year. Other parts of the law, like the expansion of Medicaid to enhance coverage for the poor, and changes to allow young people to stay on their parents' health plans, have been popular. And the defeat of the bill is a win for the hospitals that have benefited from those increased Medicaid dollars.

But many counties across the country have only one insurer, after Humana Inc, Aetna Inc and UnitedHealth Group Inc pulled out after reporting hundreds of millions of dollars of losses. The insurers who are left, Anthem Inc and other BlueCross BlueShield insurers across the country, as well as smaller players like Centene Corp and Molina Healthcare Inc need to decide in the next few months where to sell insurance and how much to charge. And that is where the market's slow burn takes off, with insurers leaving and premiums rising. Jeff Jonas, a portfolio manager at Gabelli Funds who focuses on health care, said that for consumers, 2018 looks uncertain, with a "death spiral" of decreasing competition and increasing premium rates ramping up.

### Looking to 2018

After the failed Republican effort to push through the bill, insurers are looking at changes to help 2018, America's Health Insurance Plans spokeswoman Kristine Grow said. That includes the market's cost-sharing subsidies as well as other government payments for sicker-than-usual customers and finalizing a rule the Trump administration proposed that addresses issues insurers say drives up costs. The Trump administration could do some of that itself if it wants to, such as using its regulatory authority to adjust the formula for how it compensates insurers for the sickest people, Elizabeth Carpenter at healthcare consultancy and research firm Avalere Health said.

But it is unknown if the administration will try to work within the law's existing framework or take actions to undermine it and blame the Democrats for its failure. "If they fail to act and they don't act in an appropriate way, that will further destabilize the marketplace," Dr. Mario Molina, CEO of Molina Healthcare, said. Molina's enrollment ballooned to 1 million exchange enrollees this year and the company is weighing if it will submit plans for next year.

The administration could also decide to not enforce the individual mandate, which requires that everyone purchase health insurance or pay a fine. It already took steps to erode that provision last month, when it backed off implementing tougher oversight that was due to go into effect for 2016 taxes. Experts said the individual mandate still cost less than purchasing insurance, but as it increases each year more young and healthy people would have incentive to join the healthcare market, helping to offset the cost of sicker patients.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that 14 million more people would be uninsured under the Republican bill next year, with most of the increase coming from the repeal of the penalty associated with the individual mandate. It's unclear what the Republicans will do. Trump said this bill had been shelved but that Republicans would end up with a "great" healthcare bill in the future, but for now that they are moving onto tax reform. Until they do that, they will have to work within the 2010 Affordable Care Act. It can also undercut the healthcare law through regulatory authority at the Department of Health and Human Services. — Reuters

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## FOR TRUMP, IT WAS THE LOST ART OF THE DEAL

In the end, the Closer couldn't close the deal. For President Donald Trump, the collapse on Friday of his first legislative priority, a healthcare reform bill, was an embarrassing loss of face after he and his administration insisted up until the time of the vote by the US House of Representatives that there was enough Republican support. It brings into question the neophyte president's ability to move big-ticket legislation through Congress. And for a celebrity businessman who brands himself a deal-maker and fixer, it casts doubt over his ability to deliver on his bold "drain-the-swamp" promises to shake up Washington.

The White House wants to advance, among other things, tax reform and a massive infrastructure package this year, but now it must address whether a change of approach is needed and whether congressional allies such as House Speaker Paul Ryan can be counted on to deliver. "This is the most consequential day of Trump's presidency and it's not just a failure, it's a stunning failure," Charlie Sykes, an influential Wisconsin Republican political commentator and frequent Trump critic, said on Twitter.

Trump appeared to chalk up the loss in part to his own inexperience after House leaders pulled their bill to repeal and replace Obamacare following defections by both moderate and far-right Republican members who were unmoved by Trump's ultimatum to vote for the plan or live with the current system. "We learned a lot about loyalty. We learned a lot about the vote-getting process," Trump said after the bill was withdrawn, adding that he would move forward with other priorities.

It was yet another setback for an administration barely two months in office that has already seen its national security adviser resign, had its immigration restrictions struck down in courts, and faces a barrage of questions about the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. Trump's hallmark salesmanship seemed to abandon him this week. Although he furiously courted the hard-line conservatives opposed to the reform bill, they largely refused to yield, and in the process he alienated moderates who initially supported the bill.

The president then switched tactics and gave up trying to bring the conservative opponents into the fold, instead delivering an ultimatum that all Republicans needed to back the bill. That did not work either. Trump also failed to persuade the American public that the bill was an improvement over the one it would have repealed and replaced: The Affordable Care Act - the signature domestic achievement of former Democratic President Barack Obama. Polls showed the replacement bill to be deeply unpopular, and conservative Republicans complained that their offices were being deluged by calls from constituents opposing it.

"This demonstrates that campaigning and legislating are two different things," said Jim Manley, once a top aide to former Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. Representative Joe Barton of Texas blamed the failure on Republicans who control the White House, Senate and the House still learning how to govern after eight years of Obama. "Sometimes you're playing fantasy football and sometimes you're in the real game," Barton told Reuters.

Representative Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida called it "a big blow" for the Republican agenda. Trump's efforts to engage the bill's opponents at times seemed to muddy the process further, as he largely cut Ryan out of negotiations. (Ryan didn't seem to mind, calling Trump a "great closer.") But even as Trump offered concessions, conservatives did not budge and moderates were angered.

Stuart Diamond, a professor who teaches negotiation at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, said Trump's strong-arm tactics backfired. "Threats don't work in general," he said. "They cause damage to relationships. They definitely don't work in a situation with a lot of different stakeholders, where the power is distributed."

### Escaping a Looming Disaster

After the bill was revised along Trump's specifications, the Congressional Budget Office, which analyzes the financial impact of proposed legislation, determined that the bill would deprive 24 million Americans of health insurance over the next decade and slice about \$150 billion off the budget deficit. The CBO said the bill would not affect the number of uninsured but it would reduce the budget deficit significantly less than the original bill, troubling fiscal hawks. Even as Trump and the White House pushed harder, opposition to the bill among the rank and file rose.

Representative Bill Huizenga, a Michigan Republican who is also a small-business owner, said Trump was still getting used to governing. "There are parallels between government and business, but they are not exactly the same." The lesson from the

debacle, said John Feehery, a Republican strategist who was an aide to former House Speaker Dennis Hastert, is that the White House needs to take a firmer hand in crafting legislative strategy. On healthcare, Trump largely deferred to Ryan's office, which drafted the bill in secret, sowing mistrust among conservatives.

Congress now faces arguably an even tougher legislative reform: overhauling the tax code, which has not been done since 1986 and involves navigating a snake pit of competing special interests. Like Trump's healthcare proposal, it could struggle against public opinion, with Democrats likely to cast it as a Republican giveaway to the rich. There was also a feeling among some Republicans that they had escaped a looming disaster. Even if the bill had passed the House, it faced a radical overhaul in the Senate, meaning both chambers would have been tied up battling over the bill for weeks, perhaps months.

And if it became law and millions of voters lost health insurance, some Republicans feared they could suffer at the polls. Instead, those Republicans have to hope voters will not punish them for failing to deliver on a promise they had been making since Obamacare was passed in 2010, and that they will still believe this president when he says he can strike a deal.

"This is a promise the GOP made to voters. They need to get it right," said Rachel Bovard, a policy analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation, as she urged Republicans to "start over." It is unclear when that could happen. "This bill is dead," said Representative Greg Walden of Oregon, a member of the House leadership team. — Reuters

## OUTSIDER DEALMAKER FALTERING IN WHITE HOUSE

Donald Trump campaigned as an outsider - celebrating his lack of political experience by selling himself as a dealmaker willing to buck Republican orthodoxy and his own party's leadership. He alone would reshape Washington. He's tried governing the same way. His actions are a blitz. He rarely consults old Washington hands. And he hangs the threat of retribution over anyone who challenges him. And now he and his party have been dealt a stinging defeat on a signature campaign promise, a defeat that further weakens a president whose approval rating has hovered under 40 percent and humiliates Republicans who have pledged for seven long years to undo President Barack Obama's health care law.

Trump's haphazard approach on Friday to the healthcare bill - first demanding a House vote despite an uncertain result, then suddenly suggesting he'd support a future bipartisan solution - underscored Trump's political identity: He is an independent, seemingly uninterested in leading a political party or unifying the federal government. The failed vote - despite Republican control of the White House and both houses of Congress - highlighted severe cracks within the GOP that Trump's presidency won't easily mend.

Trump now wants to turn to tax reform, an ambitious, complicated plan at the center of his agenda, and he does so wounded by the healthcare collapse as well as the uncertain legal status of his travel ban and an ongoing federal investigation into possible contacts and coordination between his campaign aides and Russian officials.

The loss exposed a limit to Trump's go-it-alone style, one forged over decades in the business world and seemingly proven effective by his improbable win. The novice campaigner used the sheer force of his celebrity and personality to draw loyal supporters and frequently bend the Republican Party to his whims. He defied the party leadership repeatedly, skipped a debate, refused to sign a loyalty pledge and turned the scathing power of his Twitter account on fellow Republicans even after he clinched the nomination and the party pined for unity.

"This is who he is. He's a dealmaker. He knows how to do deals and there's no deal here," said Ed Cox, chairman of New York state's Republican party, who has known Trump for decades, sometimes as friend, sometimes as foe. "He always wants to move on to the next thing, even going it alone." But experts say that maverick style has hurt his ability to govern effectively.

"Donald Trump's 'Art of the Deal' doesn't work in Washington. Politics is a profession and you have to know how to collect votes," said Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian at Rice University. "Trump is a salesperson and he oversold what he can get done." Brinkley said Trump's failure stood in stark contrast to the master negotiations conducted by presidents Franklin D Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson, who enjoyed majorities in both houses of Congress and achieved sweeping legislative accomplishments.

Instead, Trump's initial struggles were reminiscent of the problems Jimmy Carter faced when he declared that his fellow Democrats were "an albatross around my neck" while facing intraparty rebellion. More than two dozen members of the House Freedom Caucus oppose the healthcare plan because they say it doesn't go far enough to undo Obamacare. Some moderate Republicans, meanwhile, were turned off by a recent Congressional Budget Office analysis predicting 24 million people would lose coverage in a decade. Republicans seemed willing to risk Trump's wrath, taking comfort in the political safety their deep-red home districts provide against his possible attacks.

### Democrat

Trump was once a Democrat. He favored abortion rights most of his adult life, has shown little stomach for fighting over social issues and espoused views on trade similar to those of liberal Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. He often doesn't work in specifics, allowing supporters to read in what they want, and he's been frequently mercurial, abruptly shifting stances - like when he aban-

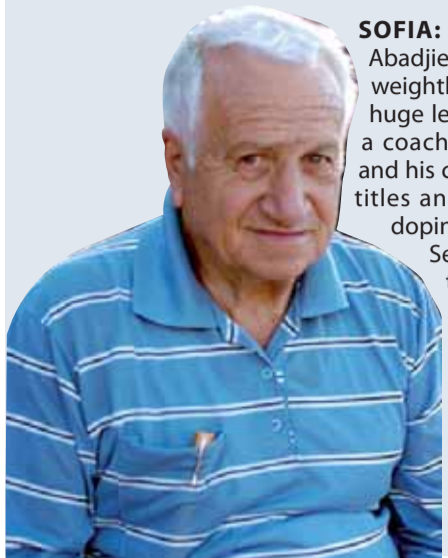
doned his vow to send Hillary Clinton to prison - yet rarely losing support of his loyal backers. That degree of unpredictability gave some credibility to his ultimatum to force a Friday vote or keep Obamacare in place, despite his years-long crusade against it.

Trump's commitment to the bill seemed wavering. He said Friday "there were things in this bill that I didn't particularly like" and, for the first time, suggested that he would support a bipartisan healthcare measure. He also claimed that "I've never said repeal and replace Obamacare within 64 days," a surprising statement considering he vowed to do so "on day one" nearly every night on the campaign trail. "He's left everything on the field when it comes to this bill," White House press secretary Sean Spicer said before the vote was pulled. "He pulled out every stop, he has called every member, he has tweeted every tweet, he has done every single thing he can."

Though Trump publicly abstained from blaming House Speaker Paul Ryan, the White House suggested some fault lay with members who opposed the measure, with Spicer declaring "they would have to go back and answer to their constituents." That act of political defiance should seem familiar to the occupant of the White House, according to one longtime Trump ally. "The people who are defeating this are the ones most like Trump - ones willing to break from the pack," said former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who also questioned the wisdom of setting a hard deadline to pass the legislation.

"If it was a negotiating tactic, it wasn't a good one," said Gingrich, who suggested that relations between Trump and Ryan, always strained, would get worse. "The president feels burned. I suspect you'll see him far more engaged on matters like tax reform, which he is passionate about. But it will be more complicated now." The failure to get the health plan through the House, a task considered easier than in the Senate, may portend even greater difficulty in passing complicated tax reform and the rest of Trump's ambitious agenda. "Doing big things is hard," said Ryan. — AP

## BULGARIAN WEIGHTLIFTING COACH IVAN ABADJIEV DEAD



**SOFIA:** Bulgarian weightlifting coach Ivan Abadjiev died yesterday aged 85, the national weightlifting federation said, leaving behind a huge legacy of success tainted by scandal. As a coach he revolutionised training methods and his charges won 12 Olympic titles, 57 world titles and 64 European crowns. But positive doping tests by Bulgarian lifters at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and Sydney 2000 left his teams discredited and his achievements tarnished. Appointed national coach in 1969 Abadjiev was credited with creating the intense training methods of 'maximal effort' heavy lifting over long hours that toppled Soviet supremacy in the sport and established a dynasty of Bulgarians in its place. —AFP

## VINALES SURVIVES CRASH TO TIGHTEN QATAR STRANGLEHOLD

**DOHA:** Maverick Vinales survived a high-speed crash to maintain his iron-grip on the Qatar MotoGP on Friday, finishing the second day of practice comfortably the fastest man on the track.

The 22-year-old Spaniard, who had already dominated under the Losail floodlights in Thursday's opening session, clocked a best time of 1min 54.316sec on his Yamaha to lead Suzuki's Andrea Iannone (0.532sec behind) and Honda's defending world champion Marc Marquez (0.596). Nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi, the Yamaha teammate of Vinales, struggled for a second day in succession, finishing 10th on the time charts at 1.098sec behind the flying Spaniard.

Former world champion Jorge Lorenzo, who left Yamaha for Ducati at the end of last season, suffered even more, ending in 12th place at 1.145sec off the blistering pace set by Vinales.

Vinales, who moved from Suzuki in the winter before going on to dominate all four pre-season testing sessions, had escaped unscathed from a crash earlier in the day.

The incident happened on Turn Four after he had slipped by Rossi. Sparks flew from beneath his bike as it careered across the track but Vinales was soon able to resume his evening's work on his back-up machine. "The crash was a big mistake on my part. I was pushing and I was going

wide," explained Vinales.

"I was at that point where you have to decide to go wide or try and make the corner. I tried to make the corner and I lost the front. My mistake and I was angry with myself because I shouldn't make those mistakes. "But I'm happy because we had good pace today even though the conditions weren't as good as yesterday. It was slippier, I don't know why but we did 1:56s consistently."

"The bike is working well but we just need to improve the grip a bit. Maybe it was the conditions today after it rained and it was a bit dusty, so let's check tomorrow. I'm happy overall but the crash was a big mistake. I know when I concentrate 100 percent I don't make those mistakes." Rossi's struggles earlier Friday led to 1993 world champion Kevin Schwantz suggesting that the great Italian, now 38 years old, may even retire at the end of the season should he be outpaced and outshone by Vinales in the championship. "Do I think he'll retire at the end of the year if Maverick hands him his ass weekend in, weekend out? He possibly could," Schwantz told motorsport.com. Sunday's night-time race in Qatar is the first of 17 rounds in the 2017 championship.

However, Rossi can at least boast impressive form at the desert circuit, having won there on four occasions. —AFP

### ATHLETICS

## KENYA AND ETHIOPIA RENEW WORLD CROSS COUNTRY RIVALRY

**KAMPALA:** Kenya and their east African middle and long-distance running rivals, Ethiopia, will come face-to-face again at the 42nd World Cross Country Championships in the Ugandan capital Kampala today.

The two countries who have dominated the global event more than any other nation, have strong teams at this year's event which is held at the picturesque Kololo Independence Ground.

Kenya's world champion, leads a strong team in the 10km senior men's race, but many believe Ethiopia, led by national champion, Getaneh Molla, should challenge. A total of 557 athletes from 59 countries will face a testing course which has been fitted with a water jump and a hill to challenge the runners endurance. "The quality of performances you will see tomorrow absolutely and quintessentially exemplifies the fact that this is a truly global sport," Sebastian Coe, IAAF President, told reporters. "There's no greater heartland for that talent and that passion than Africa for these cross country championships. This is a country, and this is a continent that takes cross country very seriously."

Despite finishing third at the Kenyan trials last month, Kamworor-World Half Marathon champion in Cardiff last year — and Leonard Barsoton, who won the

Kenyan trials, are favourites in the senior men's race. Stern competition is expected from Molla and Ethiopian team mates Muktar Edris, Abadi Hadis-a national 10,000m champion — Mohos Tuemay and Ibrahim Jeilan.

Ugandan hopes rest on national champion Joshua Cheptegei, African cross country silver medalist Phillip Kipyeko and Timothy Toroitich. "We have the experience and the best athletes. We have trained well and I have no doubt that we will triumph," Kenya's Leonard Komon told Reuters at the Kololo Independence Ground yesterday.

Olympic 1,500m champion, Faith Kipyegon and three-time winner over the same distance, Asbel Kiprop, will lead Kenya in a new event—the mixed relay.

However, much is expected of USA led by Kenyan-born Paul Chelimo and Ethiopia led by Genzebe Dibaba.

Kenyan Agnes Tirop, women's 8km senior defending champion, will lead a team including African champion Alice Aprot and Kipyegon in a race expected to be dominated by Kenya and Ethiopia. World Cross Country silver medalist Senbere Teferi, who also won silver in 5,000m at the World Championships in Beijing, Belayesh Oljira, Dera Dida and Sentayehu Lewetegn will lead the Ethiopian challenge against Kenya.—Reuters



Geoffrey Kamworor

## WTA BOSS KEEN TO LET COACHES INSTRUCT PLAYERS FROM STANDS

**LONDON:** The governing body for women's tennis (WTA) is considering changing the rules to allow coaches to instruct players from the stands, its chief executive Steve Simon said. Under the existing rules, players are allowed to take on-court coaching timeouts during WTA events, but can be fined for attempting to communicate with coaches while they are sitting in the stands. Coaches can be ejected from court and players defaulted for persistent violations of the rule. "The on-court coaching has been positive. I want to look at it further," Simon was quoted as saying by the Times. "I don't know where it will go, but I am not understanding why we allow coaching on court but not from the (players') box. There's some great personalities among the coaches that could be good for our sport. "It's something that I would actually like to see expand." Players on the WTA tour have been allowed to take one coaching timeout per set since 2009, but the rule does not apply at grand slams or on the men's tour. — Reuters

## BARCELONA TO NAME ONE STADIUM AFTER CRUYFF

**BARCELONA:** La Liga champions Barcelona will pay tribute to visionary midfielder and coach Johan Cruyff by naming one of their new stadiums after the late Dutchman and his statue will also be erected at the Nou Camp. The club are planning to relocate their Mini Estadi, the home of their B team and occasional venue for their women's team, to their training ground and president Josep Maria Bartomeu said the new ground will be named the Estadi Johan Cruyff. "Cruyff broke down barriers, he was the man who made us lift our heads up and see that nothing is impossible," Bartomeu said at a presentation on Saturday, a day after Cruyff's first death anniversary. "His death was a huge loss, not just for everyone connected with Barcelona but also for anyone who loves football." —Reuters



MELBOURNE: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (C), teammate Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas (L) and Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel (R) pose together after the qualifying session at the Formula One Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

### MOTOR RACING

## HAMILTON FIGHTS OFF VETTEL TO GRAB AUSSIE GP POLE

**MELBOURNE:** Triple world champion Lewis Hamilton fought off late bids from Sebastian Vettel and team-mate Valtteri Bottas to seize pole position in the season-opening Australian Grand Prix yesterday.

Hamilton in a Mercedes clocked a record lap of one minute 22.188 seconds to claim his 62nd career pole and his sixth in Australia into today's race in Melbourne. Ferrari's Vettel made a valiant late bid to snatch pole off Hamilton but finished just 0.268secs down, although fractionally quicker than Bottas.

Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen took fourth ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen, while Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo crashed out in the final Q3 session. It was dominant Hamilton's fourth successive pole in Melbourne and his fifth in his last six Australian GPs. "It's been a fantastic weekend so far. I'm incredibly proud of my team," Hamilton said. "Valteri did a great job and it's great for us as Mercedes. It's going to be a tight race. "Tomorrow is about putting all the work together and making sure I come back stronger than ever." Hamilton, who finished runner-up by just five points in last season's titanic world championship battle with now-retired team-mate Nico Rosberg, will be chasing his third win in Melbourne. Vettel gave promise of fighting for Ferrari's first win in Melbourne since Kimi Raikkonen's victory in 2007, with his bold showing. "I lost a bit in turn one and in turn nine I tried a bit too much, but I don't think it would have been enough," said Vettel, who claimed Ferrari's first front row since Singapore in 2015.

"I wasn't entirely happy with my lap but I don't think pole was up for grabs. "Tomorrow we can do something in the race. I'm looking forward to it. People are fired up and we're motivated." Hamilton's pole time was 1.7 seconds quicker than his qualifying time last year. "Third position is not ideal," Bottas said.

"In general I'm not happy for the result. But I'm proud of what the team has done. "I only saw a very small part of the preparation and it's nice to see the work has pulled off and we're fighting at the front."

### RICCIARDO CRASH

Australia's big hope Ricciardo crashed his Red Bull at turn 14 looking to post a good time in Q3 and will start 10th off the grid.

Ricciardo damaged the rear of his RB13 car and was heard over the team radio as saying: "I'm alright... sorry guys."

The final session of qualifying was suspended while Ricciardo's car was removed from the gravel alongside the track. "I'm physically OK, but emotionally it's tough. At least (the crash) didn't happen in Q1," Ricciardo told reporters.

"I would have loved to be (in the) top five rather than 10th." Sergio Perez, Nico Hulkenberg, Fernando Alonso, Esteban Ocon and Marcus Ericsson all failed to make it through the top 10 shootout. "After the difficulties we encountered in winter testing, we came to Melbourne without a clear idea of where we stood," Alonso said of his troubled McLaren Honda.

"But we've more or less run through all the sessions without trouble—which is better than we'd expected. "Tomorrow we'll start 13th in the middle of the pack—which is definitely not our target. Finishing the race is going to be tough."

Red Bull's Max Verstappen had a lock-up into turn six on ultrasoft tyres before he posted a time to stay alive into Q2. McLaren's Stoffel Vandoorne had a fuel-flow issue which sent the

Belgian to the pits and knocked out in Q1.

Vandoorne was joined by Antonio Giovinazzi, Kevin Magnussen, Lance Stroll and Jolyon Palmer to be eliminated in the first session of qualifying. Giovinazzi is making his F1 debut after replacing Williams team-mate Pascal Wehrlein, who has not sufficiently recovered from a back injury sustained in a pre-season crash.—AFP

## RICCIARDO SORRY AS HOME TITLE HOPES SPIN OUT

**MELBOURNE:** Daniel Ricciardo was left apologising to the Red Bull garage after his hopes of becoming the Australian Grand Prix's first home winner spun out during qualifying yesterday. The affable 27-year-old will start 10th on the grid after he skidded at turn 14, ended up in the gravel and hit a barrier before his car was towed from the track. Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton took pole ahead of Ferrari's second-placed Sebastian Vettel.

Australia has waited in vain for a local champion but it would require a good dose of luck and something truly special from Ricciardo for the drought to end today.

"That was a tough one today. I don't crash into the barriers often and the last place I want to do that is at home," he said. "But I feel I crashed for the right reason, as I was basically pushing and trying to find the limit and these things happen."

"So let's say I'm not disappointed by the approach, it was just more of a frustrating outcome, starting 10th instead of being under the top five."

"I feel for the mechanics, because they've had a long week and now they've got a long night ahead of them." Ricciardo's teenage team mate Max Verstappen qualified fifth but was scarcely more pleased, with his fastest lap more than a second slower than pole-sitter Hamilton's.

Neither of the Red Bull drivers were enamoured with the performance of their cars during Friday practice and Verstappen complained his was still far from optimal after qualifying.

"It's been a bit of a tough weekend in general, I haven't done as much running as I would have liked," he said. "The car is better balanced now but it is clear to see we still have to gain a bit. "It's not just in power; we built a car that is efficient on the straights but it means we lose a bit of grip in cornering. "I am not disappointed as I think this is about where we expected to be at race one."

"Tomorrow it is important for me to have a quick and clean start and let the guys in front battle it out." — Reuters



MELBOURNE: Red Bull Racing driver Daniel Ricciardo of Australia, left, waves as he walks down pit lane after crashing out of the qualifying session for the Australian Formula One Grand Prix in Melbourne, yesterday. — AP









## SATISFIED SCOLARI HAS NO PLANS TO QUIT GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE

**GUANGZHOU:** World Cup-winning manager Luiz Felipe Scolari has denied reports in his native Brazil that he will retire from coaching at the end of the current Chinese Super League season.

Scolari, who signed a new contract with Guangzhou Evergrande at the end of last year, called the reports "fake news" and said he hoped to remain in China beyond his existing deal.

"It is completely untrue," he told Chinese media. "I don't know what the intention was behind this fake news. I have to repeat that my contract with

Evergrande is due until the end of this year and I have the option of a one-year extension.

"I love my job in Guangzhou, and I love my players. My family in Brazil don't need me to quit my work here to take care of them at home.

"It is normal that I take some holidays back in Brazil, and I haven't seen my wife for four or five months. I went back and brought them to Guangzhou, that's it. I believe I will spend more time here."

Scolari took over as head coach at Guangzhou Evergrande in June 2015

and has since led the club to the Asian Champions League title and two Chinese Super League crowns.

He has followed in the footsteps of fellow World Cup winner Marcello Lippi in leading the club to domestic and continental success.

Scolari praised the Italian's impact on the China national team after Lippi guided them to victory over South Korea in World Cup qualifying on Thursday evening. "I always tell my players to be at their best for the national team," said Scolari, who saw five of his players start

for China in the 1-0 win.

"Lippi is my good friend. We've chatted a few times. I'm happy to see what he has done to the national team. I watched the whole 90 minutes and I like the way it went."

The Brazilian also praised Paulinho, who scored a hat-trick in Brazil's 4-1 win in Uruguay in World Cup qualifying. The midfielder forced his way back into the national team after impressing for Guangzhou during the season.

"There are two reasons why I'm happy tonight," said Scolari. "One is that

China won the match against South Korea and the other is that Paulinho scored a hat-trick for the Brazil national team. "Paulinho was not in the national team list, but he fought his way back. That is why I am very proud of the Chinese Super League. You see Paulinho, Renato Augusto and Gil have all gone back to the national team. "So it is wrong to say that the CSL is for players who have come to the end of their career. The CSL has showed it is competitive and it is able to give players the chance to play for their country again." — Reuters

## ENGLAND'S DIER WARY OF LITHUANIA THREAT

**LONDON:** England's Euro 2016 humiliation by Iceland means they will never again underestimate teams like today's opponents Lithuania, according to Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Eric Dier. Dier was a member of the team stunned 2-1 by Iceland in Nice last year as England crashed to their most embarrassing defeat since a 1-0 loss to the part-timers of the United States at the 1950 World Cup. Gareth Southgate's men will start as strong favourites at Wembley, as they look to defend their place at the Group F summit, but Dier says thoughts of Iceland will not be far away.

"Whenever you're in an England squad, you're going to think about it. It's a painful reminder and it's a good lesson for the future," he told reporters on Friday.

"We can look back on that game and what we didn't do and in games like the one on Sunday try to do what we didn't."

He added: "We have to be confident going into it, try to play quick, attacking football and hopefully they won't be able to handle that." Having tested a 3-4-2-1 system in Wednesday's 1-0 loss to Germany, Southgate may decide to revert to the back four he used in the three qualifiers he oversaw at the end of last year.

With Chelsea's Gary Cahill suspended and Manchester United pair Chris Smalling and Phil Jones having withdrawn due to injury, John Stones will expect to regain his place at centre-back.

The Manchester City defender started on the bench in Dortmund, where Burnley's Michael Keane made an accomplished debut. Uncapped Middlesbrough defender Ben Gibson has been drafted into the squad to provide cover at centre-back.

Manchester United's Marcus Rashford is also pushing for a starting berth, while Jermain Defoe will hope to feature after returning to the squad following an

absence of nearly four years.

### TERROR TRIBUTES

Lithuania made a steady start to qualifying, drawing with Slovenia and Scotland before beating Malta 2-0, but were then given a rude awakening by a 4-0 defeat in Slovakia. Edgaras Jankauskas's side, who are without an away win in six competitive games, sit fourth in the group, five points below England and three points off the play-off place.

The Lithuania manager, whose side were beaten 3-0 by the Czech Republic in a friendly on Wednesday, says his team will draw encouragement from England's defeat by Iceland. "World-class players should not be affected by pressure," Jankauskas told The Times newspaper.

"When you are privileged to play every week in great stadiums and the best league in the world, then you should get used to the pressure and you have to cope with the pressure. "It is your job week in, week out. In the Euros we saw that on the day England were not ready. I have total faith in my players." Following Wednesday's terror attack in London, which left four people dead and over 50 injured, British police have pledged to boost security for Sunday's game.

"In collaboration with the local authorities and Met Police there will be an enhanced security operation for England v Lithuania today, to ensure a safe and secure environment," said a Football Association spokesperson. "Supporters are encouraged to arrive as early as possible to avoid any delays in entering the stadium." There will be armed patrols around the stadium, while England's players will wear black armbands and there will be a minute's silence prior to kick-off. The match programmes will also contain a tribute to former England manager Graham Taylor, who died in January at the age of 72. — AFP



**GIJON:** Spain's forward Vitolo (L) vies with Israel's defender Rami Gershon during the WC 2018 group G football qualifying match Spain vs Israel at El Molinon stadium in Gijon on Friday. — AFP

### SOCCER

## BUFFON REACHES 1,000 AS ITALY AND SPAIN CRUISE

**PARIS:** Italy kept pace with Spain in European World Cup qualifying as goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon played his 1,000th professional match in a 2-0 victory over Albania on Friday. A first-half Daniele De Rossi penalty and late second from Ciro Immobile was enough to earn the Azzurri three points but they remain behind Spain on goal difference at the top of Group G after La Rioja downed Israel 4-1. Manchester City forward David Silva and Chelsea's Diego Costa were on the scoresheet alongside Vitolo and Isco, while Lior Refaelov netted Israel's consolation.

In Palermo it was a day for Buffon to savour as he won a European record 168th cap and helped Italy extend their unbeaten run in qualifiers to 55 matches (41 wins, 14 draws).

De Rossi converted the spot-kick on 12 minutes after Migjen Basha, one of six Albanians plying his club trade in Italy, brought down Andrea Belotti. Albanian fans threw flares onto the pitch in disgust and when they did so again just before the hour mark, the game was suspended for five minutes. Immobile made the game safe 10 minutes from time by heading home a Davide Zappacosta cross. "At the start, there was too much tension, we tried to do too much and missed some fluidity," said Italy coach Giampiero Ventura. "But we were never in danger."

Spain had their game wrapped up by half-time in Gijon as Silva drove home a pass from Jordi Alba before Vitolo's shot in first half injury time squirmed under Israel goalkeeper Ofir Marciano. Diego Costa headed home a Thiago Alcantara corner on 51 minutes. Refaelov gave the visitors something to cheer with a left-foot effort on 76 minutes, just moments after Rami Gershon had struck the post with a header. But Iago Aspas teed up Isco to put the gloss on a comfortable win two minutes from time.

Defeat saw Israel slip four points behind the two Group G heavyweights with five games left to play and only the pool winners guaranteed a place at Russia 2018.

"I am very happy with my goal, but the victory is the most important thing," said Silva. "We needed to win to stay ahead of the rest." In the other group game, Macedonia got their first points of the qualifying campaign with a 3-0 win at Liechtenstein, who remain pointless.

### HORRIFIC INJURY

Captain Seamus Coleman suffered a broken leg as the Republic of Ireland and Wales drew 0-0 in Dublin in Group D.

Neil Taylor was shown a straight red card for the scything challenge that left Irish defender Coleman clutching his shattered lower leg and screaming in pain as Shane Long tried to comfort him. "It's been confirmed by our doctor that he's broken his leg," said Ireland boss Martin O'Neill. "It's a big, big loss."

It was a costly game for Wales who saw their captain Gareth Bale booked for a high boot on John O'Shea meaning he, like Taylor, will miss the next qualifier away to Serbia in June.

Serbia moved top of the group after coming from behind to win 3-1 in Georgia. Nika

Kacharava gave the hosts a fifth minute lead but Dusan Tadic equalised from the penalty spot on the stroke of half-time. Aleksandar Mitrovic gave Serbia the lead before Mijat Gacinovic sealed the victory late on.

Serbia now lead the Republic on goal difference with Wales and Austria, 2-0 winners over Moldova, four points behind. Croatia went three points clear at the top of Group I with a 1-0 victory over Ukraine courtesy of Nikola Kalinic's goal seven minutes from half-time. Iceland moved up to second with a 2-1 win at Kosovo, whose wait

for a first competitive victory goes on.

Bjorn Sigurdarson gave the visitors a 25th minute lead before Gylfi Sigurdsson doubled the advantage from the spot 10 minutes later after Benjamin Kololli had brought down Birkir Saevarsson. But seven minutes into the second period Atthe Nuhui headed home a Herolind Shala corner to give Kosovo a lifeline although it wasn't enough. A brace from Cenk Tosun kept Turkey's qualifying hopes alive as they beat Finland 2-0 to stay fourth, five points off Croatia. — AFP



**LONDON:** England's defender Luke Shaw (2R) takes part in a training session at Tottenham Hotspur's training complex in Enfield, north London, yesterday ahead of England's FIFA World Cup 2018 qualifier football match against Lithuania. — AFP

## CROATIA TOPS TABLE WITH WIN OVER UKRAINE, ICELAND SECOND

**ZAGREB:** Croatia took control of Group I in the 2018 World Cup qualifying with a 1-0 victory over Ukraine as their fans had a first chance to celebrate a victory at the Maksimir Stadium. It was the first home match Croatia was allowed to play in front of their fans in the campaign. FIFA had ordered the stadium in the capital to be closed to fans when Croatia hosted Turkey and Iceland last year as punishment for previous incidents of racism and disorder.

Croatia opened a three-point lead, midway through the qualifying, with 13 points from five games and four straight wins. Croatia didn't concede a single goal in those victories as a team known for its creative power also developed a reliable defense. Nikola Kalinic scored the only goal of the match in the 38th minute, firing high into the net after a good move from midfielders Luka Modric and Ivan Rakitic.

Croatia and Juventus forward Mario Mandzukic hit the post in the first half. After what was the first defeat for coach Andriy Shevchenko, Ukraine was on eight points together with Turkey, two behind Iceland in second.

Also in Group I:

### TURKEY 2, FINLAND 0

Forward Cenk Tosun struck twice in four minutes to keep Turkey in contention to reach the 2018 World Cup. Tosun needed just nine minutes to find the back of the net with his first from close range and headed in the second just four minutes lat-

er. The forward, who has scored 20 for Besiktas this season, has a total of five goals for Turkey. Perparim Hetemaj hit the post late in the first half in Finland's best chance.

### KOSOVO 1, ICELAND 2

Kosovo's misery in its first major qualifying competition continued with a fourth straight defeat. The match was played in Albania's Shkoder as Kosovo does not have a FIFA-certified stadium. Kosovo looked determined to record its first win in the opening stages and showed some decent attacking effort, with Valon Berisha's shot bouncing off the bar. But the visitors began to expose Kosovo's weakness in defense, something they did to their opponents at last year's European Championship in France. Iceland took the lead in the 25th. Kosovo goalkeeper Samir Ujkani parried Gylfi Sigurdsson's attempt but only succeeded in deflecting the ball to the feet of Bjorn Sigurdarson, who tapped in from six yards for his first international goal. Sigurdsson doubled the lead 10 minutes later from the penalty spot. Kosovo didn't give in. It had a goal disallowed early in the second half before Atthe Nuhui headed in the 52nd in his first international game to please the roaring fans. It was only Kosovo's second goal in the qualifying. Berisha had scored its first at Finland from the spot. Kosovo pressured till the end but Iceland held firm. Kosovo and Finland have a point each at the bottom of the table. — AP

hint of that in my dressing room. There's no Bale saying, 'I got that one wrong.' He wants to appeal the yellow card."

### MCCLEAN PRAISE

Coleman defended Taylor, saying he had been left "devastated" by Seamus Coleman's injury and was "not that type of player", but also expressed sympathy for the Everton player. O'Neill confirmed Seamus Coleman had been taken straight to hospital with a broken leg. "Obviously it's a real blow to him," O'Neill said. "He's having the season of a lifetime at club level. He's a big player for us, a great captain and a great character."

"It's a big, big loss, to Everton and to us. But he'll fight back, I hope. It puts thing in perspective I suppose." In better news for O'Neill, the point earned at the Aviva Stadium kept Ireland four points clear of Wales and level on points with new group leaders Serbia, who beat Georgia 3-1.

Wales looked to be growing into the game in the second half, Bale drilling wide from distance, but Taylor's dismissal tipped the momentum Ireland's way and the hosts threatened to snatch it.

"It's five games gone, it's exactly halfway (in the qualifying campaign)," O'Neill said.

"If you'd said to me two games at home, three away, we would have 11 points on the board, I would have taken that."

"But Serbia won tonight. Austria won (against Moldova), they're not out of it. And you wouldn't call Wales out of it either."

O'Neill also paid tribute to West Bromwich Albion winger McClean, who was named man of the match five days on from the shock death of his close friend Ryan McBride, the Derry City captain, at the age of 27. "He played very, very strongly," O'Neill said. "He played with his heart, as he always does. He played with not only great commitment, but also a great measure of discipline." — AFP

# Sports

Kenya and Ethiopia renew World Cross Country rivalry



Debutant Kuldeep used Warne advice to torment Australia



SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2017

NADAL SWEEPS PAST SELA IN MIAMI, DIMITROV TOPPLED Page 18



DUBAI: Jockey Mike Smith (center right) rides Arrogate to win the Dubai World Cup race in the Meydan Racecourse yesterday. (Inset) UAE Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (center right) celebrates with Jockey William Buick (center left) and horse Jach Hobbs after they won the Longines Dubai Sheema Classic at the Dubai World Cup. — AFP

## ARROGATE WINS DUBAI WORLD CUP THRILLER

DUBAI: Overwhelming favorite Arrogate won the \$10 million Dubai World Cup yesterday, overcoming a poor start to become the sport's biggest earning horse with \$17 million to its name. The Bob Baffert trained colt with 51-year-old jockey Mike Smith in the saddle came home ahead of Gun Runner in second and Neolithic who took third place. Four-year-old Arrogate went into the race as the odds-on favorite

after an impressive win in the Breeders' Cup Classic but after a slow start out of the stalls, Smith had to weave his way through the field.

Gun Runner was ahead at the turn but Smith and Arrogate stepped up their final push down the straight at Meydan as Baffert claimed a third win in the race. Baffert admitted that he feared the worst for his horse after the sloppy start. "That was 'Plan

F!," said Baffert. "But that's the best I've ever seen in my life, it's unbelievable. I guess he knew where he was but it just goes to show you how great this horse is, he's just a great horse. Mike did a great job, he didn't panic."

Gun Runner battled hard to keep out Neolithic at the head of the chasing pack but the night belonged to Arrogate who now has seven wins from eight

starts. Smith admitted he had been caught by surprise at the start. "I missed the break completely because he's used to having a man in the gate with him, but things happen for a reason," he told reporters. "This horse can do anything, he can win in the lead, he can come from dead last, he hasn't even taken a breath. 'I get a lot of the glory, but there's a big team who deserve a lot of credit.' — AFP



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**TRUMP, MNUCHIN SAY FOCUS WILL TURN TO TAX REFORM**



**KUWAIT:** An artist's rendering of the new Kuwait airport terminal currently being under construction.

**777-300ERS A GAME-CHANGER FOR KAC**

**KUWAIT'S NEW VISION ON AVIATION INDUSTRY WILL PAY DIVIDENDS: BOEING OFFICIAL**

By Sajeev K Peter

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has embarked on a new direction by realigning its vision on growth and development, especially in the aviation sector, which will pay dividends for the country, said a top Boeing official on the sidelines of a defense conference.

In an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times, Bernard J Dunn, President of Boeing, Middle East, Africa and Turkey (MENAT), said: "The plan to build a new airport and its expansion along with the rebranding of Kuwait Airways speak for the future. These moves will really do a lot for the aviation sector and bring in a lot of traffic to Kuwait that has not been there thus far. Boeing is happy to be part of these developments."

Dunn will deliver a speech and moderate a panel discussion at the first Kuwait Air Power and Air Defense Symposium (KIAPADS), which is being held today and tomorrow at the Regency Hotel. KIAPADS is a groundbreaking conference and it is for the first time that a focused air power and air defense event of this profile is being held in Kuwait. The forum will bring together senior air force personnel from all over the region who will review the air power and air defense since the Liberation of Kuwait in the context of today's threat dynamics and their emerging impact.

**Game-changer**

"In terms of positioning, the purchase of Boeing 777-300ERs is really a game-changer for Kuwait Airways. The purchase reflects a vision that is really going to take Kuwait and the airline into the future, because with these airplanes, you can operate non-stop flights and connect Kuwait to the entire world. It is an extremely successful aircraft which is being used by our customers all over the world," Dunn pointed out.

Kuwait Airways has purchased 10 777-300ER airplanes, of which five were delivered

last year. The other five will be delivered this summer. Countries all over the world including Middle East states have realized that an investment in aerospace industry is one of the most lucrative investments one can make for the economy. "The payback factor in the industry is extremely high," Dunn said.

**Market outlook**

"Our current market outlook in the Middle East projects that the region needs 3,310 commercial jets valued at \$770 billion over the next 20 years. This generates a requirement for 58,000 new pilots, about 66,000 new technicians, and about 92,000 cabin crew, while 2,380 new airplanes are to be delivered to the region by 2035 valued at \$110 billion," he said.

"In fact, we have to look beyond these numbers. In the aerospace industry alone in the region, we will get to see highly qualified, well-trained and well-educated people who will demand good schools for their kids, good houses to live in, nice restaurants to dine in and spend their money. This will help develop a good ecosystem in the economy delivering high quality and standards to the country and to the population. The more you expand your aerospace sector, the more you are investing in yourself and in your country," the Boeing official elaborated.

According to Dunn, Kuwait has begun to understand the value of an important investment in its economy. The purchase of 777-300ERs reflects Kuwait's growing understanding of a serious investment in the aerospace sector. The second and third tier effects of that investment are huge. Kuwait will be part of that huge number," Dunn said.

**Regional presence**

Boeing celebrated its centennial last summer. "We arrived at the 100-year anniversary last July as a company crossing a significant milestone. Our involvement in the Middle East began way back in 1945 when we delivered a



**Bernard J. Dunn, Boeing's President for MENAT, speaks during the interview. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat**

DC3 airplane to King Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia. That was our first major engagement in the Middle East and we have been active in the region ever since," he said.

Boeing's engagement with Kuwait goes back about 50 years to the late 1950s when the company delivered three Boeing 707 jets to Kuwait Airways. "Ever since, KAC has been a very good customer of Boeing. They have operated nearly every type of commercial airplane we made in the last 50 years, culminating in the recent purchase of 10 777-300ERs," he pointed out.

**Market share**

The Middle East is a key market for Boeing and the region has one of the world's fastest growing commercial aviation sectors. "We have a robust order book for the Middle East with a

backlog of over 550 aircraft. Thirty percent of the company's wide-body backlog is accounted for by Emirates, Qatar Airways and Etihad alone," he said.

Despite being a tough market in the face of competition, Boeing has performed well over the years. "We have dominance, especially in the wide-body market. The next major step for Boeing in the wide-body sector is our 777X. This is an airplane we are developing at the specific request of the three big Gulf carriers in the region - Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways. The temperature and the environment in the region make it difficult for airlines to take off on certain days. To compensate for that, we are completely redesigning the 777X to add composites and a whole new wing. The aircraft can carry more people and is more cost-effective and efficient. Delivery of the air-

craft will start in 2020," he said. Talking about 787 Dreamliners, he said both airlines and passengers are happy with the airplane. "We have delivered hundreds of Dreamliners already. The aircraft continues to enjoy good market including in the Middle East.

**Defense market**

"Kuwait is an important defense market for Boeing and we have been involved in Kuwait since 1974 with Kuwait's purchase of a number of small Skyhawk fighter jets from Boeing. Since then, the country has made purchases like Apache helicopters, C17 travel jets and F/A-18 fighters. Currently, we are actively involved in Kuwait's defense sector," he said without divulging details of the ongoing discussions. "Kuwait, more than any other country in the region, definitely understands the need for a strong defense. And we are very happy to support their desires to have a fully modern and cutting-edge defense force," Dunn added. Dunn was on the ground with American forces during 'Operation Desert Storm' to liberate Kuwait.

"We are doing a number of community activities in Kuwait in partnership with INJAZ to empower entrepreneurship and startup programs among the youth in a sustainable environment. Over the last four years, we have supported around 1,500 students from secondary levels through INJAZ in building greater standards of curriculum. We are providing a grant to Kuwait University for students of its aeronautic division. Similarly, we are also supporting the aeronautic division at the Australian University of Kuwait," Dunn said.

Boeing is expected to open its own office in Kuwait by the end of this year after registration with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) as a proper entity. "We are quite bullish about the Kuwait market and as a leading aerospace company, we are looking forward to a long-term presence in the country," Dunn said.



**KUWAIT:** Khaled Al-Khaled and Alex MacDonald-Vitale sign the MOU.

**BOURSA KUWAIT SIGNS MOU WITH MEIRA**

**KUWAIT:** Boursa Kuwait has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Middle East Investor Relations Association on Thursday at Boursa Kuwait headquarters. Khaled Al-Khaled, Boursa Kuwait Vice Chairman and CEO, and Alex MacDonald-Vitale, MEIRA Chairman, signed the agreement to mark the start of this partnership. MEIRA is a non-profit organization that aims to promote investor relations best practice throughout the Middle East. Through this partnership, Boursa Kuwait will be playing a leading role in the support of the 'MEIRA Kuwait Chapter' in an effort to raise the standards of the Investor Relations role by rolling out specialized awareness and training programs.

Commenting on this agreement, Khaled Al-Khaled said: "Developing the exchange scene in Kuwait requires extensive work on many different levels. One primary level is engaging with our stakeholders with the persistent and consistent transparent approach, which we have adopted since the start."

He also added, "This has allowed us to establish positive relations with them that in turn has and will continue to support the involvement of Boursa Kuwait into the leading exchange we seek to create."

"Boursa Kuwait aims to partner with organizations and entities that share the same interests and objectives, in order to ensure a valuable outcome and a mutually bene-

ficial partnership. In line with this agreement, Boursa Kuwait aims to further establish and deploy best practices with regards to the existing investor relations activities and framework, and indeed leverage the knowhow and competence of market experts, such as MEIRA," Al-Khaled added.

The objectives of MEIRA are to foster a culture of effective communication between listed companies, exchanges, regulators, advisers and the buy and sell side communities in the Middle East, and to promote transparency in the market. It also plays an essential role in the governance framework which must be adhered to in terms of listed companies and licensed individuals.

Commenting on its role in reinforcing effective investor relations, MacDonald-Vitale at MEIRA said: "We are delighted to embark on this strategic partnership with Boursa Kuwait. This Memorandum of Understanding further strengthens the existing platform of collaboration between MEIRA and Boursa Kuwait, at a time when continued improvement in standards of best practice is of critical importance to the market's development."

He also added "At MEIRA, we look forward to supporting Boursa Kuwait's efforts to develop the Kuwait financial market". Following the signature of the MOU, MEIRA plans to host a training session on Investor Relations on 29 - 30 April in Kuwait which is open to public.













## MALIBU DELIVERS UNEXPECTED PERFORMANCE WITH 250HP

**KUWAIT:** The all-new 2017 Chevrolet Malibu has remained an enduring classic among its peers since it was introduced more than 50 years ago. Now, its 9th generation, the 2017 Malibu, offers customers two power options - a 2.5L and now and all-new 2.0L turbocharged engine that is now available in Kuwait at any of Chevrolet Alghanim Showrooms. The 2.0L turbocharged engine delivers 250 turbocharged horsepower (186 kW) and leads its segment in fuel efficiency with 14.2 km/L.

Stronger and lighter, the new Malibu delivers a more dynamically optimized ride and handling, two aspects that are complemented by the power and performance of the 250hp capable 2.0L turbo 4 cylinder engine. Acceleration from standstill and while underway happen effortlessly thanks to the 350Nm of torque, majority of which are available early on in the acceleration phase thanks to the powertrain's advanced turbo technology.

The Malibu 2.0T delivers this broad power

band for its drivers thanks to the power-dense turbocharged four-cylinder engine. The twin-scroll design of the turbo unit helps optimize the usable power from the engine at low revolutions and virtually eliminates any turbo lag.

The Malibu's stylish exterior stands out with details that subtly invoke its unexpected performance, such as dual exhaust chrome tips, as well as standard auto dimming mirrors. The turbocharged engine will be available in LT and LTZ trim with 10 spoke alloy wheels in 17 and 18 inch rims.

Inside the 2017 Malibu, driver and passengers are cosseted with comfortable cloth or leather seating and segment leading cargo space, cooled front seats as well as dual zone climate control. Infotainment is also best in class thanks to standard phone integration\* on the 8 inch screen available on the LT and LTZ respectively. Additionally, Drivers can spend more time with eyes on the road and hands on the wheel thanks to Chevrolet's

MyLink infotainment system which gives owners a simple and intuitive interface to control various elements including but not limited to audio, navigation (if equipped), comfort settings and more most of which are accessible from the steering mounted buttons or voice command.

Malibu's MyLink infotainment system gives owners a smart and simple way to access Apple CarPlay. Apple CarPlay takes the iPhone features customers want to access while driving and puts them on the vehicle's display in a smart, simple manner. That allows drivers to make calls, send and receive messages and listen to music right from the touchscreen or by voice via Siri. Apple CarPlay supported apps include Phone, Messages, Maps, Music and compatible third-party apps.

The Malibu 2.0T protects its passengers thanks to a suite of available advanced active and passive safety features at the heart of which is a high-strength steel safety cage. The

2017 Malibu features a list of available preventive safety features which include:

- Front Pedestrian Alert that uses a forward-looking camera to help avoid or reduce the harm caused by crashes with pedestrians ahead of the vehicle. The system can apply automatic last-second braking
- Lane Keep Assist with Lane Departure Warning
- Side Blind Zone Alert with Lane Change Alert
- New Forward Collision Alert with Following Distance Indicator
- Rear Cross Traffic Alert
- Front and Rear Park Assist
- IntelliBeam, which automatically switches the headlamps to high beam for better road illumination and improved visibility
- Adaptive Cruise Control with Front Automatic Braking
- Automatic Parking Assist
- Speed limit readout on dashboard

Chevrolet customers will receive Chevrolet Complete Care as standard. The comprehensive aftersales package promises additional value with competitive and transparent maintenance pricing; one-hour servicing; two days advanced booking; a regional three-year/100,000-km warranty; and four years of regional 24x7 roadside assistance.

### Chevrolet Care

All Chevrolet Alghanim customers will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years.



**ABU DHABI:** Linda Celestino, Etihad Airways' Vice President Guest Experience (left), and Claire Burgess, Head of Research, Consultancy and Training at Norland (right), surrounded by the latest group of graduating Flying Nannies at the Etihad Airways Innovation Training Academy in Abu Dhabi.

## ETIHAD AIRWAYS, NORLAND CELEBRATE GRADUATION OF 2000TH FLYING NANNY

**KUWAIT:** Etihad Airways has celebrated the graduation of its 2000th Flying Nanny, continuing its relationship with Norland, the respected UK-based higher education college which specialises in 'early years' education.

This Norland approved training ensures that Etihad Airways' highly trained cabin crew members who transfer to become Flying Nannies, can combine their service and hospitality expertise with an appreciation of the childcare skills required to ensure outstanding service and inflight care

for the airline's younger guests. The bespoke training program, devised by Norland specifically for the Etihad Airways Training Academy, provides cabin crew with the skills to support families on longhaul flights.

Linda Celestino, Etihad Airways' Vice President Guest Experience, said: "Flying with a young family can be daunting, even for our most experienced guests, and the Flying Nanny role demonstrates our understanding of their needs and our unwavering commitment to making the journey as

relaxing, entertaining and comfortable as possible - for both parent and child."

Flying Nannies were introduced by Etihad Airways in September 2013, and are onboard to provide an extra pair of hands and to allow parents more personal time while they entertain the children.

Claire Burgess, Head of Research, Consultancy and Training at Norland, who has been delivering the training at Etihad Airways' headquarters since the Flying Nanny initiative began, commented: "This milestone reflects how successful the Flying Nanny program has been for Etihad Airways, and it proves that Norland's expertise continues to make a positive impact on the passenger experience."

In September 2016, the airline introduced a new Flying Nanny Kit as part of a new range of 'Etihad Explorers' children's activity packs, to keep its younger guests occupied while onboard. The kit promotes greater interaction between nanny and child and contains an extensive range of fun items including Origami, games, pom-poms, flight certificates, tools for magic tricks and face-painting, and a 'Flying Nanny stamp of approval' which the nanny can use to reward children during their in-flight activities.



**ABU DHABI:** Linda Celestino, Etihad Airways' Vice President Guest Experience (right), presents the airline's 2000th graduating Flying Nanny, Isabel Moya Guzman from Spain (left), with a certificate marking the occasion.

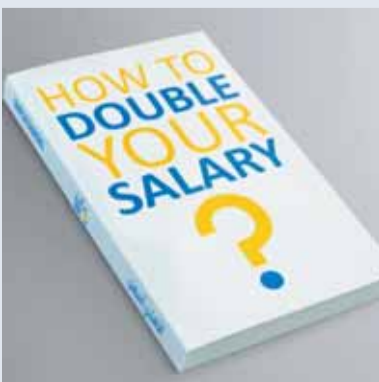
## ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 46TH 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 46th 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw on 13th March, 2017 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, announcing the names of the winners for this week. The promotion includes weekly draws, with two winners per draw. The campaign will run until 27th June, 2017.

### The winners this week are:

- Nmair Kadhem Al-Quraini, Jabriya Branch
- Meshal Hakam Jamaan, Galleria Complex Branch

New customers who transfer their salary to ABK receive KD 100 and will automatically be entered into the weekly draws to double their salaries. Existing customers who are already transferring their salary to ABK are entered into a separate draw.



## MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS GETS 'BEST JEWELLERY BRAND AWARD'

**KUWAIT:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the BIG 5 jewellery retailers globally receives 'Best Jewellery Brand Award' from India Bullion and Jewellers Association Ltd. (IBJA). Abdul Majeed, Group Executive Director, Malabar Gold & Diamonds received the award from Mukesh Mehta, President - National, India Bullion and Jewellers Association in the presence of Shiras T.M, Head - Supply Chain, MH, Rajesh Khosla, Managing Director, MMT Bank, Chethan Thadeshwar, President, IBJA - Mumbai, Anil Kataria, President, IBJA - Madhya Pradesh during India International Bullion Summit (IIBS-4) held in Mumbai recently.

India Bullion and Jewellers Association Ltd. (IBJA) was established in 1919, as a result of the prevailing circumstances in the market that warranted an association with multi-faceted approach to the problems and challenges faced by the bullion traders in a newly liberated India. IBJA helps its members and the community at

large for the promotion & regulation of Bullion trade, address disputes and arbitrations between dealers, provide a neutral & correct platform for weighing precious metals acceptable to the trading community, interact with different execu-

tive agencies, provide reliable & correct reports of assaying of precious metals acceptable to the parties involved

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is among the few companies which are vertically integrated comprising of bullion desk,

design centers, manufacturing, distribution, retail and after sale services. This enables the retailer to offer its customers products and services that unique and offer unmatched value and quality. It caters to a global audience supported by a team consisting of 16 nationalities that are proficient in 50+ different languages. Malabar Gold & Diamonds successfully manages multiple retail formats with presence in high streets, reputed malls, department stores and travel retail.

Corporate Social Responsibility has been the primary commitment of the group since its inception and it still continues with a strong corporate social responsibility scheme embedded in its system, committed to make a difference in human lives by focusing on 5 key areas comprising of health, education, housing, environment and women empowerment. Over the years the initiatives has helped to provide lifesaving drugs for over 600,000 patients and over 10,000 homeless benefited from it till date.



## CHEVROLET ALGHANIM LAUNCHES LIMITED TIME OFFERS ON TAHOE AND SILVERADO UNTIL MAR 31

**KUWAIT:** Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons Automotive (Chevrolet Alghanim), the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in Kuwait, launched new exclusive and limited offers on its power vehicles, the 2017 model year Tahoe and Silverado, giving customers the opportunity to own any of them at an attractive and valuable offer.

With less than a week until the offer ends, new Tahoe owners will receive a free one-year comprehensive insurance as well as KD1,000 to be redeemed in accessories, a service package for up to five years, or an additional amount on the trade-in value for their used cars.

New owners of a Silverado 2017 will receive an amazing accessories package that includes an Android 10.1" screen, front and back bumper paint, sidesteps, window film, and bed liner coating.

The limited offer enables customers to take advantage of the solid performance of the Tahoe and Silverado, giving them worth their money and much more, durability, efficiency and comfort.

The Chevrolet Tahoe is known to empower drivers with an exhilarating performance, thanks to its V8 5.3L engine with 355 horsepower (one of the most powerful engine in its segment) but also with an exceptional sense of comfort and the liberty that reflect its unique lifestyle with customizable accessories. The Tahoe boasts a better fuel economy than any full-size SUV in the industry and incorporates new safety technologies that contribute to a 360-degree of occupant protection and comfort. With its sleek exterior lines that combines its sheer power with elegant presence, the interior and performance aspects accomplish the same harmony in parallel. The Tahoe is also equipped with the award-winning MyLink infotainment

system that includes voice and radio controls, which are fully integrated and operable from the 8-inch full-color touchscreen on the center console.

As for truck fans, meanwhile, can conquer the harshest terrains using the unbelievable capabilities of the new 2017 Silverado, which elevates its lineage legacy through a bolder, more sculpted look that reflects its strength and dependability. The front end is engineered to improve airflow for more efficient engine cooling, while the roof and tailgate spoiler were shaped to smooth airflow over the truck for reduced drag. Coupled with available features such LED foglamps and 17-inch aluminum wheels. A true icon of desert domination, it also boasts technological breakthroughs push the limits on what a truck should be by offering 8-inch Chevrolet MyLink touchscreen display and rear view camera.

### Chevrolet Care

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A. Alghanim & Sons will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years. Customers can take advantage of the limited offer to own the car of their dreams by visiting any of Chevrolet Alghanim showrooms at the following locations: Shuwaikh, Al-Rai (Safat Alghanim), Sharq, Fahaheel and Ahmadi.



## STEPHEN HAWKING APPEARS AS HOLOGRAM IN HONG KONG

**HONG KONG:** Renowned physicist Stephen Hawking has spoken to a Hong Kong audience by hologram, showcasing the growing reach of a technology which is making inroads into politics, entertainment and business. The British scientist appeared Friday before an audience of hundreds who cheered and snapped pictures with their phones as he discussed his career and answered questions about the possibility of life on other planets, the use of technology in education and the impact of Brexit on Britain.

The 75-year-old said the election of US President Donald Trump was one in a string of "right-wing successes" that would have grave implications for the future of scientific innovation and discovery. "With Brexit and Trump... we are witnessing a global revolt against experts," he said, making his first appearance in Hong Kong since 2006. The swing to the right has come at a time when the world is facing multiple environmental crises, from global

warming to deforestation, he added.

"The answers to these problems will come from science and technology," he said. Hawking suffers from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a form of motor neuron disease that attacks the nerves controlling voluntary movement, leaving him paralyzed and able to communicate only via a computer speech synthesizer.

The event was organized by Chinese gaming company NetDragon Websoft, in partnership with ARHT Media, which creates digital human holograms of celebrities including spiritual guru Deepak Chopra, motivational speaker Tony Robbins and slain rapper The Notorious B.I.G. The technology which allows a human being to appear and interact with audiences in multiple locations simultaneously is gradually expanding its presence. French far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon appeared to supporters by hologram last month in a technological first for a presidential campaign in France. —AFP



**HONG KONG:** In this picture, renowned physicist Stephen Hawking, 75, speaks to an audience by hologram (L) in Hong Kong, beamed live from his office in Cambridge, England. —AFP

## CHINA WIN FOR APPLE AS COURT OVERTURNS IPHONE RULING

**BEIJING:** A Beijing court has overturned a ruling that Apple's iPhone 6 violated a Chinese manufacturer's patent which saw the US tech giant ordered to cease selling the smartphone in China. In May last year the Beijing intellectual property bureau had ruled that Apple violated design patents of Chinese maker Shenzhen Baili with its iPhone6 and iPhone 6 Plus, and would be barred from selling those models. Sales however were not suspended while Apple appealed against the administrative order.

The Intellectual Property Court in Beijing on Friday ruled in favor of the California-based firm. The court "quashes the decision of the bureau" and "recognizes that Apple ... has not infringed the design patent filed by the company Shenzhen Baili", according to the verdict reported by the state judicial daily Renmin Fayuan Ribao. The intellectual property bureau, an administrative body of Beijing municipality, had ruled that the two Apple phones infringed a Baili design patent.

It had accused the US firm of having "copied" the exterior design of Baili's 100C smartphone, which is characterized by a curved edge and rounded corners. But the Beijing court ruled that the iPhone 6 had features that "completely change the effect of the entire product ... and both

phones are easily distinguishable in the eyes of consumers," finding Baili's claim was without legal basis. When it took on Apple in December 2014, Baili was a promising electronics firm, backed by internet giant Baidu and eager to tap the telecoms boom.

But since then the company has collapsed, hit by public criticism of its products seen as poor quality and more so by China's ultra-competitive smartphone market which has seen many start-ups go under. Even Apple is under pressure. While China, along with Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, remains its second largest market after the US, the Cupertino-based company saw its turnover in this "Greater China" region fall 12 percent in the last quarter of 2016.

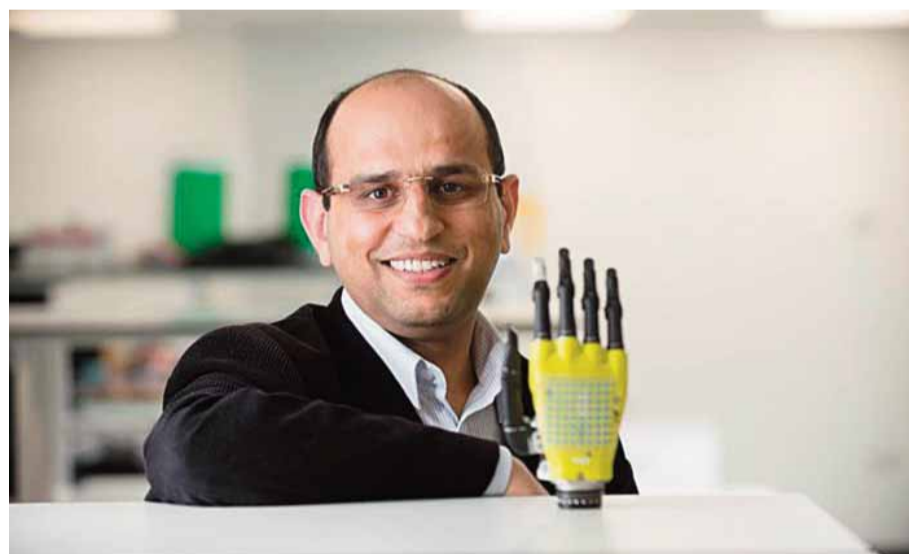
Apple's market share has plummeted in mainland China, falling behind local competitors such as telecoms giant Huawei, newcomers Oppo and Vivo, and "internet of things" pioneer Xiaomi. Apple has already had intellectual property problems in China. In May 2016 a maker of "iphone" branded leather goods won a lawsuit filed by Apple as the court ruled Xintong Tiandi had registered the word as a trademark in 2007, while Apple smartphones did not officially go on sale in China until 2009. —AFP

## OWNER OF SILICON VALLEY STAFFING FIRM CHARGED IN VISA FRAUD

**SAN FRANCISCO:** The owner of a company that supplied foreign workers to San Francisco Bay Area technology companies is facing visa fraud charges after filing fake documents to bring people to the United States, the US Attorney's Office announced Friday. A federal grand jury indicted Jayavel Murugan, CEO of Dynasoft Synergy, Inc., and a second man, Syed Nawaz, on Thursday on charges including conspiracy to commit visa fraud.

The men obtained H-1B visas for more than a dozen people by claiming the work-

ers had jobs at Stanford University, Cisco Systems and Brocade Communications Systems, according to the indictment. No such jobs existed, but Dynasoft could use the fraudulently obtained H1B visas to get the workers to the US, where it could place them with other companies and profit, prosecutors said. Bala Murali, Dynasoft's chief operating officer, said Nawaz was not available. Murugan said he did not know about the indictment and was "shocked." He said he needed to consult with his attorney and did not immediately have additional comment. —AP



**SCOTLAND:** Ravinder Dahiya of the University of Glasgow's School of Engineering poses with the prosthetic hand developed by his team at Glasgow University, Scotland, Britain. —Reuters

## SCIENTISTS USE GRAPHENE TO POWER ELECTRONIC SKIN THAT CAN FEEL

**NEW YORK:** Scientists have found a way to power an experimental kind of electronic skin using solar energy in a further step towards the development of prosthetic limbs or robots with a sense of touch. Teams around the world are working to develop flexible versions of synthetic skin that can feel by mimicking the different kinds of sensory receptors found in human skin.

Powering such systems is a challenge, but now researchers at the University of Glasgow's School of Engineering have developed a way to use graphene, an ultrathin form of carbon, to generate electricity via solar power. Graphene, which is just one atom thick, is strong, highly flexible, electrically conductive and transparent, making it ideal for gathering the sun's energy to generate power, the scientists said on Thursday.

Smart prosthetic hands, in particular, can already reproduce many mechanical properties of human limbs and giving them a skin-like sense of touch would make them even more useful for amputees. Touch-sensitive electronic skin could also be used in robots to enhance performance and help the machines detect potential dangers when interacting with humans.

Ravinder Dahiya and his team described how they had integrated power-generating photovoltaic cells into their electronic skin in the journal *Advanced Functional Materials*.

The next goal is to use the same technology to power the motors need to drive a prosthetic hand. "This could allow the creation of an entirely energy-autonomous prosthetic limb," Dahiya said. —Reuters

## MORE BIG BRANDS PULL ADS FROM YOUTUBE IN WIDENING BOYCOTT

GOOGLE DEPENDS ON AUTOMATED PROGRAMS TO PLACE ADS

**SAN FRANCISCO:** An advertising boycott of YouTube is broadening, a sign that big-spending companies doubt Google's ability to prevent marketing campaigns from appearing alongside repugnant videos. PepsiCo, Wal-Mart Stores and Starbucks on Friday confirmed that they have also suspended their advertising on YouTube after the Wall Street Journal found Google's automated programs placed their brands on five videos containing racist content. AT&T, Verizon, Johnson and Johnson, Volkswagen and several other companies pulled ads earlier this week.

The defections are continuing even after Google apologized for tainting brands and outlined steps to ensure ads don't appear alongside unsavory videos. It's not an easy problem to fix, even for a company with the brainpower that Google has drawn upon to build a search engine that billions trust to find the information they want in a matter of seconds. Google depends mostly on automated programs to place ads in YouTube videos because the job is too much for humans to handle on their own. About 400 hours of video is now posted on YouTube each minute.

The company has pledged to hire more people to review videos and develop even more sophisticated programs to teach its computers to figure out which clips would be considered to be too despicable for advertising. Contacted Friday, Google stood by its earlier promise, signaling the company's confidence that it will be able to placate advertisers. As part of that effort,

Google intends to block more objectionable videos from ever being posted on YouTube - an effort that could spur complaints about censorship.

### Laser-focused

Some outraged advertisers are making it clear that they won't return to YouTube until they are certain Google has the situation under control. "The content with which we are being associated is appalling and completely against our company values," Wal-Mart said in a Friday statement. Besides suspending their spending on YouTube, Wal-Mart, PepsiCo and several other companies have said they will

stop buying ads that Google places on more than two million other thirdparty websites.

If Google can't lure back advertisers, it could result in a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. Most analysts, though, doubt the ad boycott will seriously hurt Google's corporate parent, Alphabet Inc. Although they have been growing rapidly, YouTube's ads still only represent a relatively small financial piece of Alphabet, whose revenue totaled \$73.5 billion last year after subtracting commissions paid to Google's partners. YouTube accounted for \$5.6 billion, or nearly 8 percent, of that total, based on estimates from the research firm eMarketer Inc.

At most, RBC Capital Markets analyst Mark Mahaney said he expects the YouTube ad boycott to trim Alphabet's net revenue by about 2 percent this year. Moody's Investor Service predicted the backlash won't last long because Google is "laser-focused" on cleaning things up on YouTube.

Alphabet's stock price has fallen nearly 4 percent since the boycott began last week after an investigation by The Times in London revealed the ads of major brands were appearing in YouTube videos delving into contentious themes. The shares fell \$4.51 to close at \$835.14 Friday. —AP



**LOS ANGELES:** This file photo shows the YouTube website in Los Angeles. —AP

## CISCO WINS UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS VENDOR OF THE YEAR

**DUBAI:** Cisco has won the 'Unified Communications Vendor of the Year' award at the 13th Network Middle East Innovation Awards 2017, which was held recently in Dubai. Cisco was recognized for its innovation, key regional implementations and continued commitment to its customers and partners in providing only the best-of-breed Unified Communications (UC) and Collaboration solutions, expertise, and customer service and support.

Speaking on their win, Ahmad Zureiki, Collaboration Lead, Cisco Middle East said, "Today, technologies are improving so quickly and in so many ways, that organizations have an exceptional opportunity to build more efficient processes, foster deeper collaboration and transform the way they work overall. At Cisco, we are focused on helping our customers' future-proof their business, so they can take advantage of all that innovation. Our latest Collaboration and UC solutions have been designed specifically with the goal of making it easier for our customers' teams to instantly connect communicate and collaborate - so people can respond faster and make decisions more quickly."

"We are honored to be chosen as the 'Unified Communications vendor of the year' by Network Middle East magazine, which is recognition of our best-of-breed UC and Collaboration solutions portfolio and our team's hard work and dedication towards our customers and partners in the region in providing the best service, expertise and support. We would like to thank the panel of judges and the editors of ITP Publishing for recognizing our efforts and our customers and part-

ners for placing their trust in us." Cisco offers a full suite of integrated on-premises and cloud-based UC and collaboration applications and services. The solution is based on Cisco Unified Communications Manager and brings together voice, video, telepresence, messaging, presence and conferencing. Cisco UC is an attractive solution for midsize, large and multinational corporations requiring

sive solutions, as well as Cisco Jabber, its mobile and desktop client.

"Cisco's vision is to deliver a single seamless collaboration experience that spans all communication modes from any device on premises, from the cloud or hybrid by seamlessly connecting both cloud and premises together. Our UC and collaboration solutions include next-generation features and capabilities that can significantly reduce an organization's total cost of ownership. We provide customers with a sophisticated collaboration and communication experience that corporate IT and business expects, while also offering the same intuitiveness and simplicity found in easy-to-use software-based consumer communication tools," added Ahmad Zureiki.

Cisco has been positioned as a leader in Gartner's 2016 Magic Quadrants for Unified Communications, contact center infrastructure, web conferencing and group video systems. This leadership placement confirms both the strength of Cisco's current portfolio, which delivers the best collaboration products and solutions on the market, as well as its vision to bring all communication modes together for amazing experiences on any device.

The Network Middle East Innovation Awards 2017 celebrated the achievements of networking professionals, service providers and vendors who have worked on the most challenging projects and implementations in the region over the last 12 months. Product innovation, quality service, customer deployments and commitment to the region were the criteria set for Cisco winning the 'Unified Communications Vendor of the year' award category.



**Ahmad Zureiki, Cisco ME Collaboration Lead**

strong voice, video or conferencing capabilities. It is also attractive to enterprises that require full UC client support on leading mobile platforms, including Apple, and those that wish to leverage Cisco's networking infrastructure. Cisco also provides a full range of endpoints, including phones, desktop collaboration endpoints, room systems and immer-

## SEAWORLD TO EXPAND IN CHINA AFTER INVESTMENT DEAL

**BEIJING:** A Chinese real estate investment firm has announced it has become the largest shareholder in SeaWorld and intends to import the US company's con-

troversial theme parks into China. The Zhonghong Zhuoye group said in a statement released Friday night it will buy a 21 per cent stake in SeaWorld

Entertainment, whose shows featuring killer whales have been slammed by animal rights groups. The Chinese firm bought its stake

from Blackstone at a price of \$23 per share, with the transaction expected to be worth approximately \$430 million. The purchase, which is expected to be finalised in the second quarter, will make Zhonghong the largest shareholder in SeaWorld, with the possibility of raising its stake to 24.9 per cent. The deal will provide Zhonghong with exclusive rights to develop theme parks in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, SeaWorld said in a separate statement.

"We are delighted to engage with SeaWorld to bring this iconic, world-class family entertainment brand to China," said Yoshikazu Maruyama, President of US Operations at Zhonghong, said in the statement. "Zhonghong Group is making a significant, long-term investment in SeaWorld, reflecting their appreciation of the strength of our brand, our potential to grow the company and a shared commitment to protect wildlife and the environment," said SeaWorld CEO Joel Manby.

Founded in 1959, SeaWorld Entertainment is the operator of twelve parks across the United States, including three amusement parks called SeaWorld dedicated to marine attractions, with killer whale and dolphin shows. But their reputation has been tainted by several

scandals and by the fierce opposition of environmental organizations. In 2010, a killer whale grabbed the ponytail of Dawn Brancheau, a SeaWorld trainer, and dragged her underwater to her death in front of horrified onlookers at the end of a show at SeaWorld Orlando.

The whale, nicknamed "Tilly," was involved in the death of a part-time trainer at the Sealand of the Pacific facility in Canada in 1991 and that of a man who died in 1999 after he sneaked into SeaWorld to swim with the mammals after the park closed. CNN featured Tilly in a 2013 documentary, "Blackfish," that covered those fatalities and also sought to show the impact of captivity on these giant sea creatures.

Animal rights groups charge that killer whales were kept in tanks that are too small, fed improper diets and forced to perform tricks. The group prides itself on having "saved more than 29,000 animals in distress over the last fifty years" and having "sensitized" 400 million visitors to killer whales. However, under public pressure, SeaWorld last March announced it would stop breeding killer whales, and would no longer keep any of them in captivity after its current generation dies.—AFP



**CHILE:** Handout picture released by the Chilean Army showing soldiers watching a 15-metre long dead whale washed ashore in Pelluhue, Maule Region, Chile. —AFP

## DIALYSIS SUPPLIES DWINDLE FOR BESIEGED SYRIANS

'WITHOUT THIS MEDICINE, WE CAN'T LIVE'

**DOUMA, Syria:** The wail sliced through the stuffy underground medical centre in a besieged town near the Syrian capital. Dania, 14, was writhing in pain ahead of her first ever dialysis session. She was one of dozens of patients being treated for renal insufficiency inside a basement-turned-clinic in Douma, the largest town in the Eastern Ghouta rebel bastion near

tion is becoming increasingly deadly. Last month in Douma, kidney failure killed three people. The same number lost their lives to the condition in the whole of 2016.

"Because of the lack of supplies, our patients have to have fewer sessions," said Sadeq, whose centre is the only place offering dialysis in all of Eastern Ghouta. "Each patient used to have two to three sessions

mones, and blood pressure medication between sessions. When the Douma siege began in 2012, the centre began relying exclusively on equipment and medicine delivered on a fairly regular basis by the United Nations and the International Committee for the Red Cross.

But that all stopped in October when government forces tight-

another dialysis session before next week. "Next week? But I'm so tired," she told him. "This is all we can do. The supplies that came in won't last us any more than that," he responded. "Well, if you don't see me then, make sure to tell me to 'rest in peace,'" she quipped.

### The centre or the grave

Mona, 30, has been a regular patient at the centre since it opened, and the shortages have hit her hard. "If tomorrow there are no more supplies, I don't know what I'll do," she said, brushing away a tear without pausing. "The dose we're currently taking is so low that I can't even stand up on my own two feet," she said. Because of the siege, the hormones and other medication Mona is meant to take between her sessions are nearly impossible to find or too expensive to afford.

Hundreds of thousands are living under total siege across Syria, with millions more trapped in what the United Nations dubs "hard-to-reach" areas. Most are encircled by Syrian government troops and allied militia, but rebels and the Islamic State group also use the brutal tactic. Mohammad, 47, has been living with renal insufficiency for 12 years, but the tightening siege means he is now gripped with anxiety over whether he will have access to dialysis or find the pills he needs.

"The supplies are our soul—without this medicine, we can't live," said the father of five. As their situation becomes increasingly dire, Douma residents with kidney conditions say the centre is their only hope.

Waleed al-Shammaa, 65, said his kidney condition has worsened because of rising blood pressure—a direct consequence of the stress of survival in Syria's devastating six-year war. "Since the Syrian uprising started, our lives have been tied to this machine. If the dialysis stops, so do our lives," Shammaa said, pointing to the humming machine cleaning his blood. "This centre is the only thing we've got. It's either the dialysis centre or the grave." —AFP



**SYRIA:** Syrian medics tend to an injured man following a reported air strike in the northwestern city of Idlib. —AFP

Damascus. "It's a good thing she came in today. I've never seen results this high in my life," kidney specialist Mohammad Sadeq told Dania's mother solemnly as she wiped tears from her teenage daughter's face.

Renal insufficiency limits the kidney's ability to filter waste out of the bloodstream or regulate hormones, and is typically treated with several dialysis sessions per week. For residents of Douma, encircled by government forces since 2012 and without humanitarian aid deliveries since October, the condi-

per week. Then it became one a week. And with the delay in receiving the necessary supplies, we were forced to decrease it to one session every 10 days," he said. "We could save lives if we just had the material."

### Tell me RIP

The centre was founded in 2013 with seven dialysis machines, medicine, and other equipment recovered from previously state-run clinics nearby. Each dialysis session requires needles, membranes, and special cleaning serum, but patients also take vitamins, hor-

ened their encirclement. Since then, only a single life-saving delivery of "250 dialysis sessions" from the Red Crescent—enough to last the centre for a month—made it through on March 9. "If Dania had come in three days earlier (before the one-off delivery), I wouldn't have been able to do anything for her," Sadeq said. "That delivery saved that child's life." The benefits of the new materials, however, will be short-lived.

Khayriyah, 58, stared in disbelief at Sadeq when he told her that he could not accommodate her for



**CINCINNATI:** In this, photo provided by the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, Wendy Rice, the zoo's head keeper of Africa, feeds a bottle to a baby Nile hippopotamus born prematurely in January and named Fiona, in the hippo's enclosure at the zoo in Cincinnati. —AP

## ZOO PLAN FOR BABY HIPPO: MORE INDEPENDENCE, NIX LAP NAPS

**CINCINNATI:** The Cincinnati Zoo says its premature baby hippo, Fiona, is getting more independent and now tops 100 pounds, meaning her days of napping on her human caretakers' laps are dwindling. She was born at the zoo in January and weighed just 29 pounds, far below the typical weight. The zoo says caretakers raising Fiona are beginning to scale back their time with her, leaving

her alone for a few hours at night. It's the beginning of a transition in how much contact they have as they move toward eventually integrating her into a group of hippos with her parents. They say hippos can grow to be 3,000 pounds and are very dangerous, so at some point caretakers will begin interacting with her only from behind a protective barrier.—AP

## MEXICO POACHERS' GO-FAST BOATS ENDANGERING PORPOISES

**MEXICO CITY:** Mexican poachers are using go-fast boats, leading authorities trying to protect an endangered porpoise on 50-mile chases and parking pickup trucks on beaches to load boats and escape quickly. Mexico's environment department revealed some of the poachers' risky tactics Thursday, describing a chase earlier this week in which authorities detected a boat apparently fishing for totoaba in an area where gill net fishing is banned to protect the vaquita marina porpoise.

However, the crew escaped after leading a Navy boat on a 54-mile chase. The truck they were planning to use to haul their boat away got stuck in the rising tide. The totoaba is prized in China for its swim bladder, but bycatch includes vaquitas, of which fewer than 30 remain. The department said that over the last two years, it had seized 182 such open boats in the area, as well as 15 small trawlers and 40 vehicles in raids against illegal fishing in the upper Gulf.

It said that while small boats are usually limited to using 100-horsepower motors in the area, the poachers are using motors of over 200 horsepower. The totoaba trade is highly lucrative,

with thousands of dollars paid on the black market for a couple of pounds (kilogram) of bladders. The poachers' dangerous tactics have been seen before on videos filmed from shore but whose authenticity could not be independently verified.

One such video shows an escape like the one described by authorities, in which a patrol boat is seen chasing a small fishing craft. The small boat literally runs at full speed onto a boat trailer attached to a pickup waiting in the surf, and the pickup speeds off, up to its wheel wells in water. The tactics illustrate the difficulties authorities face in patrolling the Gulf, also known as the Sea of Cortez, the only place the vaquita lives.

Despite the ban, over 900 illegal nets and lines have been found in the area and removed over the last two years, and 174 people have been charged with illegal fishing. A force of about 350 inspectors and military personnel, 19 vessels, aircraft and a drone system are being used to enforce the fishing bans. But the effort is an uphill battle. Authorities reported Monday they found another dead vaquita in the Gulf, with wounds apparently made by humans.—AP

## US-BORN PANDA BAO BAO MAKES FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE IN CHINA

**DUJIANGYAN, China:** American-born giant panda Bao Bao made her first appearance Friday before the public in southwestern China following her move there from Washington, DC. Bao Bao was born at the National Zoo in Washington to pandas on loan from China. Under the standard loan agreement, such panda cubs must be returned to China before they are 4 years old, the earliest age at which they might begin breeding.

The 3-year-old Bao Bao explored her spacious new enclosure at the panda breeding base in the city of Dujiangyan, which features both indoor and outdoor play areas. Keepers have been helping her adapt to local bamboo and Chinese steamed bread made from corn, soybeans, rice and eggs. She is the 11th panda to be born overseas and returned to China. Bao Bao, whose name means "precious" or "treasure," underwent a month long quarantine at the Dujiangyan base, where keepers monitored her activities and health by checking her blood and feces.

Because she does not understand commands in Chinese, she is being looked after for a time by an English-speaking keeper. Giant pandas, China's unofficial national mascot, live mainly in the mountains of Sichuan, with some also found in neighboring Gansu and Shaanxi provinces. They have long been considered one of the world's most endangered animals, with an estimated 1,864 living in the wild and 200 in captivity.—AP



**SICHUAN:** Workers transfer the giant panda Bao Bao to its new home at the panda research base in Dujiangyan in southwest China's Sichuan province. —AP



MUNICH: Two lions are pictured as they play at the zoo of Hellabrunn in Munich, southern Germany. —AFP

## WILD ELEPHANTS RESCUED FROM MUDDY BOMB CRATER IN CAMBODIA

**PHNOM PENH:** Eleven wild elephants, including a baby, were rescued from a mud-filled bomb crater in Cambodia yesterday after languishing in the swampy waters for four days, an environmental official said. "They got in there to drink water and could not get out," Keo Sopheak, the head of the environmental office in eastern Mondulkiri province, said. He said the three-meter-deep mud pit, created by a bomb during the country's civil war, was located in a protected forest area

and had been enlarged by local villagers to store water.

The elephants were discovered in the crater on Friday, said Keo Sopheak, with only their rounded backs and heads poking out of the mud pool. "We had to dig away the edge of the crater by hand to make a path," the official said, adding that rescuers also pumped water into the crater to thin out the sludge and help the animals climb out. The elephants lumbered back into the jungle after their rescue.

"They could have died if they had not been spotted," added Keo Sopheak.

There are believed to only several hundred of the endangered Asian elephants in Cambodia, according to conservation groups. Like other Asian elephant populations in the region, their livelihood has been increasingly threatened by rapid deforestation and poaching. Earlier this week a male elephant died after leaning against an electricity pole and causing it to fall down in jungle near Cambodia's Cardamom Mountains.—AFP

## VENEZUELA'S MADURO ASKS UN TO HELP EASE MEDICINE SHORTAGES

**CARACAS:** Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said on Friday he has asked the United Nations to help the South American nation alleviate medicine shortages, which have become increasingly severe as the oil-producing nation's economic crisis accelerates. Triple digit inflation and a decaying socialist economic model have left medications ranging from simple anti-inflammatory drugs to chemotherapy medication out of reach for most Venezuelans.

Maduro did not specify the type of aid he requested, although he stressed that the UN has knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry. "I have asked them for support to continue making permanent progress in the regularization of medicines for hospitals," he said. Maduro earlier on Friday met with Jessica Faieta, Assistant Administrator and Director of the UN Development Program, according to state television.

The Venezuelan Pharmaceuticals Federation estimates some 85 percent of drugs are unavailable to the country's citizens. Maduro often blames the deteriorating economy and widespread shortages of goods on an "economic war" led by opposition politicians with the help of the United States. Critics say the problems are the result of dysfunctional price and currency controls that have decimated private industry.—Reuters

## NEVADA OFFICIALS CONFIRM FIRST WOLF IN STATE SINCE 1922

**RENO:** The Nevada Department of Wildlife has confirmed the first sighting of a wolf in the state in nearly 100 years. Chief State Game Warden Brian Wakeling said Friday the wolf was spotted in northwest Nevada in early November near Fox Mountain just west of the Black Rock Desert and about 20 miles from the California line.

Wakeling says wildlife officials recovered scat from the animal. A conservation lab at the University of Idaho confirmed the droppings were from a male offspring of a seven-member pack of wolves known as the "Shasta Pack" in Northern California.

Wakeling says the department occasionally receives reports of wolf sightings, but this is the first time one's presence has been verified since 1922. He says the observation of a lone animal does not mean wolves have established territories in Nevada.—AP

## STEM CELL THERAPY HELPS SOME MEN WITH ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

**PARIS:** Men unable to have an erection after prostate surgery enjoyed normal intercourse thanks to stem cell therapy, scientists are to report yesterday at a medical conference in London. In first-phase clinical trials, eight out of 15 continent men suffering from erectile dysfunction had sex six months after the one-time treatment, without recourse to drugs or penile implants. The positive result showed no signs of flagging during a subsequent year-long monitoring period.

"As far as we know, this is the first time that a human study with a 12-month follow up shows that the treatment is lasting and safe," said Lars Lund, a professor at Odense University Hospital in Denmark who took part in the trials. "That is much better than taking a pill every time you want to have intercourse," he said.

The results were promising enough to convince Danish health authorities to authorize so-called phase III "double-blind" randomized trials in which one group of men is given stem cell therapy

and another placebo. Only men recovering from prostate cancer and able to control their bladders will be enrolled in the new experiments, Lund explained by phone.

### All-purpose stem cells

To perform the procedure, doctors remove fat cells from a patient's abdomen via liposuction. The cells undergo a brief treatment and emerge as all-purpose stem cells, meaning they can mutate into almost any specialized cell in the body. "We do not cultivate the cells or change them in any way," said Lund's colleague Martha Haahr, head researcher and lead author of a study detailing preliminary results, published last year in EBioMedicine. The stem cells are then injected with a syringe into the penis, where they spontaneously begin to change in to nerve and muscle cells, as well as the endothelial cells that line blood vessels.

Men are under general anaesthesia while all of this happens, and are discharged from hospital the same day.

Prostate surgery is responsible for about 13 percent of erectile dysfunction cases. Up to 80 percent of men experience difficulty having sex immediately after an operation, previous research has shown. Diabetes accounts for 40 percent of erectile dysfunction cases, and vascular disease another 30 percent. Men with diabetes would be the next target group for clinical trials, Lund said.

The results reported at the European Association of Urology conference could be an effective "therapeutic option for patients suffering erectile dysfunction from other causes," Haahr said. It is estimated that nearly half of men between the ages of 40 and 70 experience erectile dysfunction to some degree. The global market for drugs treating the disorder is expected to top \$3.4 billion (3.15 billion euros) by 2019. Failure to perform sexually can also, in some men, result from relationship problems, performance anxiety or repressed homosexuality, Haahr said.—AFP

## BAD BREATH: STUDY FIND ARRAY OF BACTERIA WHEN ORCAS EXHALE

**SEATTLE:** When the mighty orca breaks to the surface and exhales, the whale sprays an array of bacteria and fungi in its his breath, scientists said, some good, and some bad such as salmonella. The findings in a new study raises concerns about the potential role of infectious diseases as another major stress factor for the struggling population of endangered Puget Sound orcas. Those orcas' breath samples revealed microbes capable of causing diseases.

Some were resistant to multiple antibiotics frequently used by people and animals, suggesting human waste contaminating the marine environment, according to a study published online Friday in the journal Scientific Reports. Scientists followed the whales as they swam in Washington state waters and waited for them to surface and exhale. The researchers on boats would swing a 25-foot long pole with several petri dishes above an orca's blowhole, capturing the droplets that sprayed out.

Using those unique breath samples captured over a four-year period, the study identifies an array of bacteria and fungi contained in the exhaled breath of the small, distinct population of southern resident killer whales of the northeast Pacific Ocean. The number of Puget Sound orcas has fluctuated in recent decades as they have faced threats from lack of prey, pollution and noise disturbance from vessels. The orcas were listed as endangered in 2005, and now number 78.

Scientists also found healthy bacteria in the breath samples but also worrisome drug-resistant ones such as salmonella and Staphylococcus aureus. The whales swim through urbanized waterways and encounter a number of environmental stressors caused by humans, including everything from what gets flushed down toilets to agricultural runoff. "They're recruiting the bacteria in their habitats," said Stephen Raverty, the study's lead author who is a veterinary pathologist with British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Health Centre in Abbotsford.

Orcas with weak immune responses



SEATTLE: In this file photo, a female orca leaps from the water while breaching in Puget Sound west of Seattle, as seen from a federal research vessel that has been tracking the whale. —AP

can be more susceptible to bacteria resulting in respiratory disease. "These animals are subject to many stressors, which reduce the competence of their immune systems," said marine mammal veterinarian Pete Schroeder, co-author of the paper. It's the first such study to provide a snapshot of the pathogen burden of this endangered population. It will also help scientists develop a baseline to compare changes to the whales' respiratory conditions over time.

### Unique markings

Scientists collected 26 breath samples from whales around San Juan Island and compared them to seawater samples collected from the millimeter-thick layer on the surface of Puget Sound. When the

whales break through the surface of the water, they take in the contaminants and other microorganisms in that sea layer. Pathogens and antibiotic-resistant bacterial strains were found in both the breath samples and seawater.

Scientists don't know enough to say how harmful the microbes are to the orcas. "Because you find a potential pathogen, it doesn't mean the animal is necessarily sick. It might be something normal," said Linda Rhodes, supervisory research microbiologist with the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Seattle and co-author. Bacteria are there, and if for any reason the animals become immune-suppressed, it could provide an opening to make the orcas sick, Raverty said.—AP

# CLINIC PAGE

248 33 199

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(left to right) VP Academic Affairs Dr Salah Al-Sharhan, Dr Waleed Murad Al-Kandari Undersecretary General for Information and Research PUC, GUST President Prof Donald Bates and Assistant VP for Planning and Development Paul Zalloua



Dr Waleed Al-Kandari Undersecretary General for Information and Research at the Private Universities Council



First Place: Gulf University for Science and Technology Kuwait



Second Place: Arab Open University



Third Place: King Faisal University

## GUST WINS FIRST PLACE IN THE GULF PROGRAMMING CONTEST

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) announced this week that the seventh Gulf Programming Contest (GPC) took place on its campus on March 22 and 23. The competition was under the patronage of the Private Universities Council and was attended by Professor Waleed Murad Al-Kandari, Undersecretary General for Information and Research. It was organized by the Computer Science Department at GUST, sponsored by That Al-Salasil, and hosted 51 teams from across the GCC.

PUC Undersecretary General for Information and Research, Professor Waleed Murad Al-Kandari, said, "The Private Universities Council has always worked to support all academic efforts for students in private universities in all their specialties. Our support for this event is aligned with that goal. This competition instills many qualities and values which we support for our youth including increasing their knowledge, pushing creative thinking, gaining practical experience, increasing competitive-

ness, and stimulating performance."

This year, the winning team was 'Bug::Life' from Gulf University for Science and Technology in Kuwait. In second place, was 'JavaMatics' from the Arab Open University in Kuwait, and taking third place was 'KFU\_Male' from King Faisal University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. GUST's winning team members Karim K. Al-Maghraby, Meshel A. Al-Khrajne, Amr E. Ahmed and their coach, Fadi Deeb, also won three other prestigious awards at the contest including the Solid Programmers Award for solving the maximum number of questions from the first attempt, Stealthy Programmers Award for being the first team to solve a question in the blind hour, and the Steadfast Guru Programmers Award for submitting the last correct solution to a problem.

The GPC also has an unofficial category in which GUST's 'e-LEMON-ators' team won top position. The team includes students Ziad Tariq Muhammad, Saud Al-roomi, Ebraheem Al-Muaili, and their coach, Fadi Deeb. The Gulf Programming Contest provided an opportunity for university students from around the

region majoring in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Management Information Systems, or any IT related subjects to display their abilities in programming and problem solving.

The teams were given eight to ten programming problems to be solved using one PC only. Participating in this contest gives the students the opportunity to prepare for the Arab Collegiate Programming Contest (ACPC), a qualifying round to the Association for Computer Machinery - International Collegiate Programming Contest (ACM ICPC) World Finals. Many contestants who qualified to the regional and world programming contests are currently working in the most prestigious workplaces such as Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Amazon, and Booking.com.

GUST Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Salah Al-Saharan, said, "We are proud to host such a prestigious event, and hope to continue building GUST's name as a frontrunner in the field of technology while also equipping our students with the right skills and knowledge for success." GPC is an extension of the

National Programming Contest that was first initiated in the United Arab Emirates.

In 2011, the decision was made to expand the contest to include the universities in the Gulf region. Kuwait was the first country to participate from outside the UAE, and GUST was the first university to represent Kuwait at the competition and later the first to host it outside the UAE. GUST Head of Computer Science Department, Dr. Taher Ali, said "I am extremely proud of the results our students were able to achieve. This is a testament to the robustness of our program and the drive they have to succeed."

This year, more teams and universities from across the region participated in the contest, which cements the position of Computer Science as a field of growth and importance. Some of the universities participating this year were Qatar University and Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, King Faisal University and Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University from Saudi Arabia, Bits Pilani-Dubai, Khalifa University, Zayed University and UAE

University from the Emirates, and Sultan Qaboos University and College of Applied Sciences-Sohar from Oman.

The other institutions that participated from Kuwait are Kuwait University, American University of Kuwait, Arab Open University, College of Business Studies at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Kuwait Technical College, and Kuwait College for Science and Technology.

The list of the top ten teams by rank at this year's GPC are:

- Bug::Life: Gulf University for Science and Technology-Kuwait
- Javamatics: Arab Open University - Kuwait
- KFU\_Male: King Faisal University-KSA
- CodeIT: Sultan Qaboos University-Oman
- SwagOverFlow: Bits Pilani-Dubai Campus 2B||2B: Carnegie Mellon University-Qatar
- Actus: Carnegie Mellon University-Qatar
- BroCod: Kuwait University-Kuwait
- K-TECHERS: Kuwait Technical College-Kuwait
- LOLWUT: King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals - KSA



## SECOND ANNUAL PBL SYMPOSIUM AT ACK

The School of Engineering's Center for Project Based Learning (PBL) at the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) successfully wrapped up its second Project Based Learning Symposium, under the theme of 'Reshaping the teaching and learning experience'. The symposium brought together industry employers, educators and students to share experiences and insights related to PBL in engineering education.

Keynote speakers, Prof. Anette Kolmos, Director of the Aalborg Centre for Problem Based Learning in Engineering Science and Sustainability, Aalborg University, Denmark, and Dr. Ronald Ulseth, Director of Academics and Research, Iron Range Engineering / Minnesota State University,

USA, shared their wealth of international experiences and knowledge in PBL, while also highlighting PBL as a strategy to achieve innovation in the field of engineering education. They presented evidence for PBL leading to higher academic performance and higher overall quality of education.

From their end, Prof. Kolmos and Dr. Ulseth stated: "PBL is widely regarded as a highly effective model for students to acquire both technical skill and the much desired employability skills that companies need. ACK has a dedicated staff providing high quality PBL for their students."

During his welcome speech, Dr. Martin Jaeger, Manager of the PBL Center at ACK, stated: "Through learning approaches such as PBL, students take ownership of their

learning, they become managers of their own learning, and develop skills and knowledge within a constructive environment. State-of-the-art laboratory facilities related to Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Petroleum Engineering, tied together with simulations of real world scenarios, all play important roles in enhancing students' learning process."

He added: "Students are being introduced to the simulation of multidisciplinary engineering design projects that requires the collaboration of students from different engineering disciplines. They work in teams, solve real life engineering problems, develop solution techniques, and develop critical thinking that enhances learning and prepares them for the workplace."



## AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS GROUP IN KUWAIT ORGANIZES NETWORKING EVENT

### Greetings



Parents of Khaled Ahmed Omeira from Kuwait Pakistan English School, Salmiya congratulate him on his success.

The Australian Business Group in Kuwait organized a networking event followed by a presentation for architect Naser Khraibut, the Director of Planning at the Public Authority of Housing and Welfare on "City housing projects and the future infrastructure development" in the Australian Ambassador's Residence. Over 70 business leaders from a host of companies in Kuwait attended and engaged on key issues and business opportunities in the Kuwaiti marketplace.

Mr. Khraibut explained the new vision of the Public Authority of Housing and Welfare. He described the current and future projects the authority is undertaking. He highlighted that what makes cities unique is their identities. Therefore, he stressed on the significance of sustainable environmental elements and aesthetics that characterize the new smart cities of Kuwait. These smart cities will have

world-class standards, and will offer great investment opportunities for local and overseas business.

The Australian Business Group was founded in 2009 with the support of the Australian Embassy in Kuwait and its commercial arm, AusTrade. It aims at promoting trade and other relationships between Australia and Kuwait through providing a networking forum for members to develop their business activities. Annually the group hosts several business and social events, with an emphasis on fostering networking opportunities for business leaders in the community, while embracing Australian culture and lifestyle.

The Ambassador's residence currently plays host to a series of monthly business networking dinners at which leading local businesses deliver engaging presentations on a number of topics from the economic outlook for

Kuwait to the latest market trends. Upcoming events for the year include a joint event with our partners from other business groups in Kuwait for April, our general meeting in May, and a number of networking events for the rest of the year with guest speaker covering different sectors of the local market.

The group is made up of any nationalities, the majority of whom are either Australians working for Australian businesses here in the Gulf, or have a personal association with Australia. Currently the group has more than seventy members including ten corporate members, and thanks to the support of our Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Warren Hauckit will continue to grow. To become a member of the Australian Business Group, please email our General Secretary Mr. Bassem Al-Kassem on: ausbg-ku@outlook.com



## LULU HYPERMARKET LAUNCHES FOOD EXPO 2017

Lulu Hypermarket, the largest retail chain in the region, launched its much-anticipated Lulu Food Expo 2017 with an inauguration ceremony on March 22 at its Al-Rai outlet. The 11-day festival, which is being held simultaneously at all the hypermarket's outlets in Kuwait, was inaugurated by Indian celebrity chef and culinary consultant Hari Nayak, in the presence of top Lulu management, patrons and well-wishers.

Several exciting competitions are being held to mark the Food Expo 2017, including Cookery Contest, Live Cookery Demo, Junior-Chef Contest, Wow the Master Chef Contest, Taste & Win Contest, Make and Eat Competition, Carving Competition, Pickles Contest and Kitchen Queen Contests.

Besides the cooking competitions, which began on March 19, shoppers can enjoy a host of other cooking-related events during the festival period, including Chit Chat with Master Chef, which features a question and answer session with Chef Nayak, and a live demonstration of Arabic-cooking by Chef Asmaa Al-Bahar, at Lulu Hypermarket's Al-Qurain outlet on March 25.

Similar to past festivals, Lulu Hypermarket's Food Expo 2017 will feature several highlights, including the longest pasta, the biggest pizza, the longest egg roll, the biggest Spanish paella, the biggest Maashi, the longest Swiss roll, the longest lava banquet, the biggest banana cake and the longest fatayer.

The Food Expo 2017 is part of Lulu Hypermarket's commitment to create an engaging shopping experience for their customers, while continuing to provide shoppers with the best products at the most competitive prices.



## VIGOR EVENTS HOSTS MASAAKI IMAI IN KUWAIT FOR THE FIRST TIME

April 2017 signifies a remarkable one day conference hosting the management guru and founder of the Kaizen Institute - Masaaki Imai - for the first time in Kuwait. Organized by the prominent Vigor Events and Co-organized by Al-Gas Events Company, the conference is set to focus on Operational Excellence for leaders going beyond the mere use of improvement tools and building a culture that promotes excellence in all kinds of operations within a factory, a telecom company, a hospital, a bank, or a governmental institute.

During this conference, Masaaki Imai will advocate his philosophies and Kaizen Institute's principles and methodologies to achieve the ultimate Operational Excellence within any organization. Masaaki Imai was the first to write and speak about the remarkable leadership principles known as the Toyota Production System, what we call "Lean" thinking today. His contribution has been one of integrating various kaizen

management practices, such as Just-in-time, TQM, and TPM, into the cultural environments of client companies.

Over the last three decades Masaaki Imai has authored books and articles, held lectures on kaizen, quality, leadership, Lean and other related management subjects, has consulted with global companies, introduced kaizen as a commonsense continuous improvement approach on every inhabited continent.

Masaaki Imai's contribution has been one of integrating various kaizen management practices, such as Just-in-time, TQM, and TPM, into the cultural environments of client companies.

He was also the first to organize study missions to Japan to study kaizen and Lean methods, a service that Kaizen Institute continues today, having led more than 200 groups and 4,000 people. During the conference, the Management guru will speak not only to leadership issues but also to frontline

issues at the gemba or "the real place where value is added". He will elaborate on the steps required to make a company world-class and moving it from a result-oriented to process-oriented company.

It is also worth noting that Masaaki Imai has received International Awards and Recognitions such as the Asia-Pacific Human Resource Development Award, the Shingo Research and Professional Publication Prize for Gemba Kaizen, and the First Honorary Fellow of Quality Control of India (First Fellow ever). In two additional sessions, senior consultants from Kaizen Institute will also take part in the conference shedding a light on the practical application of the Kaizen best practices & methodologies. The conferences organized in collaboration with Kaizen Institute and with the media support from the International Advertising Association - Kuwait Chapter- on April 9th at Hilton Resort Al-Mangaf from 9am to 3pm.

## STATEMENT FROM THE EMBASSY OF FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

Statement of the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Michel Temer, regarding the investigation being held in Brazil on export meat producers. "I have convened a ministerial meeting over the weekend, in order to assess the safety of national and international consumers with regard to the quality of the meat produced in the country." The Government has decided to speed up the audit process in the 21 establishments cited in the Federal Police investigation.

Three of these establishments have already been suspended and all 21 will be placed under special inspection regime conducted by a specific task force of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA). The facts are that among 11,000 employees, only 33 are being investigated. Out of 4,837 establishments subject to federal inspection, only 21 are allegedly involved in irregularities. The objective of the investigation is not the agriculture and livestock defense system in place, whose rigor is widely recognized, but a few conduct deviations.

Foreign embassies were assured that all

exporting plants remain open to inspections by importing countries and to the monitoring of activities under the national control system, one of the most respected in the world. MAPA will fully cooperate with the current investigations in order to determine eventual misconduct within the agriculture and livestock defense system. The Federal Government manifests its confidence in the quality of the national product, which has been approved by consumers in highly demanding markets around the world in terms of inspection and defense systems.

MAPA has a strict inspection service for products of animal origin. The high standard of excellence opened the doors of Brazilian meat to over 150 countries, with permanent auditing, monitoring and risk assessment. In addition to the national controls, products are also subject to local inspection on reaching their destinations. In 2016 alone, 853,000 items of products of animal origin from Brazil were sent to foreign markets and only 184 were considered, by importers, out of compliance, often because of non sanitary issues, such as labeling and completion of certificates.





# CLASSIFIEDS



### KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (23/03/2017 TO 29/03/2017)

<b>SHARQIA-1</b> AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	1:15 PM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:15 PM 7:15 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	<b>MUHALAB-3</b> COLLIDE COLLIDE BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO COLLIDE COLLIDE KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu COLLIDE	11:45 AM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 1:45 PM 5:45 PM 7:30 PM 9:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM	<b>LIFE</b> THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE	4:45 PM 7:00 PM 9:00 PM 11:00 PM 12:45 AM	<b>KONG: SKULL ISLAND</b> KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu KONG: SKULL ISLAND KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu KONG: SKULL ISLAND KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu KONG: SKULL ISLAND	4:00 PM 4:00 PM 7:00 PM 7:00 PM 10:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:45 AM
<b>SHARQIA-2</b> COLLIDE LIFE LIFE KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu COLLIDE	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 2:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM 10:00 PM 1:00 AM	<b>FANAR-1</b> POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS LIFE POWER RANGERS	11:30 AM 2:00 PM 4:30 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 11:45 PM	<b>MARINA-1</b> POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS	12:00 PM 2:30 PM 1:30 PM 3:15 PM 5:00 PM 6:45 PM 9:15 PM 11:45 PM	<b>360°- 1</b> POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS Premier Show "Smurfs: The Lost Village" POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS	12:00 PM 2:30 PM 5:00 PM 7:30 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 PM 12:30 AM
<b>SHARQIA-3</b> SLEEPLESS POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu POWER RANGERS KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu LIFE SLEEPLESS LIFE	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 4:15 PM 4:15 PM 7:15 PM 7:15 PM 10:15 PM 10:15 PM 1:15 AM 12:30 AM	<b>FANAR-2</b> KONG: SKULL ISLAND BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO KONG: SKULL ISLAND KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu KONG: SKULL ISLAND KONG: SKULL ISLAND KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu KONG: SKULL ISLAND	1:15 PM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 3:45 PM 6:45 PM 9:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:45 AM	<b>MARINA-2</b> COLLIDE COLLIDE KONG: SKULL ISLAND COLLIDE KONG: SKULL ISLAND COLLIDE COLLIDE	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 6:15 PM 8:15 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM	<b>360°- 2</b> BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	11:45 AM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:00 PM 8:15 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM
<b>MUHALAB-1</b> SLEEPLESS POWER RANGERS KONG: SKULL ISLAND KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu POWER RANGERS KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu POWER RANGERS KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu SLEEPLESS	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 7:00 PM 7:00 PM 10:00 PM 10:00 PM 1:00 AM	<b>FANAR-3</b> AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	11:45 AM 2:15 PM 4:00 PM 5:45 PM 8:15 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM	<b>MARINA-3</b> AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic LIFE AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic LIFE	1:00 PM 3:15 PM 5:30 PM 7:45 PM 10:00 PM 12:15 AM	<b>360°- 3</b> THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:30 PM 7:30 PM 9:30 PM 11:30 PM 1:15 AM
<b>MUHALAB-2</b> AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic LIFE AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic LIFE KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	12:30 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 9:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM	<b>FANAR-4</b> COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE LIFE COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu COLLIDE	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:15 AM 10:00 PM 1:00 AM	<b>AVENUES-1</b> THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE THE WINDMILL MASSACRE	1:00 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:00 PM 11:00 PM 1:00 AM	<b>AL-KOUT.1</b> POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu COLLIDE	12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:30 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM 10:00 PM 1:00 AM
		<b>FANAR-5</b> LIFE LIFE	12:15 PM 2:30 PM	<b>AVENUES-2</b> POWER RANGERS-2D-4DX KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX POWER RANGERS-2D-4DX POWER RANGERS-2D-4DX KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX POWER RANGERS-2D-4DX	12:00 PM 2:30 PM 5:00 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 PM 12:30 AM	<b>AL-KOUT.2</b> AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic SLEEPLESS AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	12:15 PM 2:30 PM 4:45 PM 6:45 PM 9:00 PM
			<b>AVENUES-3</b> KONG: SKULL ISLAND		1:30 PM		

**SAHARA AIR CONDITIONING**

**MINI SPLIT A/C UNITS, REFRIGERATORS & WATER COOLERS IN VERY GOOD CONDITION...**

**SPECIAL SALE FINAL PRICE**

- Panasonic (6 CU/FT) **Price: KD.38**
- Water Cooler (Single Tap) **Price: KD.28**
- Water Cooler (Double Tap) **Price: KD.48**
- Toshiba (19CU/FT) **Price: KD.68**
- Frigidaire (19CU/FT) **Price: KD.78**
- KD.98 A/C Unit with Installation** (Supply of A/C Unit only)

**FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT.....**  
NADEM SIDDIQUI - MOB. 97861063, 23989195 EXT. 105

**URGENTLY REQUIRED**

**Waitress Cum Cashier**

For our Restaurant in Jleeb Preferably Filipino with experience, Visa 18 & can join immediately.

Salary KD. 180 Plus Food & Accommodation. Leave Salary, Air Ticket etc.

**Contact 99698742**  
hrhr350@gmail.com

**FOR SALE**

Passport No. G3955355 Civil ID No. 276030802124 has changed my name to Shaik Mukhtar Ahmed herein after in all my dealings and documents. (C 5289) 22-3-2017

**BMW 2003 Model registered till March 2018, lady driven excellent condition, done 134,000 km, blue color. Call: 66711141. (C 5288) 25-3-2017**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, Shaik Mushtaq s/o Shaik Yousef holder of Indian

**PRAYER TIMINGS**

Fajr: 04:26  
Shorook: 05:46  
Duh: 11:54  
Asr: 15:23  
Maghrib: 18:03  
Isha: 19:20

**Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)**

## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

### Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Sunday 26/3/2017				Departure Flights on Sunday 26/3/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	PAL	669	Manila	13:10
KAC	776D	Riyadh	00:20	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:55	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
DLH	629	Doha	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	742D	Dammam	01:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
THY	764D	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:40
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	563	Amman	15:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSC	405	Sohag	02:30	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:30
KAC	412	Bangkok	02:50	SAW	706	Damascus	16:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:05
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
KAC	358	Kochi	03:30	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:40	JZR	240	Amman	17:30
CEB	0018	Manila	04:00	KAC	363	Colombo	17:35
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
THY	1405	Istanbul	04:00	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
PGT	4860	Istanbul	04:05	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	KAC	341	Chennai	18:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	514	Tehran	04:35	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
QTR	8511	Doha	05:20	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	KAC	783	Jeddah	19:10
BAW	157	London	06:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:15
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	CLX	612	Hong Kong	19:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	304	Mumbai	08:20	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	20:45
KAC	362	Colombo	09:05	KAC	353	BLR	20:55
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	DLH	634	Doha	21:00
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
QTR	070	Doha	09:20	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:45
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	203	Lahore	21:45
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
SAW	703	Damascus	10:45	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	155	Istanbul	22:15
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	JZR	502	Luxor	23:05
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	785	Jeddah	23:40



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:  
**Call MSAL hotline 128**



**PHARMACIES**  
ON 24 HRS DUTY

**INTERNATIONAL CALLS**



**Hospitals**

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

**Clinics**

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Oinariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmedi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaheel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

**STATE OF KUWAIT**  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
www.met.gov.kw



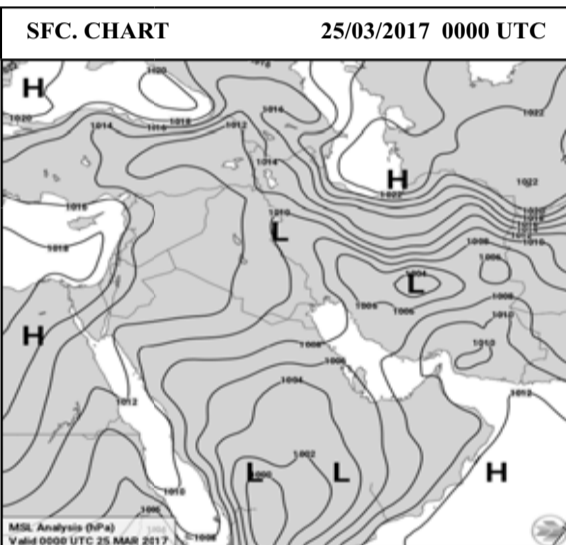
**Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours**

**BY DAY:** Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually at times northerly to north easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered rain

**BY NIGHT:** Clouds will disappear gradually with light to moderate north easterly to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings	
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STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	24 °C	16 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	23 °C	16 °C
ABDALY	21 °C	14 °C
BUBYAN	20 °C	15 °C
JAHLA	24 °C	15 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	20 °C	16 °C
SALMIYAH	21 °C	16 °C
AHMADI	20 °C	17 °C
NUWAISIB	23 °C	18 °C
WAFRA	24 °C	17 °C
SALMY	23 °C	13 °C



**4 DAYS FORECAST**

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	03/26	Sunny	26 °C	15 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 28 km/h
Monday	03/27	Sunny	28 °C	16 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Tuesday	03/28	Clouds to increase + scattered rain	29 °C	15 °C	S-SE	15 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	03/29	Partly cloudy + scattered rain	27 °C	17 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:27
Sunrise	05:47
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:02
Isha	19:19

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	100 %
MIN. RH	77 %
MAX. Wind	E 71 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	32.4mm

Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

**PRIVATE CLINICS**

<p><b>Ophthalmologists</b></p> <p>Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor 25622444</p> <p>Dr. Samy Al-Rabea 25752222</p> <p>Dr. Masoma Habeeb 25321171</p> <p>Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy 25739999</p> <p>Dr. Mohsen Abel 25757700</p> <p>Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl 25732223</p> <p>Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly 25732223</p> <p><b>Ear, Nose &amp; Throat (ENT)</b></p> <p>Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner 24555050 Ext 510</p> <p>Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali 25644660</p> <p>Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel 25646478</p> <p>Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah 25311996</p> <p>Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory 25731988</p> <p>Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary 22620166</p> <p>Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz 25651426</p> <p><b>General Practitioners</b></p> <p>Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi 24555050 Ext 123</p> <p>Dr. Yousef Al-Omar 24719312</p> <p>Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem 23926920</p> <p>Dr. Kathem Maarafi 25730465</p> <p>Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah 25655528</p> <p>Dr. Nabeeb Al-Ayoubi 24577781</p> <p>Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea 25333501</p> <p><b>Urologists</b></p> <p>Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy 22641534</p> <p>Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul 22639955</p> <p>Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi 22616660</p> <p>Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) 25313120</p> <p>Dr. Leons Joseph 66703427</p>	<p><b>Plastic Surgeons</b></p> <p>Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf 22547272</p> <p>Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari 22617700</p> <p>Dr. Abdel Quttainah 25625030/60</p> <p><b>Family Doctor</b></p> <p>Dr. Divya Damodar 23729596/23729581</p> <p><b>Psychiatrists</b></p> <p>Dr. Esam Al-Ansari 22635047</p> <p>Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan 22613623/0</p> <p><b>Gynaecologists &amp; Obstetricians</b></p> <p>Dr. Adrian arbe 23729596/23729581</p> <p>Dr. Verginia s.Marin 2572-6666 ext 8321</p> <p>Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan 22655539</p> <p>Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami 25343406</p> <p>Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly 25739272</p> <p>Dr. Salem soso 22618787</p> <p><b>General Surgeons</b></p> <p>Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer 22610044</p> <p>Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher 25327148</p> <p><b>Internists, Chest &amp; Heart</b></p> <p>Dr. Adnan Ebil 22639939</p> <p>Dr. Mousa Khadada 22666300</p> <p>Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan 25728004</p> <p>Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra 25355515</p> <p>Dr. Mobarak Aldoub 24726446</p> <p>Dr. Nasser Behbehani 25654300/3</p>	<p><b>Paediatricians</b></p> <p>Dr. Khaled Hamadi 25665898</p> <p>Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed 25340300</p> <p>Dr. Zahra Qabazard 25710444</p> <p>Dr. Sohail Qamar 22621099</p> <p>Dr. Snaa Maarouf 25713514</p> <p>Dr. Pradip Gupje 23713100</p> <p>Dr. Zacharias Mathew 24334282</p> <p><b>Dermatology</b></p> <p>Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University 23845955</p> <p><b>Dentists</b></p> <p>Dr. Anil Thomas 3729596/3729581</p> <p>Dr. Shamah Al-Matar 22641071/2</p> <p>Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed 22562226</p> <p>Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer 22561444</p> <p>Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan 22619557</p> <p>Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash 22525888</p> <p>Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan 25653755</p> <p>Dr. Bader Al-Ansari 25620111</p> <p><b>Neurologists</b></p> <p>Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri 25633324</p> <p>Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan 25345875</p> <p><b>Gastrologists</b></p> <p>Dr. Sami Aman 22636464</p> <p>Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly 25322030</p> <p>Dr. Foaid Abdallah Al-Ali 22633135</p>	<p><b>Endocrinologist</b></p> <p>Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman 25339330</p> <p>Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888</p> <p>Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924</p> <p><b>Physiotherapists &amp; VD</b></p> <p>Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291</p> <p>Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees 22666288</p> <p><b>Rheumatologists:</b></p> <p>Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060</p> <p>Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah 25722290</p> <p><b>Internist, Chest &amp; Heart</b></p> <p>DR.Mohammed Akkad 24555050 Ext 210</p> <p>Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital 25339667</p> <p><b>Consultant Cardiologist</b></p> <p>Dr. Farida Al-Habib 2611555-2622555 MD, PH.D, FACC</p> <p>Inaya German Medical Center Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123</p>
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GOSSIP

# Amanda Seyfried has given birth to her first child

The 'Mamma Mia' star and her husband Thomas Sadoski have welcomed a baby girl into the world, a spokesperson for the couple has confirmed. No other details about the birth have yet to be released but it comes only a few weeks after Thomas revealed he and Amanda had married in secret after getting engaged in September last year. He said: "We eloped ... we just took off into the country with an officiant and just the two of us, and we did our thing. We had a great day. It was perfect. Listen, she's the person I love, admire, respect most in the world. I know that you guys are close friends, and I know that she would want you to know, so don't tell anyone." And the blonde beauty is no doubt

thrilled that her little one is here as she previously confessed she is so "ready" to meet her baby. Asked how her pregnancy is going, Amanda shared: "It's good [but] I'm ready ... I'm ready ... I'm ready to meet the kid." And Thomas added: "It's the best thing I've ever done in my life. She's extraordinary. She's incredible. I'm terrified, to steal a line from 'Ghostbusters,' 'I'm terrified beyond capacity for rational thought,' but I couldn't be more excited. She's already an extraordinary mom and I'm so proud of her. Her voice, my God I know, already this kid is lucky. She gets the singing. I clean up the poop."



## Emma Roberts shares the key of a 'public' relationship

The 26-year-old actress has enjoyed an on/off relationship with her fiancé Evan Peters since they began dating in 2012 after meeting on the set of 'Adult World', but Emma says having her love life on public display can be difficult, especially because of "social media". Speaking to People magazine about maintaining privacy in her public relationship, Emma said: "I mean, I think it's all about just really knowing who you are yourself. And staying grounded with your family and with your friends. I think it's easy to get so caught up in it because now with social media, there is no stepping away, really, because even when you do it's still all on your phone. So I think [it's about] figuring out

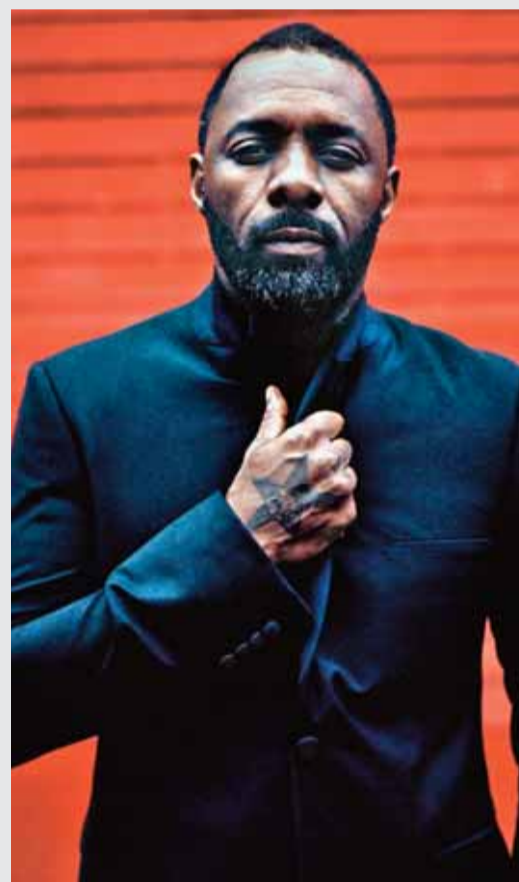
how to really step away and kind of turn it off and make time for yourself and your real life." Meanwhile, Emma and 30-year-old Evan - who star together in 'American Horror Story' - put their engagement back on in November last year after having called it off in May. A source said at the time: "Emma and Evan are engaged again. She's been wearing her ring on set. Everyone on set knows." The pair first got engaged over Christmas in 2013 but called off their marriage plans in June 2015. Evan and Emma later reconciled in August of the same year before splitting in May.

## Chris Evans wants to become a father someday

The 'Captain America: Civil War' would love to be a dad in the future but is enjoying being an uncle at the moment. He said: "I have a big family, a lot of little nieces and nephews, and cousins, and a lot of people in my life that I care about ... Chris does want to be a daddy someday." And the 35-year-old actor really bonded with his 10-year-old co-star in 'Gifted', who plays his six-year-old niece and math prodigy. Speaking about his 10-year-old co-star, he added to E! News: "Crying on cue is a tough thing to do, but I tell you what there is no better catalyst than this little nugget over here. She is so good and so honest. Those tears start rolling, you would have to be pretty heartless to not get emotional." Meanwhile, Chris is not long out of a relationship, having split from actress Jenny Slate earlier in the year. Opening up about relationships recently, he shared: "There's a certain shared life experience that is tough for someone else who's not in this industry to kind of wrap their head around. Letting someone go to work with someone for three months and they won't see them. It really, it certainly puts the relationship to the test."



## Idris Elba thinks diversity has become a 'corny' word



The 'Jungle Book' star believes people are getting tired of hearing the term thrown about in relation to the movie and television industry in the UK and across the pond in the US. He said: "It's become a bit of a corny word. People are just like, 'Oh, stop talking about it.'" And Idris was unimpressed when Labour politician Oona King called him to do a "boring" speech at the Houses of Parliament last year. He shared: "Oona certainly pulled me by the scruff of the neck and was like, 'Get up there and say it!' She pushed me to go even further and, y'know, Oona is one of the most powerful people I know, and very persuasive. Very persuasive." And King added: "He said, 'No, I don't want to just give a speech about black people.' He didn't want to be further labeled because when you're labeled your whole life you get sick of it. But I reminded him he has an extraordinary power to make people listen. To start doing night shifts in a car factory in Dagenham and end up a global Hollywood A-lister is almost impossible. It's to defy every label." Meanwhile, Idris also admitted he was left feeling "panicked" when he found himself without a job after his character - Stringer Bell in the TV show 'The Wire' - was killed off after only three seasons. He told The Guardian newspaper: "Yeah, I was definitely panicked at losing my job. I wasn't a household name, I was part of a very successful show and then I was off that successful show. But, y'know, from the day I decided I wanted to be an actor, which was probably [when I was] 13-and-a-half years old in a drama class, I've never, ever worried about if I'm going to get there - I've just got there."

## DELEIVINGNE WANTS TO BE AN 'ASTRONAUT OR A SPY'

The 24-year-old model-and-actress would have taken her life in a very different direction if she hadn't found success on the catwalk at a young age. She said: "If I hadn't gone into modeling or acting, I would have loved to be an astronaut or a spy." The 'Paper Towns' actress is known for her bushy brows, and though she didn't like them when she was younger, she's learned to "embrace" them and is thankful she followed the advice of her mother not to pluck them. She said: "The best beauty advice I've been given is from my mother, who told me not to pluck my eyebrows... All the women in my family have really big brows. As a child, I didn't care for mine, but I've since learned to embrace them, as you should. Now, I keep them in check." When she is acting, Cara relies on make-up to help her get into character. She explained: "Make-up really helps me get into character for my acting roles. It's like putting on another skin, another armor, which helps me transform into any character." But if she has a day off, Cara prefers to go bare-faced. She told Britain's ELLE magazine: "On my days off, I like to keep things simple and let my skin breathe, so I'll go make-up free. I always keep a mascara in my bag for when I need to quickly turn things around from day to night. 'Rimmel Scandaleyes Reloaded Mascara is my trusted favorite.' The blonde beauty isn't a fan of working out regularly but does try to stay active. She said: "My approach to working out is sporadic. But I like going to boxing and dancing classes. It's good to keep moving any time you can."

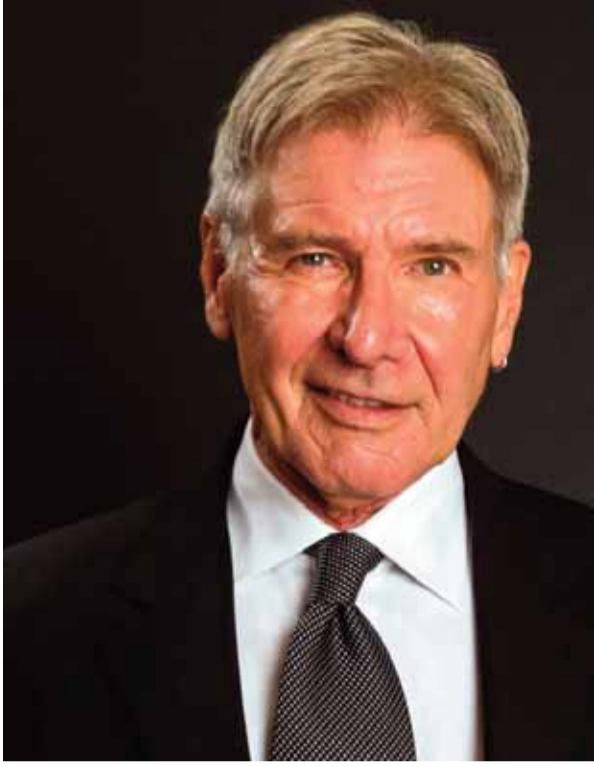


## Vergara's ex called her 'classless' for speaking Spanish

The 'Modern Family' star - who hails from Colombia - is currently stuck in a court battle with Nick Loeb over the pair's frozen embryos and in a new letter submitted to the court, Nick slams the actress for speaking in her native language. In the letter, he wrote: "I like spending time with you out at night much more than any of my friends. What I do not like and what I will not put up with anymore is the Spanish, and no I do not like hanging out with you when you speak in Spanish, with others at the table or out with us. I may as well be alone and for someone who cares so much for what other people think, I am surprised that you think it's ok. Not only is it rude and disrespectful, it is classless. And for you to then berate, embarrass, and humiliate me in front of others when I ask you to stop is not happening anymore. You tell me, I need to remind you, and then I do and you make fun of the situa-

tion. I should never of let this get this far, but I have some boundaries that I have let you cross, and this is one of them. It's not ok, you will not do this anymore, or I will just get up, leave and go. (sic)" Meanwhile, Sofia previously insisted she isn't worried if she portrays a stereotype in her acting career as she knows it is important to have representation for all races on screen. She shared: "What's wrong with being a stereotype? Gloria's character is inspired by my mom and my aunt. They are both Latin women who grew up in Colombia, like me. They love colour, prints and shoes ... It upsets me when Latinos complain about Gloria. I am grateful for the opportunity because the gringos have let me in with this strong accent I have. Eight years ago nobody had an accent like this on television."

GOSSIP



## Ford called himself a 'schmuck' after crashing plane

The 47-year-old actor was flying his private plane into John Wayne Airport near Orange County in early February when he reportedly flew close to a taxiing American Airlines flight, which was carrying 110 passengers, as he came into land. In new audio footage obtained by TMZ.com, the 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' actor can be heard telling the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) the reason behind his close call. He said in the clip: "[I'm] the schmuck that landed on the taxiway. I was distracted by the airliner which was in movement when I turned to the runway and also the big turbulence from the landing." At the time of the incident, the FAA released a statement saying Harrison had been cleared to land on "Runway 20L", but had instead attempted to land on the taxiway "that runs parallel" to his approved landing strip. The statement read: "Air traffic controllers cleared the pilot of a single-engine Aviat Husky to land on Runway 20L at John Wayne Airport Monday afternoon. "The pilot correctly read back the clearance. The pilot then landed on a taxiway that runs parallel to the runway, overflying a Boeing 737 that was holding short of the runway." No one was injured in the close call but the FAA are currently investigating this incident. It is not the first plane incident the 'Blade Runner' actor - who has many years of flying experience - has been involved in as of late. In March 2015, Harrison was flying his two-seater vintage World War II training plane when he was forced to land it on Penmar Golf Course in Venice, Los Angeles after the plane suffered engine failure. At the time, it was revealed Harrison performed a "textbook emergency landing", which saved his life.



## KARDASHIAN FAMILY HAS SECURITY 'WITH THEM 24/7'

Kim Kardashian West, 36, was robbed at gunpoint in Paris, France, in October last year and sources have now reported that since the ordeal the whole family - which includes Kim's mother Kris, sisters Khloe and Kourtney, brother Rob, and half-sisters Kendall and Kylie - have been given a new security team which follows them "most of the time". A source said: "Security and privacy issues have changed not only for her but for the whole family. They have security guards most of the time when they go out." But the insider insisted the call for a new team wasn't to do with their former bodyguard Pascal Duvier - who was let go from his position after the robbery - but because the 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' stars

wanted a "larger" team with "fresh eyes". They added to People magazine: "It wasn't to do with issues with Pascal - they parted on good terms - but they just needed a fresh team with fresh eyes. This team is a lot larger and with them 24/7." The news comes just days after it was reported that Kim's half sister Kendall, 21, had \$200,000 worth of jewelry stolen from her house in the Hollywood Hills last week. It is thought the burglars entered Kendall's house sometime between her leaving at lunchtime and returning home at 8pm. Kendall didn't raise the alarm at first as she didn't realise things had gone missing until she went to her bedroom just after one in the morning.

## Kristen Bell found it hard to star alongside her husband

The 36-year-old actress stars as Karen Baker in the upcoming action comedy movie - which is based on the 1970s TV show of the same name - and has said she had trouble being "mean" to the 42-year-old actor, who plays her on-screen husband Officer Jon Baker, because she "likes him so much". Kristen - who has two daughters Lincoln, three, and Delta, two, with Dax - said: "It was hard to be mean to him because my character is his

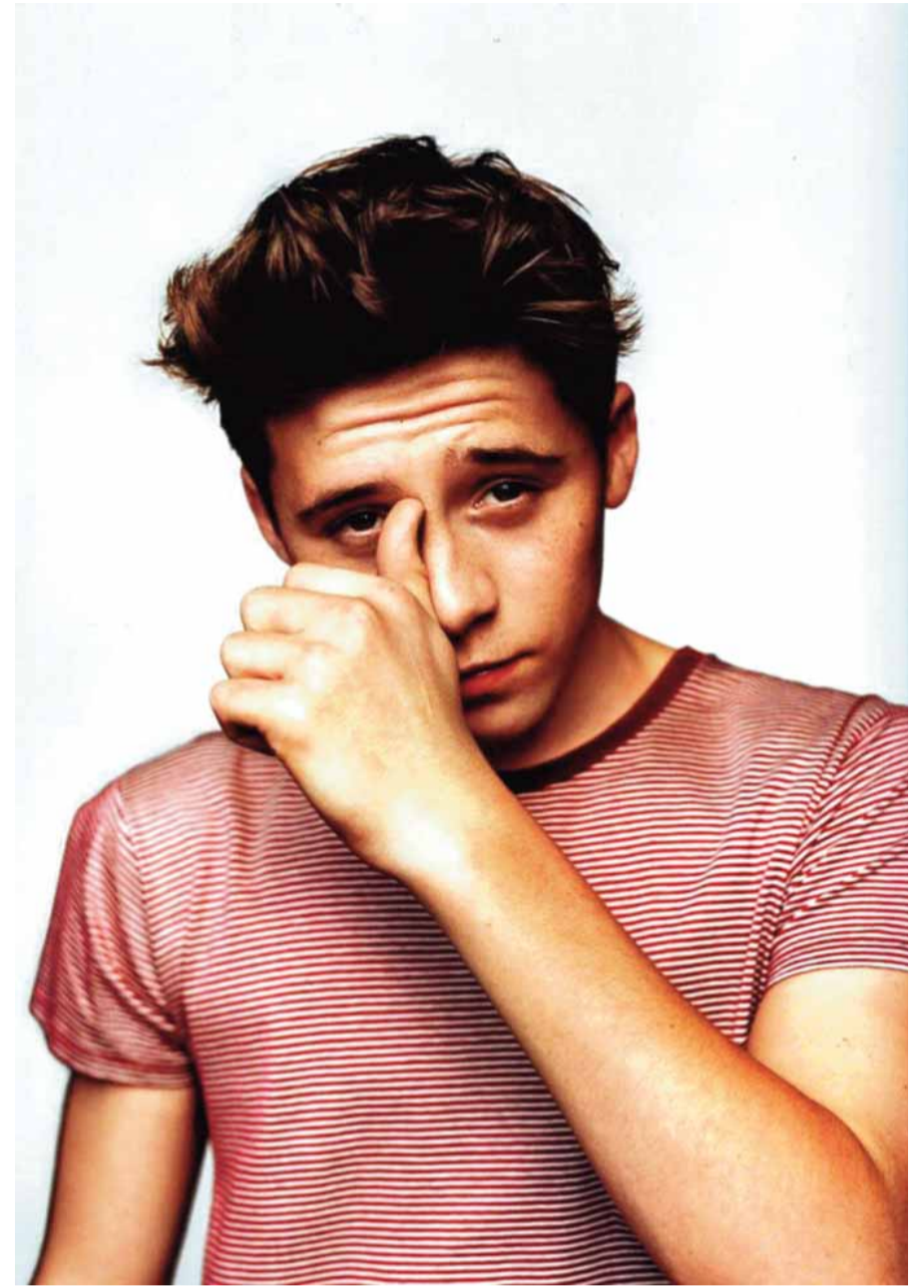
estranged, trophy wife... and it was difficult because I do really ... he's so endearing, and I like him so much." And Kristen says she did her best to learn to dislike her spouse - whom she tied the knot within 2013 - during filming, and drew on the experiences of all the little arguments they've had throughout their romance, which has spanned a decade. She added during an appearance on 'Good Morning America' on Friday: "From an actor's perspective I was like, 'Hmm, I'll take the 15 times he's really annoyed me in our last 10 years [together] and I'll put those all into a Coke bottle, pop a Mentos in there, shake it up and then that will be Karen.'" Meanwhile, Dax - who also took on directorial duties for the movie - recently revealed he directed the feature in the nude, and said although he initially concealed his modesty when having to step behind the camera, he eventually shed his inhibitions as well as his clothes. He said: "I think in the morning I started off putting my robe on in between every take when I would go over and talk to the camera department. "But, as less and less time was available to us, I found that I was not putting my robe on between takes and I'd be like, 'Wow, I haven't put on any clothes on in three or four hours and everyone seems to be fine with it.' — Bangshowbiz



## MEL B HAS ATTENDED THE FUNERAL FOR HER LATE FATHER

The former Spice Girl bid her final farewell to her father Martin Brown on Friday in a "low-key affair" which saw Mel's Spice Girls band mate Emma Bunton and Atomic Kitten member Kerry Katona amongst the guests. Mel, 41, was spotted arriving at Los Angeles International airport on Thursday with her three daughters - Phoenix, 18, whom she has with ex-husband Jimmy Gulzar, Angel, nine, from her fling with Eddie Murphy, and Madison, five, whose father in Mel's estranged husband Stephen Belafonte - as they prepared to fly back to the UK for the funeral, which took place in Mel's home city of Leeds. A source told The Sun newspaper about the funeral: "The funeral was planned to be a low key affair, but with the family all back on good terms it looked like things would be very peaceful and sensitively done. "It's obviously been a very tough time after Martin's passing - but they're

so pleased to be back together as a family." For Mel, the funeral comes just days after it was revealed she has filed for divorce from her husband and film producer Stephen, after citing "irreconcilable differences". It was reported the pair - along with Mel's three daughters - had attended family therapy session in order to "make sure their kids are OK" in the wake of the split. The pair were said to have travelled in separate cars to the session which took place in Mulholland Estates in Beverly Hills, at the home of Mel's long time psychiatrist Doctor Charles Sophy. And all three children travelled in a third car with their nanny. The reported family therapy session is believed to be the first session of this kind that the pair have attended, though it was previously reported they had tried couples therapy before their split to no avail.



## Brooklyn Beckham has pushed back his book

The 18-year-old aspiring photographer - who is the son of former soccer star David Beckham and fashion designer Victoria Beckham - was originally supposed to release his photography book 'What I See' on May 4, but has now announced it won't hit shelves until almost two months later on June 29, as he wants to get his school exams out the way first. Taking to Instagram on Friday to share the news, Brooklyn wrote: "Happy to say my book's now out on 29th June after exams are done! Excited to meet as many of you as I can at signings, dates and locations coming soon. 3 month countdown #whatisee - link for signed copies in bio! (sic)" 'What I See' is set to feature 300 pic-

tures taken by the teenager and include some previously unseen snaps of him. Publishers Penguin Random House said the book "offer his followers a rare glimpse at the world through his eyes". As well as the photos, Brooklyn has also written the foreword and penned all the captions. Francesca Dow, managing director of Penguin Random House Children's, said: "Brooklyn Beckham's images inspire a generation across the globe, and this book will give his fans a broader insight into the world seen through his unique and creative perspective."

## John Legend suitcase was stolen at JFK

The 38-year-old musician was almost left without his luggage - which is reported to have included a pair of \$30,000 Cartier Panther jewel-studded cuff links and a \$500 pair of sunglasses, as well as designer clothes - when it was left unattended by his greeter and an opportunistic thief tried to grab it. Luckily for the 'All of Me' hitmaker, airport police saw the events unfold on the CCTV cameras around the area, and managed to catch the culprit before he made off with John's possessions. Taking to Twitter on Friday, John quoted a tweet from one fan asking whether the thief had approached him and said: "This story is untrue. We use a trusted car service and they did not rob me. Our Delta greeter made a mistake and left a bag on the cart (sic)" He then tweeted: "The bag was taken because it was left unattended. The airport police caught the person who took it (on video) and retrieved my bag. "Thanks to the airport police/security. One could say it's been "handled". (sic)" It is not known whether John was travelling alone at the time, or if his wife Chrissy Teigen and their 11-month-old daughter Luna were with him. Meanwhile, the 'Love Me Now' recently said he credits Chrissy with helping him "grow" as a person. He said: "We were always different. I was always a little bit more buttoned up, and she was always more brash and free. "I would get a little nervous at first with some of the things she would say because I didn't know how people would react. I usually played it more safely. "[But now] I think she's brought me out of my shell a bit, and made me enjoy life a little bit more. It's been fun to grow together in that."



## Shailene Woodley guilty in Dakota Access Pipeline trial

The 'Divergent' star was among around 100 protesters - 26 of whom were later arrested - who turned up to the construction site in October last year to air their views against the proposed pipeline plans, which aims to transport crude oil from the North Dakota Bakken region through South Dakota and Iowa into Illinois, crossing the Missouri River. At the time, Shailene, 25, was arrested one count of misdemeanor criminal trespassing and one count of misdemeanor engaging in a riot. Now, in legal documents obtained by TMZ.com, the 'Snowden' actress has taken a plea deal which saw her plead guilty to one count of disorderly conduct, for which she will face one year of unsupervised probation. After Shailene's actions, the Department of Justice halted the pipeline project and ordered the development company to suspend all construction work. The 'Snowden' actress previously said: "That is beautiful, but that is not a win. A win is when they say 'We are not moving this pipeline to some other location, to affect clean water, but we are going to stop it and nix it.'" Meanwhile the 'Descendants' actress - who streamed the protest and her subsequent arrest on a Facebook Live chat - originally claimed she was being arrested because of her fame. She said in the video: "I'm being arrested! I was down there with everybody else! I don't know what's going on, as soon as they came I left. It's because I'm well known, it's because I have 40,000 people watching."



# Are 'gay moments' in 'Beauty' and 'Power Rangers' progress?

A hug. A wink. A dance. A non-answer. These are the so-called gay moments in a handful of recent high-profile studio movies that have sparked both rapturous celebration and startling backlash. From Sulu in "Star Trek Beyond" to LeFou in "Beauty and the Beast" and now Trini in "Power Rangers," the latest Hollywood fascination is the subtle nod that a once straight or undefined character is now or has always been gay.

But it's often so subtle that if it wasn't first discussed by filmmakers or actors, it's a wonder whether anyone would notice at all. Sulu can be seen hugging a man. LeFou winks at Gaston and later dances with a man. And Trini fails to answer a flirty question about whether she's having "boyfriend problems"... or "girl-

wrote of the ambiguous "Power Rangers" moment. Not so ambiguous is how the film industry is lagging in LGBT representation, especially compared with strides that have been made in television. A 2016 report by the University of Southern California found that 82 of the 100 top movies of 2015 did not depict one LGBT speaking or named character. In a study by the gay advocacy group GLAAD of major studio releases in 2015, 17.5 percent contained characters identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender - a percentage that was unchanged from 2014.

But even "Beauty and the Beast" director Bill Condon and many of his cast quickly retreated from previous comments about the film's "gay moment," saying the response had been "overblown." Hollywood might not be to blame for the dozens of articles that help to amplify small moments that are also socially significant firsts ("first gay superhero" and "first gay Disney character"). They're eminently clickable and part of the modern business model of internet news, especially as the public, actors and filmmakers weigh in.

For GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis, however, the minor moments are "incredibly important," especially in major studio films with significant youth audiences. A film like "Moonlight," she noted, is an adult film that came out from an independent distributor and producer. "LGBT youth have a right to see their happily ever after, too," Ellis said. A recent exhaustive GLAAD study found that 20 percent of millennials identify as LGBT - a statistic she thinks might have contributed to social media movements like the #GiveElsaaGirlfriend and #GiveCaptainAmericaaBoyfriend campaigns.

Ellis knows the "moments" are just a first step - she would like to eventually see LGBT protagonists in all-ages films - but for her, it shows that major studios, often too risk averse to change, are making an effort to test the waters. For years, writers, fans and LGBT scholars have enjoyed speculating about which Disney characters were secretly gay - from "The Lion King's" isolated bachelor Scar to the marriage-averse Merida from "Brave." But none have ever been outwardly confirmed as such.

### Unsung history

It's also noteworthy that all three recent gay-moment examples can be justified as tributes to the unsung gay history behind many of these stories. LGBT activist George Takei originated the character of Sulu. The late lyricist Howard Ashman wrote much of "Beauty and the Beast" while dying of AIDS and passed



This image released by Disney, Josh Gad, left, and Luke Evans appear in a scene from, "Beauty and the Beast."

away before the film even came out. And, in the case of "Power Rangers," the original Blue Ranger David Yost left the series after being harassed for his sexual orientation.

"There have been in the past these coded moments threaded through stories that we've seen on the big screen, but no studio has been big enough or bold enough to own those moments," Ellis said. "If you were part of the LGBT community or ultra-observant, you might pick up on it. But having the studio own it and not back down from it was a big move forward for us."

From a business perspective, there was speculation that perhaps there could be a downside when reports emerged that a theater in Alabama was not going to show "Beauty and the Beast," and a few predominantly Muslim countries had pulled the film for review because of the gay moment. Then the film

opened to a whopping \$357.1 million globally. "I don't think it impacted Disney's bottom line one bit," said Paul Dergarabedian, a senior media analyst for comScore. In fact, he said the spotlight on LeFou likely benefited the movie in the end, creating buzz, awareness and a conversation.

Ellis has observed that in just a few weeks, the tides have turned significantly. She saw some extremist anti-LGBT sentiments being thrown at "Beauty and the Beast," but now, with "Power Rangers," she's had trouble finding any backlash. It's the perfect scenario to prove their point that "inclusive content wins across the board." Ellis just hopes that studios are taking notice. — AP



In this image released by Lionsgate, Becky G portrays Trini, the Yellow Ranger, in a scene from "Power Rangers." — AP photos

friend problems?" What are we to make of these "blink and you'll miss them" moments in a year when "Moonlight," with its explicit exploration of gay themes, can rise to become the best picture winner at the Academy Awards? Is this progress? For some, it is. For others, it's too much acclaim for too little action.

### 'Outsized credit'

Buzzfeed film critic Alison Willmore wrote an article on Wednesday exploring the "outsized credit" that Hollywood is getting for the recent "seriously small moments of LGBT inclusivity." "While, to be sure, even incremental progress should be celebrated - any forward movement is better than none - this is an incredibly unsatisfactory beat to go on to be widely disseminated as a breakthrough for inclusivity," Willmore



Festival goes rave in front of the stage of DJ Robin Schultz in the Ultra Music Festival in Miami on March 24, 2017.



## Finding the 'best energy' through EDM at Ultra Festival

Nick is usually known as a lawyer in Detroit but when he travels the world's electronic music festivals he takes on a new persona-he shaves tribal figures into his hair and sprinkles glitter over his biceps. His latest occasion to live out his alternative life is taking place this weekend in Miami at the Ultra Music Festival, where dance music megastars including Tiesto, David Guetta, Steve Aoki, Martin Garrix and Major Lazer are spinning. "You work hard and you play hard," said the 27-year-old lawyer, who shied away from using his last name for professional reasons.

Chatting in between a hawk selling plastic penises and a group of young Spaniards decked out in Spider-Man costumes, Nick explained how he has explored the world's electronic festivals and discovered "the coolest time you can possibly have." "It's crazy," he said. "Everybody is having a good time and welcoming you like a family. It doesn't compare to a rock concert. Best energy possible!"

The Ultra Music Festival is one of the world's premier events for the booming scene of electronic dance music, or EDM, along with Tomorrowland in Belgium and the Electric Daisy Carnival, which takes place in Las Vegas with editions around the world. Some 165,000 revelers descended on Miami for the Ultra Music Festival-some from as far away as Europe, South America and Japan. Many adorned their heads with flowers, horns or rabbit ears. Young women sported bikinis with fishnet stockings and Converse sneakers, while other fans dressed up as superheroes or even as human bananas.

With the exception of some neighbors who will struggle to share space with the three-day party, virtually everyone appeared in upbeat spirits. "Everybody is kind. It's a place where everybody gets together and there's no hate, there's no differences, there's no race, nothing matters anymore," said James Tirado, a 21-year-old American student. "Everybody is going to have a good time Everybody is loving each other," he said. Scalpers outside offered tickets for \$600, as inside the choreographed LED lights and the intense mixes whipped the crowd into a sweaty, jumping, skin-exposed mass.

### Will the EDM bubble burst?

Of all the world-famous DJs who were spinning, Tiesto has been among the most loyal performers at the Ultra Music Festival. He has performed all but one year at the festival since its inaugural edition in 1999, when trance music dominated EDM. The 48-year-old Dutch DJ was one of the biggest figures in trance in the 1990s. Then a subculture at do-it-yourself raves, EDM has grown into a massive phenomenon that draws youth-and is also frequently associated with synthetic drugs such as MDMA. "It's amazing what they have achieved. Now they have a bigger production and they do it all over the world. It's impressive," Tiesto told AFP, referring to Ultra's global editions that started in Brazil and have spread widely.

While most festival-goers were aware that the EDM boom was recent, many did not realize that the music was gaining an audience in the 1990s-when some in attendance at Ultra

had just been born. In a paper presented last year to an annual International Music Summit in Ibiza, Spain, analyst Kevin Watson estimated that electronic music was a \$7.1 billion global industry, soaring by 60 percent since 2012.

After sweeping North America and Europe, Watson pointed to strong growth for EDM in emerging markets such as China and South America. One key factor, he wrote, is the rapid growth of streaming which has made EDM increasingly accessible to fans who are not discovering the beats on the dance floor. But EDM has plenty of high-profile detractors. Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell, who founded the alternative rock extravaganza Lollapalooza that takes place in Chicago, last year regretted EDM's prominence at festivals and said the music had lost the meditative quality of early house music.

"I hate EDM. I want to vomit it out of my nostrils," he told the Chicago Tribune last year. Pitchfork, the influential music site that avidly chronicles the indie scene, ran a piece last year that forecast a bursting bubble for EDM. It dated the start of EDM's downfall to the 2013 viral craze of the producer Baauer's song "Harlem Shake," saying it marked electronic music's continued "transformation from subculture into mass-media meme." — AFP



This file photo taken on November 19, 2016 shows rapper Kendrick Lamar onstage during the 2016 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. — AFP

## Kendrick Lamar takes on Trump in new song

Kendrick Lamar, one of the most praised voices in hip-hop, took on both US President Donald Trump and rivals in the rap world in a surprise new song. The California rapper ended the track by throwing out the date April 7 - leading fans to expect more music, and perhaps even his next album, on that date. Lamar late Thursday dropped "The Heart Part 4," a nearly five-minute track of rapid-fire rhyme that, in contrast to his often eclectic musical influences, is led by an unadorned bass line.

The Grammy-winning artist-whose 2015 album "To Pimp a Butterfly" was quickly hailed as a classic-paints a bleak picture on his latest track, rapping: "The whole world goin' mad." "Donald Trump is a chump / Know how we feel, punk / Tell 'em that God comin' / And Russia need a replay button, y'all up to something," he raps, referring to the Trump presidential campaign's alleged ties with Russia. Lamar also points to Trump's failure to win the popular vote in last year's election, rapping: "America's truth ain't ignoring the votes."

Lamar has been an active social commentator. His

"Alright" became an unofficial anthem of the Black Lives Matter movement, while another "To Pimp a Butterfly" track-"How Much a Dollar Cost," about an encounter with a beggar in South Africa-was hailed by then-president Barack Obama as his favorite song of 2015. More unusually for the 29-year-old Lamar, much of "The Heart Part 4" is about boasting of his own status in hip-hop.

"30 millions later, my future favors / The legendary status of a hip-hop rhyme savior," he raps, exalting both his earnings and his skill. In several cryptic verses in the song, Lamar appears to take shots at other rappers-especially Drake, the Toronto superstar, whom he suggests is overrated. "The Heart Part 4" is loosely inspired by funk legend James Brown's "Don't Tell a Lie About Me and I Won't Tell the Truth On You," off his 1974 double-album "Hell." If Lamar releases new music on April 7, it would come little more than a week before he is one of the headliners of Coachella, the premier music festival in California. — AFP

## PUBLIC MEMORIAL SERVICE TO HONOR FISHER AND REYNOLDS

Stars and fans will gather for a public memorial to honor late actresses Debbie Reynolds and Carrie Fisher nearly three months after their deaths. The ceremony honoring the lives of the mother-daughter duo will be held at Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills, the storied cemetery that is their final resting place. People will be granted attendance at the event on a first-come, first-served basis, and it will be live-streamed on www.debbiereynolds.com beginning at 1 pm Pacific. The ceremony is slated to feature music by James Blunt and "Star Wars" composer John Williams and display Hollywood memorabilia that Reynolds collected throughout her life.

Fisher, 60, an actress and writer who starred as Princess Leia in the original "Star Wars" trilogy, died Dec. 27 after suffering a medical emergency days earlier aboard a flight from London. Reynolds, 84, an Oscar-nominated actress who shot to fame after starring in "Singin' in the Rain" at age 19, died the following day after being briefly hospitalized. "She said, 'I want to be with Carrie,'" Reynolds' son, Todd Fisher, told The Associated Press after his mother's death. "And then she was gone."

The back-to-back deaths of two prominent actresses were stunning, but they were made even more poignant by the women's complex history. Fisher and Reynolds had a strained relationship that Fisher explored in her writing, but they later reconciled and became trusted confidantes brought closer by painful events in their lives. Reynolds lost one husband to Elizabeth Taylor, and two other husbands plundered her for millions. Fisher struggled with addiction and mental illness, which she candidly described in books and interviews.

Fisher died after finishing work on "The Last Jedi," the eighth film in the core "Star Wars" saga. Disney CEO Bob Iger said this week that Fisher appears throughout the film, and her performance will not be changed. Reynolds earned an Oscar nomination for her starring role in "The Unsinkable Molly Brown." The actresses participated in an HBO documentary on their lives called "Bright Lights," which aired in January. Todd Fisher organized the memorial to give fans an opportunity to honor his mother and sister. Fisher's daughter, actress Billie Lourd, is expected to attend. Stars including Meryl Streep, Tracey Ullman and Stephen Fry mourned the actresses at a private memorial in January. — AP



In this Jan 25, 2015 file photo, Debbie Reynolds, winner of the Screen Actors Guild lifetime award, left, and Carrie Fisher pose in the press room at the 21st annual Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles. — AP

FASHION



TOKYO  
FASHION WEEK

DRESSEDUNDRESSED by Japanese designers Takeshi Kitazawa and Emiko Sato.

# Gender-bending fashion on Tokyo runway bang on trend



If gender bending fashion is suddenly all the rage in the West, think Pharrell Williams promoting Chanel's new unisex handbag, then nowhere has the look excelled more than in Tokyo. Japan, for decades a pioneer of the androgynous look in the style of Comme des Garçons, Yohji Yamamoto and Kenzo, is spawning young designers blurring the lines expertly between masculine and feminine.

Genderless-looking boys are gaining traction in fashion circles and on the streets of Tokyo-gay but mostly straight men who dye their hair and wear make-up-not in an effort to pass themselves off as women but to create a new standard of beauty.

"Our big theme has always been 'unisex,'" says Takeshi Kitazawa, one half of the design duo behind trendy label DRESSEDUNDRESSED, sold by dozens of stockists in Japan and abroad. "Genderless' is now really common," he explains after his show at Tokyo Fashion Week, a parade of eight male and four female models each wearing interchangeable clothes.

Staying true to its brand name, it was a half-dressed, half-undressed look of coats and trousers slashed at the side with deep splits and men-rather than women-parading down the catwalk in bare legs. The only snatches of femininity were small red handbags dangled from the hand or strapped across the chest, on men as well as women, or delicate lace hems and high-heeled court shoes for women.

**'Scary before'**

"Isolation" and "control" were written upside down on caps, oversized 1970s-style glasses partially obscured the faces. It was not always possible to tell if it was a man or a woman-and that was the point. "Japanese men especially are really flexible. They wear women's brands and Japanese women are the same as well. Perhaps Japanese culture really is 'genderless,'" said Kitazawa.

With most Japanese designers ambitious to move into markets overseas, there is no trendier

time for androgynous fashion than now. Twenty percent of US millennials identify as something other than strictly cisgender and straight, compared to just seven percent of baby boomers, a survey by LGBTQ advocacy group GLAAD shows.

Transgender issues are back in the political spotlight thanks to Donald Trump's widely criticized decision to rescind US federal protections for school students to use the bathroom of their choice. Former gold medal-winning male

Olympian turned woman reality star, Caitlyn Jenner, is a household name. American actress Kristen Stewart and British model Cara Delevingne are poster children for bisexuality. "Now it's acceptable to discuss it. It's acceptable to come out now. It was so scary before," pop star Miley Cyrus told Time magazine for a cover story last week on young people redefining the meaning of gender.

**No boundaries**

Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons fame, a pioneer of fashion androgyny, will be this spring's subject of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's first monographic show on a living designer since Yves Saint Laurent, the legend who put women in trousers and tuxedo jackets, in 1983. Currently on show at the Japan Society in New York is the exhibition "A Third Gender: Beautiful Youths in Japanese Prints" seeking to shed light on the complex rules that governed gender in early modern Japan. It focuses on wakashu-male adolescents who were objects of sexual desire for both men and women and who appear to have constituted a distinct third gender in the Edo period.

Skirts in the form of shirt dresses, such as a tartan dressing-gown inspired number, each worn over trousers are clearly an autumn/winter 2017 Japanese trend for men as seen on the runway at Name's show. ACUOD by CHANU is the brainchild of a Korean designer repelled by suits as appropriate dress for the 21st century man. He also sent down the catwalk shirt dresses, even quilted versions, worn over tight trousers. "I want to get rid of any boundary among gender," explains designer Chanwoo Lee. "The mask is (part of that) as well," he added of black leather surgical masks covered in grinning zip metallic zips in which he dressed all his models, obscuring much of their faces. — AFP



Chika Kisada from "Chika Kisada" brand.

Creations from TAAKK by Japanese designer Takuya Morikawa. — AFP photos

# Lifestyle

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2017

Are 'gay moments' in 'Beauty' and 'Power Rangers' progress?

38



A model parades a creation during the "Hempel Award" for the 25th China International Young Fashion Designers Contest after the opening ceremony of China Fashion Week in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

## Photographer captures climate change over a decade

For the last decade, American photographer James Balog has been on a mission to document climate change through his camera lens. His effort has taken him to the farthest reaches of the world, from Antarctica to the northern ends of Greenland, where he has captured the movements and melts of immense glaciers.

attention and been the subject of two documentaries. This latest exhibit in Chicago, which juxtaposes photographs of glaciers taken years apart to show their rapid decline, offers updated images and new locations, such as Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. "(The images) make this subject alive and resonant in people's hearts and minds,

years. A section of the Trift Glacier in Switzerland, the height of a mid-rise building with beautiful white, blue and brown hues, appears shriveled to almost nothing over a nine-year period.

"People (who) don't believe in global warming and climate change, they need to see this exhibit. Because it's real," said Sharonya Simon, who appeared stunned while viewing the photographs. Simon, a teacher, brought her elementary school class to the museum on a field trip. The children were enthralled by the photos and the giant wall of man-made ice which they could touch.

"These photographs, these films, these interactives, these are bringing people closer to the science," said Patricia Ward, director of science and technology at the museum. "It's about making people more aware. People understand that climate change is happening, but it may not always be front and center in their mind," she said.

### 'Suddenly you're stunned'

Balog's images surprised even him back in 2007, when he first started placing specially outfitted time-lapse cameras in remote parts of the world. "When you stand out there, you don't see any of these changes," Balog said.

"When you string together a whole set of those images, suddenly you're stunned." In the works for more than two years, the exhibit comes as President Donald Trump's administration moves to roll back US regulations aimed at curbing climate change. Trump has threatened to pull the US out of the Paris accord on global warming, and proposed funding cuts to climate change research at home. The White House's budget director Mick Mulvaney has called such funding "a waste of money."

Through the exhibit, Balog and the museum in the United States' de facto Midwest capital, are putting a stake in the ground on the side of climate science. "I see this as being a broad, broad issue that applies to everyone regardless of their partisan political interest. So, I find this intense politicization of the issue right now, in the current administration, to be a real problem," Balog said. He is now embarking on his second decade of gathering images of the world's glaciers. —AFP



US photographer James Balog speaks about his images at the "Extreme Ice" exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry March 23, 2017 in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP photos



A boy touches one of the photos displayed during the "Extreme Ice" exhibit.



A woman looks at one of the images.

The results of his work were on display at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, which on Thursday opened the exhibit "Extreme Ice." "I want people to understand the ice," Balog told AFP in an interview at the show opening. "Ice is the manifestation of climate change in action." That change, often imperceptibly slow, is invisible to the eye. But, through time lapse photography, Balog reveals how 24 glaciers around the world are evolving—showing giant bodies of ice moving in currents, and crystal blue or green water pooling as melting accelerates. A scientist by training, Balog's work has already garnered

in a way that just pure art or pure science wouldn't do alone," Balog said.

### 'Climate change is happening'

More than 90 percent of the world's glaciers are melting, with 75 billion tons of ice lost in Alaska alone every year. The scale of the problem can be hard to comprehend, but Balog's photographs make it more understandable. Two juxtaposed images of the Bridge Glacier in Canada—a thick sheet of ice covering a vast valley—show its substantial retreat over a period of just three



People attend the "Extreme Ice" exhibit as they walk past a photo displayed on a digital monitor.



People at the exhibit.



Students on a field trip place their hands on a ice glacier replica.