



TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2017

JAMADA ALTHANI 30, 1438 AH

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CABINET SEALS EXTRADITION DEAL WITH UNITED KINGDOM

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12:27

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CONTROVERSY OVER CITIZENSHIP LAW AS GOVT FORMS PANEL

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly is expected to debate today amendments that allow legal recourse when the government revokes citizenship amid a controversy on whether the changes should be expanded. The Cabinet meanwhile formed an independent panel headed by an advisor to HH the Amir and former Assembly Speaker Ali Al-Rashed to look into the process of reinstating citizenship of several opposition figures revoked in the summer of 2014.

The panel comes following a deal to resolve the issue of revoked citizenship after a group of lawmakers visited HH the Amir a few weeks ago and said he has agreed to reinstate the citizenships. It also comes after opposition MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei vowed that he will file to grill the prime minister if the government does not reinstate the citizenship of opposition figures by April 3. Several other MPs have also made a similar threat because of a delay in the process even after the meeting with the Amir.

The panel will study the issues of former MP Abdullah Al-Barghash and around 57 members of his extended family and that of Saad Al-Ajmi, who was deported to Saudi Arabia after his citizenship was revoked.

Continued on Page 13

JORDAN HOSTS 28TH ARAB SUMMIT



AMMAN: Jordanian King Abdullah II (center) and his brothers Prince Faisal (left), Prince Ali (second left), Prince Hamzeh (second right), Prince Hashem (third right) and their cousin Prince Rashed are seen at Marka airport as they wait for the Saudi king's arrival yesterday ahead of the 28th Summit of the Arab League. — AFP (See Pages 3 & 8)

KUWAIT: The Cabinet yesterday approved an extradition agreement with the United Kingdom, which was signed in December and subsequently referred to the National Assembly. Speaking to KUNA after the Cabinet's routine meeting, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Falah Al-Azab said that the Cabinet has approved the extradition deal with Britain.

He said the agreement is imperative since it supports efforts to bring convicts and fugitives to justice, which in turn will help ameliorate Kuwait's ties with the UK. The extradition deal was co-signed on Dec 15 by Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and British Minister for the Middle East and Africa Tobias Ellwood.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet approved a draft decree promoting Maj Gen Mahmoud Al-Dosari as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said. The draft decree was approved during the weekly Cabinet meeting, said Sheikh Mohammad, who doubles as acting minister of information. Dosari was an acting undersecretary of the interior ministry and undersecretary of the special security unit.

The Cabinet also approved appointing former Electricity and Ahmad Khaled Al-Jassar as Chairman of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The ministers approved a draft decree appointing Jassar in the post, succeeding Abdulaziz Al-Zaben, who submitted his resignation earlier, Sheikh Mohammad told KUNA. The Cabinet expressed gratitude and appreciation to Zaben's efforts during his tenure, wishing him lasting good luck, Sheikh Mohammad noted. — KUNA

News

in brief

UAE donates \$54m to Interpol Foundation

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates announced yesterday it has donated \$54 million to the Interpol Foundation, as the country prepares to host a joint forum on global security. The funds will go towards seven Interpol projects including counter-terrorism, cyber-crime and drugs, an official statement said. "The threats posed by terrorism, organized crime and cybercrime are more complex and global than ever, requiring Interpol to play an even stronger role in international police cooperation," said Interpol secretary general Jurgen Stock. The news came on the eve of a three-day Unity for Security forum in Abu Dhabi. The conference is the first such venture organized jointly by the UAE and the intergovernmental police organization Interpol. The UAE last May announced it had signed an agreement with the Interpol Foundation for Abu Dhabi to host the group's world bureau headquarters.

Kuwait to adopt new equities benchmark

KUWAIT: Kuwait's stock exchange will introduce a new equities benchmark next year after completing a reorganization of its listed companies into new market categories, the bourse's chief executive officer told Bloomberg. Boursa Kuwait will group companies in segments according to criteria including market capitalization and average daily traded volume as part of a program to boost liquidity and draw new investors and issuers, CEO Khaled Al-Khaled said on Sunday. The allocation of stocks to new categories is expected in the first quarter of next year, advancing a program to revamp post-trade and settlement systems that's already underway, Khaled said, citing estimates on timing from the Capital Markets Authority. The reorganization will enable investors to select the market segment with the volume and activity levels most desirable for their needs.

Emaar Malls rivals Amazon with \$800m Souq.com bid

DUBAI: Dubai's Emaar Malls has offered \$800 million to buy Souq.com, the Middle East's largest online retailer, it said yesterday, challenging a reported offer by global giant Amazon. "Emaar Malls has submitted a bid of \$800 million for Souq.com in line with the strategy to align e-commerce with physical shopping," Emaar Malls said in a statement. Amazon, which walked away from talks with Souq.com earlier this year, had offered up to \$650 million for the company, according to Bloomberg. As of yesterday, Souq.com had not publicly responded to Emaar's offer. Founded in 2005, the e-commerce site emerged as the highest-valued Internet company in the region last year after a funding round raised more than \$275 million. Emaar Malls owns Dubai Mall, one of the world's largest shopping centers. It is the retail arm of real estate giant Emaar Properties.

BAHRAIN BUSTS IRAN-LINKED TERROR CELL

KUWAIT REITERATES SOLIDARITY WITH MANAMA

DUBAI: Bahrain said yesterday it had broken an Iranian-linked "terrorist cell" suspected of involvement in a bomb attack on a police bus in February and plotting to assassinate senior officials, state news agency BNA reported. The agency quoted an Interior Ministry statement as saying that the 14-member cell was working under direct supervision from two exiled Bahrainis living in Iran, one of them recently designated by the United States as a "global terrorist".

Kuwait yesterday reaffirmed its solidarity with and absolute support for Bahrain, and backs all steps being taken by Bahraini authorities to maintain the kingdom's security and stability. This was announced by an official source of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The source prayed that Bahrain would have everlasting security and stability.

Tensions have been rising in the kingdom since last year after authorities stepped up a crackdown on dissent, banning the main opposition group Al-Wefaq, arresting a leading activist and critic of the government and revoking the citizenship of the spiritual leader of the country's

majority Shiites. BNA said that six of the arrestees received military training in camps under Iranian Revolutionary Guard supervision, five had been trained by the Iraqi Hezbollah group and three received training in Bahrain.

They are suspected of a bomb attack on a bus in February that injured five police officers, the agency said. The group is also suspected of plotting to attack "senior officials", the statement said but gave no further details. It said weapons, locally-made explosives and communication equipment had been seized from the homes of the suspects. The statement said the cell was being financed and directed from Iran by Qassim Abdullah Ali and Mortada Majid Al-Sanadi. The US State Department in March labelled Sanadi and another Bahraini identified as Ahmad Hasan Yusuf as "Specially Designated Global Terrorists".

Earlier this month, Bahrain announced it had uncovered a group comprising 54 members suspected of involvement in attacks on security forces, including organizing a prison break in January, and seizing auto-

matic weapons. Bahrain in February executed three men convicted in the death of three policemen, including an Emirati officer, in a 2014 bomb attack. Bahrain frequently accuses Iran of being behind bomb attacks targeting security services and fomenting Shiite protests. Iran denies interfering in Bahrain, although it acknowledges support for opposition groups seeking greater rights for Bahrain's Shiites.

Yesterday, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi received Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa in Cairo, meeting him at the airport before holding "extensive" talks alongside aides in the presidential palace. Egypt later expressed its solidarity with Bahrain in confronting terrorism, condemning "in the strongest terms" all attempts to destabilize the security and stability of the kingdom and supporting all its efforts to fight them. In a foreign ministry statement yesterday, Egypt said it was stating its position in light of the arrest a day earlier of the "terrorist cell" that had been planning assassinations and attacks on several vital targets in the kingdom. — Agencies

SINGAPOREAN COUPLE JAILED FOR STARVING FILIPINA MAID

SINGAPORE: A Singapore couple who starved their Philippine maid until she weighed just 29 kg were ordered jailed yesterday in a case described as "shocking" by prosecutors who vowed to seek stiffer sentences. Trader Lim Choon Hong, 48, was sentenced to three weeks in jail and fined Sg\$10,000 (\$7,200), while his wife Chong Sui Foon, also 48, was jailed for three months, the couple's lawyer told AFP. Critics were outraged by



SINGAPORE: Trader Lim Choon Hong and his wife Chong Sui Foon arrive at the state court in Singapore yesterday. — AFP

what they saw as lenient penalties for the couple, who will remain free on bail pending the prosecution appeal for tougher penalties.

Both were convicted last year of violating employment laws by failing to provide enough food for their maid, Thelma Oyasan Gawidan, over a 15-month period in 2013 and 2014 at their condominium in the posh Orchard Road area. State prosecutors, who have described the systematic starvation as "downright shocking in its extremity and severity", are pushing for the pair to be jailed for the maximum 12 months.

Gawidan, who is in her 40s, had stopped menstruating because she was getting only 75 percent of the recommended level of iron, a nutrition expert testified at the trial. She was also losing her hair because she was taking less than half her requirement of zinc, according to the expert. "Simply put, she was wasting away," the prosecutors said in a submission to the court. "It is sickening that the victim had been forced to endure inhumane treatment of such cruelty and duration in what must have been for her an unspeakably hellish and unbearable existence."

They said the poor quality and small quantity of food fed to Gawidan "are intuitively repugnant to basic notions of humane and ethical treatment in a developed society".

Continued on Page 13

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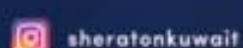
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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with veteran meteorologist Saleh Al-Ojairy, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with another group of citizens.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with a number of citizens.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with a number of Kuwaiti citizens.

AMIR MEETS VETERAN METEOROLOGIST, CITIZENS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday veteran meteorologist Saleh Al-Ojairy, who was recently honored by Dubai's Department of Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities during a forum on the standards of prayer timings. During the meeting held in the presence of His Highness

the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah applauded Ojairy's achievements and work throughout the years.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince have separately received a number of citizens at Bayan Palace yesterday. In other news,

His Highness the Crown Prince received the President of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. He also met with the newly-appointed ambassadors of Greece, Armenia and the Vatican to Kuwait. Furthermore, he met with Dr Talal Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Dr Talal Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Bangladeshi Ambassador to Kuwait SM Abul Kalam cut the cake during the embassy's ceremony. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



(From left) Omani Ambassador Hamid bin Said, Bangladeshi Ambassador SM Abul Kalam, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Saudi Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Fayez attend the ceremony.

DEPUTY FM OPTIMISTIC ABOUT LAUNCHING GULF-IRANIAN DIALOGUE DEAD SEA SUMMIT EXCEPTIONAL: JARALLAH

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah expressed optimism over the possibility of launching of a Gulf-Iranian dialogue following the recent reciprocal messages and visits. In statements to reporters on the sideline of his participation in a ceremony held late Sunday by Bangladeshi Embassy to mark the friendly country's national day, Jarallah disclosed that Kuwait has informed leaders of other Gulf states of the content of a recent message it has received from Iran.

Moreover, the Gulf Cooperation Council foreign ministers meeting on Thursday would discuss a number of issues, including dialogue with Iran, he said. He added that there would be certain steps to be taken in this regard afterward.

On Iran's plans to expand Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, Jarallah voiced concerns over the move due to proximity of the facility to Kuwaiti coasts. "Indeed, we eye continuous oversight and control over this nuclear facility to avoid any negative impact on the surrounding area and to make sure that it would not pose any real threat to the region," he said.

"Our friends in Iran have confirmed that this facility subjects to very precise technical and technological controls," he said. Jarallah, however, wished there would be permanent international oversight to the facility especially from the International Atomic Energy Agency to avoid any nuclear leakage.

Arab Summit

In the meantime, Jarallah described the upcoming Arab summit in the resort city of the Dead Sea, Jordan, scheduled today and tomorrow, as 'exceptional' due to the grave challenges facing the Arab region. "The summit will be held at a very delicate time for the Arab region," Jarallah told reporters on the sideline of his participation in a ceremony held late Sunday by Bangladeshi Embassy to mark their national day. "We are pinning high hopes on the summit and its president Jordanian King Abdullah II to change the Arab reality." His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his official delegation are set to leave for Jordan today to head Kuwait's delegation to the 28th ordinary Arab Summit.

Meanwhile, the deputy foreign minister lauded the deeply-rooted relations between Kuwait and Bangladesh. He recalled the honorable stance of Bangladesh during and after the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. He also recalled Bangladesh's contributions to the international efforts to extinguish the fire initiated by Iraqi forces in Kuwait oilfields.

On a different issue, Jarallah denied reports that the recent meeting of the Kuwaiti-UK steering committee has witnessed the signing of joint military agreements. "No military agreements were signed," he confirmed, noting that the committee has only tackled various prospects and aspects of military cooperation. —KUNA

ARAB FMS REITERATE PALESTINE CENTRAL ISSUE FOR SOLVING ALL TROUBLE IN REGION KUWAITI FM ATTENDS GCC MINISTERIAL MEETING

DEAD SEA, Jordan: Arab foreign ministers reiterated yesterday that Palestine remains the 'central issue' for solving all crises in the region, based on the two-state solution and Arab peace initiative. Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Abul-Gheit said in a speech during the session that the rapid changes taking place in the region require that the Arab world remains at the heart of dealing with these challenges and changes. Abul-Gheit called for exerting tremendous efforts to achieve a comprehensive and just settlement for Palestine, taking into account that these challenges represent a complex and interrelated package of internal political problems and regional interference in Arab affairs, which threatens Arab existence as a whole and undermines the foundation of a sovereign and independent national state.

The Arab League chief stressed that "the Syrian crisis, which represents the biggest crisis in modern history should not be left for regional or international parties which could manage it according to their own interests and away from Arab interests." Abul-Gheit called for the end of bloodshed in Syria and reaching a settlement instead on the basis of the Geneva Declaration 1 and Security Council Resolution 2254, which would preserve Syria's unity and territorial integrity, and also ensures the Syrian people's legitimate aspirations.

In his speech, Abul-Gheit also appealed to Arab countries to work in every way possible to activate collective Arab presence in major crises whether in Syria, Libya or Yemen. He stressed that the League's strength and presence comes from the collective desire of Arab countries to work together, noting that the current challenges require joint work in terms of funding, political support, and moral support so that it will be more willing to interact with the Arab crises and better qualified to engage seriously in the attempt to resolve them.

Serious deficit

Abul-Gheit also warned that the annual budget of the Arab League suffered a 'serious deficit' over the past two years, which hinders its efforts to meet the aspirations of countries or to improve the aspirations of Arab citizens. Meanwhile, Mauritanian Foreign Minister Aslak Ould Ahmed, whose country chaired the 27th session of the Arab League Council, said that during its presidency his country has worked to develop a realistic approach to joint Arab action calling for strengthening inter-relations and taking into account the importance of working together to meet the challenges.

He added that Mauritania, in coordination with Arab parties involved, had started "within a record time" in accordance with the outcomes of the Nouakchott Declaration, and its recommendations to enhance Arab-Arab relations, and to meet common challenges, especially those related to priority issues such as the



DEAD SEA, Jordan: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attends the Arab foreign ministers, meeting yesterday. —KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attends a GCC ministerial meeting in Jordan.

Palestinian issue, Arab national security and regional and international dialogue.

Regaining momentum

In the meantime, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said that the Amman summit is an opportunity to regain momentum and agree on policies that can put the Arab world on the road to contain crises and overcome the challenges. "It is true that we have differences in visions and policies, but we also have a consensus that makes adopting coordinated positions to deal with crises and make progress is an available option," Safadi said in a speech after taking over the presidency of the Arab League meeting at the level of foreign ministers from his Mauritanian counterpart.

"We are meeting in difficult times in which crises and conflicts deprive our region of security and stability that we all need to meet the aspirations of our peoples, to improve, progress, educate and work," Safadi added. The minister pointed out that Arab regional entity was unable

to resolve the crises, or stop the collapse, therefore Arab citizens' confidence in Arab joint institutions was lacking, and coordination was absent, with no viable influential Arab action.

"We agree on the centrality of the Palestinian case and the lifting of injustice of the occupation of Palestinian brothers on the basis of a two-state solution as a condition for regional security and stability," Safadi added.

GCC meeting

In other news, Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended yesterday a meeting of GCC foreign ministers in Jordan. During their coordinative meeting, the GCC foreign ministers focused on draft resolutions listed on the agenda of a preparatory ministerial meeting ahead of the 28th Arab Summit. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. —KUNA

FORUM HELPS BOOST YOUTH ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: MINISTER

'KUWAITIS SPEND MORE THAN \$10 BILLION ON TRAVELING'



KUWAIT: Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information delivers his speech during the forum.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The first Kuwaiti Youth and Tourism Forum helps boost the role of youth in sustainable development, achieve the required economic reforms and provide jobs, a Kuwaiti minister said yesterday.

Youth and tourism are interconnected by highly complex and interactive relationships, given the characteristics and features of joint activities that unite them, said Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information. This this requires the compilation of visions, ideas and views of various involved parties, he said; hence the critical importance of the forum that highlights the significance of



Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs speaks during the forum.

the heightened role of youth in sustainable development, economic reforms, diversification of sources of income, promotion of non-oil sectors of income and provision of attractive opportunities for Kuwaiti graduates in an effort to address the unemployment rate among young people.

Sheikh Mohammad was speaking during the inauguration of the conference which kicked off yesterday at the Kuwait Regency Hotel under his patronage. The forum, which includes an exhibition, meetings and workshops, is organized by the tourism sector at the Ministry of Information and Leaders Group for Consulting and Development, in cooperation with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).



Nabila Al-Anjeri, head of the organizing committee and General Manager of Leaders Group for Consultancy and Development addresses the audience.

Pros and cons

Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, said "many people see some places in Kuwait and feel they are not in Kuwait. We want to say it is Kuwait." She noted that Kuwait faces unemployment, erosion of heritage and decline in international indicators of development. But Kuwait also has many positives such as security, no taxes, the great Failaka Island, visitors from GCC countries, and open-mindedness. "We are open-minded," she said, "as Kuwaitis are active on social media that plays an integral role in today's world in shaping public and social opinions."

Sheikha Al-Zain stressed the need to cooperate for the success of this event and to achieve the hopes attached to it due to its

close relationship with the dimensions of national development in all its different aspects. "Officials have to speed up the process of supporting and encouraging all opportunities for achieving youth aspirations."

Youth empowerment

Meanwhile, Nabila Al-Anjeri, head of the organizing committee and General Manager of Leaders Group for Consultancy and Development, stressed that the forum fits with the UN's new strategy to empower the youth in sustainable development for 2030. She highlighted the emergence of the 'millennial generation', otherwise known as 'first-time travelers' or 'new generation travelers'. The term refers to people born at the beginning of



A 'sadu' weaving display featured at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village's pavilion at an exhibition held as part of the forum.

the new century and are expected to join world travelers seeking new experiences, especially after the emergence of social media.

"The youth are now traveling alone. The discovery, fun and movement offered by tourism are fully compatible with the vitality, enthusiasm and curiosity among young people, where 270 million youth worldwide travel alone yearly," Anjeri said. She pointed out that 90,000 jobs will be created by 2030 if Kuwait becomes active in the tourism sector. "Kuwaitis spend more than \$10 billion on traveling outside. Kuwait's tourism revenue amounted to \$500 million, while the United Arab Emirates' reached \$10 billion. We have to promote tourism in Kuwait and hold a lot of training and workshops to develop this sector," she explained.

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• EOS 750D 18-55 IS STM + Free Bag
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• Canon Camera Dsc Ixus 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*.

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• Canon Camera IXUS 180 BLACK + free Camera Bag.
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DROP IN OIL PRICES POSES RISK TO PRIMARY INDUSTRIES: KPC CEO

KUWAIT: The drop in oil prices is posing risks on investment, mainly in primary industry which could create unstable conditions in international markets, said CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). Nezar Al-Adsani's statement came during his speech at Kuwait's fourth Enterprise Risk Management Conference yesterday.

The three-day conference aims to bring awareness towards risks inside KPC, while also focusing on the impact of disruptive innovations on investments in the future. These innovations affected the oil and gas sector leading to a drop in prices, said Adsani.



KUWAIT: CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Nezar Al-Adsani speaks during the conference. — KUNA

He noted the importance of studying the long-term impact of these risks on projects. Meanwhile, he said the energy sector will keep growing as the living standard keeps growing around the world.

KPC's investment in the risk management program in the past 10 years is showing positive results in project funding, portfolio management, human resources and technologies, he added. Adsani expected the program to improve decision making in the oil sector including production and providing needed products for consumers. — KUNA



KUWAIT DIVE TEAM REMOVES TONS OF WASTE AFTER HEAVY RAIN

KUWAIT: The 'Kuwait Dive Team' of the Environmental Voluntary Foundation, lifted waste weighing two tons from Abu Alhasania coast, following the recent heavy rain, in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority and Kuwait Municipality.

The team's head of marine operations Waleed Al-Shatti said that the waste

varied between plastic bags, cans and wood, which will cause a large pollution to the coast.

Shatti said that this environmental work will continue for several days, adding that the team is working in coordination with governmental agencies to prevent the pollution from affecting marine life. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Health Ministry officials attend the ceremony. — KUNA

TB CASES IN KUWAIT DROP TO 56

KUWAIT: The number of tuberculosis (TB) patients in Kuwait has dropped to around 56 cases, according to the Ministry of Health's statistics approved by World Health Organizations (WHO) in 2015, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs at the Ministry Dr Majda Al-Qattan said on Monday. She said in press remarks on the sidelines of the Ministry's celebration of the 'World Tuberculosis Day' which was observed on March 24 every year, that the rate of tuberculosis in Kuwait ranges from 20 to 22 cases for each 100,000 people. According to the Ministry's statistics by the end of 2015, the total number of TB patients reached 724 cases

compared to 2014 when it reached 780, she said. 'We Will Not Let Anyone Suffer from Tuberculosis' is the motto of this year, she added.

Kuwait, along with Gulf Cooperation Council countries, work under the umbrella of WHO to set a comprehensive strategy to face this illness, as WHO categorizes the Gulf region including Kuwait as in the "pre-tuberculosis elimination phase," she affirmed.

WHO has set the year 2020 as the year of tuberculosis elimination in the whole world, while the Gulf region countries have put a comprehensive plan to be revised every three months through periodical meetings with the

GCC health Council to follow up on the latest developments in this respect, she said. As part of Kuwait's precautionary measures, domestic workers coming from TB- infected areas to supply a health certificate proving they are TB-free to be followed by further health checks in Kuwait, Qattan said.

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis and generally affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body. The classic symptoms of active TB are a chronic cough with blood-containing sputum, fever, night sweats, and weight loss. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh, to congratulate her on an honorary order recently bestowed upon her by French President Francois Hollande. — KUNA

CABINET BRIEFED ON MEASURES TAKEN TO FACE DAMAGE CAUSED BY HEAVY RAIN

KUWAIT: The Cabinet listened during its weekly session yesterday to a presentation by Minister of Public Works Abdurrahman Al-Mutawa on measures and steps taken to face damage caused by heavy rains that hit the country last week. He told ministers about efforts made by all ministry's teams to remove all obstacles that accumulated rainwater and caused traffic congestion on some roads across the country, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said in a statement following the meeting.

Mutawa also apprised ministers of the formation of a committee that includes representatives from Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Water and Electricity, Kuwait University and Public Authority for Housing Welfare to unveil the causes of accumulated rainwater in several areas and who was responsible for this negligence. The committee is asked to submit its report within two weeks. The Cabinet has extolled efforts made by all workers at Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Interior and relevant bodies in dealing with this crisis, also referring to the positive role of citizens in helping security apparatuses in such emergency conditions. The Cabinet also urged all concerned bodies to take all preventive measures so as to avoid the reoccurrence of such incident in the future, Minister Mohammad Al-Abdullah added. The Cabinet then reviewed a report of the Central Agency for Public Tenders

on a complaint by a company whose request was previously rejected. It assigned Minister of Justice to form a committee to open an investigation into this incident and submit a report to the Cabinet within two weeks, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah said.

Afterwards, the Cabinet listened to a presentation by Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the outcomes of the fruitful visit by His Highness the Amir and his accompanying delegation to the Republic of Turkey. During the visit, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed deep-rooted and historic relations between the two countries, and means of promoting them in all fields to serve common interests. The two leaders also shared views on the latest political developments in the region and international arenas.

The visit witnessed the signing of several agreements on the contribution to the response plan of refugees' crisis in Turkey and on tourist cooperation, as well as two memoranda of understanding on military cooperation, the Cabinet statement noted. In recognition of His Highness the Amir, President Erdogan bestowed upon His Highness the 'Order of the State of Turkey,' the most prestigious decoration awarded to foreign figures. In return, His Highness the Amir presented the Turkish President with Kuwait's 'Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer'. — KUNA

'TECHNICAL PROBLEMS' DELAY GCC RAILWAY PROJECT: OFFICIAL

CONSTRUCTION STARTS IN 2020 INSTEAD OF 2018

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Secretary General of the Federation of GCC Chambers (FGCCC) Abdul Raheem Naqi said that the GCC railway project would be delayed because of infrastructural and technical problems. Naqi also denied there being any political problems behind the delay and stressed that instead of commencing construction in 2018, it would start in 2020. The GCC railway is a proposed railway system to connect all six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Naqi added that Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman had gone a long way in domestically executing the project and linking some of the cities together with railroads. He also noted that Bahrain had recently selected a specialized international company to execute the project that would initially start operating locally before connecting various states. Constructing the railway system in Kuwait has faced many obstacles in recent years, primarily in terms of removing farms and other private property from the proposed route, in addition to making sure that the route does not conflict with existing oil facilities.



The proposed route of the GCC railway project.

GCC businessmen consortium

Speaking at a press conference held to introduce the GCC Industry Forum, due to be held in Fujairah in the UAE on April 5, Naqi said that a consortium was set up by GCC businessmen and women to establish a multipurpose holding company to support small and medium projects. In addition, Naqi explained that once established, the company would provide ample investment opportunities for the private sector as well as job opportunities for youth. "The company will also help diversify national income sources," he underlined.

Naqi said GCC states aspire towards increasing the industrial sector's contribution in their GDP to 25 percent by 2020. He also expected GCC industrial investment to reach \$1 trillion by 2020, when GCC states would have finished building the currently under-construction industrial cities.

Free trade agreement with UK

In other news, GCC officials said GCC states are working on signing an early free trade agreement with Britain so that they could get priority arrangements when UK exits from the EU. The official said that the agreement's draft would be ready within a month. The sources said that UK could not currently sign any agreements because it was still an EU member. Notably, GCC-UK annual trade volume is about £30 billion, said a Qatari official, who asked to remain anonymous because he was not authorized to speak to the media, noting that Qatar's Finance Minister Ali Sharif Al-Ammadi had discussed part of the agreement in a meeting with the British Treasury Secretary Phillip Hammond in December.

KUWAIT STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF DIRECT DIALOGUE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

DOHA: The state of Kuwait yesterday stressed the importance of holding direct dialogues between humanitarian actors from the East and West due to the positive effects that would contribute to enhancing the process of international humanitarian action.

Head of the humanitarian work team in the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry Abdullah Al-Khubaizi said on the sidelines of the 'International Humanitarian Action Conference between East and West' that Kuwait is keen to cooperate with all international humanitarian actors to address the effects of the war on terrorism and the international classifications associated with it which have become a real threat against the humanitarian process.

Khubaizi, a First Secretary, said that Kuwait, represented by the Foreign Ministry, has taken several steps and organizational policies in cooperation with a number of government agencies in order to protect the Kuwaiti humanitarian work and its sponsors and keep them away from the circle of suspicion. He added that these policies, which are compatible with the relevant international regulations and resolutions, have

contributed to the promotion of Kuwaiti humanitarian leadership and strengthened the confidence of the international community in the humanitarian role of the State of Kuwait at the governmental and popular levels.

On the conference, Khubaizi praised the wide participation of international bodies and experts in the field of humanitarian work and their effective role in enriching the knowledge of the conference sessions and their outstanding intellectual contributions to understanding the relationship of the Islamic religion with charity and humanitarian work. He expressed hope that this conference would come up with recommendations and initiatives that contribute to creating a common platform and dialogue between the countries of the East and West to promote a common understanding of the humanitarian work to confront all challenges facing humanitarian and charitable work. The conference, organized by Eid Charity, aims to enhance cooperation, build field work partnerships, fund humanitarian projects and build peace between charitable organizations with different backgrounds and orientations. — KUNA

MEETING DISCUSSES OBSTACLES FACING APPLICATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The eighth meeting of the renewable energy sources uses development committee was held yesterday at the ministry of electricity and water. The meeting was chaired by Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq in the presence of officials from concerned ministries and departments. It took place as a response to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's instructions to diversify sources of energy by utilizing renewable energy to produce 15 percent of the total energy used by 2030.

The meeting reviewed the challenges faced by state departments in using renewable energy applications, pending referral to the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Planning and Development so that it could provide the support needed to facilitate the process. During the meeting, chairman of the technical committee Salah Al-Modhei held a video pres-

entation, briefing on renewable energy projects in various areas of the country. Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) representative Ahmed Al-Jeemaz said that the company is in the process of building Al-Debdebah Solar Power Plant that is expected to cover 15 percent of the oil sector's needs of electricity by 2020. Also speaking at the meeting, KNPC's Suad Al-Radhwan said the project would produce one gigawatt of power, at an estimated cost of \$1 million. She added that the plant would reduce the amount of fuel annually used in generating electricity by 5.2 million barrels, while reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 1.29 million tons annually.

Court cases

The administrative court yesterday rejected a case filed to cancel a Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) decision approving a proposal to offer Dasma and Bneid Al-Gar Co-op Society's markets for investment,

said MSAL's assistant undersecretary for legal affairs Abdul Aziz Shuaib. Shuaib added that this verdict proves that all the legal measures taken by MSAL are sound and are only made to benefit the co-op and its shareholders, especially after it had been suffering considerable losses and failed to pay its dues.

Separately, the court of cassation yesterday adjourned hearing a case filed to contest the government's decision to withdraw Ahmed Al-Jabr's citizenship till another hearing on April 3. Meanwhile, the court of appeal yesterday sentenced Rania Al-Saad and Saleh Al-Saeed to three years with labor on state security charges for slandering Saudi Arabia on their Twitter accounts. In another case, the criminal court yesterday sentenced a Kuwaiti, an IS-affiliated hacker and member of the 'Caliphate Electronic Army' to 10 years with labor. The court also ordered confiscating all the videos he possessed on being arrested.



34,313 TRAFFIC TICKETS ISSUED IN ONE WEEK

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The General Traffic Department carried out several campaigns in all Kuwait governorates over the course of last week, resulting in issuing 34,313 traffic tickets, impounding 179 vehicles and two motorcycles, while 22 persons were sent to the traffic department's detention cell and an expat was deported for driving without a license.

Detour opened

Meanwhile, the General Traffic Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Works, announced the

opening of a detour with a roundabout on Wafra Road (306) for 6.5 km across Ahmadi stables towards Wafra today at dawn.

Public relations

The Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry participated in the Kuwait award for public relations and customer service exhibition at the Social Sciences College of Kuwait University, which was attended by Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting State Minister for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, along with several officials.

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Crime

Report

MAN ASSAULTS TEEN AFTER BREAKING INTO HOUSE

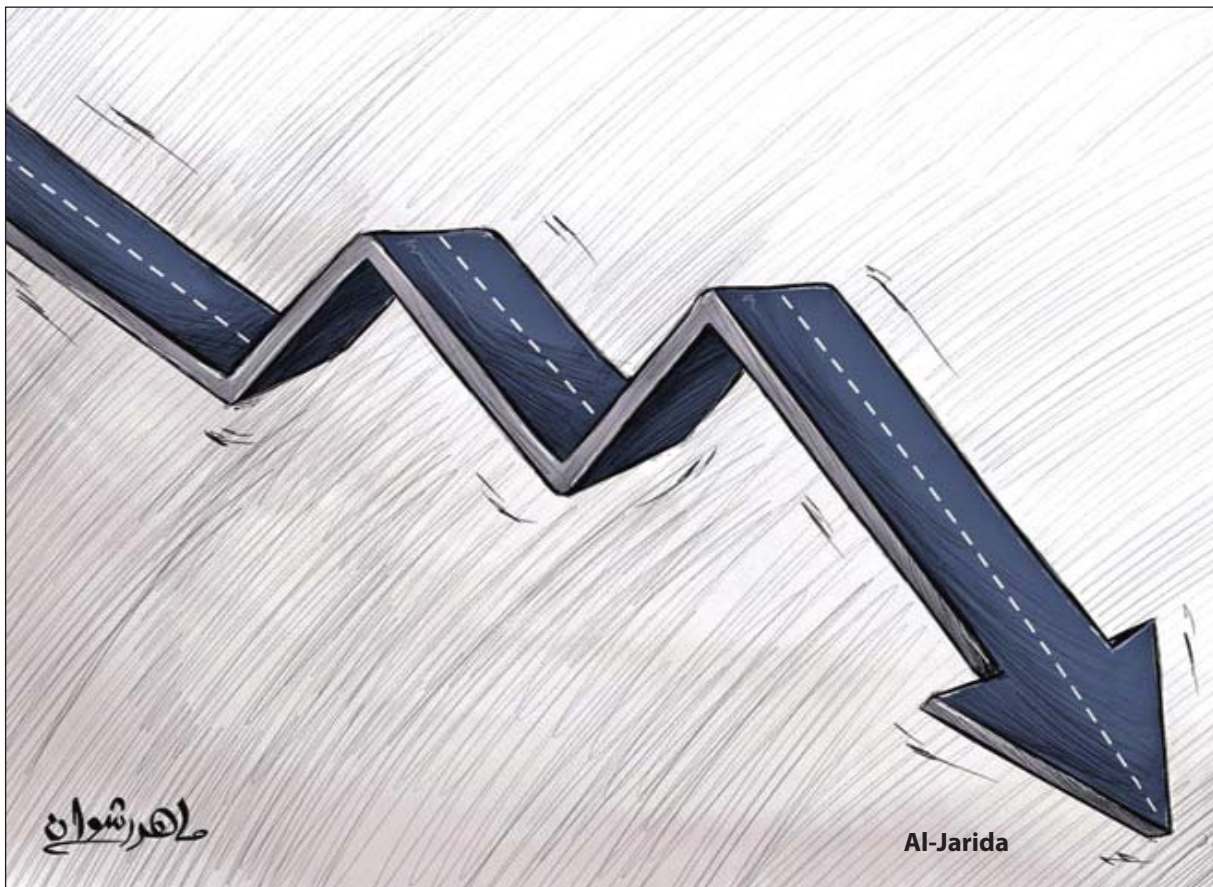
KUWAIT: A citizen accused a person of entering her house and molesting her daughter. She said the man forced his way in and attacked her 17-year-daughter, but when she resisted, he escaped. Detectives are looking for him, based on information the mother gave them.

Teacher arrested with drugs

An Egyptian teacher at the education ministry was arrested by police with illicit pills. The suspect drew policemen's attention in Salmiya, who asked him for his ID and discovered that he is wanted by authorities. The man attempted to escape on foot but was caught and sent to concerned authorities.

Cheese thief caught

A 33-year-old Egyptian man was caught stealing a piece of cheese from a store in seaside Shaab. The suspect was seen hiding the cheese in his clothes, and was stopped by security men, who called police. The market manager lodged a complaint at Maidan Hawally police station, and investigations are underway. —Translated from the Arabic press



الجريدة

Al-Jarida

HOT SHOTS

By Mudaffar Abdullah

What can a senior official who had been in office for over eight years, which is the maximum period in one office as per the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) regulations, add to it? Kuwait was recently busy with talks about senior officials who had been deposed for various reasons, which is very normal and there is nothing new about it. What was really exciting was declaring intention to appoint them in other more luxurious positions, which means keeping them in office and showing them courtesy all the way till they die. This has provoked people's feelings as if those officials were very rare and unparalleled in the world of administration, though government administration has been deteriorating under those very same officials.

The public opinion did not refer to any of those officials as 'brilliant' and indispensable administrators. Those people have been in office for long enough and done their part. Too much is being said about extending their tenure and too much have also been said about corruption in the institutions they ran. Why should we challenge the public and appoint them in new positions about which they know nothing? Why should the feelings of senior officials in those institutions, who had been waiting for their turn in promotion, be provoked by parachuting someone else as a superior to them, thus creating more social grudges? Courts are already full of administrative cases and complaints about government administration's ill-treatment.

Such a provocative behavior only spreads mere hatred amongst social sects and enhances the feeling that some elite groups are more favored by authorities and receive other treatment than the so-called principles of the development plan. There are many ways to reduce the impact of 'reproducing' these officials and imposing them on more competent ones. They can simply be alienated from decision-making and be used as advisors if they were actually too 'precious' to be lost.

This brings up an important question: What a senior official who had been in office for over eight years can add to it by adding a four-year renewable tenure to his previous one with nothing tangibly achieved? That also applies for ministers. So, when will we stop producing hate and grudges?

—Translated by Kuwait Times

POLICEMAN ARRESTED FOR BLACKMAILING EXPATS

KUWAIT: A policeman took advantage of his work at the criminal detectives department to blackmail expats for money to release them, after making them believe they were in violation of the law. The suspect was arrested and sent to the public prosecution. A security source said the suspect stopped an Indian delivery driver in Fahaheel and told him he is in violation of the traffic law. He gave him an option of paying KD 200 and be released or be sent to concerned authorities. The Indian called the restaurant owner, who went to the address the Indian gave him, where the suspect showed him his ID, proving he was a detective, and refused to accept anything less than KD 200. —Al-Rai

الأنباء

Al-Anbaa

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

By Saleh Al-Shayeji

Most world constitutions, if not all of them, call for equality amongst people. However, human beings themselves are not equal in terms of having individual differences in most life aspects, requirements as well as in physical buildup. Thinking about the topic, I stopped at variations in people's comprehension and intelligence levels as well as their ability to develop mental powers and utilizing the knowledge they acquire.

All educational systems assess each learner through a teacher's follow up and tests, which are made to judge a learner's skills and abilities. Since monitoring and following up pupils start with their first day at school, there is a great chance to assess students at an early stage and direct them to what is good for them, what they are good at and what matches their talents and abilities. Thus, potentials could be developed and properly utilized in what is good for them and for their societies. Regular education has many mistakes in our countries that need to be reviewed and corrected because it is not fit for everybody and there are no

responses to its outcome and results. For example, why do we force a repeatedly failing student or one with low achievement to go on studying the same courses without shifting to vocational, sport or any other form of education capable of developing his/ her potentials and skills? They could excel in other fields of education instead of trapping them in systems that does not match their potentials and hobbies, turning them eventually into a burden on their societies that also loses out on their potential due to the pressure.

Parents have to realize that kids do not necessarily have to be all intelligent or have super mental powers capable of acquiring knowledge easily, which is impossible. A son or daughter has to be directed to the right educational program that matches their skills and potentials. It is no shame that any of them do different courses outside the regular system. The state has to provide other educational facilities and activities and encourage parents to send their kids there because they might be better educational incubators for them.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

ZAIN MAIN SPONSOR OF KUWAIT'S PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE PRIZE

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its main sponsorship of Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service Prize for the second consecutive year. The prize, hosted by Kuwait's Public Relations Association, comes under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from 27 - 29 March.

Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan visited Zain's booth during the opening ceremony, and expressed his admiration of the company's leading role in the Public Relations and Customer Service fields as well as the tremendous efforts the company exerts in enriching its social role within the community on a continuous basis.

Kuwait's Public Relations Association dedicates this prize to shed light on the distinguished efforts and achievements of companies and organizations in the fields of public relations and customer service across all industries from both the public and private sectors. The event also features a number of workshops about the strategies of PR and customer service targeted at employees of ministries and organizations.

The judging committee - responsible for selecting the winners - consists of local and international PR and Customer Service experts to evaluate the participating entities as per the



highest international standards. The standards include serving customers while meeting their needs, distinguished social contributions, excellent media presence, and more.

During December 2016, Zain proudly received four titles as part of the fourth Advertising Creativity Award. The award, organized by the Arab Media Forum, recognized Zain's "National Day TVC - Ya Bilady", "Ramadan TVC - Live in Peace", "Eid TVC- Let's Sing", as well as the company's corporate sustainability contributions. Zain also participated in a Public Relations and Marketing discussion panel that came as

part of the Advertising Creativity Award. Zain's sponsorship of Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service Prize for the second consecutive year showcases its distinguished PR and media involvement, and further strengthens the company's role as a leading private sector company launching several public relations and marketing campaigns all year round. Zain will continue supporting this very important field which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole, whether through traditional or modern media tools.



MORE STAFF GRADUATE FROM CBK ACADEMY

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) celebrated graduating its seventh batch of retail banking employees who had successfully passed their training at CBK Academy in the bank's Faiha branch. Mona Al-Abdul Razzaq,

CBK's human resources manager, congratulated the graduates and stressed the significance of training in creating a promising new generation of bankers who are highly trained on using the latest technologies.

Meanwhile, the trainees expressed their satisfaction with the training they underwent at CBK Academy, and stressed that it would help improve their skills in delivering retail banking and customer care services.

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THOUSANDS EVACUATED AS MONSTER CYCLONE BEARS DOWN ON AUSTRALIA

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Page 8

ALEXEI NAVALNY GETS 15 DAYS IN JAIL AFTER PROTEST

KREMLIN CALLED THE PROTEST A PROVOCATION AND A LIE

MOSCOW: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was sentenced to 15 days behind bars and fined yesterday after staging the biggest anti-corruption protests in years, an act branded a "provocation" by the Kremlin. The United States and the European Union have voiced deep concern after Navalny and more than 1,000 others were detained in the Moscow protest on Sunday, with the State Department describing the arrests as an "affront to democracy".

A Moscow district court ordered Navalny to serve 15 days in jail after having found him guilty of disobeying police orders. He was fined 20,000 rubles (\$350) for having organized an unsanctioned protest. The lawyer turned activist, 40, who has announced plans to run for president next year, called Sunday's protests after publishing a report accusing Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev of controlling a property empire through a shadowy network of non-profit organizations.

"The authorities are being accused of multi-million theft, but they remain silent," a haggard-looking Navalny said in court, insisting the protests were legal. "More than 1,000 people were arrested yesterday but it is impossible to arrest millions," the 40-year-old lawyer said. About 7,000 to 8,000 people demonstrated in Moscow on Sunday, according to police figures, making it one of the biggest unauthorized rallies in President Vladimir Putin's 17 years in power.

The Kremlin called the protest "a provocation and a lie", and claimed minors had been promised "financial rewards" to participate. Demonstrations were held not just in Moscow and Russia's second city Saint Petersburg but also in a number of provincial cities where protests are rarely seen. They attracted a significant number of minors born since Putin came to power. "I am very happy that a generation that wants to be citizens, that isn't afraid,

was born in the country," Navalny said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russians' "civic stance" would be respected if expressed legally but, without mentioning Navalny by name, suggested "some people will continue using (politically) active people... to their own ends, calling them to illegal and unauthorized actions".

EU calls for protesters' release

Navalny was arrested as he was walking to the Moscow protest and another 1,030 people were detained, according to OVD-Info, a website that monitors detentions of activists. The vast majority were fined and released overnight, while about 120 remained in custody yesterday, OVD-Info said. One policeman was hospitalized after suffering a head injury, the interior ministry said. The European Union urged Russia to release the demonstrators "without delay" and expressed concern that police action had "prevented the exercise of basic freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly".

"We call on the Russian authorities to abide fully by the international commitments it has made, including in the Council of Europe... to uphold these rights and to release without delay the peaceful demonstrators that have been detained," US State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the detention of "peaceful protesters, human rights observers, and journalists is an affront to core democratic values".

Hope for a normal future

The protests drew comparisons with mass anti-government rallies that swept Russia in 2011 over vote-rigging after a parliamentary election, which snowballed into the biggest challenge against Putin since he took power in 2000. Navalny said Sunday that he was



MOSCOW: Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, who was arrested during March 26 anti-corruption rally, attends a hearing at a court in Moscow yesterday. —AFP

"proud" of the demonstrators. "You are the country's best people and Russia's hope for a normal future," he wrote on Twitter. Despite the scale of the protests, Russian state television news did not cover them, broadcasting soap operas and nature films instead.

Pro-Kremlin television host Vladimir Solovoyov accused Navalny on-air Sunday of being a "paid provocateur" seeking to

"destroy" the country. The Russian constitution allows public gatherings when authorized by city authorities, but that privilege is rarely accorded to Kremlin critics. Navalny won a surprise 27 percent of the vote in the Moscow mayoral election in 2013, and afterwards announced plans to seek the presidency.

But he has been the subject of several legal prosecutions, and in February was

found guilty of embezzlement in a case he called politically motivated. He was given a five-year suspended sentence which could make him ineligible to run in next year's vote. Navalny and his team, though ignored by official media, have taken their anti-corruption campaign online, using social media to expose the hidden fortunes of high-ranking officials.—AFP



RAQQA: Members of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), made up of an alliance of Arab and Kurdish fighters, inspect the Tabqa dam yesterday, which has been recently partially recaptured, as part of their battle for the jihadists' stronghold in nearby Raqqa. —AFP

US-BACKED FIGHTERS BATTLE IS AROUND NORTH SYRIA TOWN

BEIRUT: US-backed forces battled the Islamic State group around a key Syrian town yesterday, after the capture of an airbase brought them closer to besieging the jihadists in their stronghold Raqqa. Backed by air power from the US-led coalition that has been bombing IS since 2014, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) are laying the groundwork for an assault on the heart of the jihadists' so-called "caliphate". Operations are currently focused on the strategically important town of Tabqa on the Euphrates River, and the adjacent dam and military airport.

Late Sunday, Arab and Kurdish fighters from the SDF seized Tabqa airbase and pressed north towards the town itself. Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor, said the SDF was fighting north of the airport to reinforce its positions. "The SDF could bring supplies to the airport in the coming days and use it as a launching point for additional military operations," he added, reporting "heavy strikes" in the area. SDF spokesman Talal Sello told AFP that the alliance would "begin rehabilitating the airport after clearing out explosive devices" left behind by IS and said the base's main landing strip was seriously damaged.

Fighting pause at dam

Bolstered by air strikes and military advisers from the US-led coalition, SDF units are approaching Tabqa from the south via the airport and via the north near the dam. Yesterday, the SDF announced it would pause fighting near the IS-held structure to allow a technical team to work on it, after it was forced out of service the previous day. "To ensure the integrity of the Tabqa dam... we have decided to stop operations for four hours beginning at 1.00 pm (1100 GMT)... to allow a team of engineers to enter the dam and carry out their work," said SDF spokeswoman Jihan Sheikh Ahmed.

A source inside the dam told AFP the teams would carry out repairs so the dam could resume operations. The UN has warned that damage to the dam "could lead to massive scale flooding across Raqqa and as far away as Deir Ezzor" province downstream to the southeast. IS issued warnings through its propaganda agency Amaq that the dam "is threatened with

collapse at any moment because of American strikes and a large rise in water levels".

The US-led coalition denied the dam had been "structurally damaged" and said it was "taking every precaution" to ensure its integrity. The SDF launched its offensive for Raqqa city in November, seizing around two thirds of the surrounding province, according to the Britain-based Observatory. At their closest point, they are just eight kilometers (five miles) from the city, to the northeast. But they are mostly further away, between 18 and 29 kilometers from Raqqa.

Rebels quit Homs district

Syria's conflict began with protests against President Bashar Al-Assad in 2011 but has since morphed into a brutal war pitting government forces, jihadists, rebels, and Kurds against each other. In addition to the US-led coalition's bombing campaign, Russian warplanes are carrying out air strikes in support of Assad's government. Yesterday, a spokesman for the Islamist rebel group Ahrar Al-Sham told AFP it shot down a "Russian helicopter" over a government-held town in the northwestern province of Latakia.

But a spokesman for Moscow's forces in Syria, headquartered at the Hmeimim air base in Latakia, said yesterday that all Russian aircraft inside Syria were safely at their bases or on missions. Russia's air support has helped Syrian government forces regain the upper hand in swaths of territory across the country. Assad's government has also relied on "reconciliation" deals, under which rebels agree to quit territory in exchange for an end to siege or bombardment, and safe passage.

Yesterday, evacuations from the last opposition-held district of the central city of Homs resumed under a similar deal, according to state news agency SANA. It said about 290 people, including 70 rebels, had quit Waer yesterday and that a total of 1,500 were expected to be bussed out by the end of the day. UN-mediated talks between government and rebel representatives continued yesterday in Geneva, aimed at bringing an end to the war that has killed 320,000 people. The UN's envoy Staffan de Mistura was in Jordan yesterday to brief an Arab League meeting on the talks. — AFP

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AFGHAN SECURITY MINISTERS SURVIVE IMPEACHMENT VOTE

KABUL: The Afghan defense and interior ministers and the head of the country's intelligence service survived a vote of confidence called yesterday over the failure to tackle mounting insecurity and the Taliban insurgency. Defense Minister Abdullah Habibi, Interior Minister Taj Mohammad Jahid and Masson Stanekzai, head of the National Directorate for Security were all summoned before parliament over a string of security failures in recent months.

About 50 people were killed this month when gunmen attacked

Afghanistan's largest military hospital, Kabul's 400-bed Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan hospital, just across the road from the heavily fortified US embassy. While all three officials survived, the fact of their summons to parliament, which has the power to sack ministers, underlined mounting frustration with the Western-backed government's handling of the security situation in Afghanistan. Abdul Rauf Ibrahim, the speaker of parliament, said the vote had been called over "weakness in management and the worsening security around the country,"

notably the hospital attack. Habibi, in particular, faced widespread ridicule for his alleged tendency to fall asleep at inappropriate moments, with pictures circulating on social media showing him sitting in a variety of meetings, with eyes closed and head leaned forward.

"If we put the minister in a sack and sent him to another country and opened the sack there, he wouldn't have any idea how he got there," deputy speaker Humayoun Humayoun told parliament this month. In his address to parliament yesterday, Habibi denied

falling asleep in meetings, saying he sometimes avoided looking up so as not to accidentally stare into the eyes of any women present.

The vote in parliament came just days after security forces abandoned the district of Sangin in the strategically important southern province of Helmand that has been heavily contested by the Taliban. The loss of Sangin, where British and American forces suffered heavy casualties trying to defeat the insurgents, highlighted the growing control exerted by the Taliban, who are

fighting to restore strict Islamic rule after being driven from power by a US-led campaign in 2001.

US officials estimate that government forces control less than 60 percent of Afghanistan, with the rest either contested or under the outright control of militant groups. Last year, the United Nations reported 3,498 civilians were killed in the conflict and 7,920 were wounded, while at least 6,785 soldiers and police were killed in the first 10 months of the year, according to figures from US authorities.—Reuters



MOSUL: Displaced Iraqis, who fled their homes in the Old City in western Mosul due to the ongoing fighting between government forces and Islamic State (IS) group fighters, are taken to the Hammam al-Ailil camp, south of Mosul, yesterday. —AFP

IRAQ FORCES LAUNCH RENEWED ATTACK ON MOSUL'S OLD CITY

MASSIVE OPERATION AGAINST IS POSES DANGER TO CIVILIANS

ARBIL, Iraq: Iraqi forces renewed their assault yesterday against jihadists in Mosul's Old City, after days in which the battle was overshadowed by reports of heavy civilian casualties from air strikes. Iraqi forces began the massive operation to retake west Mosul from the Islamic State (IS) group last month and have recaptured a series of neighborhoods, but the battle poses a major threat to civilians in the city. Iraqi officials and witnesses have said air strikes took a devastating toll on civilians in the Mosul Al-Jadida area in recent days, but the number of victims said by some to number in the hundreds could not be independently confirmed.

"Federal Police and Rapid Response Division units began to advance today on the southwestern axis of the Old City," Lieutenant General Raed Shakir Jawdat, the commander of the federal police, said in a statement. Jawdat said that one of their targets is Faruq Street, which runs near the Al-Nuri mosque. IS chief Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi made his only known public appearance at the mosque after IS seized Mosul in 2014, calling on Muslims to obey him. Iraqi interior ministry forces have been operating in the area of the Old City for several weeks, but they

have faced tough resistance and progress in the area has been slow.

The Counter-Terrorism Service, which along with the Rapid Response Division is one of two special forces units spearheading west Mosul operations, has made faster progress in areas further west. But the Old City—a warren of narrow streets and closely-spaced buildings in which the UN said 400,000 people still reside—poses unique challenges in terms of the difficulty of advancing as well as the danger to civilians.

Heavy toll on civilians

Brigadier General Yahya Rasool, the spokesman for Iraq's Joint Operations Command, said that interior ministry units have deployed snipers to target IS jihadists using civilians as human shields. However, Iraqi forces have also frequently fired mortar rounds and unguided rockets during the battle for Mosul—weapons that pose a much greater risk to residents of areas where fighting is taking place. The battle has already taken a heavy toll on civilians, pushing more than 200,000 to flee in addition to others who have been killed or wounded in the fighting.

An AFP photographer saw civil defence personnel and volunteers digging through the remains of houses to recover the dead in Mosul Al-Jadida on Sunday. The remains of at least 12 people—among them women and children—were placed in blue plastic body bags. Rasool said that the defense ministry has opened an investigation into the reports that strikes killed civilians in west Mosul. The US-led coalition against IS has indicated that it may have been responsible for at least some of the civilian deaths.

"An initial review of strike data... indicates that, at the request of the Iraqi security forces, the coalition struck (IS) fighters and equipment, March 17, in west Mosul at the location corresponding to allegations of civilian casualties," it said in a statement on Saturday. But that only addresses one day, while Iraqi officials referred to strikes carried out over several days. On Sunday, US Central Command chief General Joseph Votel called recent civilian deaths in Mosul a "terrible tragedy." "We are investigating the incident to determine exactly what happened and will continue to take extraordinary measures to avoid harming civilians," he said in a statement.—AFP

ISRAEL ARRESTS SEX SUSPECTS SHIELDED BY ULTRA-ORTHODOX

JERUSALEM: Israeli police yesterday arrested more than 20 Jewish ultra-Orthodox suspected sex offenders whose alleged crimes were known to their insular communities but concealed from the authorities. The arrests followed an undercover investigation in the ultra-Orthodox communities, which tend to shun secular society and live according to strict religious teachings.

The 22 men, aged 20 to 60 and from communities in Jerusalem, Bnei Brak Beit Shemesh and ultra-Orthodox West Bank settlement Beitar Illit, allegedly committed sex crimes against women, youths and children from their communities over the past two years, police said. Members of the communities, acting under the auspices of the rabbinical leadership, investigated the crimes and their alleged perpetrators, and would conduct internal processes which determined what the suspects must do in order to keep the affair from reaching the police, a statement read.

"In most cases, the suspects were ordered to seek some kind of treatment from within the community," police said, while "dozens of victims did not receive the necessary treatment". The cases were documented using small notepads, displayed by

police in a video they distributed about the operation and the arrests. In Jerusalem, members of the suspects' communities tried to prevent the arrests, yelling at officers and stoning them, shattering windows on two police cars, police said.

The suspects were being questioned and if necessary would be taken to court, police said. Exposing the system of internal hearings and arresting the suspects would prevent further cases of sexual assault and enable those already victimized to be helped, police said. A police spokeswoman told AFP that none of the people involved in documenting and concealing the felonies had been arrested at this stage.

Ultra-Orthodox Jews represent about 10 percent of the Israeli population and live in compliance with a strict interpretation of Jewish laws. The more extreme groups from the sector do not accept the authority of the secular institutions of government and do their best to avoid its law enforcement and judicial systems, relying on religious doctrine and rabbinical authorities instead. Ultra-Orthodox leaders also wield significant political influence and have often played the role of kingmaker in Israeli politics.—AFP

10 JIHADISTS AMONG 20 DEAD IN YEMEN ATTACK

ADEN: Ten people were killed yesterday in a jihadist attack on a government building in southern Yemen that also saw 10 assailants die, including a suicide bomber, officials said. The suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden car into the entrance of the local government headquarters in Huta, the provincial capital of Lahj, a security official said. Security forces killed nine militants, including three wearing explosives belts and others armed with guns, when the assailants attacked the building following the bombing, the official said.

Six soldiers and four civilians were killed in the bombing and gunfight, and two soldiers and two civilians were wounded, the official said. Lahj's deputy

governor, Abdulfatah Ahmed, accused Al-Qaeda of being behind the attack. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has exploited a power vacuum created by the war between the government and Huthi rebels who control the capital Sanaa and number of major cities along the Red Sea coast.

The United States regards AQAP as the jihadist network's most dangerous branch. Washington has conducted more than 40 air raids, including drone strikes, against AQAP in March alone. Many of the strikes have targeted towns in southern provinces where the radical group is known to operate. At least 25 suspected AQAP members have been killed in the raids.—AFP



ADEN: A Yemeni man looks at a burning vehicle following a reported suicide car bombing in Huta, the capital of the southern province of Lahj, a bastion of Al-Qaeda jihadists, yesterday. —AFP

TURKS IN GERMANY START VOTING IN ERDOGAN REFERENDUM

BERLIN: Turkish voters in Germany, as deeply split as those in their ancestral homeland, started casting early ballots yesterday in a referendum that could vastly boost President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers. Hundreds of expatriates lined up at consulates in Germany, which has 1.4 million eligible Turkish voters, and in five other European countries ahead of the controversial April 16 plebiscite. The vote sparked

a bitter row when Germany and The Netherlands blocked campaign events by Turkish ministers earlier this month, leading a furious Erdogan to accuse both countries of using "Nazi" methods.

As in Turkey, the voters flocking to polling booths were divided on whether the proposal would help bring stable government or allow a strongman to impose one-man rule. "I voted for democracy!" said

one, Hussein Saregul, indicating that he had stamped the brown ballot paper for a "no" vote—not the white version for "yes". Saregul, who has lived for eight years in the eastern city of Dresden with his family, said he was sorry relations between Germany and Turkey had been so tense in recent weeks. "We hope that the 'no' vote will prevail," he said, adding that the referendum is only "in the interest of one man. It is a step towards dictatorship."

Crackdown, arrests

Germany, the most populous EU country, is home to the world's largest overseas Turkish community, about three million strong, a legacy of the "guest worker" program of the 1960s and 1970s. Turkish voters in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France and Switzerland can also cast their ballots for the next two weeks, until April 9. Other countries will start later, with a total of around three million allowed to vote in 120 Turkish missions in 57 countries. Turkey itself will vote on April 16 on the proposal to create an executive presidency and abolish the post of prime minister.

Germany and other Western nations have voiced concern about the plan, and about a crackdown in Turkey in the aftermath of a failed coup last July that has seen thousands of people arrested or fired from their posts. Germany's top-circulation newspaper Bild recommended opposing the constitutional change, in a bilingual German-Turkish article. It argued that modern Turkey's founder

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, "would have said no", describing him as "authoritarian but not dictatorial".

Neighbors argue

Turkish community leader Gokay Sofuoğlu spoke of a "deep split" that ran through the diaspora and said the rift had intensified because Erdogan was labeling opponents of the referendum traitors and terrorists. One voter in Berlin, Aslan Ismael, accused European countries of being biased against Erdogan. "The German media and German politicians want a 'no' vote," he said, also complaining that Turkish ministers had been blocked from several rallies by local authorities citing logistical reasons. "I don't understand this bashing, these anti-Erdogan measures," he said. "Those high-ranking officials wanted to come and explain what the reform is all about."

"In Germany, the principle of freedom of expression is very important and it has not been respected," he said, adding that he was not a member of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP). An opponent of the proposed change, Berlin-born Sirin Manolya Sak, said that in the debate tensions "have been fuelled by both sides". She said she regretted that Turks and Germans "who have lived together for 60 years in Germany—neighbors, friends, work colleagues—are arguing today." "It's a shame... that suddenly we wonder if some are integrated or not, just because they vote this way or that." —AFP

ARAB LEAGUE CHIEF URGES ACTION ON SYRIA

SWEIMEH, Jordan: Arab League chief Ahmed Abul Gheit urged Arab governments yesterday to do more to resolve the conflict in Syria rather than leaving it to other powers. He was speaking as Arab foreign ministers met to prepare for the Arab League's annual summit, set for tomorrow in Jordan. "In my view it's not right that Arab governments stay out of the biggest crisis in the region's modern history," Abul Gheit said. He urged them to "find an effective way of intervening to stop the shedding of blood in Syria and end the war."

The Syrian government was not invited to the summit. The bloc suspended Syria's membership in late 2011 after anti-regime demonstrations were brutally repressed.

Abul Gheit in February ruled out an early Syrian return to the bloc, saying that this was up to the League's 21 other members. He said the issue would only be raised when "a political settlement" was in sight for Syria's devastating civil war which has killed 320,000 people.

Yesterday, he called on Arab governments to "work in every possible way to play a more active role in major crises", including in Yemen and Libya. "It is not right that this kind of terrible crisis gets passed over to international and regional powers to manage as they like and control according to their own interests," he said. "These conflicts all pose a serious threat to Arab security," he said.—AFP



AMMAN: Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Jordanian King Abdullah II sit in a vintage car during a welcome ceremony at the airport in the Jordanian capital Amman yesterday ahead of the 28th Summit of the Arab League. —AFP



ISTANBUL: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses his supporters during a meeting in Istanbul, yesterday. —AP

UN TALKS ON GLOBAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN

UNITED NATIONS: More than 100 countries are set to launch the first UN talks on a global nuclear weapons ban yesterday over objections from the major nuclear powers. Some 123 UN members announced in October that they would launch the UN conference to negotiate a legally binding nuclear ban treaty, even as most of the world's declared and undeclared nuclear powers voted against the talks. Britain, France, Israel, Russia and the United States voted no, while China, India and Pakistan abstained.

Even Japan—the only country to have suffered atomic attacks, in 1945 — voted against the talks, saying the lack of consensus over the negotiations could undermine progress on effective nuclear disarmament. The countries leading the effort include Austria, Ireland, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa

and Sweden. Hundreds of NGOs back their efforts. They say the threat of nuclear disaster is growing thanks to mounting tensions fanned by North Korea's nuclear weapons program and an unpredictable new administration in Washington.

Supporters point to successful grassroots movements that led to the prohibition of landmines in 1997 and cluster munitions in 2008. "I expect that this will take a long time, let's not be naive," Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom said at the UN last week. "But it's very important in these days when you see more of this rhetoric, and also sort of power demonstrations, including threatening to use nuclear weapons." "Quite a high number of countries are actually interested in saying we have to break the deadlock that has been on this issue for so many years,"

she added. "So it's also the expression of frustration." No progress has been made on nuclear disarmament in recent years despite commitments made by the major nuclear powers to work toward disarmament under the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), said Beatrice Fihn, director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, an international coalition of NGOs.

Role of nuclear weapons

"There was disappointment with the Obama administration, which made some pledges, but then ignored most of them," she said. "And now there are raised worries with the new US president." Then-president Barack Obama announced a drive in 2009 to reduce the role of nuclear weapons and eventually eliminate them. But his administration

strongly encouraged NATO allies to vote against this year's UN negotiations, saying a ban would obstruct cooperation to respond to nuclear threats from adversaries.

President Donald Trump threatened a nuclear arms race in a tweet shortly before he took office in January, saying "we will outmatch them at every pass and outlast them all." However, with experience from the campaigns against cluster munitions and landmines, Fihn believes there's a "good chance" a treaty will be adopted, if not necessarily after the first phase of negotiations, which will end in July. Even with the major nuclear powers boycotting the debate, a treaty would oblige them to revisit their policies sooner or later—even if, like Russia and the United States, they're currently modernizing their nuclear weapons arsenal. "Even if major (nuclear

weapon) producers don't sign it, they have a big impact," Fihn said of global treaties. "Look at Russia denying using cluster bombs in Syria. Why? They did not sign (the cluster munitions ban), but they know it's bad." No major powers have commented on the start of the talks so far, although the US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, is expected to issue a statement on the sidelines of opening day.

US and French representatives explained their countries' opposition in October citing a need to make progress in stages, without disturbing the current strategic balance of weapons or jeopardizing nuclear deterrence. Fihn compares such arguments to the logic of chain smokers: "It's never the right time to quit." "But with the multi-polar world, lots of countries feel like they don't have to wait for the superpowers to act," she added. — AFP

US SENATE PANEL TO QUESTION TRUMP SON-IN-LAW ON RUSSIA

WASHINGTON: The Senate Intelligence Committee is seeking to interview President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, as part of its investigation into ties between Trump associates and Russian officials. Rebecca Glover Watkins, a spokeswoman for Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, a North Carolina Republican, confirmed that Kushner has been called.



WASHINGTON: This file photo shows Senior White House adviser Jared Kushner as he arrives to attend US President Donald Trump's press conference at the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

Kushner, an adviser to Trump during his presidential campaign and in the White House, would be the closest person to the president to be questioned in the congressional investigations into Russia's role in the 2016 election. At least four congressional committees are probing possible Russian attempts to influence the vote and any ties between Moscow and Trump associates. FBI Director James Comey confirmed the agency's investigation last week.

A White House official told Reuters that

Kushner has volunteered to speak to the Senate Intelligence Committee but has not received confirmation. The official said Kushner was the main point of contact with foreign governments and officials during the presidential campaign and transition. Members of a president-elect's team routinely meet with Russians or other foreign officials. The Senate panel wants to ask Kushner about two meetings arranged with Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak at Trump Tower in New York in December, as well as a meeting with the head of Russia's state-owned development bank. The bank, Vnesheconombank, was among the Russian banks sanctioned by the Obama administration in 2014 after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea. The New York Times first reported the committee's request and details of the meetings with the Russians. Watkins confirmed the report.

The US intelligence community has concluded Moscow orchestrated the hacking of Democratic Party groups during the campaign and released the stolen information to benefit Trump. Russia has denied the allegations. Kushner arranged a meeting with Kislyak in early December that was also attended by Trump's short-lived national security adviser, Michael Flynn, who was fired after misrepresenting his contacts with the ambassador.

Later that month, the Times reported, Kislyak requested a second meeting, which Kushner asked a deputy to attend. The Russian ambassador asked that Kushner meet with Sergei Gorkov, head of Vnesheconombank, which was also sanctioned by the European Union after Russian interference in Ukraine. The New York Times first reported the committee's request and details of the meetings with the Russians. Watkins confirmed the report. — Reuters

WILL CABINET FOLLOW TILLERSON'S LEAD IN MEDIA ACCESS?

NEW YORK: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who has famously declared himself "not a big media press access person," isn't alone in President Donald Trump's Cabinet. But it's too early to call him a trendsetter, either. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and Transportation Secretary Elaine Cho, both with extensive private sector backgrounds, have similarly been press-averse at the beginning of their tenures. Others seem to be following the leads of predecessors. In some cases, it's just too early to tell.

Tillerson's decision not to make room for reporters on the plane for his first major overseas trip earlier this month drew scrutiny because his job is generally considered the most important in the Cabinet and there's a



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson speaks during his meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir at the State Department in Washington. — AP

rich tradition of secretaries of state keeping the public informed of foreign policy objectives. He's had little visibility so far and the plane decision is more than symbolic; many of his predecessors and their staffs used that time to answer reporters' questions.

In an interview with the one journalist allowed on the trip, from the right-leaning web site Independent Journal Review, Tillerson said he personally doesn't need media attention. "I understand it's important to get the message of what we're doing out," the former Exxon Mobil CEO said, "but I also think there's only a purpose in getting the message out when there's something to be done." With attention paid to Trump's declaration of some media organizations as enemies of the American people, and reporters' jousting with White House press secretary Sean Spicer a near-daily television event, access to Cabinet-level officials can be overlooked.

Precisely because they don't get as much attention, it's important for journalists to understand and explain the work being done, said Nikki Usher, a professor of media and public affairs at George

Washington University. "These offices have tremendous power and most people don't know what goes on in there," she said. Cabinet secretaries with a private sector background need to understand that they now work on behalf of the people, who have a right to know what these officials are doing in their names, she said.

"Corporate folks are used to not having to account for any kind of public conversations or talk to reporters with the exception of crisis communications or quarterly earnings calls with assessments of the health of their corporations," Usher said. They're used to being insulated. The billionaire philanthropist DeVos' background is more private sector than public. She was the chairman of Michigan's Republican Party and her husband is the co-founder of Amway. Her lack of education background and support of school choice made her the most controversial Cabinet pick, and she needed the tie-breaking vote of Vice President Mike Pence to be confirmed.

Perhaps as a result, she's not been shy about avoiding the media. The department did not announce it when she visited her first school as education secretary. Reporters showed up anyway, tipped by advocacy organizations, but were not allowed in the school. DeVos does not take reporters' questions after speeches and her few interviews were with conservative news outlets. Her public schedule is often not released ahead of time. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has both a public and private sector background, as a banker, former Labor Secretary, director of the Peace Corps and CEO of United Way.

Press is not the enemy

She hasn't held a meeting or news conference with reporters since her Jan. 31 Senate confirmation, and hasn't spoken to reporters following public appearances. Ray LaHood and Anthony Foxx, the two transportation secretaries under former President Barack Obama, met frequently with reporters. How the Trump appointees interpret their boss' attacks on the press will be watched closely. "The press is not the enemy," said Peter Cook, a former reporter and spokesman for the Department of Defense during the Obama administration.

It's also common for top executives in many fields, for reasons of ego or message control, to keep a tight rein on underlings. Requests to speak to agency heads in the administration of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a potential 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, have to go through the governor's office. Here's how some of the other Cabinet offices have been working: Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and other senior defense and military leaders continue to take media contingents with them overseas. — AP



SAO PAULO: Demonstrators march along Paulista Avenue in Sao Paulo, Brazil, during a nationwide protest against political corruption — AFP

ANTI-CORRUPTION PROTESTS IN BRAZIL DRAW WEAKER TURNOUT MESSAGE IS THE MAIN FOCUS, NOT THE NUMBER

SAO PAULO: Brazilians furious at corruption demonstrated Sunday in support of a politically explosive probe into high-level embezzlement and bribery, but turnout was significantly lower than at previous protests. The long-planned day of nationwide demonstrations kicked off in the capital Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro, before shifting to the nation's biggest city Sao Paulo. Protesters, many wearing the yellow shirts of the country's beloved football team or draping themselves in the Brazilian flag, said a huge investigation known as Operation Car Wash must not let up in intensity.

"We're supporting Car Wash. It's an operation that must go all the way," said Teresa Kohler, 51, who was in Rio helping to organize the demonstration with the group take to the Streets. "We must punish the corrupt, make a real cleanup and build a new Brazil." With the number of politicians targeted by the probe rapidly increasing—reportedly now including around half a dozen members of President Michel Temer's cabinet—many in Brasilia are trying to slow Car Wash down.

Protesters focused their anger on a law putting all criminal cases involving politicians in the hands of the Supreme Court, which moves at a snail's pace, taking years to bring prosecutions to trial. "The worst are the Congress members," said Elisangela Colombo, 43, at the Sao Paulo protest. "I came to demonstrate against them because they keep passing laws in their own interest. They're afraid and want to stop Car Wash."

Compared to similar demonstrations over the last two years, Sunday's event was notably smaller.

Just hundreds gathered in Brasilia and only several thousand in Rio on the iconic Copacabana beachfront. The Sao Paulo turnout was also far off the huge crowds that gathered over the last two years to call for the impeachment of leftist president Dilma Rousseff, who was eventually ejected last year and replaced by center right Temer.

Cintia Gante, a 51-year-old real estate agent in Sao Paulo, said the seemingly endless revelations of corruption no longer had "novelty." "People are getting tired," she said. Rogerio Chequer, head of Take to the Streets, told reporters in Sao Paulo that the protests were still significant. "The number is not our main focus today, it's the message we're sending," he said. "If at the end of the day Brazil understands what's happening in Brasilia, then our objective has been met."

Desperate measures?

Operation Car Wash has uncovered a vast web of politicians and executives who fleeced state oil company Petrobras, with a lot of dirty money funneling into party election funds. The probe got even bigger this month with a request by Prosecutor General Rodrigo Janot to open new investigations expected to target more than 100 politicians. A week ago, Brazilians got a shock on a new front when police said they'd uncovered a

scheme to bribe corrupt health inspectors at meatpacking plants to certify tainted meat. The revelation prompted several big markets, including China, to impose brief but damaging import bans. As Car Wash's crusading chief judge Sergio Moro advances, a panicky Congress is trying to push back. Lawmakers have attempted to pass legislation that would pardon anyone who had received undeclared campaign donations in the past, while making it illegal in the future. This would effectively become an amnesty for politicians who took secret donations or what may have been plain bribes.

Another initiative being discussed is to change the electoral system so that voters cast ballots for parties, not individual candidates, meaning that scandal-tainted politicians would be able to escape much of voters' direct anger. The result is an ever-widening divide between politicians and voters. Protester Paulo Rachid, 63, an engineer in Rio, described Temer's ruling PMDB party as a machine existing only to make money for its members.

Corrupt politicians are "a gang that has taken control of Brazil. They have infiltrated at every level of society," he said. Among fed-up Brazilians, Moro is seen as a hero—one of the only figures left in public life who is on the right side. "He should be president," said Rio street vendor Edison Reis, 60, brandishing an inflatable Moro doll that he was selling for 20 reais (\$6.45). "And all the rest should be put in prison." — AFP

SUSPECTS SOUGHT IN DEADLY CINCINNATI NIGHTCLUB SHOOTING

CINCINNATI: Cincinnati police searched for suspects in a nightclub shooting that left one man dead and 15 other people injured and sent club patrons diving to the ground to dodge bullets in what they described as a chaotic and terrifying scene. A gunfight broke out inside the crowded Cameo club early Sunday after a dispute among several patrons escalated into a shootout, authorities said. Some 200 people were inside the club near the Ohio River, east of downtown Cincinnati at the time.

"What we know at this point in the investigation is that several local men got into some type of dispute inside the bar, and it escalated into shots being fired from several individuals," Cincinnati Police Chief Eliot Isaac said. It was not immediately clear how many people fired shots. O'Bryan Spikes, 27, was killed and 15 other people were injured. At least five victims remained hospitalized yesterday morning.

A University of Cincinnati Medical Center spokeswoman said shortly before daybreak that two were in critical condition and three were in stable. Police scheduled a news conference for later yesterday morning. No suspects were in custody in the shooting at the club, which police said has a history of gun violence. Club patron Mauricio Thompson described a chaotic scene in which as many as 20 shots were fired as people scrambled to get away. He said there was a fight and people were yelling for security to intervene before the gunfire began.

"Once I got outside, people coming out bloody, gunshot wounds on them, some of their friends carrying them to the car, rushing them to the hospital," Thompson told WCPO-TV. "It was just crazy." Another patron told the television station that she dove to the



CINCINNATI: Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley speaks alongside police chief Eliot Isaac, center, and assistant fire chief Roy Winston, left, during a news conference at police headquarters regarding a fatal shooting at the Cameo club, in Cincinnati. — AP

ground outside of the nightclub to dodge bullets, and that her boyfriend climbed on top of her to protect her. "I thought I was going to die. At that point survival skills started kicking in," said Sherell, who preferred not to give her last name. "Once I heard the third shot - I didn't know whether it was coming from outside, someone was shooting at the club, or whether it was coming from inside." Isaac said the club has its own security oper-

ation that uses detection wands and pat-downs, but that police believe several firearms somehow got inside. Four officers were working security in the club's parking lot and some tried unsuccessfully to revive the man who died. The club has a history of gun violence, including a shooting inside the club on New Year's Day in 2015 and one in the parking lot in September of that year, City Manager Harry Black said. — AP

NORTHERN IRISH PARTIES FAIL TO SOLVE SPAT IN TIME

BELFAST: Northern Ireland's squabbling parties have abandoned talks to form a power-sharing government before yesterday's deadline to resolve their bitter political differences. The main two parties in the British province said no deal would be reached by the 4.00pm (1500 GMT) cut-off, following a snap election triggered by the bad blood between them. James Brokenshire, Britain's Northern Ireland minister, must decide what to do next, with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Fein unable to work together.

He has three options: set a new talks deadline, call a fresh election, or suspend devolution and return administration of the province fully to the UK government. "The talks have failed," said DUP leader Arlene

Foster, who was first minister in the outgoing government. "We were willing to form an executive today but Sinn Fein have walked away. "There wasn't a spirit of compromise to get back into the executive."

McGuinness funeral handshake

Northern Ireland Assembly speaker Robin Newton confirmed no deal was reached and matters were now in Brokenshire's hands. "The deadline required by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 for the appointment of ministers will not be met. The implications of that are now for others to consider," he said in a statement. Sinn Fein's terminally-ill deputy first minister Martin McGuinness resigned in January, citing Foster's handling of a bungled green

energy scheme. That brought down the executive and prompted a snap election on March 2. Socialists Sinn Fein, representing Catholic Irish nationalists, gained ground. However, the conservative DUP, representing pro-British Protestants, narrowly remained the largest party in the 90-seat assembly. Foster and Michelle O'Neill, Sinn Fein's leader in Northern Ireland, shook hands at McGuinness's funeral on Thursday, triggering hope of a deal. In his eulogy, former US president Bill Clinton urged both sides to "finish the work of peace" in Northern Ireland.

"The only way a lasting peace can ever take hold and endure is if those who have legitimate, legitimate grievances on both sides embrace the future together," he said. But

O'Neill and party president Gerry Adams felt the DUP had not gone far enough to accommodate a bolstered Sinn Fein's demands. "The talks process has run its course. Sinn Fein will not be supporting nominations for speaker or the executive," O'Neill said Sunday.

Brexit backdrop

Nationalist newspaper The Irish News called yesterday for further talks. "It is better for them to get it right late, than to abandon the talks on time," it said. "Failure for these talks is simply not an option." The News Letter, a unionist newspaper, said full government from London was preferable to hurried concessions to Sinn Fein's current demands. "It is essential that Sinn Fein's dis-

graceful, deliberately destabilizing conduct is not rewarded," it said. The crisis comes two days before British Prime Minister Theresa May is due to give Brussels formal notification of the UK's intention to leave the European Union.

While the United Kingdom as a whole voted to leave the EU, a majority in Northern Ireland wanted the UK to stay in. There are concerns in Northern Ireland about the impact Brexit might have on the open border with the Republic of Ireland, an EU member state.

Michel Barnier, the EU's chief Brexit negotiator wrote in the Financial Times newspaper yesterday: "We will not stand for anything that weakens dialogue and peace in Northern Ireland." — AFP



TIRANA: This photo in Tirana shows the entrance of a secret-tunnel turned into a museum covered with photographs illustrating the political persecution of some 100,000 Albanians from 1945 until 1991 during the communist regime. — AFP

OPENING SECRET POLICE FILES, ALBANIA TO DRAIN THE SWAMP

TIRANA: Forty years ago, Irina Sallaku's husband Xhavit disappeared and she has spent decades wondering what happened to him. Now 84, the only thing she knows is that he was executed by the Sigurimi, Albania's despised Communist-era secret police which terrorized the population for decades until it was disbanded in 1991. And with the recent opening of the Sigurimi's vast archive of secret files, she is hoping to find some answers at last.

Born in the former Soviet Union, she met Xhavit while he was studying in Leningrad and ended up following him back to Albania which was then under the iron-fisted rule of dictator Enver Hoxha. Things started to go wrong when Hoxha's paranoid regime cut ties with Moscow in 1961, putting huge pressure on mixed couples like them, and Xhavit's eventual disappearance ripped the family apart. "I was sent with my two daughters to a labor camp for 12 years," she says, showing a yellowed photograph of her husband and their twins in park.

Years later, one of the daughters, Elena, found the indictment against her father and three documents concerning his execution. But each had a different date, making it impossible to know which was correct. And they have no clue where he was buried. "I have no hatred for anyone," Irina says. "The only thing I want is a grave where me and my relatives could lay a wreath and cry."

Draining the abscess

More than 25 years after the fall of Communism, Hoxha's 41-year dictatorship and its secrets are still poisoning Albania's politics, and many hope the opening of the files will turn the page, allowing wounds to finally heal. "The opening of the communist secret police's archives will help eradicate the evil that continues to poison Albanian society," said prominent Balkans writer Ismail Kadare. "It is like draining an abscess—a painful surgical procedure but one which is essential."

The Sigurimi was a powerful tool in the hands of Hoxha, who crushed all opposi-

tion and anti-communist dissent, and kept this country of three million people isolated from foreign influence until his death in 1985. Over that period and until the collapse of Communism in 1991, more than 100,000 people were put in camps, another 20,000 were imprisoned and some 6,000 others died or simply disappeared.

Unofficial sources believe that about 20 percent of Albanians collaborated with the Sigurimi, informing on "suspicious" activities of friends, neighbors, colleagues or even family members. Western intelligence sources estimate that up to 10,000 people worked for them during the Communist period.

Painful secrets

"The archives of the dictatorship contain painful secrets for many Albanians," says Gentiana Sula, whose grandfather died in prison and who heads up the body responsible for opening the files. Initial estimates suggest there are "millions of pages of documents, more than 120,000 files and 250,000 records," she says. In 2015, parliament passed a law to open the Sigurimi's archives and in December last year, an independent authority was set up to help anyone seeking information about their own experience or the fate of a loved one.

The main aim of opening the archives is to ensure that no former Sigurimi collaborator is able to hold a public position. But another key objective is to bring transparency to Albania's fractious political scene where the allegation of collaboration or being an informer for the Sigurimi is a potent weapon which crops up on a weekly basis, whether in the press or in parliamentary exchanges.

Although proven cases are very rare—in 26 years, just two politicians have publicly admitted it—some lesser known figures have discreetly withdrawn from public life after being tarnished by such slurs. With rumors swirling and speculation rife, manipulating the issue has "fuelled political immorality which, for years, has held Albanian politics and society hostage," the author Kadare said back in 2008. — AFP

BULGARIA'S BORISOV SEEKS THIRD TIME LUCKY

SOFIA: Bulgaria's comeback king Boyko Borisov faced an uphill battle yesterday to build a stable coalition government following an election victory that will see him crowned prime minister for a third time. With nearly all votes counted, his pro-EU centre-right GERB party won Sunday's snap election in the European Union's poorest country with 32.6 percent of the ballot. Official results showed GERB will hold 96 of 240 parliamentary seats — 12 more than in the outgoing administration.

The burly Borisov, a former firefighter and bodyguard, saw off a stiff challenge from the Socialist Party (BSP) — seen as closer to Moscow—which garnered 27 percent and more than doubled their MPs to 79. "I hope we can ensure the rapid formation of a government that responds to the wishes of the people and to the grave international situation," Borisov said late Sunday. But whether the 57-year-old can form an effective government that stays the course, unlike his previous two attempts, remains to be seen.

He has already ruled out a coalition with all parties except with a group of nationalists, although they may not back his reform plans. Once a bodyguard for Bulgaria's last communist leader and its ex-king, Borisov has long dominated national politics in the southeastern European state, serving as premier from 2009 to 2013 and again from 2014 to 2017. But both times he quit early,

first in 2013 after mass protests and then last November after his candidate for the presidency was beaten by an air force commander backed by the BSP.

Bulgaria, where the average monthly salary is just 500 euros (\$540) and corruption is rife even after 10 years in the EU, has now seen three elections in the past four years. Borisov's reform efforts in office, in particular to meet Brussels' demands to tackle corruption and organized crime, failed to get off the ground. In January Bulgaria takes up the rotating presidency of the EU, in the midst of negotiations with Britain on the terms of the latter's exit from the bloc.

Second-class

A victory for the Socialists would have raised the prospect of a tilt toward Moscow in the NATO member state, home to 7.4 million people. Russia, which has long had close cultural and economic ties with Bulgaria, has recently been accused of seeking to expand its influence in other Balkan countries. PSB leader Kornelia Ninova had said she was not content with Bulgaria being a "second-class member" of the EU, and that she would veto an extension of sanctions imposed by Brussels on Moscow. But Borisov, too, said during the campaign that he wanted more "pragmatic" ties with Russia and to revive contentious joint projects. — AFP

MAY HOLDS CRISIS TALKS IN SCOTLAND ON BRINK OF BREXIT

EU SUMMIT TO COME UP WITH MORE DETAILED STRATEGY

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May travels to Scotland yesterday to try to avert its independence bid while also fighting a political crisis in Northern Ireland in the frantic final days before she launches Brexit. With Britain still reeling from a terror attack at the gates of parliament, May is preparing to embark on a journey out of the European Union this week that will change Britain and the EU forever.

Ahead of her talks with Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, May said she wanted "a more united nation" and would fight for the interests of all parts of Britain once exit negotiations with Brussels begin. But Sturgeon wants Scotland to remain in the European single market when the rest of Britain leaves and the Edinburgh parliament is expected to back her call for a new independence referendum with a vote today.

May will send a letter to EU President Donald Tusk with Britain's formal departure notification tomorrow, opening up a two-year negotiating window before Britain actually leaves the bloc in 2019. The Sunday Times newspaper reported that the letter would run to eight pages and British media said it would be handed over in person by Britain's EU envoy Tim Barrow.

May will also tomorrow address British MPs on Brexit, nine months after the country voted by 52 percent in June in favor of leaving the EU, the first country to do so. The EU is expected to provide an initial response by Friday and an EU summit on April 29 will come up with a more detailed strategy but the talks themselves are not expected to start until May at the earliest.

We want a deal

The prospect of those negotiations breaking down and Britain leaving with no deal in place is a growing concern for UK business leaders and among pro-EU politicians on both sides of the Channel. The EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier last week warned that no deal could create queues at the port of Dover, disrupt air traffic in and out of Britain and even see the transport of nuclear material suspended. "We want a deal," Barnier told reporters, after May said that "no deal is better than a bad deal".

Barnier also said Britain must "settle the accounts" after EU officials said Britain faced an exit bill of around 60 billion euros (\$65 billion) —



SCOTLAND: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May delivers a speech at the Department for International Development's (DfID) office at Abercrombie House in East Kilbride, south-west Scotland yesterday. — AFP

likely to be a major bone of contention in the negotiations. The launch of Brexit, which has raised wider questions about European integration, will come just days after EU leaders celebrated the 60th anniversary of the bloc's founding treaty in Rome with a declaration in favor of a "multi-speed Europe". Tens of thousands of pro-EU demonstrators took to the streets of London and other European cities on Saturday but for many Britons the country's departure cannot come soon enough.

Out of control Brexiters

The run-up to the historic moment has been particularly frenzied for May, who had to be rushed out of the British parliament last Wednesday after an attacker went on a rampage outside the gates. Briton Khalid Masood, 52, ran over and killed three pedestrians before stabbing a police officer to death and then himself being shot dead just inside the gates of the symbol of Britain's democracy. Scotland and Northern Ireland are providing two further headaches for Conservative leader May.

MERKEL FLIES HIGH IN POLL TEST AS SCHULZ EFFECT FIZZLES

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel emerged emboldened yesterday from a surprise state poll triumph, as the hype around her main rival fizzled on its first test in a "super election year". With just six months to go until a general election in Europe's top economy in which Merkel is seeking a fourth term, the poll in the tiny southwestern state of Saarland Sunday took on outsized importance. Voters returned Merkel's conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) to power with 41 percent of the vote, five points higher than at the last election in 2012.

The centre-left Social Democrats (SPD), who had been enjoying a surge in the polls thanks to their freshly-anointed champion, Martin Schulz, came in a distant second with 30 percent. Schulz, the former president of the European Parliament, admitted yesterday that the result had been a bitter disappointment just a week after SPD delegates unanimously elected him party chairman. But he tried to put a brave face on the defeat. "Election campaigns are marathons and not sprints, and we have good stamina," he said, warning the CDU that "those who are celebrating today shouldn't count their chickens before they hatch".

Merkel was to hold her own news conference at CDU headquarters at 1115 GMT. Saarland is governed by a "grand coalition" government, the same right-left alliance that Merkel leads in Berlin. For Schulz to take her job from her, he would likely need to win a majority for a leftist coalition with far-left Die Linke and the ecologist Greens party known as Red-Red-Green. Commentators said the Saarland result indicated voters may be getting cold feet about that prospect.

Small state, big signal

Germany's top-selling daily Bild said Merkel clearly had the wind in her sails after the Saarland vote, noting the dilemma faced by Schulz and the SPD. "It's a small state, but a big signal," it said of Saarland, the first of three German state polls scheduled in the run-up to the national election on September 24. "If Martin Schulz wants to become chancellor, he is going to have to put all his eggs in the Red-



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel gives a press conference one day after CDU's victory in state elections in the southwestern federal state of Saarland during a meeting with the CDU's leadership yesterday at the party's headquarters in Berlin. — AFP

Red-Green basket—a big risk. And Angela Merkel can breathe a sigh of relief and get ready for the next Schulz attack." After weeks of breathless media coverage of the so-called "Schulz effect", credited with lifting the SPD around 10 points in national polls to pull even with the CDU, news website Spiegel Online said the election proved he had "no magic

powers". "This much is clear after the CDU success in Saarland: the SPD had better get ready for a tough campaign," it said. The centre-left Sueddeutsche newspaper said the poll had been a crushing reality check for the SPD.

"While yesterday's result hasn't ended the SPD's hopes of making it into the chancellery, it has certainly put a damper on Schulz mania," it said. Merkel's CDU had suffered a string of state poll setbacks in the wake of her decision in 2015 to open the borders to hundreds of thousands of refugees, mainly from strife-ravaged Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. However the issue has lost its explosive force in German politics as the number of new arrivals has dwindled.

The right-wing populist AfD party, which had seized on voter outrage and angst over the issue, won seats in Saarland Sunday, its 11th German state, but with an anemic result of six percent. The score was just over the five-percent threshold of votes needed to gain representation.

Political scientist Robert Vehrkamp of the Bertelsmann Foundation noted that strong turnout of around 70 percent had transformed what was forecast as a tight race into a show of force for the CDU. "Many voters, particularly the centrists, are nervous about the strong results of the populist parties on the fringes," he told DPA news agency.—AFP

100-KILO GOLD COIN STOLEN FROM BERLIN'S BODE MUSEUM

BERLIN: Thieves stole a gold coin with a face value of \$1 million and weighing 100 kilograms (220 pounds) from Berlin's Bode Museum yesterday. According to German media, the stolen coin is the "Big Maple Leaf", a commemorative piece issued by the Royal Canadian Mint in 2007. The coin, 53 cm (21 inches) across and three cm thick, features the portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. Bode Museum gave the face value of the coin at \$1 million (920,000 euros), though the market price of 100 kg of gold is around \$4 million.

German police said on Twitter that the robbers likely used a ladder found at a nearby rail track to break into the museum at around 3.30 am (0130 GMT).

Suburban rail traffic was interrupted as investigators combed the area for clues. The Bode Museum, located on the German capital's UNESCO-listed Museum Island, houses one of the world's biggest coin collections. The holding includes 102,000 coins from ancient Greece and about 50,000 Roman coins. —AFP

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INDIA'S BIGGEST STATE'S LEADER BOOSTS HINDU RIGHT AGENDA

BISHARA, INDIA: When India's prime minister named a hardline Hindu known for his anti-Muslim speeches to head its largest state Uttar Pradesh this month, many saw it as a sign his party's huge election win had emboldened him to pursue a more radical agenda. But in the village of Bishara in Uttar Pradesh, where a Muslim man was lynched by his Hindu neighbors in 2015 triggering a national outcry, residents celebrated into the night by letting off fireworks and dousing each other with festive colored powder.

It was a sign of the popularity of Yogi Adityanath, a 44-year-old firebrand Hindu priest known for his inflammatory rhetoric

against Muslims, who make up nearly 20 percent of the northern state's population. "He is like a god to us," said Kiran Rana, the mother of one of the 14 men arrested over the killing of 50-year-old Mohammad Akhlaq on suspicion of killing a cow-considered by Hindus to be sacred-for its meat. "He will get them (our children) out."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) appointed Adityanath after winning a landslide election victory in Uttar Pradesh, home to 220 million people and seen as a bellwether of national politics. Modi has frequently sought to downplay his party's

Hindu nationalist agenda since taking power in 2014 in India, a Hindu-majority but officially secular country with a significant Muslim minority. But the appointment of a Hindu hardliner to head its most populous state has raised fears it will implement its ideology of "Hindutva" more aggressively in the future.

Hindutva, which roughly translates as "Hinduness", aims to create a Hindu homeland free from "foreign" communities such as Muslims and Christians, whom adherents perceive as a legacy of successive invasions since the eighth century. Manini Chatterjee, national affairs editor at The Telegraph news-

paper, described it as "a kind of a declaration of war against the secular state". "It is saying 'we are unapologetic about who we are,'" she said. "Their reading of the UP verdict is that UP and India in general is ready for this aggressive Hindutva."

Muslim fears

Bishara is only around 30 kilometers from central New Delhi, but it only has electricity from seven in the evening to the next morning. Potholes cover the village's main road, and jobs are in short supply. Asked what she hopes to get from the priest-turned-politician, who shaves his head and often

drapes himself in a saffron-colored robe, Rana said simply, "development". Her brother-in-law, Rajiv Rana, thought his priority should be to ensure that cows are protected.

"The cow is our mother. When we prepare food, the first bite goes to our cow. If we have to choose between the cow and development we will choose the cow," he said. Hindus in Bishara said previous state governments had favored Muslims for electoral reasons—a perception widely used by the BJP in its election campaign for UP. They insisted relations between the two communities remained good. But Muslim residents gave a different picture. — AFP



AYR: Storm clouds gather in the town of Ayer in far north Queensland as Cyclone Debbie approaches yesterday.—AFP

THOUSANDS EVACUATED AS MONSTER CYCLONE BEARS DOWN ON AUSTRALIA

CYCLONE DEBBIE CAUSES LARGEST EVACUATION

AYR, AUSTRALIA: Thousands of people including tourists were evacuated yesterday as north-east Australia braced for a "monster" cyclone packing destructive winds, with warnings of major structural damage and dangerous tidal surges. Cyclone Debbie has been forming off the coast of Queensland state over recent days, the Bureau of Meteorology said, and is expected to make landfall as a category four storm on a scale of five-after daybreak today.

Residents, who have been sandbagging and boarding up homes, were told to prepare for the worst weather to pummel the state since Cyclone Yasi in 2011, which ripped houses from their foundations and devastated crops. "This is probably the largest evacuation we've ever had to do," said Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, adding that structural damage and power outages were likely. "This is going to be a monster of a cyclone."

Some 3,500 people have been evacuated between the towns of Home Hill and Proserpine, around 100 kilometers south of Townsville, a tourist hotspot used to access the Great Barrier Reef. Another 2,000 in the coastal area of Bowen were also on the move, Palaszczuk said, with cyclone shelters available for those with

nowhere else to go. Up to 25,000 more in low-lying parts of Mackay were urged to head to higher ground amid fears the storm could cause a tidal surge up to 2.5 meters.

The ferocity of Debbie has been building and it was upgraded to a category four cyclone late yesterday before making landfall, expected somewhere between Ayr and Mackay, with a warning that "it may intensify further". The meteorology bureau forecast pounding rain and wind gusts of up to 280 kmh near its centre. "Storm surge is also a risk factor, and if the cyclone crosses the coast around high tide this will enhance these effects," it said, adding that severe flash flooding was possible. The cyclone is forecast to hit at around 8 am yesterday (2200 GMT), with high tide in the area at 9.44 am. More than 100 schools have been closed, along with local ports.

Our block of dirt

Palaszczuk pleaded with residents to do as emergency service personnel asked, amid reports some were refusing to leave, an appeal echoed by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. "If you have received an official evacuation order, you and your family must leave immediately,"

he said. But some were adamant they were staying, with Mike Kennedy saying he believed many in the small community of Cungulla planned to remain.

"This is our block of dirt and we're going to defend it from the storm if we can," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Queensland Police Commissioner Ian Stewart said the storm already appeared to have claimed the life of a tourist, as many visitors flee areas in the firing line. "There has been a fatal traffic accident near Proserpine and we believe it is associated with this weather event and it looks like a tourist has lost their life in that traffic accident," he said.

"The message is very, very clear at this stage. It is time to think very logically about your safety and the safety of your family." The federal government said it was ready to provide immediate assistance in the aftermath, with a disaster relief ship en route from Sydney and navy helicopters and planes on standby. "We are ready and able to respond to this emergency in support of civilian emergency authorities and the residents of northeastern Queensland once the full impact of Debbie is known," said defense force chief Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin.—AFP

JAPAN LOANS MANILA MILITARY PLANES FOR SOUTH CHINA SEA

MANILA: The Philippines yesterday took delivery of two Japanese military surveillance aircraft to help it patrol vital sea lanes in the South China Sea, despite Manila's increasingly conciliatory stance to Beijing's claims over the disputed waters. Japan will lease a total of five surplus Beechcraft TC-90 planes to the Philippines, according to Manila's defense secretary Delfin Lorenzana. Philippine military chief General Eduardo Ano said the new planes would be deployed over Benham Rise and the South China Sea.

Japan's attempt to bolster defense cooperation with Manila comes at a time of heightened regional concern over China's activities in disputed waters. "As we are faced with many security-related issues in the Asia-Pacific, including those in the South China Sea, our cooperation with the Philippines for the regional security and stability is now even more significant," Japanese Defense Minister Kenji Wakamiya said at a ceremony to hand over the planes. Japan, which has a territorial row with China over disputed islands in the East China Sea, has worked to strengthen ties with other countries in a bid to contain its regional rival.

China claims most of the sea, including waters close to the Philippine coast, despite the claim being declared as without basis last year by a United Nations-backed tribunal. Beijing opposed the Philippines' lease of the planes almost as soon as it was announced last year under Manila's then-president Benigno Aquino, who took a tough stance on China's territorial ambitions. However, Aquino's successor President Rodrigo Duterte has reversed this stance, openly courting China for trade and aid, while playing down the South China Sea dispute.

Earlier this month Duterte said he was open to sharing resources with Beijing in the flashpoint waters, saying he could not stop Beijing from building on a disputed shoal near his country's west coast, which China seized from the Philippines in 2012. He also brushed aside concerns over Chinese survey ships that had been seen near Benham Rise waters east of the main Philippine island of Luzon that have been recognized by the United Nations as indisputably Philippine territory. Parts of the South China Sea are also subject to competing claims by Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam.—AFP



NASU: Firefighters carry a survivor they rescued from the site of an avalanche in Nasu town, Tochigi prefecture yesterday, while Self Defense Force personnel look on.—AFP

SEVEN STUDENTS, ONE TEACHER KILLED IN JAPAN AVALANCHE

TOKYO: An avalanche yesterday killed seven Japanese high school students and a teacher on a mountain-climbing outing, and injured 40 more. More than 100 troops were deployed in a major rescue mission after the avalanche hit ski slopes in Tochigi prefecture north of Tokyo. Television footage showed rescuers climbing the mountainside as ambulances stood by. A total of 52 students and 11 teachers from seven high schools were on a three-day mountaineering expedition when disaster struck.

A warning had been issued for heavy snow and possible avalanches from Sunday until yesterday in the area, with the local weather agency forecasting snowfall of some 30 centimeters. In the latest update seven students and one teacher, mostly from Otawara High School in Tochigi, were found with no vital signs, an official with a prefectural disaster task force said. In Japan, deaths in such circumstances are not announced officially until doctors can confirm them. Officials earlier said eight students had no vital signs.

Some 40 people have been injured, including two students in serious condition, the prefectural official said. "All the people have been carried down from the mountain and they are now being transported to hospital," he said. The avalanche struck in the town of Nasu 120 kilometers north of Tokyo on the final day of the excursion, Tochigi authorities said, adding that soldiers were brought in at the request of the prefecture's governor.

Local media cited experts as saying it was likely a surface avalanche, caused by a heavy snowfall accumulating on a previous deposit of slippery snow. "This (outing) is an annual event and we never had a major accident before," one of the teachers told Jiji Press. "I am really shocked." The ski resort had been closed for the season, according to the operator's website, with the lift stopped and no skiers at the site. But some of its facilities were made available for the high school mountaineering trip organized by local physical education authorities.—AFP

INDONESIAN GIRL HOWLS THROUGH CIRCUMCISION AS DEBATE HEATS UP

GORONTALO: Indonesian toddler Salsa Djafar was wearing a glittering golden crown decorated with ribbons and a shiny purple dress to mark a special occasion—her circumcision day. At the celebrations attended by relatives, shrieks filled the modest, yellow-walled house in remote Gorontalo province as a traditional healer covered the 18-month-old girl with a white sheet and sliced skin off her genitals. The healer used a knife to remove a tiny piece of skin from the hood that covers the clitoris—which she said looked like a "garlic skin"—then stuck the knife into a lemon.

It marked the end of a procedure supposed to rid the child of sin and signal she was now officially a Muslim. "It's hard to see her crying like this, but it is tradition," her father Arjun Djafar, a 23-year-old labourer, said at last month's ceremony. Female circumcision—also known as female genital mutilation or FGM—has been practiced for generations across Indonesia, which is the world's biggest Muslim-majority country, and is considered a rite of passage by many.

The United Nations condemns the practice and the government once sought to ban it, but opposition from religious authorities and its widespread acceptance mean FGM has been impossible to stamp out. Nowhere is it more common than Gorontalo, a deeply conservative area on the central island of Sulawesi, where the procedure is typically accompanied by elaborate rituals and celebrations. A government survey estimated over 80 percent of girls aged 11 and under in Gorontalo had been circumcised, compared to about 50 percent of girls in the same category nationwide.

An obligation

Despite the pain it causes and growing opposition inside and outside Indonesia, residents of Gorontalo, mostly poor rice farmers, consider female circumcision an obligation. The healer, Khadijah Ibrahim, who inherited her job from her mother when she passed away several years ago, said that girls who were left uncircumcised risked developing "mental problems and disabilities". Local healers say the practice prevents girls from becoming promiscuous in later life, while there is also a widespread belief that uncircumcised Muslim women's prayers will not be accepted by God.

But the practice is not limited to far-flung parts of the archipelago. It remains common among Muslim families even in Jakarta, although doctors there typically carry out a less extreme form of the procedure that involves pricking the clitoral hood with a needle. In an effort to accommodate cultural and religious considerations, the government has moved away from previous attempts to ban the practice entirely and has instead sought to stamp

out the more harmful methods and ensure safety. Authorities insist the methods most commonly used in Indonesia—usually involving a pin prick—do not amount to female genital mutilation.

The methods used in Indonesia are generally less harsh than the most brutal forms of FGM found mainly in African and Middle Eastern countries that can go as far as total removal of the clitoris. The UN however disagrees with the Indonesian government's stance, classifying FGM among "harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes" and has passed two resolutions aimed at stopping it worldwide in recent years. The global body says FGM has no health benefits and can cause many problems, such as infertility and an increased risk of childbirth complications.

Not in Quran

Debate within Indonesia has been heating up in recent times, with activists and even a major Muslim organization arguing against female circumcision, saying it violates a woman's right to do as she wishes with her body. "I believe there are no verses in my religion that allow female circumcision—it is not in the Quran," Khorirah Ali, a member of the government-backed national commission on violence against women, said.

The country's second-biggest Muslim organization, Muhammadiyah, discourages its followers from partaking in circumcision but the largest, Nahdlatul Ulama, and the country's top Islamic authority the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) are still in favor. The issue is a hot potato and the government has flip-flopped in recent years. In 2006, the health ministry banned doctors from carrying out female circumcision, saying there was no medical benefit—but the MUI hit back with a fatwa saying that women who undergo the procedure would be considered noble.

The government backtracked several years later and said licensed medics could conduct the procedure as long as it was only "scratching the clitoral hood", only to later void this measure in favor of asking a specially appointed council to issue safety guidelines. Campaigners say the constant changes have created confusion about what is allowed and more harmful practices—such as those used in Gorontalo—continue to exist.

Despite the opposition, the practice is unlikely to end soon in the country of 255 million people. Jurnalis Uddin, an expert on female circumcision from Jakarta-based Yarsi University, and a member of the government's advisory council, said the focus should be on encouraging the less harmful methods. "To get rid of the practice completely is like swimming against the current," he said.—AFP



INDONESIA: In this photograph, toddler Salsa Djafar cries as a traditional healer conducts a circumcision in Gorontalo, in Indonesia's Gorontalo province.—AFP

THREE MALAYSIAN HOSTAGES RECOVERED IN PHILIPPINES

MANILA: Three Malaysian seamen kidnapped eight months ago by Muslim extremists have been found safe in the strife-torn southern Philippines, the country's military chief said yesterday. Troops found the three before midnight Sunday in a mountainous area of Jolo island after they were abandoned by their Abu Sayyaf captors, General Eduardo Ano said. Mohammad Jumadil Rahim, Mohammad Ridzuan Bin Ismail and Fandy Bin Bakran were taken to a military hospital for treatment, Ano said, adding that their recovery meant there were no more Malaysian captives in the hands of the Abu

Sayyaf

The Malaysians were among a group seized from a tugboat in waters between the southern Philippines and Malaysia last July. Last week two other Malaysians from

the same tugboat were found by a Philippine patrol vessel drifting in a boat off Jolo. The Abu Sayyaf, whose leaders have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, has long engaged in kidnapping for ransom—often targeting foreigners. In recent months they have taken to seizing sailors from ships in waters between the southern Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Maritime security officials have warned that the region is in danger of a "Somali-type" situation unless action is taken. The International Maritime Bureau said in January the number of maritime kidnappings hit a 10-year high in 2016, with waters off the southern Philippines becoming increasingly dangerous. General Ano credited the recovery of the three Malaysians to the pressure placed on the extremists by a military operation in Jolo. — AFP



A visitor poses for a picture on the Mediterranean Sea coast in Alexandria on Sunday. — AP

CONTROVERSY OVER CITIZENSHIP LAW AS GOVT...

Continued from Page 1

The committee will not look into the case of Ahmad Jabr Al-Shemmari, the former owner of pro-opposition Al-Yaum TV, because his case is still in the cassation court, which yesterday set April 3 as the date for issuing its verdict.

The lower and appeals courts both ordered the government to reinstate the citizenship of Shemmari and his children. Two weeks ago, he withdrew the case from the court because of the promise of the Amir, but the government insisted that the court rules that the judiciary is not competent to look into citizenship issues because they are sovereign matters.

The amendment that the Assembly is likely to debate today or tomorrow is to change the administrative court law, stipulating that Kuwaiti courts are authorized to look into revoked citizenship cases. The government has remained against the proposed amendment, insisting that citizenship is a sovereign issue that courts should not be allowed to handle.

MPs are also planning other amendments to the nationality law stipulating that the government is not allowed to revoke any citizenship without a final court ruling. Lawmakers have also

proposed other amendments to speed up naturalization of certain groups. The proposed amendments have triggered a controversy among lawmakers themselves, with some social activists intervening in the case.

A group of diwanis supported by the government and a few lawmakers strongly opposed any changes to the 1959 nationality law or even the court law, and insisted that citizenship issues must remain entirely in the hands of the government. They said that proposed changes to the nationality law threaten to undermine the composition and identity of the Kuwaiti people.

But a large group of lawmakers have expressed the need to first change the administrative court law, allowing victims of revoked citizenship to seek the help of the judiciary. They also want to press ahead with the amendment to the nationality law that requires a final court verdict before withdrawing any citizenship.

Meanwhile, MP Safa Al-Hashem yesterday threatened to grill the prime minister over the government's intention to scrap the roads and transport authority two years after its law was passed and even before the authority was formed.

SINGAPOREAN COUPLE JAILED FOR STARVING...

Continued from Page 1

Gawidan lost almost 20kg during her time working for the couple, who only allowed her to eat two meals a day - usually a few slices of white bread and small portions of instant noodles prepared by Chong. They also packed meager meals for her when she went with the family on vacation to Hong Kong, the court heard.

The nutrition expert testified that the maid's daily calorie intake was only about 900 calories, much less than the 1,700 calories she needed to sustain her normal activities. Gawidan had no access to her mobile phone and was not allowed to go out on her own to buy food. She was only allowed to shower once or twice a week and could only use the condominium's common toilet. "Moreover, she was subject to even more degrading treatment... she suffered the indignity of (the wife) standing inside the toilet while she showered so as to monitor her," the prosecutors said.

Gawidan ran away in April 2014 and called a compatriot for help, a decision the prosecutors said could have saved her life. She was taken to a migrant workers' shelter which helped her file a complaint with the manpower ministry. The couple's lawyer Raymond Lye told AFP they were "remorseful and sincere in expressing their regret".

But netizens were seething in online comments. "These two aren't human and should be treated the same way they deemed fit to treat another human," wrote one netizen by the name of Jamie Yeo on the Facebook page of local newspaper The Straits Times. "How can such human beings even exist? Don't they feel ashamed of themselves? They have money to employ a helper but no money to provide proper food. Extremely disgusted with them," wrote another user by the name of Dan Ang. Many Singapore households depend on foreign domestic help. In 2016 there were 239,700 foreign maids working in the affluent city-state, mostly from Indonesia and the Philippines. — AFP



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Focus

KREMLIN LIVID AS GEN BORN UNDER PUTIN FLOCKS TO PROTESTS

At the age of 16, Darya Moroz is too young to vote in Russia but she sneaked out to join the opposition protest in Moscow on Sunday - without telling her parents. "I didn't tell them because I was afraid of arguments," Moroz said after she came out to support opposition leader Alexei Navalny. "I just said I was going for a walk." She was not alone. The unauthorized protest in Moscow on Sunday drew unprecedented numbers of students and others born after President Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, who have known only his rule.

"There were a lot of young people detained, aged 17 or 18," said Oleg Yeliseyev, a lawyer who helped three teenagers get released without charge from police stations. "This is the first time in Russia basically. Protests are getting younger," Yeliseyev told AFP. "We don't have exact statistics but there were really a lot of minors and students," a spokesman for OVD-Info, a group that monitors police detentions in Moscow, confirmed to AFP. "In each of the police stations there were at least two or three teenagers. That didn't happen before."

'Generation has been born'

Navalny, with his social networking savvy and readiness to send Tweets even from a courtroom, is streets ahead of other Russian politicians. His approach clearly appeals to the internet generation that does not watch state television nor has first-hand memories of the 1990s, a decade often considered one of economic and political chaos preceding the "stability" of the Putin era. In court yesterday, Navalny told journalists he wanted to thank high school and university students for taking part. "I'm really happy that a generation has been born in the country who want to be citizens, who aren't afraid," he said.

But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov accused Navalny of "consciously deceiving minors, children basically", by encouraging them to attend an unsanctioned rally. Peskov said that Navalny had offered "financial rewards" to minors if they were detained, though he gave no evidence to back up his claim. A YouTube video posted Sunday by a nationalist news site shows a young boy apparently in a police van saying Navalny had promised that the European Court of Human Rights would pay €10,000 (\$10,900) in compensation for detention. The video, which has no identifying details nor explains why a cameraman would be inside a police van, had been viewed 50,000 times as yesterday.

'There are no answers'

Moroz, who is studying computer programming at university, said she decided to join the protest after Navalny's anti-corruption group released a video expose linking Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to a vast property empire. She said she was shocked the authorities did not react. "The only thing that happened was that Medvedev blocked Navalny on Instagram. I was gobsmacked, basically," she said. "In our country, there are no answers, no attempts to refute anything, nothing."

She went to the protest with a friend, Vlad Korostelev, a 19-year-old computer security student. They said police pulled friends from the crowd on the central Pushkin Square and hauled them into police vans. Riot police "pulled people out at random... people who weren't holding posters or doing anything," Korostelev said. Moroz said she was "scared for myself and them". "A lot of people were very young and they had never been in that situation, they didn't know what to do, they were just in a panic," she said. "It's scary to live in this country and you need to try to fight this, because it's totally out of line."

One of those detained was 17-year-old Roman Shingarkin, a student who shinned up a lamppost with another young protester. He told The Village, a local news site, that officers "detained us quite harshly: A policeman hit me in the stomach." His parents collected him from the police station after his juvenile crime unit filed a report saying he shouted slogans and disobeyed police - claims which he denies. "I'm not sorry I went to the protest. I'm just sorry I caused trouble for my parents," he said. A poll yesterday by the opposition-leaning Ekho Moskvy radio station found that 76 percent backed school children taking part in protests. — AFP

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'RELIGIOUS LEFT' BECOMING US POLITICAL FORCE

Since US President Donald Trump's election, monthly lectures on social justice at the 600-seat Gothic chapel of New York's Union Theological Seminary have been filled to capacity with crowds three times what they usually draw. In January, the 181-year-old Upper Manhattan graduate school, whose architecture evokes London's Westminster Abbey, turned away about 1,000 people from a lecture on mass incarceration. In the nine years that Reverend Serene Jones has served as its president, she has never seen such crowds.

"The election of Trump has been a clarion call to progressives in the Protestant and Catholic churches in America to move out of a place of primarily professing progressive policies to really taking action," she said. Although not as powerful as the religious right, which has been credited with helping elect Republican presidents and boasts well-known leaders such as Christian Broadcasting Network founder Pat Robertson, the "religious left" is now slowly coming together as a force in US politics.

This disparate group, traditionally seen as lacking clout, has been propelled into political activism by Trump's policies on immigration, healthcare and social welfare, according to clergy members, activists and academics. A key test will be how well it will be able to translate its mobilization into votes in the 2018 midterm congressional elections. "It's one of the dirty little secrets of American politics that there has been a religious left all along and it just hasn't done a good job of organizing," said J Patrick Hornbeck II, chairman of the theology department at Fordham University, a Jesuit school in New York. "It has taken a crisis, or perceived crisis, like Trump's election to cause folks on the religious left to really own their religion in the public square," Hornbeck said.

Religious progressive activism has been part of American history. Religious leaders and their followers played key roles in campaigns to abolish slavery, promote civil rights and end the Vietnam War, among others. The latest upwelling of left-leaning religious activism has

accompanied the dawn of the Trump presidency. Some in the religious left are inspired by Pope Francis, the Roman Catholic leader who has been an outspoken critic of anti-immigrant policies and a champion of helping the needy.

Although support for the religious left is difficult to measure, leaders point to several examples, such as a surge of congregations offering to provide sanctuary to immigrants seeking asylum, churches urging Republicans to reconsider repealing the Obamacare health law and calls to preserve federal spending on foreign aid. The number of churches volunteering to offer sanctuary to asylum seekers doubled to 800 in 45 of the 50 US states after the election, said the Elkhart, Indiana-based Church World Service, a coalition of Christian denominations which helps refugees settle in the United States - and the number of new churches offering help has grown so quickly that the group has lost count.

"The religious community, the religious left is getting out, hitting the streets, taking action, raising their voices," said Reverend Noel Anderson, its national grassroots coordinator. In one well-publicized case, a Quaker church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on March 14 took in a Honduran woman who has been living illegally in the United States for 25 years and feared she would be targeted for deportation.

'Never Seen' This

Leaders of Faith in Public Life, a progressive policy group, were astounded when 300 clergy members turned out at a January rally at the US Senate attempting to block confirmation of Trump's attorney general nominee, Jeff Sessions, because of his history of controversial statements on race. "I've never seen hundreds of clergy turning up like that to oppose a Cabinet nominee," said Reverend Jennifer Butler, the group's chief executive. The group on Wednesday convened a Capitol Hill rally of hundreds of pastors from as far away as Ohio, North Carolina and Texas to urge Congress to ensure that no people lose their health insurance as a result of a vote to repeal Obamacare.

Financial support is also picking up. Donations to the Christian activist group Sojourners have picked up by 30 percent since Trump's election, the group said. But some observers were skeptical that the religious left could equal the religious right politically any time soon. "It really took decades of activism for the religious right to become the force that it is today," said Peter Ubertaccio, chairman of the political science department at Stonehill College, a Catholic school outside Boston.

But the power potential of the "religious left" is not negligible. The "Moral Mondays" movement, launched in 2013 by the North Carolina NAACP's Reverend William Barber, is credited with contributing to last year's election defeat of Republican Governor Pat McCrory by Democrat Roy Cooper. The new political climate is also spurring new alliances, with churches, synagogues and mosques speaking out against the recent spike in bias incidents, including threats against mosques and Jewish community centers.

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, which encourages alliances between Jewish and Muslim women, has tripled its number of US chapters to nearly 170 since November, said founder Sheryl Olitzky. "This is not about partisanship, but about vulnerable populations who need protection, whether it's the LGBT community, the refugee community, the undocumented community," said Rabbi Jonah Pesner, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, using the acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. More than 1,000 people have already signed up for the center's annual Washington meeting on political activism, about three times as many as normal, Pesner said.

Leaders of the religious right who supported Trump say they see him delivering on his promises and welcomed plans to defund Planned Parenthood, whose healthcare services for women include abortion, through the proposed repeal of Obamacare. "We have not seen any policy proposals that run counter to our faith," said Lance Lemmonds, a spokesman for the Faith & Freedom Coalition, a nonprofit group based in Duluth, Georgia. — Reuters

'SCHULZ EFFECT' FAILS TO DELIVER IN FIRST TEST

It was the German Social Democrats' first electoral test under their new leader, Martin Schulz. They failed. Instead, voters in the state of Saarland flocked to Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives on Sunday for fear of a new left-wing alliance. "A damper for Schulzomania," the Sueddeutsche Zeitung daily wrote in a Monday editorial as politicians in Berlin sought to evaluate the implications of the vote for the Sept 24 national election in Germany, the European Union's pivotal member state.

Schulz has led a revival in his Social Democrats' (SPD) poll ratings since winning the nomination as their leader in January. But the prospect of his center-left party ruling with the far-left Linke in Saarland turned off voters there. Both the SPD and Linke lost support from the 2012 vote after suggesting they could team up or form a "red-red-green" alliance with the environmentalist Greens. In the event, the Greens did not meet the 5 percent threshold to enter the state assembly.

The outcome is a setback for the prospects of such a left-leaning alliance ousting Merkel after September's vote, though drawing lessons for the federal vote from the Saarland result is problematic and "red-red-green" could yet prevail nationally. With just 800,000 voters, Saarland is the size of just two of Berlin's residential districts. Merkel's conservatives also fielded a strong candidate in Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the state premier who has been nicknamed "the Merkel from the Saar". "I know her. She is simply brilliant," said Hajo Funke, political scientist at Berlin's Free University, adding that Kramp-Karrenbauer had focused on competent government in Saarland and was not egocentric. "So the 'Schulz effect' was curtailed, but it still exists."

The suggestion of an alliance of the SPD with the far-left Linke unnerves many voters in western Germany. But it is not a

taboo in the east, where the Linke, the successor to the old East German Communist Party that rejects NATO and wants to lift the top income tax rate to 75 percent, already governs in a three-way leftist alliance in Berlin and Thuringia. Schulz played down the implications of Sunday's result for the national election, saying Saarland was a special case. He pointed to Oskar Lafontaine, a former SPD chairman who deserted the party for the Linke, which he heads in the western state. Years of poisoned relations between the two parties followed. "I think there are only limited inferences that can be drawn from state elections for the whole country," Schulz said, appearing to leave open the possibility of cooperation with the Linke at national level. Two more regional elections in May - in the far northern state of Schleswig-

Holstein and the populous western region of North Rhine-Westphalia - offer the Social Democrats the chance to regain the initiative. Polls show the SPD leading in both states, though they underestimated the strength of Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) in Saarland and overestimated support for the SPD.

Stage Victory for Merkel

Despite the local caveats in Saarland, the message for the SPD is that the "Schulz effect" is not yet gaining enough traction despite a 10-point bounce in the party's national ratings since his nomination in January. "It needs to deliver more," Funke said of the SPD. "A lot depends on whether the SPD can be convincing when fleshing out its election campaign focused on social issues and Europe." Schulz is trying to win

over dissatisfied working class voters with a message of social justice. Under Merkel, who has been in power for 11 years, Germany has enjoyed economic growth and high employment, but the gap between rich and poor has widened. Voters feel this sense of growing inequality but are loath to sacrifice the relative economic stability they enjoy under Merkel at a time when much of southern Europe is plagued by mass unemployment and neighbouring France is faring less well.

Underlining Germany's economic strength, a survey released yesterday showed German business morale touched its highest level in nearly six years in March. "Schulz is speaking about the problems - he has talked about making nurseries and education free - but on economic and social issues, the CDU can say that Germany is doing far better than comparable neighboring countries," said Funke. On the long road to the Sept. 24 federal election, Saarland was a stage victory for the Christian Democrats. "It is one result on a long path," Merkel told reporters. "We have our feet well enough on the ground to know that all the problems for 2017 are not solved with this."

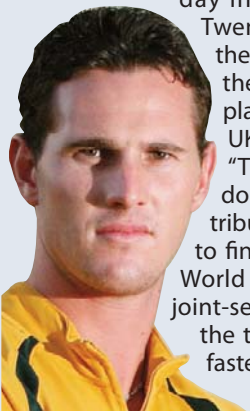
At national level, the SPD, Linke and Greens have held exploratory talks about forming a coalition to oust Merkel after September's vote, and have discussed refraining from attacking each other during the campaign. Schulz's challenge is to convince voters he will not be dragged too far to the left. A Forsa poll released on March 22 showed 59 percent of those asked wanted change in Germany's top leadership, possibly pointing to an appetite for a different coalition. But only 19 percent were in favor of a "red-red-green" alliance. "Flirting with red-red does not go down well in this state," Kramp-Karrenbauer said after the Saarland vote. "That should be a signal for the federal level too." — Reuters



Martin Schulz, chairman of Germany's social democratic SPD party, stands in front of his party's secretary general Katarina Barley (hidden) as they meet with the SPD leadership at the SPD headquarters in Berlin yesterday, a day after regional elections in the southwestern federal state of Saarland. — AFP

AUSTRALIA PACEMAN TAIT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

SYDNEY: Australian fast bowler Shaun Tait has announced his retirement from all forms of the game yesterday due to persistent elbow injuries. Tait, who had retired from first-class cricket in 2009 and one-day internationals in 2011, continued to play as a Twenty20 specialist, with his last match coming for the Hobart Hurricanes against the Sydney Thunder in the 2016-17 Big Bash League. "I honestly wanted to play a couple more years, whether it was over in the UK or here," the 34-year-old Tait told cricket.com.au. "The elbow has pretty much gone off a cliff now, it's done and dusted. "I suppose when you're not contributing on the field as much as you'd like to, it's time to finish up." Tait was instrumental in Australia's 2007 World Cup triumph in West Indies, where he was the joint-second highest wicket-taker with 23 dismissals in the tournament. "In his prime, Shaun was the world's fastest bowler.—Reuters

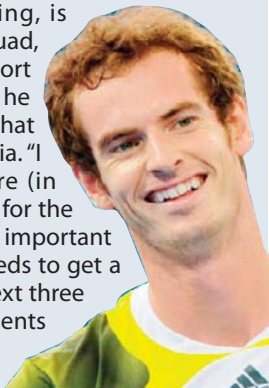


SCOTTISH KICKBOXER DEAD OF HEATSTROKE

BANGKOK: A Scottish kickboxer has died after an apparent attempt to lose weight in preparation for a fight in Thailand. Police Capt. Prachakorn Promduang said the body of 21-year-old Jordan Coe was discovered Sunday morning clad in multiple layers of clothing. He had been 3 kilograms (6.6 pounds) over the weight class limit for a Sunday night fight in the northeastern province of Nakhon Ratchasima, and was last seen Saturday morning headed out from a resort there for a workout. Prachakorn said Coe had been trying to meet the weight limit for the fight, and that preliminary autopsy results showed heatstroke was the cause of death. In a practice considered risky to their health, boxers seeking to meet a weight limit ahead of a fight often try to lose as much water as possible through sweating. Jordan had spent around three years in the northeastern province of Ubon Ratchathani, where he trained in the sport of kickboxing, also known as Muay Thai. "Loving the constant fighting each month," Jordan said in a final Facebook post last Thursday promoting his scheduled fight. — AP

ANDY MURRAY DOUBTFUL FOR DAVIS CUP WITH INJURY

LONDON: World number one Andy Murray is likely to miss Great Britain's Davis Cup quarter-final trip to France due to an elbow injury, his brother Jamie Murray has said. Three-times grand slam winner Murray, who pulled out of the ongoing Miami Masters after sustaining an elbow problem in training, is expected to be left out of the Great Britain squad, which will be announced yesterday. "It's some sort of tear in his elbow, so he needs to rest. He said he can do everything except serve and he told me that rest was all he had to do," Jamie told British media. "I am not planning that he is going to be there (in France) but, if he is, then obviously that is great for the team and we'll see what happens. "But the most important thing for him is just to get healthy ... He just needs to get a bit settled and get a good crack at it over the next three months because there are a lot of big tournaments to play." — Reuters



STUNG MERCEDES VOW TO STRIKE BACK IN CHINA

MELBOURNE: Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes are vowing to come back hard in China after being ambushed by resurgent Ferrari in the Formula One season-opener in Australia.

The German outfit, who have ruled the sport for the last three years, got a rude awakening in the first race of the new season when Sebastian Vettel beat Hamilton by almost 10 seconds in Melbourne on Sunday. Vettel's triumph has overturned early-season expectations and raised the prospect of a Ferrari-Mercedes battle for the world title over the remaining 19 races.

All eyes will now be on the next grand prix in Shanghai on April 9 to see if Ferrari can repeat their improved performance through Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen.

"If it wasn't already clear after qualifying, then it's certainly clear now that this is going to be a season of very small margins," Mercedes technical director James Allison said.

"Credit to Ferrari, they had a very quick car and we just weren't quite good enough to stick with them. We won't panic, though. "It's race one of a long season and we scored some very good points with both cars in Melbourne. We'll be determined to come back stronger in China and make sure those small margins go our way next time." While Vettel's first win for Ferrari since Singapore in 2015, and his 43rd victory overall, has supercharged the season, he said there was still a lot of work to do.

"This is one of many steps and we have to enjoy what we do. It's great to see people smiling," said Vettel. "Now we have to reset to go to China and try to do a good job."

'ABOUT TIME' FOR FERRARI

Ferrari president Sergio Marchionne said the team returning to the top of the podium was long overdue, with the victory meaning a non-Mercedes driver leads the championship for the first time since 2013. "It was about time," Marchionne said. "We've been waiting for this victory for almost a year-and-a-half. Hearing the Italian national anthem again was very moving.

"Sebastian delivered a great race and I am sure Kimi will be soon up there battling alongside his team-mate."

But like Vettel, Marchionne is not getting carried away at the start of a globe-trotting season which will wrap up in Abu Dhabi in November. "It is absolutely essential to remember that this is not the destination but the first step on a long road that must see us all focused on improving each and every day," he said.

Shanghai will also be an opportunity for Australian Daniel Ricciardo to bounce back after his traumatic outing in Melbourne. The amiable Red Bull driver crashed in qualifying, was hit with a grid penalty and started Sunday's race from pit lane, before his car stopped on lap 29 of his 58-lap home GP.

"Sure, I'm disappointed now but it is what it is. I've been here before so I'll wake up tomorrow and be motivated to get ready for China," Ricciardo said after the race.

"If any Aussies have a bit of energy left in a few weeks, then come out to China and you'll hopefully see a better race from me." The weekend setback continues Ricciardo's run of terrible luck at his home grand prix, where he was disqualified from second place in 2014 for breaching fuel rules. — AFP



FONTANA: Kyle Larson celebrates with a burnout after winning the NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif., Sunday. — AP

MOTOR RACING

KYLE LARSON HANGS ON TO WIN AT FONTANA

FONTANA: A blistering first in qualifying. A surprising first in the Xfinity Series race. And a steady, tenacious first when it really mattered on Sunday. Kyle Larson was second to nobody in his home state.

Larson persevered through four late restarts to win at Fontana, adding his second career victory to his overall Monster Energy NASCAR Cup series points lead. "Lots of fun to be Kyle Larson right now," Larson said with a grin. "Our race cars are really fast in Xfinity and Cup, so it's a blast to show up to the race track every week."

Larson finished second in each of the last three races, but the Sacramento-area native's Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet was the class of the field at Auto Club Speedway all weekend long. He claimed the second pole of his career Friday, and he also won the Xfinity race Saturday in a result that surprised him much more than his Cup triumph. The 24-year-old prodigy became just the fourth driver to sweep a race weekend at Fontana. "Our cars are really good at every race track right now," Larson said. "I feel like I have a shot to win every time I go to the race track. That's always a lot of fun. That's something I've always hoped for, to get to a point like that in my NASCAR career. In the past, I had race tracks where I knew I would be good, but right now, we're going to some tracks that aren't good for me and running up front. It's a lot of fun to have that confidence."

Fontana's bumpy 2-mile track particularly suits Larson's skills, and he was unshakable during the late drama and jockeying typical to the five-wide asphalt one hour east of Los Angeles. After surging up from fourth to first with four new tires before the final caution, he made one last outstanding restart and cruised through two overtime laps to win. "This is just amazing," Larson said. "We have been so good all year long, three seconds in a row. I've been watching all the TV, like, 'He doesn't know how to win.' But we knew how to win today, so that was good." Brad Keselowski was second, and Clint Bowyer came in third for his best finish since June 2015 and his first top-five finish in 52 races. Martin Truex Jr. was fourth after challenging Larson aggressively, and Joey Logano roared up to fifth. Larson added to his other career victory, which came on NASCAR's historic 2-mile oval at Michigan. After an early NASCAR season full of dominant cars getting stung at the finish, Larson wasted none of his advantage. "He's on a really nice roll, and it takes everything," said Keselowski, who surged into second after two outstanding late restarts. "This is a sport of speed, execution and luck, and when you're on a roll like that, you've got all three on your side." Ganassi credited the win to his young driver's increasing maturity, along with his fast car, of course. Larson is a former Earnhardt Ganassi Racing development driver who landed with Chip Ganassi Racing in 2014, showing steady promise that built to this spectacular season to date.

"I think he's got a lot of runway, and we don't even have the engines pulled up yet," Ganassi said of Larson's potential. "I think he's got a long

way to go. I have no idea what he's capable of. Your guess is as good as mine."

Larson is only the second driver in Fontana history to win from the pole, joining six-time race champion Jimmie Johnson, who did it in 2008. Johnson finished 21st after starting near the back in his backup car.

Johnson, Keselowski and Phoenix winner Ryan Newman all sustained minor damage early on, but Larson was fast from the start.

Larson won the first stage of 60 laps, earning his first stage victory of the season, but lost his lead during a slow stop after getting too close to the wall on pit road. Truex won the second stage, but Larson slipped past him to reclaim the lead on the first lap of the final stage. The leaders pitted under caution with 20 laps to go, but Truex had his first slow stop all day and slipped five spots down the field to seventh. Larson won the race off pit road and had a fine restart, but Matt Kenseth slid hard into the wall moments later after minor contact with Truex.

Kenseth failed to finish for the third time in five races this season. After the restart with 12 laps to go, Larson flew past Kyle Busch and built a decent cushion - only to slow again when Cory LaJoie spun out. Larson pitted for tires along with

most of the field, while only Hamlin, Truex and McMurray stayed out.

Larson barely got back into the lead before Ricky Stenhouse Jr. spun on contact from Roush Fenway Racing teammate Trevor Bayne to force the fourth caution, necessitating overtime. Larson had no problem hanging on.

JUNIOR'S 600

Dale Earnhardt Jr. finished 16th in his landmark 600th NASCAR start, becoming just the 25th driver to hit the mark. He had to start from the back due to a tire change, and he never really threatened.

STARS COME OUT

The Fontana race compelled its usual eclectic collection of Hollywood celebrities to make the drive. The group included actors Scott Eastwood, Kaitlin Olson, Terry Crews and Eric Stonestreet along with Los Angeles Kings forward Tyler Toffoli and Los Angeles Chargers tight end Antonio Gates.

The three-race Western swing is over, and NASCAR heads home to Martinsville Speedway, moving from Fontana's wide 2-mile oval to a half-mile bullring. — AP

LAUDA PUTS BOTTAS ON A LEVEL WITH ROSBERG

LONDON: Niki Lauda has hailed Valtteri Bottas's debut for Formula One world champions Mercedes as "incredible" and suggested the Finn's retired predecessor Nico Rosberg would have done no better.

Bottas started and finished third in Sunday's season-opening Australian Grand Prix, with his team mate and triple champion Lewis Hamilton second behind Ferrari's race winner Sebastian Vettel.

"Bottas did an incredible job. First time in the car, finished third, close up to Lewis. He could not have done a better job," said retired triple world champion Lauda, who is non-executive chairman and a shareholder in the team. "We have the right choice," added the 68-year-old, who told Sky Sports television that the former Williams driver had been top of his list of candidates to replace Rosberg after the German announced his retirement in December.

The 27-year-old was announced as Hamilton's team mate in January.

"I expected Bottas, in a new car with a new team, with the help of the team to get quicker. He did all that. So the whole weekend he was a sensation," said Lauda.

"I don't think he would have been worse than Nico if Nico would have raced here. "It could have been exactly the same result but

he was the first time in the car, which I think was outstanding," added the Austrian.

Bottas told reporters after spraying champagne on the podium that the race weekend had been a "good starting point for the journey for me driving for Mercedes" but felt he could do a lot better.

"I didn't get everything perfect but it was the first qualifying with the team and this track really hasn't been fantastic for me ever in qualifying," he said.

"Overall, I think not a disastrous first race weekend with the team but I do have my points I will take, and I can do better next time and I look forward to that."

Rosberg, who beat Hamilton to the 2016 title despite winning fewer races, has said he has no regrets about retiring but nonetheless kept a close eye on proceedings in Melbourne. The German posted photographs on his Twitter account of himself, his wife and daughter watching the race from his Monaco apartment.

"Respect to all of you who always get up so early on Sunday mornings," he said. "I'm excited to watch it, first time in 11 years now in front of the TV, so that's a massive different experience."

He later sent a message of congratulations to Vettel and Ferrari. — Reuters

VIVA MANCHESTER UNITED SOCCER ACADEMY'S TRYOUTS KICK-OFF

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, VIVA, announced, under the partnership agreement inked with Manchester United Soccer Club, an open invitation to all youths with soccer skills between the ages of 12 - 15 years old, to join in "VIVA Manchester United Soccer Academy" tryouts in Kuwait, titled 'It's 'more' Than Just a Dream', held on 30 March 2017 starting 4 pm at Corner Soccer field behind the Kuwait Towers. Participants can register through VIVA's official website www.viva.com.kw, or upon arrival at the field. The tryouts will focus on different technical aspects, such as dribbling, short passing, turning and finishing. Kuwait Football Associated certified coaches will shortlist 32 players, from whom 16 players are selected based on their skills and fitness to go to Manchester United Soccer Camp for world-class training in

England during the summer.

Commenting on this occasion, Abdelrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA said: "VIVA endeavors to embrace the youths and meet their aspirations to reach their goals on global sport scale, thus we were eager to organize this academy including our CSR strategy on annual basis to grant the youths the opportunity to live such unique experience."

VIVA announced its sponsorship for Manchester United in 2011 for five years, and for Real Madrid in 2014 for five years as well, to offer the opportunity to the fans of both teams to be closer to the most famous soccer teams in the word through exclusive offers and promotions.

To find out more about VIVA's partnerships, latest offers and promotions, visit one of the 73 VIVA branches, or the VIVA website at www.viva.com.kw



CYCLING

WIGGINS SLAMS MARGINAL GAINS AS ‘A LOAD OF RUBBISH’

LONDON: Bradley Wiggins has labelled the marginal gains philosophy said to underpin much of British Cycling’s recent success as “a load of rubbish”.

In comments reported by the Daily Telegraph on Monday, Wiggins was equally dismissive of the “chimp paradox” theory for dealing with pressure promoted by sports psychologist Dr Steve Peters and said former British track team-mate and fellow Olympic gold medallist Victoria Pendleton was a “bit of a milkshake”.

Britain was seen to gain a technological advantage over its rivals thanks to research carried out under what became

known as the ‘Secret Squirrel Club’ headed up by former Olympic champion Chris Boardman that looked for legal improvements in bike design and rider equipment.

It all became known as part of the search for “marginal gains” but Wiggins, in what the Telegraph said were remarks made at a corporate event in the City of London, was unimpressed.

“A lot of people made a lot of money out of it and David Brailsford used it constantly as his calling card, but I always thought it was a load of rubbish,” said Wiggins. “It’s a bit like the whole chimp thing,” added the five-times Olympic

gold medallist, who won several golds when Brailsford was in charge of the British Cycling team. He also won the 2012 Tour de France for the Team Sky outfit headed up by the celebrated coach. “At the end of the day, chimp theories and marginal gains and all these buzzwords—a lot of the time, I just think you have got to get the fundamentals right: go ride your bike, put the work in, and you’re either good or you’re not good. “Sometimes in life or in sport, whatever, you’re either good at something or you’re not. That’s what makes you a better athlete: your physical ability and whether you’ve trained enough—not

whether you’ve slept on a certain pillow or mattress.”

Pendleton, who won cycling golds at both the 2008 Beijing Olympics and four years later in London, has spoken of how Peters helped her career.

But Wiggins said: “Vicky’s a bit of a milkshake (mixed up) anyway. You can over-analyse things but at the end of the day, it’s about your ability and whether you’re a better athlete than the other person or not.

“Whether you’ve come to grips with this other person living inside you, it’s all a bit... well, each to his own. That may work with some people, but as (former

footballer) Roy Keane would say: it’s utter nonsense.”

The Telegraph said Wiggins was not asked at the event about the ongoing investigation into whether he had broken anti-doping rules at the 2011 Criterium du Dauphine race.

Last week Wiggins told Sky Sports he would have a “lot to say” and “shock a few people” when he finally comments in details on the allegations which centre on whether he was given a legal decongestant or received an unauthorised injection of the powerful corticosteroid Triamcinolone without an official medical exemption. — AFP

RECORD-EQUALLING WILLIAMSON TON PUTS NEW ZEALAND ON TOP

HAMILTON: A record-equalling Test century by Kane Williamson yesterday put New Zealand in charge of the third Test against South Africa and had them talking of victory in Hamilton. At stumps on the third day, New Zealand were 321 for four, leading South Africa by seven runs with Williamson—who equalled Martin Crowe’s record of 17 Test centuries for the Black Caps—not out on 148 with Mitchell Santner on 13. It was a remarkable fightback by a side completely outclassed in the second Test when they were beaten by eight wickets inside three days. Opener Jeet Raval, who put on a 190-run partnership with Williamson, said New Zealand were eyeing a 200 first innings lead. “We’d love to get 500. We’re in a good position and we’ve still got six wickets in the shed,” said Raval.

“If we can get a couple of hundred-run lead and then put South Africa under pressure with the new ball it puts us right in the game. “It’s about putting us in a position where we can win this game and draw the series.” New Zealand, battling to square the series which South Africa lead 1-0, enjoyed a solid start from Raval and Tom Latham with an 83-run opening partnership before Williamson took control.

“I felt like bit of a clown batting with the master at the other end. Just to watch him bat was unbelievable,” added Raval, whose 88 came from 254 balls while Williamson has faced 216 deliveries for his 148. South African quick Morne Morkel, who took the wickets of Latham and Raval, described Williamson’s performance as “exceptional”. “There’s only one team under pressure now

and that’s us,” he said.

PATIENT RAVAL

Latham progressed from his overnight 42 to 50 before he was caught behind by a diving Quinton de Kock off Morkel.

It was another 58 overs before a second wicket fell as Williamson and Raval dictated terms to a bowling attack toiling on a flat track. Williamson worked the ball to all parts of the ground including a six off Keshav Maharaj over the bowler’s head.

He followed up with two more off Vernon Philander and Morkel over the square leg boundary—three sixes in one innings from a batsman who only had nine from his previous 60 Tests.

The six off Philander made him the sixth and fastest New Zealander to reach 5,000 Test runs, seven innings quicker than the previous record set by Crowe. When Williamson smacked part-timer Dean Elgar to the boundary for his hundred, he had equalled Crowe’s New Zealand record of 17 centuries in 16 fewer Tests.

While Williamson punished the bowling, Raval was impressively patient as he picked up ones and twos off the pace attack of Philander, Morkel and Kagiso Rabada.

He batted for 390 minutes before getting an inside edge to Morkel to give de Kock his second catch.

Rabada then accounted for Neil Broom (12) and Henry Nicholls (nought) in successive balls before Santner joined Williamson to guide New Zealand through to stumps.

For South Africa, Morkel has two for 74 and Rabada two for 83. — AFP



DHARAMSALA: India’s Umesh Yadav (R) celebrates the wicket of Australia’s Nathan Lyon with teammates during the third day of the fourth and last Test cricket match between India and Australia at The Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala yesterday. —AFP

CRICKET

INDIA SET FOR VICTORY AFTER AUSTRALIAN BATTING COLLAPSE

DHARAMSALA: All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja starred with both bat and ball on the third day of the fourth Test yesterday to put India on course for a series-clinching victory against Australia in Dharamsala.

The left-hander top-scored with 63 to help India surpass Australia’s first-innings total of 300 and then snared three wickets with his spin bowling as the visitors crumbled.

India’s pacemen did the early damage, with Umesh Yadav picking up two wickets and Bhuvneshwar Kumar dismissing the in-form Australian skipper Steve Smith for 17 to leave the Aussies reeling on 31-3 inside 10 overs.

A short ball from Kumar hit the bottom edge of Smith’s bat before crashing onto the stumps in spectacular fashion.

Smith ended the four-Test series with 499 runs including three centuries, only the sixth visiting batsman to have scored so many hundreds in a series in India.

The spinners then got down to business on a lively track that offered plenty of bounce, with Ravichandran Ashwin also grabbing three wickets to help his side skittle out Australia for just 137 in the final session.

At stumps the top-ranked home side were 19-0, needing 87 more to win the match and clinch the Border-Gavaskar trophy with a 2-1 series scoreline.

With two days of play remaining and all their wickets intact, India appear all set to seal a memorable win, capping weeks of controversies and verbal volleys between the top sides. Day three also had its share of drama when Murali Vijay claimed a catch off Josh Hazlewood at the fog end of the Australian innings. Replays however showed the ball had spilled onto the grass.

CATCH DRAMA

TV cameras then showed Smith fuming in the dressing room and appearing to mumble angrily at Vijay’s attempt to claim the catch.

Australian batting coach Graeme Hick sought to play down the incident after the day’s play. “We were watching it on our own little pads and the ball definitely touched the ground,” Hick said. “Having fielded in slips myself, sometimes you’re not 100 per cent sure. He would have felt that go into his fingers and felt it was a clean catch. “At times this series has been heated but this game has been played in very good spirit.” India got their first breakthrough when Yadav had David Warner caught behind cheaply for six, just after the opener had been dropped in the slips by Karun Nair.

Nair had also dropped the same batsman in the first innings. Warner ended the four-Test series with an average of 24.12 — his lowest in a series of four or more matches, and his third lowest overall.

The Indian fast bowlers exploited the pace offered by the wicket to put relentless pressure on the batsmen.

Yadav also accounted for Matt Renshaw

before Glenn Maxwell put on 56 for the fourth wicket with Peter Handscomb to steady the ship briefly. But Handscomb was brilliantly caught by India’s stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane off Ashwin while Jadeja dismissed Shaun Marsh for one. Jadeja had played a crucial knock with the bat earlier in the day, starring in a seventh-wicket stand of 96 with Wriddhiman Saha (31) to

help India post 332 and swing the momentum their way. “You couldn’t have asked for more. Jadeja and Saha batted really well. This morning was really special. The way they batted was fantastic,” said Ashwin.

“I told Jadeja there was a hundred for the taking. He is a very talented batsman: if he puts his head down, he can get that hundred.” — AFP

SCOREBOARD

DHARAMSALA, India: Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the fourth and final Test between India and Australia in Dharamsala yesterday.			
Australia 1st innings: 300 (Smith 111, Wade 57, Warner 56; K. Yadav 4-68)		P. Handscomb c Rahane b Ashwin 18	
		G. Maxwell lbw b Ashwin 45	
India 1st innings (overnight 248-6):		S. Marsh c Pujara b Jadeja 1	
L. Rahul c Warner b Cummins 60		M. Wade not out 25	
M. Vijay c Wade b Hazlewood 11		P. Cummins c Rahane b Jadeja 12	
C. Pujara c Handscomb b Lyon 57		S. O'Keefe c Pujara b Jadeja 0	
A. Rahane c Smith b Lyon 46		N. Lyon c Vijay b U. Yadav 0	
K. Nair c Wade b Lyon 5		J. Hazlewood lbw b Ashwin 0	
R. Ashwin lbw b Lyon 30		Extras (b4, lb1) 5	
W. Saha c Smith b Cummins 31		Total (all out; 53.5 overs) 137	
R. Jadeja b Cummins 63		Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Warner), 2-31 (Smith), 3-31 (Renshaw), 4-87 (Handscomb), 5-92 (Marsh), 6-106 (Maxwell), 7-121 (Cummins), 8-121 (O'Keefe), 9-122 (Lyon), 10-137 (Hazlewood).	
B. Kumar c Smith b O'Keefe 0		Bowling: B. Kumar 7-1-27-1, U. Yadav 10-3-29-3, K. Yadav 5-0-23-0, Jadeja 18-7-24-3, Ashwin 13.5-4-29-3.	
K. Yadav c Hazlewood b Lyon 7			
U. Yadav not out 2			
Extras (b4, lb11, w5) 20			
Total (all out; 118.1 overs) 332			
Fall of wickets: 1-21 (Vijay), 2-108 (Rahul), 3-157 (Pujara), 4-167 (Nair), 5-216 (Rahane), 6-221 (Ashwin), 7-317 (Jadeja), 8-318 (Kumar), 9-318 (Saha), 10-332 (K. Yadav).			
Bowling: Hazlewood 25-8-51-1, Cummins 30-8-94-3, Lyon 34.1-5-92-5, O'Keefe 27-4-75-1, Maxwell 2-0-5-0.			
Australia 2nd innings:			
M. Renshaw c Saha b U. Yadav 8		India 2nd innings:	
D. Warner c Saha b U. Yadav 6		L. Rahul not out 13	
S. Smith b Kumar 17		M. Vijay not out 6	
		Extras (0) 0	
		Total (for no loss, 6 overs) 19	
		To bat: Pujara, Rahane, Nair, Ashwin, Saha, Jadeja, Kumar, K. Yadav, U. Yadav	
		Bowling: Cummins 3-1-14-0, Hazlewood 2-0-5-0, O'Keefe 1-1-0-0.	

AUSTRALIA BATTING COACH DEFENDS MISFIRING WARNER

DHARAMSALA: Australia opener David Warner will assess his performance after failing yet again to improve his poor away record in the test series against India, batting coach Graeme Hick said yesterday.

Warner averages nearly 60 at home but the number drops below 35 when the 30-year-old left-hander is batting abroad.

Fourteen of his 18 centuries came on home soil and the opener managed just one fifty in his eight innings in India. “Obviously David will be very disappointed with his aggregate on tour,” Hick told reporters after the third day’s play in the fourth and final test at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium. “He was desperate to have a very big tour and to have a very big influence here. Whether he put himself under a bit too much

pressure to do so, only he can answer that.

“He will reflect on it, as champions do, and feel and assess it himself. But without a doubt, he is one of our major players and you would have hoped for a little bit more from him.” Warner scored 56 in the first innings and six in the second and has struggled against the Indian spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja.

“It is tough up front (with) Jadeja bowling into the rough and Ashwin bowls really well at him. (They) certainly questioned him,” Hick said. “That’s the beauty of the game, it puts these challenges up between great players and makes it very interesting to watch. David will obviously be very disappointed with the way things have gone,” added the former England Test batsman. — Reuters



HAMILTON: Kane Williamson of New Zealand (R) bats as South Africa’s Quinton de Kock (L) looks on during day three of the third Test cricket match between New Zealand and South Africa at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday.—AFP

BANGLADESH EYE RARE AWAY GLORY IN S LANKA

DAMBULLA: Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Mortaza said yesterday he’s confident his side can secure a rare series win away from home when they face Sri Lanka in the second One Day International this week.

The tourists lead 1-0 going into today’s contest at Dambulla and know that victory would secure their third ever series win away from Bangladeshi soil.

Bangladesh dominated Sri Lanka with bat and ball during the opening game Saturday of the three-match series to clinch a crushing 90-run win against their more illustrious opponents.

A win on Tuesday would see them take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series. “I am fully confident we will play our best. It will give us a good chance (of victory),” said Mortaza. “They will try very hard too since they are 1-0 behind. They will try to push us from the start. They know how to play aggressive cricket. We have to execute our plans properly and start anew,” he added. Bangladesh have only ever beaten fellow-strugglers Zimbabwe and an under strength West Indies team in an away

series. But at home they have enjoyed a fine run of form lately, winning five consecutive series in the past two years before narrowly losing to England in October.

They failed to win a single match in their most recent away series in New Zealand however, although Mortaza said his teammates had learnt from the disappointment.

“New Zealand was difficult for us but that experience will work for us here,” he said. Sri Lanka, who are staring at a fifth consecutive ODI series loss against a Test nation, added fast bowlers Nuwan Kulasekera and Nuwan Pradeep to their squad due to fitness concerns over Suranga Lakmal. Team manager Asanka Gurusinha said Lakmal was likely to play tough and warned Bangladesh that his side were hurting from the humiliation of Saturday’s defeat. “(The) team is really pumped up after losing the first game. We know the pressure is on us because we don’t have any more chances,” he said.

“It’s like a main final for us. We are pretty confident that we can play much better than we did,” Gurusinha added. — AFP

SOCCER

SWEDISH FOOTBALL STILL WAITING FOR NEXT ‘ZLATAN’

STOCKHOLM: Swedes have a reputation as level-headed and patient, and it's just as well: they'll have to wait a while for a new "Zlatan" to suit up on the national football squad. Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Sweden's all-time high scorer with 62 goals, put an end to his 116-cap international career in June 2016. Since then, the team has had no star player of top international calibre to fill Ibrahimovic's shoes.

Some young hopefuls have however shown promise, like Emil Forsberg and Alexander Isak.

Commentators have repeated the phrase so often it's almost comical. "The next Zlatan. Or the new Zlatan, Zlatan

junior, Zlatan of the North ... It's a journalistic genre that's existed for almost 15 years," Swedish Radio sports commentator Johannes Finnlaugsson once joked. That was back in 2014, when no one came close to Ibrahimovic's star power on the Swedish squad.

Many young talents have been compared to him over the years, but none have lived up to expectations upon arriving in the big league. But 17-year-old wunderkind Alexander Isak hopes he'll be different. The AIK forward was sold to Borussia Dortmund in January for a reported 10 million euros (\$10.7m), just two weeks after becoming Sweden's youngest ever international

goalscorer. But despite that, Isak was not selected for Sweden's 4-0 win against Belarus on Saturday, nor for the friendly against Portugal on Tuesday in Funchal in the Azores. Instead, coach Janne Andersson called on Anderlecht's Isaac Kiese Thelin to replace striker John Guidetti. Thelin scored.

ISAK 'MAKING AN IMPRESSION'

"I want to play on the national team, and to do that I have to make a good impression," Isak told football channel Fotbollskanalen in January. But for now, he's setting his sights on the Euro Championships for the under-21s, where he's still a novice having made

the team just once. "I'm really keen. Obviously. This tournament would be my first, because I missed the Under-17 one in 2016 and I'm a little bitter about that. So my goal is to be in Poland this summer," he said. Swedish TV4 commentator Olof Lundh says he's following Isak's progress with Dortmund, where he's only played for a few minutes in the German Cup. "It's clear he's making an impression so it could go quickly," he told AFP. But for now, other, older players are trying to make up for the gaping hole left by Ibrahimovic's absence.

Wearing Ibra's old number 10 is 25-year-old offensive midfielder Emil Forsberg, who plays for another

Bundesliga club, RB Leipzig. He scored twice in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Belarus.

"Together with Victor Nilsson Lindelof, he's part of a new generation of players who have taken important roles in Janne Andersson's new team. They can become even better," Lundh told AFP. Lindelof, a 22-year-old defender, will feel at home against European champions Portugal on Tuesday—he has played for Benfica since 2012.

Last week he was preparing the game against Belarus when he learned that he had been elected to the Portuguese All-Star team by his peers. —AFP

KERBER REACHES MIAMI FOURTH ROUND, KEYS FALLS

MIAMI: Top seed Angelique Kerber advanced to the fourth round at the Miami Open on Sunday but eighth seed Madison Keys was sent packing.

On a day when Simona Halep, Svetlana Kuznetsova and Venus Williams also won their third round matches, Kerber did not have it all her own way against 61st-ranked American Shelby Rogers.

The German, however, proved too strong, breaking five times for a 6-4 7-5 win on the main stadium hardcourt at Crandon Park. "It's always good to have close sets, especially when you win them at the end. They give you confidence that you can go out in your next match knowing you can win close matches because you've just done it a day ago," Kerber told reporters.

"You win the match, you're always happy about your performance.

Keys, in her second event since returning from wrist surgery, was the only seed to lose on Sunday, falling to 72nd-ranked Spaniard Lara Arruabarrena 7-5 7-5.

Third seed Halep took less than an hour to polish off qualifier Anett Kontaveit of Estonia 6-3 6-0 with an aggressive performance that left the Romanian very

pleased. "I think I played my best match of the year," Halep told the WTA. "I was confident, and knew what I had to do ... everything went pretty well for me tonight.

"I felt good when I came to site and was sure that it was going to come together because I work every day. At one point, it has to come. "I felt the best that I have this year. I can move without pain or anything and I'm confident, which is the most important thing." Russian seventh seed Kuznetsova, the runner-up last year, stayed on track for another tilt at the championship when she beat American qualifier Taylor Townsend 6-4 6-2. A week after losing the Indian Wells final to compatriot Elena Vesnina, Kuznetsova's stronger second serve proved the difference as she was broken just once while breaking her opponent four times.

The next challenge for 2006 champion Kuznetsova will be 11th seed Venus Williams, a three-time Miami champion, who was far too good for Romanian qualifier Patricia Maria Tig 6-3 6-0.

British 10th seed Johanna Konta and Australian 14th seed Sam Stosur also won their third round matches, Stosur earning a date with Halep. — Reuters



KEY BISCAINE: Rafael Nadal, of Spain, returns the ball to Philipp Kohlschreiber, of Germany, during the Miami Opentennis tournament, Sunday, in Key Biscayne, Fla. — AP

TENNIS

NADAL WINS IN 1000TH MATCH, RAONIC WITHDRAWS WITH INJURY

MIAMI: Rafa Nadal celebrated his 1,000th tour level match with a come-from-behind victory over German veteran Philipp Kohlschreiber to reach the fourth round of the Miami Open on Sunday. World number 31 Kohlschreiber was on fire early, ripping through the first set in only 21 minutes but fifth seed Nadal flipped the switch and turned the match on its head to prevail 0-6 6-2 6-3 on the main stadium hard court at Crandon Park.

It was the first time Nadal had failed to win a game in the first set of an ATP tour match since 2008, the ATP said. The 30-year-old Spaniard ignited the near-capacity crowd with a typically determined comeback to clinch his 822nd career victory. He joins a small group of 11 players headed by Jimmy Connors (1,535) to have played at least 1,000 matches.

"One thousand matches is a lot of matches. Obviously that's good news because that says I am having a long career," Nadal told reporters.

"During a lot of years, I heard that I'm going to have a short career, so it's something important for me. I remember the first match very well because it was at home in Mallorca. It was my first victory on the ATP and was a great feeling."

Nadal said he had not done much wrong in the first set against an opponent who was in the zone. "He was doing everything good, so that's sport. I lose the set because he was playing too good. That's it." But a match is long and the positive thing is I held the pressure well this afternoon after a very tough first set. I resisted well in the first few games of the second set and then I think I played a great second and third set."

While Nadal played in the relative comfort of

the late afternoon, Kei Nishikori also took three sets and nearly three hours to advance under a high noon sun, outlasting Spain's Fernando Verdasco 7-6(2) 6-7(5) 6-1.

Nishikori, the runner-up to Novak Djokovic last year, fired 37 winners but Verdasco, aided by persistent swirling winds, used his varying pace and depth to rattle Japan's number one, inducing 48 unforced errors.

Milos Raonic withdrew before his match against American qualifier Jared Donaldson, blaming a persistent hamstring injury.

"It's related to the previous injury I sustained almost four weeks ago... in Delray Beach," the Canadian told reporters. Raonic said he would not return to the tour until he felt 100 percent fit.

"That could be in two weeks, that could be a little bit longer." — Reuters

GOLF

JOHNSON WINS MATCH PLAY TO SWEEP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

AUSTIN: The final day lasted longer than Dustin Johnson wanted. The outcome was what everyone expected. Johnson, a golfing machine with no discernible weakness and hardly any pulse, won the Dell Technologies Match Play on Sunday for his third straight victory, this one making him the first person to sweep the four World Golf Championships.

He had to work the hardest for this title. Johnson was taken to the 18th hole in the semi-final before making an 8-foot putt to beat Hideto Tanihara, and then Jon Rahm rallied from 5 down with 10 holes to play until his fearless charge fell short on the final hole.

Johnson tapped in a 30-inch putt for a 1-up victory, completing a dominant week in which he never trailed in the 112 holes he played over seven matches.

"What am I going to say that you guys don't know?" Rahm said. "If his putter had been hot, I wouldn't have had a chance, no question. ... It's amazing how he's able to keep cool the entire round. It amazes me. And he's just a perfect, complete player."

Johnson now has 15 victories in his career, six of them dating to his first major at the U.S. Open last summer at Oakmont. Three of them were World Golf Championships at the Bridgestone Invitational, the Mexico Championship and the Match Play. He won the HSBC Champions in Shanghai in 2013.

Asked to size up his feat, Johnson said, "Pretty good." There's really not much else to say. He led 94 percent of the holes he played at Austin Country Club, a tournament record. He won 46 of those 112 holes. When asked about his pulse on Saturday, Johnson said, "It's beating."

"It got a little faster than I would have liked starting on about 16," he said with a smile. "But I was able to hang in there." Johnson was 4 up with six holes to play when Rahm, a bold Spanish rookie with a big game, hit driver over the water and onto the 13th green to win the hole with a birdie. He stuck a wedge close on the 15th for another birdie. Rahm hit a shot through the trees on the 16th and won the hole with a 30-foot birdie. And just like that, he was 1

down with two holes to play. "I just made a swing as hard as I could," Rahm said. "And somehow the ball went under the first tee, rose just over the next one ... and went through to 100 yards. I don't know what happened. I think either Seve, God, someone right there or both of them just made a gap in the trees and made my ball go through there." Indeed, it was the kind of magic Spanish great Seve Ballesteros for so long produced. —AP



AUSTIN: Dustin Johnson poses with his trophy after defeating Jon Rahm, of Spain, at the Dell Technologies Match Play golf tournament at Austin County Club, Sunday, in Austin, Texas. —AP

LEE MI-RIM RUNS AWAY WITH LPGA KIA CLASSIC

LOS ANGELES: South Korean Lee Mi-Rim fired seven birdies in a seven-under par 65 on Sunday to post a record-equalling triumph in the LPGA Kia Classic in Carlsbad, California.

Lee's 20-under par total of 278 matched the tournament record set by Cristie Kerr in 2015 — when the American powered past Lee for a two-shot victory.

Determined not to be disappointed again, overnight leader Lee opened her round with a birdie and birdied every other hole on the front nine as she pulled away from the field.

She finished six strokes in front of compatriot Ryu So-Yeon, who carded a 66, and American Austin Ernst, who posted a 67. "I was a little nervous, but I made it," said Lee, who also added birdies at 15 and 16 before she was done.

Lee said her ball-striking was better this year than it was two years ago, when she couldn't hold on to her third-round lead. She claimed her third LPGA Tour victory and her first since winning twice in her rookie season of 2014.

Her total could have been even more impressive. At 16 she left an eagle

attempt short, and she had a good look at a long birdie at the last.

Throughout much of the round it was Ryu giving chase. She started the day five-strokes off Lee's lead, but pulled within three shots with three holes to play. Although she was unable to convert several birdie attempts on the back nine, world number five Ryu said she was encouraged by her performance.

"I think everything is right there," Ryu said. "I just need to keep it patient and need to trust myself I'm good. Even though I haven't won any tournament I just cannot really blame anything. I felt like everything is pretty great."

Ernst had five birdies in her bogey-free effort. She started the day four off the lead and said she kept an eye on the scoreboard where she saw Lee racing away from the field.

"She was at 20-under," Ernst said. "I knew at that point you're basically playing for second place unless she does something coming down the stretch."

"My game was really solid. Today was really a solid round of golf. Hit a bunch of greens. Gave myself a lot of the good looks." — AFP

KUWAIT TIMES NBA POWER RANKINGS

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: In addition to its usual coverage of the NBA, Kuwait Times introduces a new feature this year: the NBA Power Rankings. It is a weekly list ranking each team based on its performance during the week. The Cavs dropped out of the top five following a shaky performance this past week, making way for a new Eastern Conference contender to join the list of elites. (For any comments or suggestions, e-mail the writer at: a.jabr@kuwaittimes.net)



1- Golden State Warriors (59 - 14) Last week: 1 - The Warriors enter today ranking first in offensive rating, tied for first in defensive rating and also first in net rating. Needless to say, they are already in total postseason mode.



2- San Antonio Spurs (56 - 16) Last week: 2 - LaMarcus Aldridge has been surging since returning back from a minor heart arrhythmia, averaging 21.4 points in his last five games. The Spurs meanwhile have been exhibition the best defense in the league since the beginning of 2017.



3- Houston Rockets (51 - 22) Last week: 3 - James Harden won the MVP candidate showdown on Sunday against Russell Westbrook, helping the Rockers beat the Thunder for their fourth straight win and seventh in their last eight games.



4- Boston Celtics (48 - 26) Last week: 5 - The Celtics have moved within half a game for first place in the East's standings behind strong performance that saw them win seven of their last eight games. They have a chance to dethrone the Cavs when they visit them on April 5.



5- Washington Wizards (45 - 28) Last week: 6 - John Wall's 37 points helped the Wizards beat the Cavs on Saturday, but it is his remarkable defense that is drawing much of the attention towards him. He has held the Thunder's Russell Westbrook to his lowest field goal percentage this season (20 percent).



6- Cleveland Cavaliers (47 - 25) Last week: 4 - The Cavs have allowed their opponents to score an average of 117.2 points in their last five games, of which they have lost three, including a tough defeat to the Wizards. They remain half a game ahead of Boston in the East's standings, and the two teams face each other on April 5.



7- Toronto Raptors (44 - 29) Last week: 9 - The addition of Serge Ibaka and PJ Tucker has improved the Raptors' defense significantly. The team currently ranks eighth in the league in defensive efficiency, and second since the All-Star break. Combine that with DeMar DeRozan's consistent scoring (he scored 40 in back-to-back games last week for the first time in his career) and Toronto enters today on a five-game winning streak and have punched their ticket to the playoffs for the fourth consecutive year.



8- Utah Jazz (44 - 29) Last week: 7 - Despite winning only one of their last five games, the Jazz clinched a playoffs' spot for the first time since 2012. Their underwhelming performance as of late has led center Rudy Gobert to call out some of his teammates for 'lack of competitiveness.'



9- Oklahoma City Thunder (41 - 31) Last week: 8 - Russell Westbrook recorded his 36th triple-double of the season in Sunday's loss to the Rockets. He needs to make five in Oklahoma City's next 10 games in order to tie Oscar Robertson's single-season record.



10- Los Angeles Clippers (44 - 31) Last week: 10 - One day after beating the Jazz and clinching a playoff berth for the sixth straight season, the Clippers lost the Kings on Sunday after blowing an 18-point lead with five minutes remaining in the game.



11- Milwaukee Bucks (37 - 36) Last week: 12 - Milwaukee has wrapped a 4-2 West Coast road trip that included wins against the Clippers and Blazers, firmly putting them in a tie with Atlanta for fifth place in the East's standings.



12- Portland Trail Blazers (35 - 38) Last week: 14 - The Blazers have won six of their last seven games, and took advantage of Denver's latest defeat to take over the eighth and final postseason-qualifying position in the West's standings.



13- Miami Heat (35 - 38) Last week: 11 - The Heat, who lost three of their last four games, hopes to have injured guard Dion Waiters back before the end of the regular season as they look to keep a hold on the eighth spot in the East's standings amid a strong push from Chicago.



14- Denver Nuggets (35 - 38) Last week: 13 - The Nuggets logged impressive wins against the Cavs and Pacers last week, before a loss to the Pelicans on Sunday cost them the eighth spot in the West's standings less than a month before the playoffs.



15- Indiana Pacers (37 - 36) Last week: 18 - The Pacers enter today in seventh place in the East's standings, and their success this season combined with offseason roster moves



could determine Paul George's future with the franchise next year.

16- Chicago Bulls (35 - 39) Last week: 20 - The Bulls are making a surprise late surge towards the postseason after many people have ruled them out as a playoff contender following Dwyane Wade's injury.



17- Memphis Grizzlies (40 - 33) Last week: 15 - The Grizzlies dropped to seventh place in the West's standings after losing three consecutive games following a four-game winning streak. This is far from the consistent performance the team had shown in the past few years.



18- Atlanta Hawks (37 - 36) Last week: 16 - The Hawks are struggling heavily playing without injured forward Paul Millsap. They lost their last seven games, including a humbling defeat to last-place Nets on Sunday.



19- Dallas Mavericks (31 - 41) Last week: 17 - Not only are Dallas' playoff hopes fading, but they currently face the risk of having a losing season for the first time in 16 years. The last sub-.500 season was 1999-00, and Mark Cuban became owner of the team in January 2000.



20- New Orleans Pelicans (31 - 42) Last week: 21 - The Pelicans virtually need a miracle to make it to the post-season this year, but here is an off topic note: since they traded for DeMarcus Cousins, they are 5-8 with him in the lineup, and 3-0 without him.



21- Charlotte Hornets (33 - 40) Last week: 23 - Winners of four of their last five games, the Hornets still have a chance to make it to the playoffs, but in order to do so, they have to overcome a tough schedule ahead that includes games against the Bucks, Raptors, Thunder, Wizards, Heat and Celtics.



22- Detroit Pistons (34 - 39) Last week: 19 - The Pistons find themselves in no man's land. After holding the eighth spot in the East for a while, they dropped to tenth place after managing only one win in their last seven games.



23- Orlando Magic (27 - 46) Last week: 27 - Elfrid Payton is the youngest player to record four triple-doubles in a month since LeBron James had four in November 2007 at the age of 22 (per the Elias Sports Bureau).



24- Philadelphia 76ers (27 - 46) Last week: 24 - With his 32 points in Friday's win over the Bulls, the 76ers' Dario Saric joined teammate Joel Embiid as the second pair of rookies in franchise history to have 30-point games in the same season (per the Elias Sports Bureau).



25- Brooklyn Nets (16 - 57) Last week: 25 - One positive thing that can be taken from the Nets' miserable season is that at least the players learned how to play together as a team. Bench scoring has been significant in helping Brooklyn win three of their last four games.



26- Minnesota Timberwolves (28 - 44) Last week: 22 - The Wolves have allowed their opponents to score an average of 117.5 points during their current six-game losing streak. Defensive-guru Tom Thibodeau likely needs to work more with the team on that department during the offseason.



27- Sacramento Kings (28 - 45) Last week: 28 - The Kings need to focus in the offseason on the development of Skal Labissiere, in hopes of unlocking the great potential of pairing him with center Willie Cauley-Stein next year.



28- New York Knicks (27 - 46) Last week: 26 - The Knicks shift their attention to the offseason amid uncertainty surrounding most members of the roster given coach Jeff Hornacek's recent reiteration that he will fully commit to the triangle offense next season.



29- Los Angeles Lakers (21 - 52) Last week: 30 - The Lakers unveiled a bronze statue for Shaquille O'Neal outside the Staples Center on Friday. 'Shaq' has earned himself the moniker of the franchise's most dominant big man, which is saying a lot for a franchise where legendary centers including Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Wilt Chamberlain have also seen great success with.



30- Phoenix Suns (22 - 52) Last week: 29 - I was going to write about Phoenix starting the youngest lineup in NBA history on Thursday, before Devin Booker went off on a 70-point barrage on Friday, becoming the sixth NBA player ever to score that much and the youngest ever to do so.



LOS ANGELES: Sacramento Kings guard Buddy Hield, center, and forward Anthony Tolliver, left, celebrate after center Willie Cauley-Stein, rear second left, scored the go-ahead basket with 1.8 seconds left in an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Clippers, Sunday, in Los Angeles. The Kings won 98-97. —AP

BASKETBALL

KINGS RALLY FROM 18 DOWN IN FOURTH TO STUN CLIPPERS

LOS ANGELES: Willie Cauley-Stein scored on a putback with 1.8 seconds remaining, allowing the Sacramento Kings to stun the Los Angeles Clippers 98-97 at Staples Center on Sunday. Darren Collison scored 19 points to lead the Kings, who trailed by as many as 18 points in the fourth quarter. Kings rookie guard Buddy Hield, who hit two clutch three-pointers in the rally, and forward Anthony Tolliver each had 15 points. DeAndre Jordan collected 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Clippers, while Chris Paul had 17 points and nine assists. The loss prevented the Clippers from pulling into a tie with the idle Utah Jazz for the fourth seed in the Western Conference.

CELTICS 112, HEAT 108

Boston held off a late Miami charge and moved into a virtual tie for first place in the Eastern Conference with a victory over the Heat. The win moved Boston to just four percentage points behind the idle Cleveland Cavaliers for the top seed in the conference. The teams meet April 5 in Boston. Isaiah Thomas, the league's leading fourth-quarter scorer, tallied eight points in the final 4:58 after the Celtics, who rallied from a 15-point first-half deficit, blew a nine-point fourth-quarter lead and trailed by two with 4:13 remaining.

PACERS 107, 76ERS 94

Paul George scored 21 points to lead seven Pacers in double figures as Indiana beat Philadelphia at Bankers Life Fieldhouse. Myles Turner contributed 17 points and a team-high 16 rebounds. Also in double figures for the Pacers were Jeff Teague (16 points) and Al Jefferson (14). C.J. Miles, Monta Ellis and Aaron Brooks each scored 10 points. Jefferson suffered a leg injury with 9:43 left in the fourth quarter. He was taken to the locker room in a wheelchair. Indiana snapped a two-game losing streak and moved into a three-way tie with Atlanta and Milwaukee for the No. 5 spot in Eastern Conference.

HORNETS 120, SUNS 106

Kemba Walker had 31 points and nine assists to lead Charlotte. The Hornets pounced on the Suns quickly, racing to leads of 17-1, 22-3 and 30-7 before eventually leading 38-18 after one quarter. The Hornets went on to lead by as many as 25 in what was their second wire-to-wire victory of the season. Charlotte has won four of its last five and continues to hang around in the Eastern Conference playoff race with nine games remaining.

NETS 107, HAWKS 92

Veterans Jeremy Lin and Brook Lopez combined for 42 points to help Brooklyn outlast short-handed and struggling Atlanta, handing it a seventh straight loss. Lopez had 23 points and seven rounds and Lin scored 19 points, his most since getting a season-high 24 on March 14. Lin added eight assists, two steals and four rebounds for the Nets. Brooklyn has won three of its last four, improved to 8-8 in March and broke a five-game losing streak in Atlanta.

ROCKETS 137, THUNDER 125

Lou Williams paced a quartet of 20-point scorers for the Rockets in their win. Williams finished with 31 points on 11-of-15 shooting, hitting 7 of 8 3-pointers to help carry the Rockets to their third win in four meetings with the Thunder this season. Aid came in the form of guards James Harden (22 points, 12 assists) and Eric Gordon (24 points on 4-of-9 3-point shooting), and forward Trevor Ariza, who made 9-of-11 shots while also chipping in 24 points. Houston shot a robust 63.3 percent from the floor. Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook recorded his league-leading 36th triple-double. He finished with 39 points, 11 rebounds and 13 assists.

BULLS 109, BUCKS 94

Nikola Mirotic hit six three-pointers and scored 28 points on 11-of-14 shooting for the Bulls. Jimmy Butler scored 20 points while adding 14 of the Bulls' 33 assists. Robin Lopez and

Rajon Rondo each scored 18 points for Chicago, with the latter adding nine rebounds and nine assists. Giannis Antetokounmpo led Milwaukee with 22 points.

PELICANS 115, NUGGETS 90

Anthony Davis scored 31 points and grabbed 15 rebounds in only 28 minutes to lead New Orleans to a victory over Denver. Jrue Holiday and Jordan Crawford each scored 13 points, and the bench contributed 49 as the Pelicans earned their sixth win in eight games. New Orleans is now four games behind the Nuggets for the eighth spot in the Western Conference. The Pelicans won without DeMarcus Cousins, who sat out due to an ankle injury. Cousins got hurt Friday during New Orleans' 117-107 loss to the Houston Rockets and was still sore at the Sunday morning shootaround.

WARRIORS 106, GRIZZLIES 94

Stephen Curry contributed two three-pointers to a 14-5 fourth-quarter run that enabled Golden State to pull away from Memphis en route to a victory. Curry finished with 21 points and Klay Thompson a game-high 31 for the Warriors, who extended the league's longest active winning streak to seven games while squaring the season series 2-2 with the Grizzlies. Mike Conley had 29 points and a team-high six assists for Memphis, which lost ground in its pursuit of the fifth and sixth playoff spots in the West.

TRAIL BLAZERS 97, LAKERS 81

Damian Lillard led the way with 22 points, and Portland cruised past Los Angeles at Staples Center. Allen Crabbe added 18 points and CJ McCollum contributed 13 as the Trail Blazers beat the Lakers for the 12th consecutive time. Portland has won seven in a row over Los Angeles at Staples. The win allowed the Trail Blazers to tie the Denver Nuggets for eighth place in the Western Conference race. D'Angelo Russell led the Lakers with 22 points. —Reuters

MAYE HITS LATE JUMPER TO LIFT NORTH CAROLINA TO FINAL FOUR

MEMPHIS: Roy Williams went all "Gone With the Wind" when a player asked about his North Carolina Tar Heels making the last shot Sunday to edge Kentucky to the Final Four.

And the coincidence that the Tar Heels have been on the other end of similar shots recently, like in the 2016 national championship and a wild December game against the Wildcats.

"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a ...," Williams said with a smile, quoting Clark Gable's famed line as Rhett Butler. "I didn't care what he was talking about." Luke Maye hit a jumper with 0.3 seconds left and top-seeded North Carolina held off Kentucky 75-73 to earn the Tar Heels' second straight trip to the Final Four, winning a showdown of college basketball's elite in the South Regional.

The national semifinal will be the 20th for North Carolina, where the Tar Heels (31-7) will play Midwest champ Oregon on Saturday in Glendale, Arizona. North Carolina took control with 12 straight points over the final 5 minutes, a run similar to what it used a week ago to beat Arkansas. The Tar Heels finished this game with a 16-9 run. Kentucky's freshmen De'Aaron Fox hit a 3 and Malik Monk quickly added two more, one with 7.2 seconds left and defenders in his face to tie the game at 73.

"I probably should have called time out," Kentucky coach John Calipari said. "It entered my mind, but they got that son of a B in so quick, I couldn't get to anybody to do it. I needed to stop that right there." Theo Pinson drove enough toward the basket to pick off Maye's defender, then passed back to Maye. The sophomore from Huntersville, North Carolina, knocked it down for the win with his feet on the 3-point line. "I just kind of stepped back, and he gave me the ball and I just shot it, and luckily it went in," Maye said. "It was a great feeling." Maye finished with a career-high 17 points off the bench for North Carolina. Justin Jackson scored 19 points, and Joel Berry II added 11 on a sprained left ankle. The Wildcats had one last chance, but Derek Willis' inbounds pass went out of bounds on the far end. Kentucky (32-6) will miss out on the Final Four for the second straight year. Willis and sophomore Isaac Humphries left the court with towels over their heads, and Fox was the last to leave.

The Wildcats had hoped their talented freshmen would carry them. Bam Adebayo and Fox each had 13 points, and Monk, the Southeastern Conference player of the year, finished with 12. Fox and Adebayo wept side by side in the locker room. "That shot is just playing back and

forth in my head," Fox said. "It's going to be difficult to get over." Never before had the NCAA Tournament pitted powerhouse programs that have so dominated March. This South final featured Kentucky with the most tournament wins all-time with 124 and North Carolina just behind with 120 (now 121).

This was just the fourth time these blue bloods have met in a regional final. The result was much the same as the others, with North Carolina now 3-1 against Kentucky as the Tar Heels avenged a 103-100 loss on Dec. 17 in Las Vegas.

Kentucky led for less than 4 minutes in a game North Carolina had a big edge on the boards (44-34) and inside, where the Tar Heels outscored the Wildcats 34-26.

Officials didn't help the flow of this game calling fouls left and right, though Kentucky took the brunt with its star trio of freshmen all picking up two fouls each in the half. Fox played only 8 minutes of the first half after picking up his second foul with 12:23 left. Adebayo easily was the most frustrated as he missed all five shots in the half with Kennedy Meeks swatting away one of his dunk attempts.

North Carolina led by as much as 9 a couple times before both teams went into shooting slumps. The Tar Heels led 38-33 at halftime. —AP

JAPAN WARY AS THEY LOOK TO BATTER THAI MINNOWS

TOKYO: Japan coach Vahid Halilhodzic has told his players they will "carry the future of Japanese football on their shoulders" when they face Thailand in a World Cup qualifier today.

No pressure there, then. Further turning up the heat on his own side, the firebrand Franco-Bosnian also warned Monday against over-confidence, insisting that the visitors were more than capable of punishing any slackness from Japan.

"We must not underestimate Thailand," Halilhodzic told reporters in Saitama. "I've watched all their games and they can play. We will need to be focused and put in a real shift."

Halilhodzic has taken pains to keep Japan grounded since last week's 2-0 victory in the United Arab Emirates moved them closer to a sixth successive World Cup. The Blue Samurai are level on points with Saudi Arabia at the top of Group B and are expected to brush aside

Thailand, even with captain Makoto Hasebe sidelined with a knee injury.

"Winning in the Emirates has put us in a privileged position," said Halilhodzic. "But it will mean nothing if we blow it against Thailand."

Japan trail Saudi Arabia on goal difference, with both teams on 13 points from six games and four to play in the final round of Asian qualifying for the 2018 Russia World Cup.

"Fame and majesty rest on this game,"

Halilhodzic waxed lyrically. His team are trying to strengthen their grip on one of the group's two automatic qualifying spots ahead of Asian Cup holders Australia, who lurk behind them in third.

"We have the future of Japanese football on our shoulders, so we have to fight for it. "People seem to think Thailand will be pushovers," added the 64-year-old. "Well, they won't be. We will need to show real heart." Further injuries to midfielder Yasuyuki Konno and forward Yuya

Osako have added an unwanted twist to Japan's preparations, exposing a worrying lack of depth to the former Asian champions.

"We don't have a player who can carry the team," admitted Halilhodzic. "There isn't a player who will dribble past five defenders. But if the players aren't motivated, then there's a problem."

"We are in a difficult moment but it's up to the team to come together and step up."—AFP

LIPPI SAYS CHINA MUST KEEP MOMENTUM

BEIJING: China's fledgling revival under Marcello Lippi will be tested by Asia's top team Iran in World Cup qualifying today, while Australia need to return to winning ways when they play UAE. China shocked South Korea 1-0 last week for their first win of Asia's final qualifying groups, and Lippi says there is much more to come from Team Dragon. Elsewhere Japan host Thailand, South Korea play Syria and table-topping Saudi Arabia entertain Iraq as the road to Russia 2018 heads towards its conclusion. Lippi, who coached Italy to World Cup victory in 2006, has been hailed as a hero for fashioning China's rare win over South Korea, which hauled them off the foot of Group A with four games to go.

He said China now need to maintain their momentum. They now lie five points back from an automatic berth and have games to come against Syria, Uzbekistan and Qatar, after their trip to Tehran.

"We worked hard to get the three points



Marcello Lippi

we needed (against South Korea)," said the 68-year-old Italian, according to Xinhua news agency. "But it is not enough to win a ticket to the World Cup. We need to continue this momentum and win the following matches." Lippi added: "We still have room to improve. We didn't play the same level as we did in the last match against Qatar."

However, playing Carlos Queiroz's Iran

away is a different proposition to last week's home game in Changsha, and Lippi said China cannot afford to sit back in the Azadi Stadium.

CAHILL NOT 'FLINCHING'

"In the first half, we played too defensively when we were under pressure. I don't want to see the same 45 minutes in the following matches any more," he said.

"In the second half, my team was well organised in defence and created several chances to score. We still have much work to do." Meanwhile Tim Cahill remains bullish about Australia's prospects despite a run of four straight draws which has put their automatic qualification in doubt. The Saudis and Japan are level on points at the top of Group A, occupying the two automatic spots, with Australia three points behind in third and currently in line for a place in the play-offs.

But Cahill, Australia's record scorer, said he took heart from their victory at the 2015 Asian Cup, which followed a run of indifferent results. "Leading into the Asian Cup I think everyone was worried and thought we had no chance, and we ended up lifting the trophy," Cahill told the team website. "When Ange said we would lift it six months prior I know it was hard for people to believe, but me, Mile (Jedinak), Millsy (Mark Milligan), Bresc (Mark Bresciano), we didn't bat an eyelid. "I don't think I'll be flinching much now."

The game in Sydney is shaping as a must-win for UAE, whose 2-0 defeat to Japan last week left them fourth in the group and piled pressure on their coach, Mahdi Ali. Ismail Matar, who skippered the side last week, told The National newspaper "this is for the federation (to decide)", when asked about Ali's future. "Our coach is with us now, so we have to face the problems together. We have to focus on the next game together and that is it," Matar was quoted as saying, adding that the players remained behind Ali. —AFP



YPANE: Paraguayan national football team players Angel Romero (L) Cecilio Dominguez (C) and Santiago Salcedo take part in a training session at the Complejo Albiroga training centre in Ypane, near Asuncion, on Sunday, ahead of a World Cup 2018 South American qualifier match against Brazil today. — AFP

SOCCER

TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE? BUOYANT BRAZIL ON BRINK OF WORLD CUP

MONTEVIDEO: A buoyant Brazil could book their place at the 2018 World Cup today while Argentina will attempt to give their qualifying campaign more breathing space with a game at altitude against Bolivia.

After sinking into a protracted depression after the trauma of their humiliating 2014 World Cup exit, Brazil have undergone a transformation since new manager Tite took over last year.

Tite, who was appointed after the debacle of the 2016 Copa America Centenario, when Brazil failed to qualify from the group stage, has overseen a record-breaking run of seven straight wins. The latest of those victories came on Thursday, when Brazil shrugged off an early Edinson Cavani goal to destroy Uruguay 4-1 in Montevideo.

That win marked a new record for Brazil in qualifiers, surpassing the six straight victories recorded by the fabled Pele-led team which went on to win the 1970 World Cup in Mexico.

Brazil's magnificent run of form under Tite means they now lead the South American standings with 30 points from 13 games, seven points clear of second placed Uruguay who have 23 points. It is all a far cry from the state of the table last September. When Tite took charge of his first qualifying game, Brazil were languishing in sixth place overall, with only nine points from six games. But today, if Brazil beat Paraguay in Sao Paulo, and Chile and both Ecuador and Chile lose their games, the five-time World Cup-winners will have secured their berth in Russia.

Tite meanwhile has attempted to keep the soaring optimism that accompanied Brazil's revival in check, insisting that he is not a miracle-worker. "If people want a perfect coach, they should look elsewhere, because at some point I'm going to make a mistake," Tite said following Thursday's rout of historical rivals Uruguay.

BALANCED ATTACK

Arguably, Tite's most significant achievement since taking charge is to make Brazil less reliant on Barcelona superstar Neymar.

While Neymar has flourished under Tite-scoring five times in qualifying since the former Corinthians coach took over-the "Selecao" is now a more rounded attacking force.

Goals have arrived from all areas, with China-based midfielder Paulinho-one of the most maligned players of Brazil's ill-fated 2014 World Cup campaign — conjuring an improbable hat-trick against Uruguay last week.

Yet if Brazil's passage to Russia is now a formality, the situation is anything but straightforward for the chasing pack.

Argentina hauled themselves back into the qualifying places on Thursday with a battling 1-0 win over Chile.

The Argentinians will attempt to build on that crucial victory when the travel to the thin air of La Paz to face Bolivia today.

The city's Estadio Hernando Siles is situated some 3,600 metres (11,800 ft) above sea level, and was the scene of a famous 6-1 Argentinian defeat in qualifiers for the 2010 World Cup.

In qualifying for the 2014 World Cup, Lionel Messi was left vomiting at half-time while Angel Di Maria needed to be given oxygen on the pitch before Argentina ground out a 1-1 draw.

Failure to beat Bolivia on Tuesday could see Argentina fall out of the automatic qualifying

positions once more, if Colombia beat Ecuador in Quito and reigning South American champions Chile down bottom team Venezuela in Santiago. Chile, back-to-back winners of the Copa America in 2015 and 2016, are currently outside the qualifying places following last week's defeat in Buenos Aires.

Captain Claudio Bravo vowed 'La Roja' would go all out to secure victory against Venezuela.

"We will be more aggressive at home, for sure," Bravo said. The fact that Chile dominated Argentina for long periods on Thursday has left the squad encouraged, the Manchester City goalkeeper added.

"We lost but analysis of the game leaves us strengthened, because we are convinced that by playing this way we will reach the World Cup," Bravo said. —AFP

PREVIEW

THIAGO IS SPAIN'S HEIR TO XAVI BUT A PAINFUL REMINDER FOR BARCA

MADRID: Barcelona and Spain have been searching for a player to hold their teams together like glue, orchestrating the midfield as Xavi Hernandez used to do for club and country. Bayern Munich midfielder Thiago Alcantara seems the natural heir to Xavi, who left Barcelona in 2015 having retired from Spanish international the previous year.

But although Julien Lopetegui has made the 25-year-old Thiago a key cog in Spain's midfield, it is significantly harder for Barcelona to bring back their former player.

He left in 2013 for 24 million euros (\$26.1 million) and Spanish media reported on Monday that Bayern have quoted the Catalans an eye-watering 90 million to re-sign him.

Barcelona did not do enough to persuade Thiago to stay, with Bayern pouncing to sign a player who was keen to link up again with former manager Pep Guardiola, this time at the Allianz Arena.

"Pep has always had a lot of faith in me, and me in him, so if he was still the coach then yes (I probably would have stayed)," Thiago said at the time. Lopetegui has long been a fan of Thiago, who was one of the best players when the coach led Spain to the Under-21 European Championship trophy in 2013.

Thiago scored a hat-trick in the final as Spain beat Italy 4-2 and Lopetegui has now made him a key part of his midfield in the senior team, ahead of midfielders including Isco and Koke. With Xavi retired and his long-time partner Andres Iniesta, entering his final years at the top level, the onus is on the likes of Thiago to assume the mantle.

He started as Spain beat Israel 4-1 in a World Cup qualifier on Friday and may feature in the friendly against France today in Paris.

Several of the players from Lopetegui's U-21 team are establishing themselves in the Spain side, including David de Gea and Alvaro Morata, but to safeguard the intricate passing style that led the country to 2010 World Cup and Euro 2008 and 2012 glory, the midfield maestro is essential. That is why Barcelona are also attempting to recapture a player who has improved significantly under Carlo Ancelotti's guidance in Munich, although reports in Germany suggest Bayern are ready to offer him a new deal.

If Thiago does succeed with Spain, Barcelona will have an uncomfortable reminder of what might have been for them - unless they are willing to pay a high price to bring him back to the Nou Camp. —Reuters



FUNCHAL: Sweden's headcoach Jan Andersson gestures during a press conference at Estadio do Maritimo in Funchal, Madeira island, yesterday, on the eve of the friendly football match Portugal vs Sweden. — AFP



CLUJ-NAPOCA: Mihai Pintilii (R) of Romania vies with Martin Braithwaite (L) of Denmark during the FIFA World Cup 2018 qualification football match between Romania and Denmark in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, on Sunday. — AFP

Sports

Kyle Larson
hangs on to
win at Fontana



Kerber reaches
Miami fourth
round, Keys falls



TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2017

TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE? BUOYANT BRAZIL ON BRINK OF WORLD CUP

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PITTSBURGH: Pittsburgh Penguins goalie Matt Murray (30) blocks a shot as Justin Schultz (4) defends Philadelphia Flyers' Valtteri Filppula (51) in the first period of an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh, Sunday. — AP

NHL

FLYERS BOOST WILD CARD HOPE, BEAT PENGUINS

PITTSBURGH: Jakub Voracek and Dale Weise sparked Philadelphia's four-goal third period as the Flyers beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 6-2 in the NHL on Sunday night. Jordan Weal scored his fifth goal in the first period and Valtteri Filppula his ninth in the second, then the Flyers broke it open in the third. Weise got his fifth of the season and Voracek his 19th before Radko Gudas and Shayne Gostisbehere capped the scoring. Steve Mason stopped 25 shots for the Flyers, who won for the fourth time in seven games. Philadelphia is six points behind Boston for the second Eastern Conference wild card, with three teams ahead of them and seven games left. The Flyers had won three of their previous nine games, including a home shutout against Pittsburgh. Matt Murray made 27 saves for the Penguins, who missed out on an opportunity to move a point behind the Washington Capitals for the top spot in the Metropolitan Division. Matt Cullen and Patric Hornqvist scored.

RED WINGS 3, WILD 2, OT

Andreas Athanasiou scored 1:52 into overtime and lifted the Detroit Red Wings over the reeling Minnesota Wild. Jimmy Howard made the game-winning goal possible by making one of his 24 saves. Red Wings forward Gustav Nyquist got the rebound and made a long pass to set up Athanasiou, who faked out Devan Dubnyk with a

move before flipping the puck into the net. The Wild have lost eight of nine and are 3-10-1 in March. They still clinched a playoff spot late Saturday night when the Los Angeles Kings lost to the New York Rangers. The Wild extended their postseason streak to five under first-year coach Bruce Boudreau. Mike Green and Tomas Tatar also scored for Detroit. Dubnyk finished with 16 saves and Eric Staal and Nate Prosser scored for Minnesota.

STARS 2, DEVILS 1, OT

Tyler Seguin scored on a power play 20 seconds into overtime as the Dallas Stars rallied to beat the New Jersey Devils. Ales Hemsky also scored a power-play goal with 6:36 left in regulation as the Stars came back to avoid being eliminated from playoff contention. Kari Lehtonen made 20 saves for Dallas, including a stop on a short-handed breakaway attempt by Blake Pietila about a minute before Hemsky tied the game. Blake Coleman, who was born in Plano, Texas, scored his first NHL goal for New Jersey. Keith Kinkaid made 30 saves.

JETS 2, CANUCKS 1

Michael Hutchinson made 28 saves and Adam Lowry scored a power-play goal in the third period to lift the Winnipeg Jets past the Vancouver Canucks. Lowry scored the go-ahead goal with

8:13 to go, keeping the Jets mathematically alive in the playoff picture - although one loss or one win by St. Louis the rest of the season would knock Winnipeg out of contention. Mathieu Perreault also scored for Winnipeg. Alexander Edler had the only goal for Vancouver, while Ryan Miller made 30 saves.

DUCKS 6, RANGERS 3

Andrew Coglianone scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period and Jonathan Bernier made 25 saves as the Anaheim Ducks won their fourth straight game by beating Henrik Lundqvist and the New York Rangers. Patrick Eaves scored two goals and Ryan Getzlaf had four assists as Anaheim moved two points ahead of idle San Jose and Edmonton for first place in the Pacific Division with seven games remaining. Josh Manson had a short-handed goal and Ryan Kesler scored on the power play for the Ducks, who improved to 8-1-1 in their last 10 games. Lundqvist made 28 saves in his first start since suffering a hip injury on March 7, and Brady Skjei, Derek Stepan and Rick Nash each scored for the Rangers. New York could have clinched a playoff spot with a win. Coglianone alertly raced in to score on a rebound after a faceoff between Kesler and Stepan sent the puck off Lundqvist, and Eaves doubled the Ducks' lead 2:04 later. Nick Ritchie added an empty-net goal with 1:38 remaining. — AP

NHL results/standings

Anaheim 6, NY Rangers 3; Winnipeg 2, Vancouver 1; Philadelphia 6, Pittsburgh 2; Dallas 2, New Jersey 1 (OT); Detroit 3, Minnesota 2 (OT).

Western Conference							Central Division							Metropolitan Division						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS														
Chicago	48	21	6	225	192	102	Ottawa	41	25	8	194	191	90	Washington	49	17	8	238	163	106
Minnesota	44	24	7	240	190	95	Toronto	35	24	15	227	219	85	Columbus	48	19	7	232	171	103
Nashville	38	25	11	222	205	87	Boston	39	30	6	214	202	84	Pittsburgh	46	18	11	258	211	103
St. Louis	40	28	6	207	199	86	Tampa Bay	36	29	9	205	206	81	NY Rangers	46	26	4	241	201	96
Winnipeg	34	35	7	225	241	75	Florida	33	30	11	193	209	77	NY Islanders	35	27	12	218	225	82
Dallas	31	33	11	206	238	73	Buffalo	31	32	12	188	216	74	Carolina	33	27	13	193	208	79
Colorado	20	51	3	145	249	43	Detroit	30	32	12	184	217	72	Philadelphia	35	32	8	197	220	78
Pacific Division							Atlantic Division							Eastern Conference						
Anaheim	41	23	11	199	185	93	Montreal	42	24	9	204	187	93							
San Jose	42	26	7	201	182	91														
Edmonton	41	25	9	223	195	91														
Calgary	42	29	4	207	202	88														
Los Angeles	35	32	7	180	186	77														
Vancouver	30	36	9	172	219	69														
Arizona	27	39	9	180	240	63														

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



QUITO: Ecuador' national soccer team trains in Quito, Ecuador, Sunday. Ecuador will face Colombia for a 2018 World Cup Russia qualifier soccer match in Quito today. — AP

WIN OR LOSE, CHINESE FANS EXPECTED TO FLOCK TO RUSSIA

HONG KONG: Chinese fans are expected to travel to the 2018 World Cup finals in record numbers with the growing interest in soccer and a cordial relationship with hosts Russia seen as key factors, despite the national side's failings on the pitch. China have only played at one World Cup and the current team face an uphill battle to book a berth at the next one, but Feng Tao, chief executive officer of marketing and events firm Shankai, believes fans will flock to Russia regardless. "We are confident we can bring more fans to Russia because of the relationship between Russia and China," said Feng, whose company has signed an exclusive deal with BH Hospitality to sell travel packages for the tournament to the Chinese market. "The countries are very close, it's much easier to go to Russia than it was to go to Brazil, which took 24 or 25 hours, or to South Africa, which took 14 or 15 hours. To go to Russia takes only seven hours from China, so it's easier.

"Historically, there's a good relationship between China and Russia and now football has become part of the mentality of the Chinese people. Businessmen, the media and fans are showing strong interest in the World Cup. "Until now, the majority have only been able to follow the World Cup on television but now there's going to be the opportunity for them to travel to watch and for them to see a World Cup." While the figures are unlikely to eclipse the numbers who travelled to South Korea to watch China play in 2002 — as many as 100,000 were believed to have seen the side's World Cup debut-Shankai are expecting 50,000 packages to be sold to Chinese fans as part of the expected \$25 million deal. The projected figure represents the most for a World Cup that does not feature the Chinese team, a significant upswing on the numbers sold for the 2014 World Cup finals, when 3,000 packages-mainly at the highest end-were sold.

"The fans who went to Brazil were spending more money," says John Parker, managing director of BH Hospitality. "But what we are seeing in China is that they are waking up to the passion of sport and, because of the internet especially, they are now able to access everything they require and they are comfortable doing that. "Tourism between Russia and China is very strong and the Chinese population is falling in love with soccer. "The World Cup is the highest point of the game and Chinese fans will be able to go to Russia without any problems because the relationship between the two countries is so strong and healthy. "China is going to be a growth market. It's already developing from where it was historically." China are currently fifth in the six-team Group A of Asian World Cup qualifying on five points from six matches and travel to Tehran to face leaders Iran today, where a defeat will likely end their chances of advancing to the finals.— Reuters

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United Airlines defended the gate agent's

secure rights for themselves, in a country where so-called honor killings and acid attacks remain commonplace. They face routine discrimination in the workplace as well as harassment in public, and few women have headed any high-profile firms in the country. Kamal cited Shazia Syed as another female pioneer after she was last year made head in Pakistan of Unilever, a Dutch-British multinational. "Things are transforming in Pakistan now, the world must know that," he said. UBL, headquartered in the financial hub Karachi, employs 15,000 people and has branches in 15 other countries, including the US, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. — AFP

LEADERS OF KUWAIT II LAUNCHED IN PARIS

PARIS: Leaders Publishing Corporation, an OMNIA company, announced the launch earlier this month of Leaders of Kuwait II, a brand new edition of its landmark reference book focusing on Kuwait's dynamic business leaders in the country's private and public sectors.

Leaders of Kuwait II has new, in-depth profiles based on interviews with over 100 top executives. Each profile examines the background, career, company, and sector of each leader, with unique insights on doing business in Kuwait from those best placed to know. Key issues discussed include growth of the private sector, surviving the financial crisis, youth development, and the unique challenges of multi-generational family business groups in Kuwait. The country's most recognizable business leaders also provide personal perspectives on what Kuwait has to offer to the world today, along with their advice for the business leaders of tomorrow.

"The launch of Leaders of Kuwait II has already created a buzz in Kuwait with sharing on LinkedIn and other social media generating strong interest in the book from the publisher's head office in France," states Mrs. Annabelle VILDA the MENA director who has been handling the project Leaders from the Construction, Education, Financial Services, Food &

Beverage, Health Care, and Real Estate sectors are among the C-level executives portrayed in all-new profiles. A wide cross-section of industries and backgrounds are included, with members of Kuwait's leading business families well represented.

New in this edition is a section covering Young Kuwaiti Leaders - the emerging class of entrepreneurs who are leading up-and-coming start-ups, or rising through the ranks of established business groups. The young leaders profiled offer insights on the challenges and opportunities for young people in Kuwait's increasingly dynamic business environment, with numerous examples of self-starting entrepreneurs getting their first taste of entrepreneurship in school or university, gaining professional experience after graduation, and taking on leadership roles developing new markets in Kuwait and the wider region while still in their 20s and early 30s.

"In addition to over 100 individual profiles, Leaders of Kuwait II looks at changing trends in Kuwaiti business and public life, with an in-depth look at the current economic outlook across major sectors, the shifting balance of the public and private economy, cultural and demographic trends," concludes Mrs Marie-Gabrielle Palau the publisher.



ON ECONOMICS

ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS (2/5): TAX ENFORCEMENT



By Khaled Al-Mutawa

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The main reason for arguing on the need for taxation and its efficiency is the income from oil, the for Kuwait's wealth. By now, the country has been an important exporter of the black gold for several decades, and such a fact allowed the state to get the foreign companies interested in investing. Thus, the protection of Kuwait's economic sovereignty and the regulation of the domestic labor market and commercial work are important issues for the government to consider, and taxation is one of the possible ways to solve the problem.

Currently, Kuwait has a special tax program for foreigners that allow new companies from other countries not to pay taxes for up to ten years, and it is intended to increase the volume of foreign direct investment. At the same time, although this state strategy tends to increase the volume of foreign money, it is also aimed to protect the country's natural resources and the environment in general. Therefore, having a tax enforcement in Kuwait is a good idea for several reasons.

First, imposing taxes would increase the income to the state budget, which could later be used to implement some infrastructure-related projects. Moreover, the rich natural resources of Kuwait are one of the convincing factors that the income of people will remain sufficient in the long run and that the foreign companies and individuals will be interested in investing.

Secondly, the proper system of taxation that would calculate the amount of taxes based on the total income would have a positive social impact since it would not only make both foreigners and country's citizens even but also level the volume of the taxes paid for every social class. Finally, tax enforcement could have a positive social and demographic effect because its implementation is not a politically popular decision and would require the teaching of the population on why such an approach is necessary. Thus, such instructing would improve the overall political background of the people living in Kuwait.

Tax reinforcement is not the practice undertaken by Kuwait only. In fact, it is a must in some other states, and these countries managed to achieve an outstanding economic development and prosperity due to this and other measures. For instance, the United Arab Emirates is one of the most prosperous states in the world, and it is also the country with the taxation system aimed at the protection of the national oil industry from foreign capital.

This system includes the high taxes of fifty-five percent for the foreign companies and citizens of the country that generate their income from the oil industry within the state.

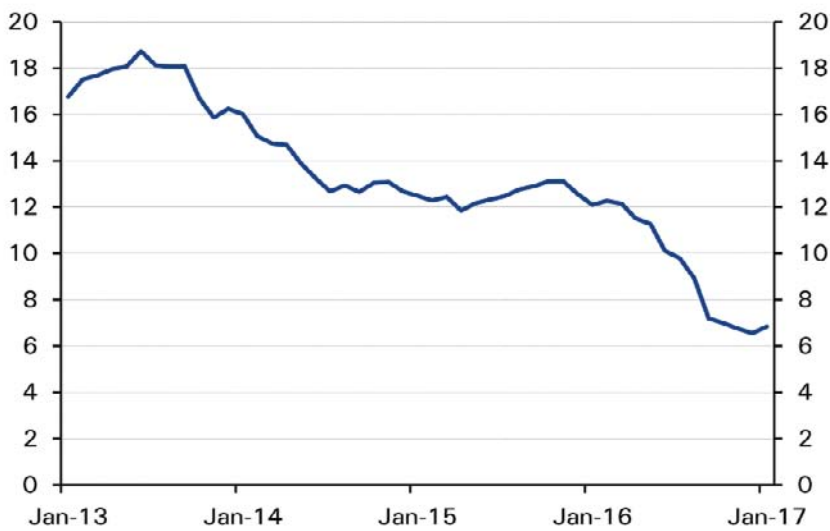
Still, in spite of the high level of taxation, the investing environment remained attractive for the foreign entities, and they continued to be a part of the economy of the United Arab Emirates.

Therefore, the shift toward the tax reinforcement in Kuwait is a natural and modern decision that is likely going to benefit the country. The experience of some other states, such as UAE, shows that although such a step might be politically unpopular, the negative effects of imposing taxes can be mitigated by the proper use of the country's natural resources and correct positioning of the investment environment.

Finally, the significant advantage of Kuwait that can both soothe the negative perception of the fact of tax reinforcement and assure that taxes will be a source of income and not a burden for both foreigners and the citizens is the large deposits of oil on the country's territory.

Chart 1: Household debt growth

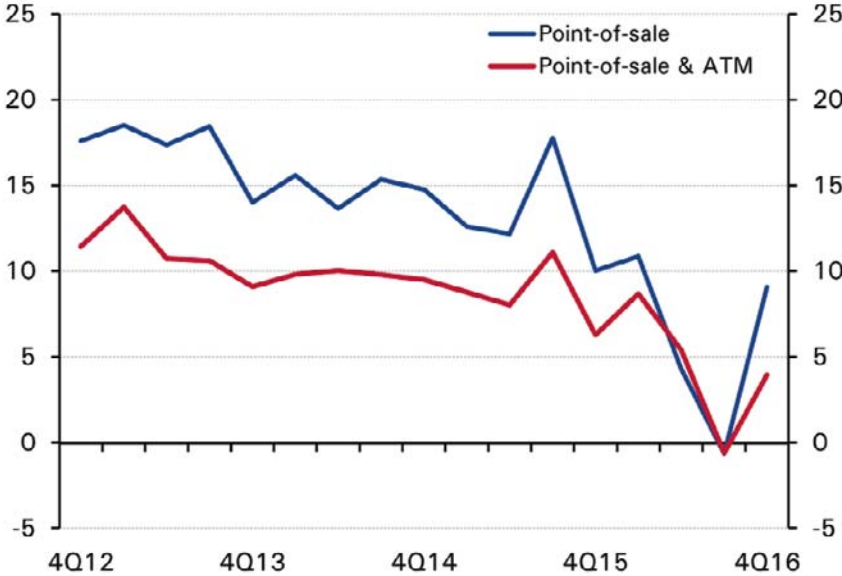
(% y/y)



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

Chart 2: Card transactions

(% y/y)



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

KUWAIT: CONSUMER SECTOR NORMALIZING IN 2016, FOLLOWING YEARS OF ROBUST GROWTH

NBK Economic Update

The consumer sector has been normalizing since late 2015, with the marked softness in household debt and imports coinciding with a period of lower oil prices and fiscal consolidation. Although household income growth and employment remained robust, most consumer indicators revealed softness throughout 2016. Consumer confidence remained notably weak. Card spending, which has been volatile and hit negative territory at one point, was also weaker. Meanwhile, employment among Kuwaitis continues to provide support to the sector, thanks to steady government hiring.

Consumer spending moderated during 2016, despite temporarily seeing a more serious slowdown in the second and third quarters of 2016. Spending growth on credit and debit card point-of-sale as well as total spending including ATM withdrawals growth slid into negative territory for the first time on record in 3Q16 to recover during the last quarter of the year mainly due to seasonal factors, recording 9% and 4% y/y growth, respectively.

A slower consumer sector was felt in a cooling in imports of consumer goods in 2016. Consumer imports retracted by 9% y/y in 2016; a significant slowdown

from the 7% y/y growth posted the previous year. Most of the impact has been felt in imports of motor vehicles, which recorded a 20% decline y/y in 2016. This is a reflection of a struggling auto market and, more generally, weak durable goods purchases as reflected in the ARA consumer confidence index. Consumer confidence remained noticeably weak in recent months. The overall ARA consumer confidence index stood at 96 in February 2017, down 8% y/y. The index has been below the 100 point mark since August 2016 when the government announced plans to increase fuel prices. Most of that decline is due to weakness in the durable goods, current income and current employment components, highlighting concerns over sustained low oil prices and the subsidy reforms being implemented.

Notable decline in Household borrowing

Household borrowing is slowly recovering following a notable decline during the first eight months of 2016. Growth in personal facilities excluding credit for the purchase of securities slipped to 7.0% year-on-year (y/y) in January 2017 compared to 12.6% a year ago (Chart 1). The average monthly net gain in such loans dropped to KD 70.5 million in the most recent six

months, compared to an average of KD 101 million during 2015.

Public sector hiring in 2016 continues to support national employment growth. The number of Kuwaiti civilian job entrants averaged around 4,059 a quarter over the four quarters ending in 3Q16, supported by strong hiring during 4Q15 and 1Q16. This represents a marked increase from around 3,000 job entrants two years earlier. Of those, 68% is government sector hiring; new government jobs nearly doubled to 2,756 a quarter during the same period. New private sector jobs retreated slightly, but continued to hold up relatively well, accounting for about a third of new civilian jobs. The slowdown in private sector employment is attributed to the government's continuous efforts to clamp down on "phantom employment".

The consumer sector is expected to continue to be soft in 2017, but could be supported by the recent government decision to soften hikes in utility prices. The newly approved utility prices, which are much lower than the ones released earlier in law 20/2016 might provide a positive boost to the consumer sector, along with steady employment growth and modest gains in salaries in the government sector.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.767
Indian Rupees	4.688
Pistani Rupees	2.908
Srilankan Rupees	2.008
Nepali Rupees	2.921
Singapore Dollar	219.850
Hongkong Dollar	39.288
Bangladesh Taka	3.802
Philippine Peso	6.084
Thai Baht	8.865

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.428
Qatari Riyal	83.867
Omani Riyal	793.009
Bahraini Dinar	810.810
UAE Dirham	83.136

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.400
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.795
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.226
Tunisian Dinar	135.920
Jordanian Dinar	429.880
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.034
Syrian Lira	2.176
Morocco Dirham	31.043

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	305.150
Euro	332.610
Sterling Pound	383.880
Canadian dollar	229.870
Turkish lira	85.240

Swiss Franc	310.590
Australian Dollar	234.200
US Dollar Buying	303.950

GOLD

20 Gram	254.250
10 Gram	130.050
5 Gram	65.870

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr

US Dollar	305.400
Canadian Dolla	229.135
Sterling Pound	380.170
Euro	329.750
Swiss Frank	306.505
Bahrain Dinar	809.590
UAE Dirhams	83.540
Qatari Riyals	84.760
Saudi Riyals	82.365
Jordanian Dinar	431.915
Egyptian Pound	16.964
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.010
Indian Rupees	4.663
Pakistani Rupees	2.912
Bangladesh Taka	3.836
Philippines Peso	6.084
Cyprus pound	167.715
Japanese Yen	3.710
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.915
Malaysian Ringgit	69.695

Selling Rate

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.640
Thai Bhat	9.755
Turkish Lira	84.755

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.375491	0.385491
Czech Korune	0.004219	0.016219
Danish Krone	0.040392	0.045392
Euro	0.325237	0.334237
Norwegian Krone	0.032003	0.037203
Romanian Leu	0.084569	0.084569
Slovakia	0.009134	0.019134
Swedish Krona	0.030660	0.035660
Swiss Franc	0.302241	0.313241
Turkish Lira	0.079242	0.089542

Australian Dollar	0.224387	0.236387
New Zealand Dollar	0.208576	0.218076

America	BUY	SELL
Canadian Dollar	0.223463	0.232463
Georgina Lari	0.137823	0.137823
US Dollars	0.301050	0.305450
US Dollars Mint	0.301550	0.305450

Asia	BUY	SELL
Bangladesh Taka	0.003458	0.004042
Chinese Yuan	0.042880	0.046380
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037198	0.039948
Indian Rupee	0.004091	0.004779

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002678	0.002858
Kenyan Shilling	0.003059	0.003059
Korean Won	0.000263	0.000278
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065430	0.071430
Nepalese Rupee	0.002954	0.003124
Pakistan Rupee	0.002662	0.002952
Philippine Peso	0.005980	0.006280
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.213338	0.223338
South African Rand	0.018547	0.027047
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001636	0.002216
Taiwan	0.009952	0.010132
Thai Baht	0.008505	0.009055

Arab	BUY	SELL
Bahraini Dinar	0.802846	0.811346
Egyptian Pound	0.014962	0.020870
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000197	0.000257
Jordanian Dinar	0.424731	0.433731
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020047	0.044047
Nigerian Naira	0.000390	0.001025
Omani Riyal	0.786177	0.791857
Qatar Riyal	0.083006	0.084456
Saudi Riyal	0.080287	0.081587
Syrian Pound	0.001294	0.001514
Tunisian Dinar	0.132140	0.140140
Turkish Lira	0.079242	0.089542
UAE Dirhams	0.081656	0.083356
Yemeni Riyal	0.000993	0.001072

Dimah report

GLOBAL LIQUIDITY SUPPORTIVE OF THE FINANCIAL MARKETS

By Hayder Tawfik



The massive size of the global liquidity that has been supporting the global financial markets are still here and will remain for the next few years. This is one strong reason why global investors should not worry about a small correction in the global financial markets that have been trending up for a while. All around the

world central banks are weighing the latest rise in the official US interest rates and see how it might impact their economies. One thing for sure is that some of them will not take away the liquidity they created if the outlook for inflation is not a real threat yet. Furthermore, global liquidity will be searching for higher yields or capital appreciation in the expectation of falling real interest rates around the world at least for this year. The global financial markets are still supported by a looser monetary policy pursued by most central banks. That easy monetary policy stimulus could help offset rate hikes from the Federal Reserve and any concern about stretched equity valuations.

Inflation forecast for the coming year is projected to be around the 2%. Once this rate is adjusted for long term US rates then we are talking about a real interest rate of just around 0.5% against around 1% at present. This why I believe central banks will remain very supportive of economic growth in the year ahead. I don't think the gradual increases in US interest rates would have much impact on monetary policy rates around the world. Even if other central banks raise their own rates in nominal terms, they should fall once adjusted for headline inflation.

As for investors, a small rise in inflation combined with low real interest rates could be just what they need for the time being. The current global financial conditions are very much supportive for the global economy and could make a substantial positive contribution to global economic growth for the next couple of years. Falling unemployment around the world and let's say full employment in the US with low inflation and below 1% Federal Reserve interest rates should lead to higher economic growth.

There are no signs of any reversal of the monetary stimulus measures that were taken by most central banks almost 8 years ago. The European Central bank, the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan are still pumping money into their systems. The European Central bank is still purchasing around US\$200bn worth of bonds every month. This is cash paid to investors on monthly basis. Still, very low real interest rates are supporting the global financial markets and pushing investors into equities and bonds. Investors, central banks, companies and household savings are awash with liquidity that is looking for places to invest.

It is just possible that the uptrend in the global equity markets that started back in November of last year could go on for a while longer, even if the valuation at sometimes get a bit stretched. I think it makes sense for equity investors to approach the markets carefully in the coming few weeks. This does not imply any changes to the bullish scenario for the equity markets for the rest of the year. Improving global economic growth, higher corporate earnings and the chance of small rises in interest rates makes equities the perfect asset class to own.

MANCHESTER: Worries are whirring in Britain's smaller financial centers-which together employ far more people than the glamorous City of London-that the looming EU departure will lead to heavy job losses. In Manchester's buzzing finance district of Spinningfields, a worker at an insurance company said he thought it would have "a huge impact". "Business are going to pull out, there will be a lot of job losses," Mohammed, who declined to give his surname because of the sensitivity of the issue, told AFP.

Financial and professional services, which rely heavily on access to Europe's single market, employ 2.2 million people, or seven percent of Britain's working population, according to TheCityUK, a lobbying group. Two-thirds of those workers, or 1.5 million, are based outside London. The northwestern English city of Manchester, for example, is one of Britain's biggest finance hubs.

Fraser Morris, client director at Brown Shipley, a private bank in the city, said the loss of banking "passports" which allow firms to operate freely across the single market could spell trouble. "If we lose the passporting, it might have a big effect because finance services are such a big area for the whole country," he said. "We are obviously a little bit nervous about the outcome," he said, adding that he believed negotiations would "last a few years". Prime Minister Theresa May is set to kickstart the process



MANCHESTER: A man walks along a pavement past a billboard advertising rural holidays in the city centre of Manchester, northwest England, one of Britain's biggest finance hubs. — AFP

on Wednesday with a formal notification to the EU of Britain's intention to leave after last year's historic Brexit referendum.

240,000 jobs at risk?

"It's difficult to get a full handle, purely because we do not know the outcome of the negotiations," said Keith Pilbeam, a professor at the Department of Economics at

City, University of London. "If they go well-which is a big if-there should not be too many job losses," he said. But if things go badly, he warned that up to 240,000 jobs could be cut, or around 10 percent of the financial sector workforce.

Back-office jobs, the support roles that tend to be based outside London, were cut drastically after the 2008 global financial

crisis-and also in the wake of rapid technological advances. More tough times could now be ahead. "Companies are engaged in contingency planning-and Brexit is an issue which obviously they need to think about," said Gary Campkin, director of policy and strategy at TheCityUK. "Whether that actually means that ultimately jobs will go is unclear," he said.

'Jewel in the crown'

Britain's much-envied status as a centre of global finance will remain unchanged, Campkin said, but he cautioned against too much attention on London. "Inevitably there's going to be a focus on the jewel in the crown, which is London," Campkin said. "It's what the country delivers as a whole for the industry that really makes it the world-beating financial centre that it is. We believe that this position will be maintained in the future."

Other key finance hubs include Birmingham in central England; Bristol in the southwest; Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield in the north; Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland; Cardiff in Wales; and Belfast in Northern Ireland. Back at Spinningfields, demand is still high for office space. "Only time will tell what impact on growth Brexit will have," said Howard Bernstein, chief executive of Manchester City Council. But he added that since the referendum, "the market is not showing any lack of confidence". — AFP

TRUMP TAPS SON-IN-LAW TO HEAD BUREAUCRACY OVERHAUL: REPORT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has tapped son-in-law Jared Kushner to lead a new White House office, that aims to apply ideas from the business world to help streamline the government, the Washington Post reported Sunday. The White House Office of Innovation is to be unveiled Monday with sweeping authority to overhaul the bureaucracy and fulfill key campaign promises like reforming care for veterans and fighting opioid addiction, the Post said.

"I promised the American people I would produce results, and apply my 'ahead of schedule, under budget' mentality to the government," Trump was quoted as saying. It is conceived as a sort of SWAT team made up of former private sector executives charged with bringing fresh ideas to the business of government, according to the report. "The government should be run like a great American company. Our hope is that we can achieve successes and efficiencies for our customers, who are the citizens," Kushner told the Post. The 36-year-old is a senior adviser to Trump with far-reaching influence over domestic and foreign policy. Top Trump strategist Stephen

Bannon, who has called for "deconstruction of the administrative state," will not be part of the new group, the Post said. Technology and data are expected to be a key focus of the effort, and the White House has been working with the likes of Apple CEO Tim Cooke, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and Tesla's Elon Musk, the Post said. "There is a need to figure out what policies are adding friction to the system without accompanying it with significant benefits," Stephen Schwarzman, CEO of investment firm Blackstone Group, told the Post. "It's easy for the private sector to at least see where the friction is, and to do that very quickly and succinctly."

Ivanka to attend women's economic summit

Meanwhile, Ivanka Trump is planning a trip to Germany to attend a summit on the economic empowerment of women, a senior administration official says. The first daughter was invited by German Chancellor Angela Merkel during Merkel's recent White House visit, said the official, who was not authorized to discuss details of the trip by name and



WASHINGTON DC: This file photo taken on March 3, 2017 shows Senior Advisor to the President, Jared Kushner (L), walking with his wife Ivanka Trump to board Marine One at the White House. — AFP

requested anonymity. The W20 summit, a women-focused effort within the Group of 20 countries, will be in Berlin in late April. Ivanka Trump's plans are still being worked out, but she hopes to study successful apprenticeship programs during her visit. Merkel and Ivanka Trump spent time together when Merkel visited the White House to meet with President Donald Trump. At the request of German officials, the first daughter helped arrange a meet-

ing between American and German business leaders to discuss vocational training.

The meeting marked the second time foreign leaders reached out to Ivanka Trump to coordinate an economic conversation. During Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's visit last month, she helped organize a meeting on economic development opportunities for women. That came together at the suggestion of Trudeau's office. — Agencies

COLOMBIA'S CITY OF WOMEN REBUILDS HOMES AND HOPES

TURBACO: When fighting in Colombia forced Everlides Almanza to abandon her farm, she ended up in a slum near the coastal city of Cartagena where with only some plastic tarpaulin to shelter her, she longed for a new home. She dreamed of a brick building with a sturdy roof and a tiled porch - she just never expected to be the one to build it.

After arriving in the slum in 1992, Almanza and dozens of other destitute families who had also been uprooted by the conflict met human rights lawyer Patricia Guerrero, who helped organize them into a group. The League of Displaced Women - many of them single mothers and war widows - went on to build a new neighborhood of 102 houses on the once barren bushland in Turbaco, a municipality near Cartagena. It became known as the City of Women.

"We learnt about construction, how to make bricks and mix cement," Almanza told the Thomson Reuters Foundation as she sat in a rocking chair under the shade of a mango tree. "We had to fight to build our own homes. Some people said women weren't capable of doing this," the 60-year-old said.

Since the first house was built in 2004, the neighborhood of brightly painted green and pink facades and tree-lined streets has been cited as an example of rebuilding that other communities emerging from conflict could emulate. While men live in the City of Women, it's the women who are in charge, bolstered by property deeds in their own names. "Here women call the shots," said Maritza Marimon, another league member. "We fought tooth and nail to build our homes. Men can't come here and say this is mine. It's ours."

Rights restored

A peace deal signed in December between the government and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has raised hopes the 7 million Colombians displaced by war can return home or put down permanent roots. Yet roughly half of all the displaced live in cities, many settling in makeshift shelters in hillside slums, often with no land tenure rights and no running water.

How Colombia ensures its displaced population has access to housing is key to forging lasting peace and rebuilding their lives, political analysts say. For many, the City of Women - where residents joined forces to build houses together and petition for title deeds - could prove the model to follow. Back in the 1990s when the women lived in Cartagena's slums, Guerrero vowed to help the women lift themselves out of poverty.

When she asked them about their most urgent need, most replied they wanted a house they could call their own. "With a house, your rights are

restored," said Guerrero, who founded the League of Displaced Women. Guerrero eventually secured funding, most of it from a \$500,000 grant from the US Agency for International Development, to buy a plot of land on which the City of Women was built. But as the women tried to get it off the ground, they were met with violence. Drug-running criminal gangs issued death threats against the league, a community centre built by the women was set on fire and burnt to ashes, and one of women's husbands was murdered.

United

Despite such sacrifices, the women say the struggle was worth it. "No one can take this away from me. And no one can chuck me out of my own house," said Ana Luz Ortega, standing on the porch of her home with fuchsia pink walls where she lives with her husband and children. "I've seen many cases where husbands have left their wives and children on the street after going off with another woman who then comes in to live in the house," she said.

Like other countries in Latin America, property rights are unequal between men and women in Colombia. Widows especially find it difficult to inherit from their husbands with land usually handed down to sons and the husband's family. Yet property titles give women greater control and financial say over their homes, and are crucial to accessing secure bank loans.

"It was very important that the women had the properties registered in their names ... It gives women a sense of freedom and self-esteem," Guerrero said. Since it was built, the City of Women has led to the creation of a tight-knit network of activists who continue to fight for other rights. "These women are warriors," said Jose Enrique Zafra, who lives in the City of Women. "They're united, they fight for what's best for their community."

Over the years, the women have successfully lobbied government authorities to provide the City of Women with services, including running water and a local school. Now the league is demanding bus routes that serve the neighborhood after dark, street lighting and a school that teaches children aged up to 18.

For Ortega, who was raised in the countryside where women are still largely expected to stay at home and look after the children, joining the league was an awakening.

"Before the league, I didn't even know I had any rights," said the soft-spoken Ortega. "I now know that as a woman I have the right to choose what I want and to be respected. Before I was submissive, now I feel liberated," she said. — Reuters



ALBION: In this Sept 15, 2015 file photo, marijuana plants are a few weeks away from harvest in the "Flower Room" at the Ataraxia medical marijuana cultivation center. — AP

ILLINOIS CONSIDERS LEGALIZING MARIJUANA FOR A FISCAL BOOST

SPRINGFIELD: Marijuana advocates are trying to lay the groundwork for Illinois to become the first state in the Midwest and the ninth nationwide to legalize recreational pot, arguing the move will help solve the state's notorious budget crisis. Two Illinois state lawmakers introduced legislation last week that would allow residents 21 and older to possess, grow or buy up to an ounce (28 grams) of marijuana and license businesses to sell marijuana products subject to regulation. They say it would help fill Illinois' multibillion-dollar budget hole with \$350 to \$700 million in new tax revenue.

A national advocacy group, the Marijuana Policy Project, based the estimate on the proposal's \$50-per-ounce wholesale tax, Illinois' standard sales tax, federal marijuana consumption data and recreational pot prices in Colorado. The proposal earmarks 50 percent of wholesale revenues for the state's general fund and divides the remaining half 30/20 between education and public health.

Every state to legalize pot to date has done so by voter ballot initiative, according to Chris Lindsey, a legislative analyst with the project. But Illinois advocates are not alone in holding out hope for lawmaker approval. Seventeen other states - including Missouri -

are also considering legislative action. Rep Kelly Cassidy, a Chicago Democrat who co-sponsored 2014 legislation that legalized medical marijuana in Illinois, is sponsoring the proposal in the House. She said states that legalized marijuana have seen an economic boost from increased tax revenue, new jobs and bolstered tourism. "We're talking about all sorts of ways of raising revenue," Cassidy said, referring to state lawmakers' efforts to break a two-year budget logjam. "We might as well be talking about this, too."

But she and fellow Chicago Democrat Sen. Heather Steans, who sponsored legislation that succeeded in decriminalizing the possession of small amounts of pot last year, know their new pitch could be a tough sell. They plan to jumpstart conversations with lawmakers, interest groups and the public this spring but won't move legislation forward in the current session.

'Enforcement nightmare'

Key players like the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police currently oppose the measure. Ed Wojcicki, the association's director, called legalizing recreational pot "an enforcement nightmare." He said existing science remains inconclusive about how to best iden-

tify impairment on the road and in other compromising situations. Democratic Rep Lou Lang of Skokie, lead sponsor of the medical marijuana proposal, suggested the staggered timeline could help lawmakers gain a more complete picture of potential benefits and consequences - especially as more data rolls in on Illinois' pilot medical marijuana program, which launched in late 2015.

"I do think this might be in Illinois' future," Lang said. "I certainly support the idea of having a discussion." Illinois legalization advocates like Dan Linn, who directs the state chapter of a nonprofit lobbying group called NORML, have long been working toward this conversation. Linn said states where pot is legal have recorded no uptick in traffic fatalities. Instead of threatening public safety, he contended, regulating the already widely consumed substance will take the business out of the hands of criminals and impose important regulations like quality and age controls. "There's not a drug dealer in this country that asks for an ID when someone's looking to buy drugs," he said. The proposal is launching at a time when the federal government, which still lists marijuana as an illegal drug, is considering ramping up enforcement against recreational use. — AP

TRUMP TRADE DOUBTS SEND SHARES TUMBLING

LONDON: The dollar and share prices tumbled yesterday, as investors worried that US President Donald Trump's defeat over healthcare reform foreshadowed difficulties delivering other key campaign promises, in particular tax cuts and spending. Trump's failure to rally enough support from his own Republican party to repeal and replace Obamacare spurred a rush to safe haven assets such as gold, the Japanese yen and the Swiss franc.

So-called "Trumpflation trades" - bets that Trump's pro-business policies would stoke growth and inflation in the US and global economies, boosting assets such as commodities - came under heavy selling pressure. The

dollar, whose index had surged more than 6 percent in the aftermath of Trump's election to hit 14-year highs at the start of 2017, slipped to its lowest since Nov. 11, two days after the results of the presidential vote.

"Investors are viewing this setback as a broader loss of faith in the Trump administration's ability to deliver on other campaign pledges - namely tax and spending policies, which have underpinned asset prices since the US elections," said ING currency strategist Viraj Patel, in London. US Treasury yields fell to a one-month low of 2.35 percent, while borrowing costs across the euro zone also fell sharply, as investors ditched riskier assets and unwound bets on higher inflation and interest

rates. The fall in risk appetite dominated European stock markets, with the pan-European STOXX 600 index falling 0.8 percent on the day. The Basic Resources index was the biggest sectoral loser, down 2 percent to a two-week low as copper prices slipped, while the banking index was down 1.3 percent. And the depressed mood looked set to continue on Wall Street, with US stock index futures falling 1 percent to a six-week low.

Risk aversion

Bucking the weaker trend among European stocks were precious metal miners such as Randgold and Fresnillo, both up more than 1 percent, as risk aversion boosted gold. Gold

prices climbed more than 1 percent to a one-month high of \$1,259 an ounce.

The safe-haven yen also gained more than 1 percent against the greenback, touching 110.12 yen per dollar, its strongest since mid-November, while the Swiss franc also gained as much as 0.8 percent to trade at its highest levels since Nov. 10. The euro rose 0.7 percent to a 3-1/2-month high of \$1.0874.

"The markets are continuing to unwind the Trump premium," said BMO Capital Markets currency strategist Stephen Gallo, in London. "We probably are aiming for the (Nov 8) pre-election lows...that's probably a viable target." In Asian trading, falls in stock prices were more moderate, with MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan down 0.1 percent after posting its first weekly decline last week in three weeks. In terms of relative

valuations, US stocks are trading well above their historical averages while Asia stocks are still broadly in line with theirs despite a recent bounce. "Any big pull back in markets would be an opportunity for long term investment in a region where potential is still intact," said Nicholas Yeo, head of China/Hong Kong equities at Aberdeen Asset Management in Hong Kong, part of a team that manages \$374 billion in assets as of end-December 2016.

Japan's Nikkei, though, fell 1.5 percent as the yen rebounded in the face of renewed US dollar weakness. Following the defeat on US healthcare legislation on Friday, the White House warned rebellious conservative lawmakers on Sunday that they should get behind Trump's agenda or he may bypass them on future legislative fights, including tax reform. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report



Monday 27 March 2017

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
Price index	▼ -8.25	7,032.26	7,040.51	7,046.13	6,981.75
Weighted Index	▼ -0.72	421.39	422.11	424.38	419.96
KSX 15	▼ -2.81	947.80	950.61	952.89	944.09

Volume	262,945,959
Value (KWD)	26,897,051
Number of Trades	5,839

Security	Trades						
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	▲ 0.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	1,220	1,220	10,205	12,450	2	1,220	▼ -40.0
ENFRGYH	39.0	38.5	1,510	58	2	39.0	▲ 0.0
GPI	50	48.5	4,389,570	215,873	103	49.5	▼ -0.5
ABAR	91	88	2,500	224	4	89	▼ -5.0
Oil & Gas			4,403,785	228,606	111	977.04	▼ -23.71
KFOUC	320	305	19,100	6,007	5	320	▲ 5.0
BPCC	580	570	101,437	58,819	4	570	▲ 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	▲ 0.0
ALQURAIN	355	350	221,542	77,547	20	355	▲ 5.0
Basic Materials			342,079	142,373	29	1348.89	▲ 11.15

KCEM	500	495	11,000	5,450	2	500	▲ 10.0
CABLE	495	475	84,217	40,332	14	485	▼ -5.0
SHIP	210	206	18,010	3,740	4	210	▲ 0.0
PCBM	1,080	1,060	44,230	47,618	15	1,080	▲ 0.0
PAPER	410	385	14,010	5,402	5	410	▲ 15.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	76	▲ 0.0
ACICO	300	300	182,000	48,800	14	300	▲ 0.0
HCC	216	196	6,500	1,339	5	216	▲ 10.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0
NICBM	218	214	23,208	5,011	6	216	▲ 0.0
EQUIPMENT	61	58	2,512,344	149,540	83	59	▼ -1.0
NCCI	100	100	1,000	100	3	100	▲ 5.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	79	75	580,580	43,174	43	76	▼ -4.0
AGLTY	650	640	2,424,717	1,576,060	59	650	▼ -10.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	285	▲ 0.0
CLEANING	56	54	365,692	20,006	13	56	▲ 1.0
KGL	68	68	175,330	11,922	6	68	▼ -1.0
KPCPC	164	164	15,000	2,460	2	164	▲ 4.0
HUMANSOFT	3,100	3,100	35,000	108,500	1	3,100	▲ 0.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	240	▲ 0.0
GFC	66	61	540,776	34,370	20	66	▲ 5.0
MAYADEEN	30.5	30.0	1,793,551	53,858	30	30.0	▼ -0.5
CGC	510	495	182,000	90,765	36	510	▲ 15.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	790	▲ 0.0
ALAFAC	240	240	30,000	7,200	1	240	▼ -2.0
MUBARRAD	79	79	117,010	9,244	8	79	▼ -1.0
LOGISTICS	77	75	2,422,681	183,222	50	75	▼ -2.0
SCBM	93	88	1,585,681	142,499	45	93	▲ 5.0
GCEM	89	88	992,333	87,603	34	89	▲ 2.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	86	▲ 0.0
FCBM	91	91	51,795	4,713	3	91	▲ 1.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	▲ 0.0
SPEC	91	89	53,000	4,720	6	89	▼ -2.0
Industrials			14,221,845	2,887,448	508	1706.85	▲ 21.90

KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	188	▲ 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	55	▲ 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	97	▲ 0.0
CATTL	216	210	18,950	4,091	4	210	▼ -6.0
DANAH	110	102	7,294,882	769,566	267	102	▲ 2.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,400	▲ 0.0
Consumer Goods			7,313,832	773,657	271	1146.66	▲ 1.42

MHC	375	370	3,785	1,412	2	370	▲ 0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	▲ 0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	275	▲ 0
Health Care			3,785	1,412	2	1470.30	▲ 0.00

KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,380	▲ 0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0
SULTAN	68	65	936,114	61,479	66	65	▼ -3
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	22.5	▲ 0
EYAS	400	400	100,000	40,000	8	400	▼ -15
IFARH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0
OLULAFUEL	132	128	421,343	54,883	27	132	▲ 0
MUNTAZAHAT	88	88	227,532	19,588	13	88	▼ -1
JAZERA	580	570	5,050	2,879	3	580	▲ 10
SOOR	130	128	20,116	2,598	12	128	▼ -2
FUTUREKID	124	114	57,250	6,710	8	114	▼ -10
ALRAI	178	176	9,000	1,585	4	178	▲ 0
ZIMAH	57	55	583,200	33,070	21	56	▲ 0
Meezan	1,020	1,020	22,500	22,950	5	1,020	▲ 20
Consumer Services			2,392,105	245,702	167	932.74	▼ -13.78

NBK	690	680	2,500,250	1,713,734	47	680	▼ -10
GBK	255	250	1,108,426	277,112	25	250	▲ 0
CBK	455	450	3,682	1,658	4	455	▲ 25
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	305	▲ 0
ALMUTAHED	475	465	388,764	186,210	26	465	▼ -5
KIB	242	240	353,760	85,551	18	242	▼ -2
BURG	335	325	233,045	76,466	19	330	▲ 0
KFIN	610	600	3,900,546	2,378,190	104	610	▲ 0
BOUBYAN	410	405	398,214	162,632	53	410	▲ 5
AUB	280	265	15,342,812	4,155,292	211	265	▲ 0
ITHMR	51	50	2,656,965	135,164	57	51	▼ -1
WARBABANK	265	260	1,510,244	395,969	99	260	▼ -5
Banks			28,406,308	9,567,978	663	974.23	▼ -1.75

KINS	305	275	37,080	10,746	6	275	▼ -25
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	550	▲ 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	495	▲ 0.0
WINS	102	100	2,745	278	3	100	▼ -2.0
KUWAITIRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0.0
FTI	64	59	210,300	12,637	34	61	▼ -3.0
WETHAQ	58	55	65,520	3,604	6	55	▼ -3.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0
Insurance			315,663	27,265	49	1092.90	▼ -33.47

Security	Trades						
	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	50	47.0	27,564,291	1,343,603	378	49.5	▲ 1.5
KRE	72	69	11,562,236	819,234	126	70	▲ 0.0
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0
NRE	110	106	2,606,795	277,563	33	108	▲ 0.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	375	▲ 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	445	▲ 0.0
AREFC	170	170	150,000	25,500	7	170	▼ -8.0
MASSALEH	50	49.5	21,800	1,082	4	49.5	▲ 1.5
ARABREC	42.5	41.5	935,222	39,288	28	42.0	▼ -0.5
ERESCO	44.5	43.5	2,298,458	100,767	63	43.5	▲ 0.0
MABANEE	840	830	607,818	507,239	22	830	▲ 0.0
INJAZZAT	99	94	2,429,585	234,600	51	94	▲ 0.0
INVESTORS	29.0	28.5	3,813,413	109,355	40	29.0	▲ 0.0
IRC	38.5	37.5	435,010	16,448	23	38.0	▼ -1.0

ALTJARIA	81	80	289,820	23,190	13	80	▲ 0.0
SANAM	58	53	10,010	531	2	58	▲ 2.0
AAYANRE	95	93	133,052	12,374	11	93	▲ 0.0
AQAR	81	80	120,261	9,701	3	80	▼ -2.0
ALQAARIA	38.5	36.5	27,000	1,015	7	38.0	▲ 0.0
MAZAYA	134	128	4,967,038	646,442	65	132	▲ 2.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	▲ 0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0
TUARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	63	▲ 0.0
TAAMEER	39.5	35.5	20,112,594	755,799	360	39.0	▲ 1.0
ARKAN	83	82	604,066	49,903	18	82	▼ -2.0
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0.0
ABYAR	30.0	28.0	9,430,546	276,372	108	28.5	▲ 0.0
MUNSHAAT	81	57	3,425,872	202,811	99	58	▼ -2.0
FIRSTDUBAI	61	59	933,668	55,739	49	61	▲ 1.0
KBT	57	55	2,537,700	142,303	68	57	▲ 0.0
REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0
MENA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0	▲ 0.0
ALMUDON	47.5	46.5	1,488,070	68,744	51	47.0	▼ -0.5
MARAKEZ	44.5	42.0	585,375	25,581	20	44.0	▲ 2.0
REMAL	83	81	5,852,716	479,574	102	81	▲ 0.0
AWJ	100	98	1,058,953	104,728	32	99	▲ 0.0
Real Estate			104,001,369	6,330,377	1,784	1096.10	▼ -0.22

KINV	102	100	2,031,104	203,621	30	102	—	0.0
FACIL	184	184	46,140	8,490	4	184	—	0.0
IFA	48.5	44.0	6,590,624	295,885	180	44.5	▼	-2.0
NINV	116	112	818,727	93,158	37	116	—	0.0
KPROJ	495	490	3,645	1,802	3	495	▲	5.0
COAST	48.0	47.0	1,694,916	80,280	38	47.5	▼	-0.5
SECH	52	50	2,643,829	133,994	56	51	▼	-2.0
SGC	99	99	50	5	1	99	—	0.0
ARZAN	41.0	38.5	192,640	7,481	10	39.5	▼	-1.0
MARKAZ	108	108	55,234	5,855	1	108	—	0.0
KMEFIC	31.5	31.0	317,001	9,832	23	31.5	▼	-1.0
ALAMAN	52	52	279,656	14,542	11	52	▼	-1.0
AL.QI.A	52	51	1,527,650	77,802	30	52	—	0.0
ALMAL	21.5	20.0	9,627,693	200,846	114	21.0	▼	-0.5
GIH	46.0	44.5	1,470,550	66,643	52	45.0	▼	-1.0
AAYAN	51	50	7,808,466	392,709	90	51	—	0.0
BAYANINV	48.0	47.0	1,440,490	67,549	64	47.5	▼	-0.5
OSOUL	67	66	73,478	4,863	3	67	—	0.0
KFIC	44.5	44.5	55,000	2,448	5	44.5	—	0.0
KAMCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	—	0.0
NIH	70	69	128,500	8,970	5	70	—	0.0



Knowsley Place in Bury



Sulaiman Al-Rubaie, Executive Vice President & Head of Alternative Asset Management



Saint Peters square

GLOBAL EXPANDS REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS IN THE UK WITH TWO NEW ACQUISITIONS

KUWAIT: Acting on behalf of its clients, Global Investment House (Global), a regional Asset Management and Investment Banking firm headquartered in Kuwait with offices in major capital markets in the MENA region, has unconditionally contracted to acquire two Grade-A commercial office space properties, in the greater Manchester area (the "Properties") on 21 March 2017. The properties are let to the UK Government and Sky Subscribers Services Limited, on full repair and insurance leases that are subject to upward only rent reviews. Structured as one transaction, this acquisition provides Global investors a sharia compliant structure enjoying a stabilized income stream with strong rental growth prospects and expected annualized cash dividends of 9%.

The first property; 6 Knowsley Place in Bury, is a modern office building constructed in 2011, extending to 14,403 sq ft of space arranged on lower ground, ground and four upper floors. It is part of a 500,000 sq ft mixed development of modern office accommodation constructed in 2011, located in the main part of Phase 1 of the Bury Town-side development, which will become the main civic quarter for Bury. The property is let to the Metropolitan Borough of Bury, with a certain lease term of 14 years unexpired.

The town of Bury, a suburb of Manchester, has recently benefited from major regeneration projects including Knowsley Place as well as The Rock (a new

open shopping centre) and Dumers Lane (27 acre industrial and residential project to the south of the town centre). The town benefits from an excellent public transportation network with direct service from Bury to Manchester City centre and main railway stations, with average journey times being under 30 minutes. Bury's occupational market is one of the better performing of the greater Manchester area suburbs, with the vacancy rate for best quality buildings standing at 4% of total stock at the end of Q4 2016.

The second property; Saint Peter's square, is situated in the centre of Stockport, an affluent town 8 miles south east of Manchester; with a prominent frontage onto one of the main arterial routes through Stockport into Manchester. This property is a modern, high specification building in Stockport's established commercial district comprising of a self-contained unit over basement, ground and 5 upper floors and benefits from a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'. The property also benefits from panoramic views and excellent levels of natural light. The building is the most modern, highest specification Grade A office in Stockport. The building is let entirely to SKY Subscriber's Services (part of SKY PLC) with a weighted average unexpired lease term in excess of 8 years.

Stockport is one of the largest greater Manchester sub-regional centres, with a vibrant diverse economy and skilled workforce, employing over 120,000 peo-

ple in over 12,000 businesses (the second highest figure in Greater Manchester). Similar to Bury, Stockport also enjoys excellent transportation links into Manchester and the surrounding areas. The town has been identified as a principal focus for development with a number of priority projects set out, including the Stockport Stock Exchange, Red Rock (flagship leisure development project in the middle of town centre) Mersey Way (shopping centre) as well as greater investment in transport and interchange network to support the town's regeneration projects.

Significant untapped value

This marks the fifth transaction under the UK National Commercial Real Estate Program which Global's real estate asset management team launched, in partnership with London based Greenridge Investment Management Limited ("Greenridge"), in September 2015. The program strategically identifies off-market investment opportunities outside Central London that are characteristically of Grade A specification and which produce rental income derived from Investment Grade or Government tenants on long-term triple net leases. Portfolio tenants from the previously acquired properties include National Air Traffic Services (NATS), 3M Co, the National Health Services (NHS) of Scotland and most recently, Hartshead House in Sheffield City

Centre, which is primarily let to UK Government. On this occasion, Head of Real Estate Asset Management at Global Nasser Al-Khaled, commented: "This deal demonstrates our strong ability to originate transactions that carry significant untapped value. Manchester is a market which we have monitored for a while but we were very careful with our asset selection and timing, given where the prevailing valuation levels stood in the past and where they stand today. Following record leasing in 2014, and 2015 and continued demand in 2016, the acute shortage of Grade A supply is expected to result in an unprecedented complete absence of 'ready to occupy' Grade A space in Manchester. In the absence of new available space, Manchester will remain a landlord's office market and we expect rents to rise in the medium term which would also spill over to Manchester's sub-markets where our recently acquired assets are located."

Sulaiman Al-Rubaie, Executive Vice President & Head of Alternative Asset Management, added, "We are very happy with the strong performance of our UK Real Estate program and look forward to expand this successful program to exploit further opportunities in continental Europe and the United States. This is the fifth transaction completed by Global's real estate asset management team in almost two years and we look forward to expand our real estate assets under management to USD 1 billion in the next several years."



CAYENNE: Trucks form a blockade in Cayenne on March 26, 2017, with a banner reading "Hollande (referring to French president Francois Hollande), where is your deal on the future? No roads, no development". — AFP

STRIKES IN FRENCH GUIANA PARALYSES WEAK ECONOMY

CAYENNE: French Guiana was paralysed by a general strike yesterday that closed schools and shops and stoked fears of further instability in the French overseas territory. The French government appealed for calm in the South American territory which has been gripped by protests since last week over security and the state of the economy. "The first priority is the fight against insecurity," French President Francois Hollande said of the crisis that has elbowed its way into the country's presidential election campaign.

Barricades have been erected on roads since last week, snarling traffic, and the US State Department has warned travelers to stay away, citing the risk of violence. The barriers were temporarily lifted on Sunday and some stores opened so people could stock up on food and other supplies before the strike began, leading to long queues at petrol stations.

Air France and Air Caraïbes cancelled all flights into Guiana and schools and universities were closed after 37 labor unions launched the strikes demanding a "Marshall Plan" to improve public services and security. The protests also led to the postponement of an ArianeSpace rocket launch at Europe's Guiana Space Centre in Kourou. French Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said a delegation of ministers would be sent to Guiana before the end of the week if certain conditions were met, without elaborating. "The situation is tense," said Ericka Bareigts, the French minister for overseas territories, appealing for calm.

'All we have is plundered'

The French government had previously sent a delegation to negotiate with strikers, but many of the territory's 22 mayors refused to meet the officials, instead demanding that French ministers to come in person. "This has gone on long enough! All we have is plundered, it's time to recognize the people of Guiana," a woman at a barricade blocking access to the airport in the capital Cayenne told AFP on Sunday. The "Collective to Get Guiana Moving" has called for better access to health services and electricity, economic development and job creation programs, and renewed efforts to keep children from dropping out of school. Guiana, with about 250,000 inhabitants, relies on huge injections of public funds. "The government must respond rapidly to these requests," French Environment Minister Segolene Royal said after a recent visit.

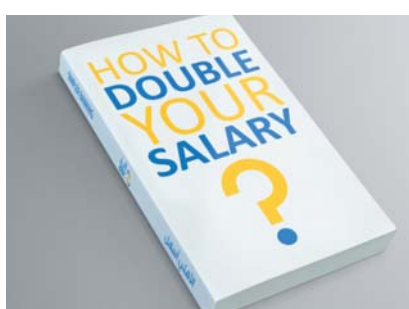
Several of the candidates running for the presidency in France have pounced on the crisis which flared just weeks before the first round of voting on April 23. "This situation is the consequence of the failed policies of Francois Hollande," said conservative candidate Francois Fillon. Marine Le Pen, the far-right National Front candidate, condemned what she called a "cruel minimum service" delivered by French governments to Guiana. A similar revolt gripped French Guiana in 2008 over soaring fuel prices, shutting down schools and the airport. The strike ended after 11 days, when the government agreed to cut fuel prices. — AFP

ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' DRAWS

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 47th 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw on 20th 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 were:

- Hanaa Mostafa Ali AlSharrah, Head Office Branch
- Banseyah Ahmad Ahmad Hussain, Jahra2 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.

EU CLEARS DOW-DUPONT CHEMICALS MEGA-MERGER

BRUSSELS: The EU yesterday approved a \$130 billion mega-merger of US agro-chemicals giants Dow Chemical and DuPont, paving the way for major consolidation in a sensitive sector for farmers and the environment. The decision by antitrust regulators was subject to Dupont selling "major parts" of its global pesticides business, said the European Commission, the EU's executive arm. "Due to significant commitments on products and the worldwide research and development organization, the merger of Dow and Dupont can be approved," EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said.

Dow Chemical and DuPont, two of the oldest US companies, announced their tie-up in December 2015 to create the world's biggest chemicals and materials group. The decision spares the EU from angering the administration of US President Donald Trump, just days before Vestager visits Washington.

Vestager has not been shy of tackling major US companies since she took on the competition brief in 2014, winning praise in Europe but criticism across the Atlantic. Dow and Dupont are dominant players for a huge range of chemical products, but the manufacturing of pesticides and fertilizers has drawn the most attention. The products developed by the Dow and DuPont "affect each and every one of us. They literally affect our daily bread," Vestager told a news conference in Brussels. To win approval, the companies agreed to sell off key DuPont pesticides units, including sensitive research and development capabilities.

'Dominant market share'

Dow will be required to sell two manufacturing plants in Spain and in the US, with German giant BASF widely seen as a potential buyer. The Dow-Dupont merger is part of a broader wave of consolidation in the agro-chemicals sector that



BRUSSELS: European Competition Commissioner, Denmark's Margrethe Vestager addresses a press conference on the merger between US agri-chemicals giants Dow Chemical and DuPont at the European Commission. — AFP

has worried environmental activists and small farmers. In the coming days, the EU is expected to decide on the \$43-billion takeover bid by ChemChina for Swiss rival Syngenta.

The EU is also to decide on German giant Bayer's \$66-billion offer for US firm Monsanto, another mega-merger in the industry that has angered activists. Opponents to the deals warned that the tie-ups would deepen threats to the environment, bring higher prices to struggling farmers as well as boost the controversial genetically-modified crops industry. If all tie-ups are successful, "the three resulting companies could control around 70 percent of the world's agro-chemicals and more

than 60 percent of commercial seeds," said a letter from Friends of the Earth and co-signed by Greenpeace and dozens of other groups.

"Through dominant market share and sheer political power, they would unduly influence our agriculture and food system," added the letter, which was dated Monday. Vestager is due in Washington on Friday. She has pushed through a series of anti-competition probes of Google and Amazon as well taking a historic 13-billion-euro decision against Apple. Some US critics say she unfairly targets American companies but Vestager insists she had simply applied European Union competition rules. — AFP

CHINA AND NEW ZEALAND AGREE TO BOOST ALREADY-CLOSE TRADE TIES

WELLINGTON: China and New Zealand ramped up their cooperation yesterday, pledging to expand their existing free trade agreement into what visiting Premier Li Keqiang called China's "most advanced" with a developed country. The two governments also promised to work together on a Chinese trade and business expansion strategy that Beijing calls "One Belt, One Road".

In Wellington, Li signed nine pacts with New Zealand Prime Minister Bill English, who said talks to upgrade their free trade agreement (FTA) - in effect since 2008 - would begin on April 25. The upgrade would produce an arrangement of the "most advanced level" between the nations and "the first of its kind between China and a developed country", Li said.

In a column published on Monday in the New Zealand Herald, headlined "To New Zealand, with love", Li wrote that rising international instability and uncertainty "have made it all the more important for China and New Zealand to work together to turn challenges into opportunities". New Zealand depends heavily on exports, and Li's remarks echoed those by English and New Zealand central bank governor, Graeme Wheeler, who have warned that possible disruptions of global trade is the biggest threat to prosperity.

'One belt' summit

English said Paul Goldsmith, New Zealand's regulatory reform and innovation minister, would attend a "One Belt, One Road" summit in Beijing in

May. New Zealand was the first Western country to sign an FTA with China and the first to join the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) after which it helped usher in the United Kingdom and Australia.

China is the New Zealand's second biggest trade partner, after Australia, which Li visited last week. Despite agreements on areas from e-commerce to chilled goat exports, thornier issues emerged during Li's talks with English. — Reuters



AUCKLAND: Chinese Premier Li Keqiang is greeted by Auckland Mayor Phil Goff and Counsel General Xu (C) after arriving. — AFP



6 TIPS FROM FORD TO MAKE YOUR SUV GETAWAY EXTRAORDINARY

DUBAI: There's no feeling quite like hitting the road and getting out of town. Whatever flavor you favor - off-roading or heading into the desert to camp and stargaze around the fire - you're in for a treat that breaks up the day-to-day of the work week and provides memories that last a lifetime. Any extraordinary journey requires the right vehicle, but driving off the beaten track without fully understanding how to approach different conditions can be intimidating - and even dangerous. So here are some tips to help you get the most out of your journey and take on the world with confidence.

Feel the sand between your... tires

As Robert Frost once opined, sometimes it's taking the road less travelled that makes all the difference. But the trouble with roads less travelled is that they're often also less paved, less comfortable, and sometimes covered in - or entirely made of - sand. When heading through tough terrain with sand, you want to avoid wheel slippage and keep momentum to

avoid getting stuck. But sand, rocks or mud shouldn't be enough to stop you getting where you want to go. If you're in an Explorer 4x4, you have a head start with Intelligent 4WD and Terrain Management, plus Hill Decent Control, which will give you the confidence you need to tackle the toughest off-road environments with ease.

Tow, tow, tow your boat (or ATV)

What good is a boat, jet ski, or quad bikes parked in a driveway? Without pulling power to reach the terrain you're yearning, you're stranded on land, and that's no fun.

Before planning any trips with a heavy trailer, make sure you have a vehicle up for the job - and double check your owner's manual to make sure your trailer is within the recommended towing limits. Also get to know any helpful tech your vehicle comes with. The Ford Explorer, for example, can tow more than 2,250 kg and uses advanced Trailer Sway Control technology to give you control and confidence at any speed to help get you out of

the driveway and into the water or daring to take on the dunes.

Go stargazing

They say gazing into the nighttime heavens is like locking eyes with the universe, and there are few better ways to end a day of tough off-roading after escaping the city. The Explorer's available LED-panel moon-roof with power sunscreen covers the first and second rows, brightens up the interior giving you and your family their own personal skylight and a window to the stars - the ultimate HD display.

Enjoy the Sounds of Nature

There's nothing quite like the blare of a horn, the rattling clatter of an ancient utility vehicle, or the clamor from a construction site to add another layer of frustration to the slog of a traffic jam. Luckily, life isn't all traffic jams. Once you're in the wild remember to put your windows down and enjoy the sounds of nature. Whether that's the swell of a mountaintop wind or the burbling of a roaring river

is entirely up to you. Until you get there, though, the Explorer's available 12-speaker in 10 locations - including two subwoofers - Sony system helps reduce distortion and enhance sound presence for a crisp and clean listening experience. For 2017, making the connection and smooth transition between devices and soothing Sony sounds, is the latest generation of Ford's innovative high-tech SYNC(r)3 communications and entertainment system, which supports Arabic for the first time - both text and voice activation - enabling simpler control for Arabic-speaking drivers.

Space out

Located behind the third-row seats in the 2017 Ford Explorer, on the left-hand quarter panel trim, are four control buttons with which to PowerFold the entire row with one touch, opening up the boot to such a space that you can stow all the gadgets and gear you need for your weekend getaway adventure. Best-in-class standard second-row head room, and third-row leg room will give your road-trippers

more breathing space. Add to this the second-row 60/40 split bench with armrest and dual cup holders for added comfort and convenience and you may not even want to get out of the Explorer when you reach your destination.

Getting there safely

Ford understands that it's not only about the destination, but getting you there as safely as possible. The Intelligent 4WD Terrain Management System helps provide surefootedness in a variety of road conditions, while AdvanceTrac with Roll Stability Control and Curve Control enhances confidence in slippery conditions.

The strong unibody structure of Explorer helps to protect occupants should you be involved in a collision, and with seven standard airbags - dual-stage front, front-seat side, front-passenger knee and Safety Canopy System - and the offering of available automotive industry-exclusive inflatable rear safety belts for second-row outboard seating positions, you can rest-assured that your safety on your weekend getaway is in strong hands.



MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS' OPENS ITS 173RD SHOWROOM GLOBALLY

MANAMA: Malabar Gold & Diamonds' the leading jewelry retailer has extended its presence in Bahrain by opening a new showroom in Temple road at Manama, Bahrain. Hesham Zaal Khalifa Zaal Al-Bufalash along with Abdul Salaam KP, Group Executive Director, Malabar Group jointly inaugurated Malabar Gold & Diamonds' 173rd showroom globally at Temple Road, Manama, Bahrain on 23rd March, 2017 in the Presence of Sakkeer P, Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mohammed Rafeeq, Branch Head Malabar Gold & Diamonds, management members, media, dignitaries & well-wishers.

The showroom displays a significantly large collection of traditional as well as contemporary jewelry in gold, certified diamonds, platinum and precious gem jewelry across the world that

can hold you spell-bound with their awe-inspiring beauty. As a part of the inaugural offer, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is providing its customers exciting promotions during this period. Customers will get an assured free gift on every jewelry purchase as a part of inauguration. To add more glitter, the new outlet also offers zero deduction on gold (GCC) exchange and no making charges on 8 gram gold coins. These offers are valid until 1st April, 2017.

Malabar group offers exquisite and beautiful jewelry as a part of various brands presented at Malabar Gold & Diamonds' namely Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewelry, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Divine - Indian Heritage Jewelry, Precia - Gem Jewelry and Starlet - Kids Jewelry.

NBK OFFERS EXPATS EXCEPTIONAL OFFERS WHEN THEY TRANSFER THEIR SALARIES

KUWAIT: We launched an innovative promotion that entitles its expatriate customers living in Kuwait to win over 60 valuable prizes and instant gifts annually, as part of the bank's ongoing efforts to reward its existing and new customers who transfer monthly salary to their NBK's account and also aimed to attract those who seek the best services and distinctive products offered by the bank. NBK directs its new campaign, that extends until December 31, 2017, to all expatriate customers, giving them a chance to enter a draw on numerous valuable gifts; including airline tickets to their home coun-

try, cash prizes up to KWD 500, free NBK Visa Signature Credit Card for two years, and other instant prizes, in addition to other privileges as part of the bank's pursuit to build bridges to its expatriate customers, living up to its motto "NBK with you here and at home".

There will be 40 winners from the new customers who transfer their salaries to NBK. The prize consists of a round trip airline ticket fare to their home country which is presented through NBK Gift Card. The draw for the airline ticket will be held quarterly. As for Thahabi existing and new customers, they will have a chance to enter a draw to win a KD 500 cash prize, offered through a free NBK Visa Signature Credit Card for the first year. Once the campaign's conditions are met, the



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FLYDUBAI CARGO CONTINUES TO DELIVER

KUWAIT: Flydubai's Cargo division has completed five years of operations and continues to build on the growth, expansion and success of the Dubai-based airline.

A growing network

Flydubai Cargo has built a network that, due to interline agreements with other airlines, extends globally, allowing the transportation of a variety of goods from Dubai across the GCC, Middle East, Europe, Africa, Russia, CIS, Central Asia and America. Flydubai Cargo now offers its services to 300 destinations around the world. With Flydubai operating flights to 62 destinations which did not previously have direct links to Dubai, the opportunity to transport goods directly has seen strong demand for services to get shipments to their destination faster and more efficiently. Having successfully completed the EU Aviation Security Validation in 2014, Flydubai Cargo has received the ACC3 designation, which allows the carrier to provide uninterrupted cargo services into or through the EU. "Since Flydubai Cargo began operations in 2012 it has become an integral part of our business," said Hamad Obaidalla, Chief Commercial Officer at Flydubai. "We are pleased that we have been able to offer our customers consistent and efficient cargo solutions while continuing to provide flexible and innovative services."

Digital logistics

Flydubai Cargo has continued to invest in a number of electronic cargo systems, which enables its customers, free of charge, to have access to a real-time online booking system, process their air waybills and track their consignments. The airline only uses electronic air waybills (e-AWB) and in Dubai a fully automated warehouse storage facility and retrieval system enhances operations and transit times.

As a recent signatory of the IATA Multilateral e-AWB agreement, Flydubai Cargo has been recognized by IATA as the highest ranked airline for its e-AWB pen-



etration worldwide. "Electronic air waybills are a crucial part of our operations and contribute significantly to how we operate," said Mohamed Hassan, Vice President of Flydubai Cargo. "It has helped keep our costs to a minimum, and increase the productivity and accuracy of our cargo solutions."

Highlights of 2016

Flydubai Cargo's growth continued into 2016 as it began operations from Al Maktoum International (DWC), providing an additional option for cargo solutions to and from Dubai.

Several Security escort agreements have been signed at airports across Central Asia, Europe and the Middle East for the handling of valuable cargo and additional XML (Extensible Markup Language) tech-

nology has been implemented to support advance customs reporting. To protect temperature sensitive cargo during the summer, thermal blanket protection has been introduced for on the ground transportation goods such as, fruits, vegetables and flowers.

Flydubai Cargo continues to be recognized for its performance. It received the "Cargo Operator of the Year" award at the Supply Chain and Transport Awards (SCATA) in Dubai and was recognized at the Payload Asia Awards as the "Rising Star Carrier of the Year". "These awards highlight how far Flydubai Cargo has come since 2012.

We're proud to have been recognized by our peers in the industry," added Mohamed Hassan. "We look forward to continuing to provide effective cargo solutions across our freight network."

RASAMEEL PARTICIPATES IN MIPIM ANNUAL GLOBAL REAL ESTATE CONFERENCE IN CANNES

CANNES: A team from Rasameel Investment Company has attended MIPIM, the annual global real estate conference in Cannes, France. With 24,000 participants from more than 100 countries attending this year, MIPIM is "the place-to-be" for all the global real estate market stakeholders wishing to keep up with the latest trends in the field.

Shahid Feroz, Vice President of Alternative Investments at Rasameel Investment Company commented on this participation by saying "We at Rasameel know the importance of fully understanding all the global political and economic variables affecting the real estate markets when looking for the best investment opportunities. This conference was a great opportunity for us to exchange and discuss the latest real estate trends and developments."

Despite the global economies relative stability and growth, the political changes are adding further ambiguity on real estate investments, and the political topics were predominant in this year's conferences. Discussions focused in addition to the economic topics on the latest political developments, including the election of the new US president, Donald Trump and his pro-US spending, protectionist legislative agenda, the future of the Euro zone shaken by the Brexit and the rise of the populist political parties across Europe, in addition to the political power struggle between the US, Russia and China.

The new norm

Although investing with uncertainty is becoming the new norm post the great recession of 2008, there are interesting global real estate trends to be aware of in making investment decisions. Feroz indicated that with the US economy growing at a rate of 2% and expected to grow even further under the newly elect President Trump, coupled with positive job growth and controlled inflation, the Federal Reserve has set the course for interest rates to raise, which will have a direct effect on real estate cap rates, valuations and financing. While in the European continent, the EU

nations' disparities are becoming increasingly pronounced. Indeed, since the establishment of the EU, the northern states like Germany, Holland and Finland have shown a more conservative approach towards income vs. productivity as compared to the southern states like Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal. Wages in the south increased at a higher rate than the north while productivity declined.

The wage increase in the south was mostly financed by massive debt, where as the northern states managed better than their southern neighbors to increase productivity, contain debt levels and introduce enhanced economic reforms. Feroz said that this North-South divergence continues to put greater question marks on the sustainability of the EU. However, it is clear that both the north and the south cannot afford the breakup of the Union. Not yet at least, despite the Brexit referendum results of June 2016.

Brexit effect

The Brexit, which is set to be triggered end of March has affected the real estate market with values losing 3 points in the quarter following the vote. However, recovery has started and prices have recovered in the first few months of 2017. The exchange rate and the devaluation of the British Pound have undeniably also drove some recent investment decisions. In London, the global city where Brexit is only one factor of the real estate market equation, long-term plans based on scenarios are advised and it is expected that rents will hold in the City of London before sliding down mainly because of excess supply.

Technology, on the other hand, has disrupted many industries and started to dent the real estate industry as well. Allowing people to connect with each other and collaborate remotely, technology has reduced the need for physical space and eliminated the many middle men acting in the real estate business. Websites like Zillow or Rightmove have made it easier for investors to access information and applications are now people's favorite platform when collect-



Shahid Feroz

ing rents, making reservations and leasing space. Infrastructure investment, driven by urbanization has become increasingly important. The US major cities are undeveloped to meet current demand of occupiers and there is a need for better highways, public transport, housing and work/play space. Those changes are also motivated by Millennials' change in taste and habits. This new workforce need more open space, flexible working hours in addition to modern lifestyle work and entertainment environment.

Undeniably Feroz said that the real estate market remains highly dependent on local tendencies and preferences, and location remains key. Political developments, technological advances and social trends affect the demographics and behaviors of individuals or corporates occupiers, which in turn affect the location and the real estate market dynamics in general. Real estate investment decisions should take into account multiple scenarios of changing trends and need to be based on long-term perspectives.

SUPER SUCCESSOR HONOR 8 LITE GEARS UP FOR DIGITAL NATIVES

DUBAI: Honor, the number one smartphone e-brand by Huawei, has just unveiled the Honor 8 Lite, the brand's latest smartphone to be launched under the flagship Honor 8 series. Embodying the motto "Beauty at your reach", the Honor 8 Lite, follows the success of the Honor 8, launched last summer, and offers the flagship smartphone's eye-catching aesthetics and high-performance at an attractive price point available at all local retailers for the internet-minded, style-conscious millennial looking for a technologically advanced device. The sleek-looking Honor 8 Lite offers snappy performance, supported by strong battery life, as well as advanced camera capabilities.

"Honor is dedicated to creating devices that match our millennial users' lifestyles and unique personalities. Following the success of honor 8, we saw an opportunity for the introduction of a lighter version of the device that opens up the market for more users to gain access to both visual appeal and strong performance features at a budget price point," said Chris Sun Baigong, Vice President Huawei honor Middle East CBG.

Stylish smart device

With its design inspired by the mesmerizing scenes of the Antelope

Canyon, Honor 8 Lite's dual 2.5D curved glass display and brushed metal exudes premium quality. Its 7.6mm slim body and chamfered edges provide a comfortable yet firm grip.

Outstanding photography results

Honor 8 Lite's camera is equipped with user-friendly functions for capturing and sharing favorite moments. Its 8MP front camera boasting a 77° wide angle lens, coupled with an upgraded and highly-intuitive selfie mode, allows users to take flawless selfies no matter the surroundings. Its 12MP rear camera with 1.25µm pixels and Phase Detection Auto Focus (PDAF), brings you a snappy (focus speeds of just 0.3 seconds), and pleasant shooting experience all around.

Smoother customized performance

Fueled by the powerful Kirin 655 Octa-Core CPU, 3GB LPDDR3 RAM, and equipped with a 16GB of internal storage expandable to 128GB, Honor 8 Lite enables users to run multiple functions simultaneously without any glitch. The Honor 8 Lite runs with the innovative EMUI 5.0 interface featuring an intelligent learning system, which achieves optimal performance by allocating



resources according to users' needs and prioritizing apps based on users' behavior over time. EMUI 5.0 also provides flexible functions to accommodate users' needs, with 90% of the general applications accessible in 3 steps or less.

Strong battery support

The Honor 8 Lite has a long-lasting 3000mAh (typical value) battery with a high energy density of 650WhL. Coupled with its Smart Power 5.0 system, which optimizes battery consumption and a 16nm intelligent

chip-level power saving technology, the Honor 8 Lite lets users make the most of their device under any circumstances. The Honor 8 Lite launches in four colors: blue, black, gold and white. The device is available for purchase today 1st of March, in the Middle East.



SAN FRANCISCO: In this Tuesday, Dec 13, 2016 file photo, an Uber car in driverless mode waits in traffic during a test drive. —AP

SELF-DRIVING UBER STRUCK DURING ARIZONA ACCIDENT

TEMPE: Officials say a self-driving Uber SUV was operating on its own when it was struck by another vehicle making a left turn at an intersection in Arizona, where the company is testing autonomous vehicles. No one was seriously injured. Uber says its vehicles have been grounded as it investigates. Police in Tempe say the self-driving SUV was obeying the law and the

driver in the other car who didn't yield was cited for a moving violation after the Friday night crash.

An Uber statement Saturday says there were no passengers in the self-driving Volvo SUV at the time of the crash but there were two operators in the front. Police say the Uber rolled over onto its side as a result of the collision. —AP



ROME: Visitor wear special 3D viewing devices in one of the rooms of the Domus Aurea, a large palace built by the Roman Emperor Nero in the first century, during a exhibition for the press about the new visit whit a viewer biocular to high technology 3D's system, in central Rome on March 22, 2017. —AFP

TOSHIBA'S US ATOMIC UNIT TO FILE FOR BANKRUPTCY

TOKYO: Toshiba's loss-hit US nuclear unit could be placed under bankruptcy protection as early as this week, a report said yesterday, sending shares in the Japanese giant lower. Westinghouse Electric is likely to file for Chapter 11 on Tuesday and is eyeing Korea Electric Power Co to help with its subsequent restructuring, Japan's Nikkei business daily said, without citing sources. The two firms already have a technology partnership.

Toshiba's stock ended a see-saw session at 218.4 yen, down 2.06 percent. The company has lost more than half its market value since late December, when it warned of multi-billion-dollar losses at Westinghouse and said it was investigating claims of accounting fraud by senior executives at the division. A Tokyo-based Toshiba spokesman declined to comment yesterday's Nikkei report.

"The fluctuations today are linked to the recent volatility in Toshiba shares," Toshikazu Horiuchi, a broker at IwaiCosmo Securities, told AFP. "There will likely be more selling if US authorities criticize the bankruptcy restructuring." Toshiba has said it would try to sell Westinghouse, once lauded as the future of its atomic business

after the 2011 Fukushima disaster sidelined new orders in Japan.

Japanese financial regulators have given the company until April 11 to publish results for the October-December quarter, which were originally due in mid-February. Toshiba has twice delayed their release, saying it needed more time to probe claims of misconduct by senior managers at Westinghouse and gauge the impact on its finances. Toshiba previously warned it was on track to report a net loss of 390 billion yen (\$3.5 billion) in the fiscal year to March, as it faced a writedown topping 700 billion yen at Westinghouse, which has been hit by big cost overruns.

This month Standard & Poor's cut its credit rating on Toshiba again, warning that its finances were quickly worsening. The firm is trying to spin off its prized memory chip business to raise cash, after earlier selling its medical devices unit and most of a home appliance business. The latest crisis comes less than two years after Toshiba's reputation was badly damaged by separate revelations that top executives had pressured underlings to cover up weak results for years after the 2008 global financial meltdown. —AFP

GOOGLE AD BOYCOTT COULD AIM IRE AT AD-SERVING SOFTWARE

SAN FRANCISCO: Google's money-making foundation is strong enough to endure a current boycott by advertisers, but the movement could rattle the practice of software "programmed" ad placement, analysts said.

The internet giant's core business of serving up advertising along with online search results appeared to be safe from the boycott, motivated by companies seeking assurances that their marketing messages won't be displayed along with hateful or outright terrorist content, particularly videos on Google-operated YouTube.

The "backlash" could broaden into a rebellion against the market practice of software programming ad placements, slowing not only Google's revenue but also that of other internet firms, according to Jackdaw chief analyst Jan Dawson. "I would think Google (and parent company Alphabet) would be extremely lucky to emerge from all this with minimal financial impact," he said in a blog post. "I think it's far more likely it sees both a short-term dent in its revenues and profits from the spreading boycotts and possibly a longer-term impact as brands reconsider their commitments to programmatic advertising in general."

California-based Google, which has seen a slew of companies withdraw ads fearing placement alongside extremist content, said this week it is introducing new tools to give firms greater control. "We know advertisers don't want their ads next to content that doesn't align with their values," Google's chief business officer Philipp Schindler said in a blog post. "We're taking a tougher stance on hateful, offensive and derogatory content."

Hateful videos

The boycott began last week after the Times newspaper of London found BBC programs were promoted alongside videos posted by American white supremacist and former Ku Klux Klan member David Duke as well as Wagdi Ghoneim, an Islamist preacher banned from Britain for inciting hatred. The analysis found more than 200 anti-Semitic videos, and that Google had failed to remove six of them within the 24-hour

period mandated by the European Union after it anonymously signaled their presence.

The British government subsequently put its YouTube advertising on hold, saying in a statement, "it is totally unacceptable that taxpayer-funded advertising has appeared next to inappropriate internet content." Others to pull the plug, temporarily at least, include the BBC, The Guardian newspaper group, McDonalds UK and the British arm of the major advertising agency Havas. The movement spread to the United States this week, with AT&T and Verizon pulling ads from Google. Google's parent Alphabet has lost

investors. "It is a hit on their revenue, but it is an even bigger hit on their brand; on their reputation," Altimeter Group principal analyst Charlene Li said. "Google hasn't taken it seriously enough."

She recommended that Google engage advertisers directly and openly. A solution may not be easy. Google needs to strike a balance between pleasing advertisers and those who upload videos to YouTube and are free to take their creations elsewhere if unsatisfied with their shares of ad revenue. Google's setbacks could benefit traditional television networks as ad dollars return there from YouTube or stall a shift to

Advertisers can chose "keywords" for targeting their ads, or sometimes use demographic options such as age groups or where people live. Google and the leading social network Facebook stopped publishing ads on websites posting sensational and fabricated stories following controversy about the role "fake news" may have played in the US presidential election last year. In February, YouTube ended an advertising partnership with its biggest star, PewDiePie, who had published videos containing anti-Semitic insults and Nazi references. These claims against the Youtuber were even-



MOUNTAIN VIEW: This file photo taken on September 1, 2015 shows the Google logo at the Google headquarters. —AFP

slightly more than \$20 billion in value since the start of this week based on a slip in its share price, in a sign the boycott has made investors nervous.

Limits of software

Still, analysts believe the boycott's overall financial impact should be relatively small given the breadth of Google's advertising activities. Even a "draconian" estimate of fiscal damage was limited to whittling perhaps a percent off Alphabet's revenue, Morgan Stanley said in a note to

online, Morgan Stanley said.

Google rivals such as Facebook could also benefit if they prove safer havens for digital advertising. Above all, the boycott highlights the limits of "programmatic" advertising, the practice of letting software algorithms decide pairing between marketing messages and content sought by online viewers. The technology is broadly used by internet firms, which heavily rely on software and artificial intelligence to figure out what ads will interest people at any given moment.

usually debunked as overwhelming evidence of media tampering and escalation was brought to light. Following these embarrassing revelations, many claimed publications and media outlets were simply fanning the flames of this 'controversy' to further their agenda against the new media of the internet. The boycott will push for programmatic ad software to become more precise and better understand the content offered for pairing in order to reduce risks for advertisers, Li said. —AFP

BUSINESS LOSS FROM CYBER ATTACKS IS \$861K PER SECURITY INCIDENT

DUBAI: On average a single cybersecurity incident now costs large businesses \$861,000. Meanwhile, small and medium businesses (SMB) end up paying \$86,500. Most alarmingly, the cost of recovery significantly increases depending on the time of discovery. SMBs tend to pay 44% more to recover from an attack discovered a week or more after the initial breach, compared to attacks spotted within one day. Enterprises pay a 27% premium in the same circumstances. These are the main findings of Kaspersky Lab's report "Measuring the Financial Impact of IT Security on Businesses" based on the 2016 Corporate IT Security Risks survey.

In the report, Kaspersky Lab compared an organization's security budget to losses incurred from serious incidents. Overall, businesses expect IT Security budgets to grow at least 14% over the next three years, due to the increased complexity of IT infrastructure. A typical small businesses currently spends 18% of

their total IT budget on security, whereas enterprises allocate 21%. The research shows a significant disparity between businesses of differing sizes, with annual security budget varying from just \$1,000 for very small businesses to more than one million US dollars for large companies.

To estimate the total cost of recovery, Kaspersky Lab and B2B International asked businesses to report their losses from the most serious security incident in different categories. Although the most frequent cost is for additional staff wages, businesses reported significant spending due to lost business opportunities, improvement in IT security, employing external specialists and hiring new staff. Enterprises spend \$79K on training and \$85K on requesting help from external experts -19% of the total loss.

"Based on our worldwide survey, the average IT Security budget is 'worth' just 2.5 cyber attacks once all direct and indirect losses are

taking into account. With thousands of threats attacking corporate world every day, an efficient cybersecurity definitely pays off. Businesses understand the threat clearly; 59% of SMBs and 62% of enterprises say they will improve their security regardless of an ability to measure return," comments Vladimir Zapolyansky, Head of SMB Marketing, Kaspersky Lab.

"However, the survey proves that reaction time post-breach has a direct impact on financial losses. This is something that cannot be remedied via budget increases. It requires talent, intelligence and an agile attitude towards protecting one's business. As a security vendor, our goal is to provide tools and intelligence for businesses of all sizes, keeping in mind the difference in ability to allocate security budgets," adds Zapolyansky. The full report titled "Measuring the Financial Impact of IT Security on Businesses" is available at Kaspersky Lab's website

EXPLORERS, DE NIRO DENOUNCE TRUMP ON CLIMATE CHANGE



NEW YORK: File photo shows a general view of the Explorers Club dinner held in the Great Hall of Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York, as actor Robert De Niro addressed guests. —AFP

NEW YORK: Top British explorer Ranulph Fiennes and Solar Impulse pilot Bertrand Piccard are expressing fears about US President Donald Trump's moves to roll back environmental protections. Their criticism was backed by actor Robert De Niro, who joined them late Saturday at the 113th dinner of The Explorers Club in New York, held every year to honor great adventurers in the presence of over 1,000 guests. Fiennes—who has been dubbed the world's greatest living explorer—recalled his earliest expeditions to the Arctic.

"In the 1970s, we designed man-hauled sledges so that they were slightly waterproof in case there was a bit of water up there," the 73-year-old told AFP. "By the mid-90s, we were designing canoes to be sledges... In the five years since I

was last around, that area has got so that ski-planes won't even land," meaning their use in rescue missions is no longer possible, he explained. "Trump has got to get around to the view that (Barack) Obama had, which is to encourage everything to vie against climate change, not to increase it."

Switzerland's Piccard, who received the club's medal for co-piloting the first round-the-globe trip in a solar plane, said the way to "Make America Great Again," as per Trump's campaign slogan, was to use "clean technologies." "Today, the solutions (to climate change) are profitable. They create jobs, they make profit, they sustain growth and at the same time they protect the environment," he said. Attending the dinner as an admirer of explorers, De Niro also

denounced the new administration's attitude toward environmental issues. "Every day brings news about how we're sprinting away from common sense and care for our planet," he said.

"In the last two weeks alone, we've seen America's leadership proposing... to deny the facts and dismiss the facts on climate change." Trump on Friday gave final approval for the building of the controversial Keystone XL oil pipeline, overriding environmental concerns in favor of boosting jobs and energy supply. His proposed 2018 budget would also slash funding for science, health and environmental programs at home and abroad, sparking an outcry among experts who say the cuts would endanger the planet. The blueprint must be approved by lawmakers before it can take effect. —AFP

NEXT 50 YEARS WILL DETERMINE HUMANITY'S OUTCOME 'FOR 10,000 YEARS' 'WE COULD END UP IN A VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION'

LONDON: The extent to which countries cut their emissions over the next 50 years will determine the conditions of people's life on earth for at least the next 10,000 years, the head of the Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University says. Continued use of oil, natural gas and coal at the current rate will likely raise global temperatures to 2 or 2.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, creating conditions that would make life "difficult to manage", said Johan Rockstrom. Even more worryingly, this temperature rise may trigger natural events that would take the planet from 2 degrees Celsius to 6 degrees, which would be "catastrophic", he said.

"What happens in the coming 50 years will certainly determine the outcome for humanity 10,000 years and beyond," Rockstrom said, adding that the last 50 years of human activity has "pushed us away from the stability we've been in for the past 12,000 years". Rockstrom is one of a group of scientists proposing that the world halves its carbon dioxide emissions every decade from 2020, by issuing penalties on carbon emitters.

If temperatures approach 2 or 3 degrees Celsius, sea levels are likely to rise at least 7 or 8 meters (23-26 feet), and droughts and floods increase to a frequency and severity not seen before. There are also likely to be many more catastrophic weather events such as hurricanes and "massive" heat waves, he said. Tropical areas of the earth will "very rapidly" move north, and tropical diseases will spread to other latitudes. This temperature rise may also cause additional trigger events that will warm the planet further, he said.

These include permafrost in Siberia thawing and releasing potent greenhouse gases, forests dying and releasing carbon dioxide, and ice melting which would leave the planet with a darker surface that absorbs the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. "These are the kind of domino effects that we are concerned about and where we could end up in a very dangerous situation," Rockstrom told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. If temperatures rise 4 degrees Celsius or more, it will be the first time this has happened in 4 million years - since before modern humans existed, he said. To have a chance of keeping temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, as laid out in the Paris climate agreement, countries will need to decarbonize their economies, cut emissions from agriculture and food production, and protect existing natural environments, Rockstrom said. They will also need to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere using "geoengineering" techniques which are both costly and have not yet been tried out at scale. But they will be a necessity, he added. "We have gone too far, we have simply emitted too much."

Business voices

Too often the most vocal groups on climate are environmental non-governmental organizations and climate scientists, Rockstrom said. Although their voices are important, over the decades that had led to a mistaken belief that there is a contradiction between economic growth and sustainability, he said. "It's very dangerous to have NGOs in the frontline, science a little behind them, because political leaders need to hear the business voice. They

are the engine of growth and jobs," he said. One reason why the 2015 Paris climate talks were so successful was because "business was there and it was very strong," he said.

Companies in many sectors see the potential for making money from sustainable growth, he said. Truck companies can make vehicles that run on electricity, the aviation industry is finding ways to cut emissions, and companies in the construction industry are working on low-carbon alternatives to the current form of cement, for example. But companies are also hedging their risks. While many are investing in new low-carbon technologies, often under the radar, they also continue to make - and sometimes lobby for - older technologies, Rockstrom said.

Either way, they will adapt to political realities to make the most profit in the short-term, he said. "We're in this Trump administration that doesn't care about climate change at all, so (businesses in United States) basically adapt to the situation," he said. "But if we had another administration, they would operate there to make the maximum profit." Overall, though, there is a general move towards sustainable economic growth, he said. China, for example, more than doubled its solar capacity last year, making it the world's largest producer of solar energy by capacity. It aims to generate 20 percent of its energy without fossil fuels by 2030, up from 11 percent today. China's rationale for shifting to clean energy is because it makes good business sense, he said. "They are adamantly focused on their own growth, their own success and their own prosperity," he added. —Reuters



ICONIC JAMAICAN BEACH VANISHING AS POLLUTION, CLIMATE CHANGE TAKE A TOLL

KINGSTON: Hellshire Beach, one of Jamaica's cultural icons, has appeared in countless documentaries, movies and travelogues about the island nation. The strip of sand, a half-hour drive from the capital and backed by seafood restaurants, is a weekend favorite for Kingstonians, a place to kick back and "lyme" - the local term for "chill". But Hellshire Beach is fast disappearing. What once was a wide strip of sand in front of Aunt May's Fish Place has vanished so quickly that Kingstonians find themselves digging through old photos to make sure their memories aren't playing tricks on them. One of them is Kamillah Taylor, a 30-year-old US software engineer who grew up going to Hellshire. She remembers people riding horses and children playing on a wide expanse of beach.

When she visited last year, she was shocked to see that much of it was gone. "To go from that to basically shops that look like they are on cliffs... it blew my mind how different it was. It was a totally different scene," said Taylor in a telephone interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Experts say that a combination of pollution and warmer temperatures linked to climate change have killed the once-thriving coral reefs offshore, allowing waves to pound the beach and wash away the sand. "I've never seen anywhere along the Jamaican coast change so significantly. ... It's a domino effect starting with the death of the reef," said Mona Webber, a marine ecologist and director of the University of the West Indies' Centre for Marine Sciences.

Disappearing reef

Webber carried out her graduate work in the sea off Hellshire in the 1980s, studying the impact of pollution from Kingston harbour on the reef. Back then, as she used a small skiff to collect water samples along the reef, its structure was so dense that it could be a challenge not to bump into it. But now the reef is completely gone, she said. Hellshire sits downstream from Kingston harbour, where industrial and other wastes over decades made their way into the water. As the beach's popularity grew, it also suffered from water pollution created by bathers and fishermen who gutted fish in the water, Webber said.

"Coral reefs cannot handle poor water quality. They really are affected by excess nutrients and algal overgrowth," Webber said. Studies in the 1990s showed that a big day out for Kingstonians at Hellshire led to algae doubling in the bay two to three days later, she said. Climate change, which can cause rising sea temperatures and additional stress on coral, may have been the "last nail in the coffin" for the reef, Webber said. Once parts of the reef had weakened or died, other parts of it became more vulnerable to storms, she said.

Locals like Nehemiah "Natty" Thomson, 66, a long-time fisherman who now cooks up fish in one of the seaside restaurants, remember the hurricanes that slowly dismantled the reef. "Ivan, Gilbert, Dean... every one come cut off a piece," Thomson said. Parts of the dead reef remain offshore in a pile of coral rubble. Once the reef had been slowly swept away by hurricanes, it left the bay vulnerable, Webber said. "Once you lose your reef, the seagrass gets exposed to too much high wave action and then the beach itself is also compromised. All those systems help to hold the sand in place," Webber said, adding that the structures on Hellshire have cut the beach off from dunes that could replenish it.

Visitors - and profits - down

For Kingstonians, the shrinking beach has meant losing one of the few free public beaches near the city. For the fishermen and vendors, it is a threat to their livelihoods. "There is definitely a decline in the number of people coming to Hellshire. It's affecting business as well," said Glaston White, chairman of the Half Moon Bay Fisherman's Association, the non-profit group responsible for managing the beach. May Byrou, who owns Aunt May's Fish Place, a long-popular beachfront seafood restaurant, estimates that her business is down 25 to 50 percent due to the disappearance of the beach.

Parthenope James, who goes by the nickname Pie and owns another seafood restaurant, said she's also felt the impact, even though her restaurant is not on the beachfront. "When the people come and see how it stay, they go somewhere else," Pie said. For beach-goers, what little beach is left has been transformed. Doryck Boyd, a semi-retired dental surgeon who has been coming to Hellshire since the 1970s, said the difference is startling. "You could walk way out and the water would be up to your waist," Boyd said. But without a reef the currents have gotten stronger, and the water increasingly unsafe, he said. For now, the Half Moon Bay Fishermen's Cooperative has tried to stem some of the erosion by putting in a groyne - a wall that extends from the beach out into the water. The cooperative is looking to raise funds to do more recovery work, White said.

Some restaurant owners also have stacked sandbags and tires on the beach in hopes of shoring up the sand. But Webber suggests one of the best solutions might be abandoning the beach entirely to let it recover - or at least restricting access. "There is such a thing as carrying capacity," she said. White said fishermen are coming to terms with that fact. "They are aware that the time may come that we'll be asked to evacuate," he said. "They are basically bracing to see if that's going to be a possibility." —Reuters

'SCARED' FATHER OF BANGLADESH 'TREE GIRL' ENDS TREATMENT

DHAKA: A young Bangladeshi girl diagnosed with a rare condition known as "tree man syndrome" has left hospital, her father told AFP yesterday, saying he feared she would never be cured. Surgeons

operated on Sahana Khatun last month and removed some of the bark-like growths she has developed from the extremely rare condition of epidermodysplasia verruciformis. The 10-year-old is

believed to be the first female in the world to suffer from the condition, also known as "tree man syndrome", and was being treated for free by the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Doctors hailed the initial surgery as a success, but Sahana's father Mohammad Shahjahan said it had only aggravated her condition and he wanted to spare her from further procedures. "They removed the bark-like growths and they grew again more thick and strong," he told AFP. "I am scared. They said my daughter needed another 8-10 operations. But what's the guarantee that she will be cured after that?" Samanta Lal Sen, head of the hospital's burns and plastic surgery unit, said he had wanted to keep the girl in hospital for further surgery but her father, a poor laborer, refused.

"He left with his daughter, complaining there was no progress. We asked them to stay a few more weeks for treatment," Sen told AFP. Fewer than half a dozen people are known to suffer from the syndrome, among them 27-year-old Bangladeshi rickshaw-puller Abul Bajandar. He has undergone at least 21 surgical procedures to remove huge growths each weighing five kilos (11 pounds), and doctors believe he may be the first sufferer to be cured. Sahana's father, a widower, said he had also struggled financially during her treatment. "I had to remain at her side without going to work. I didn't have any money to feed her properly," he said. "She's the only family I've got left and I don't want to see her sadly sitting in a hospital bed." —AFP



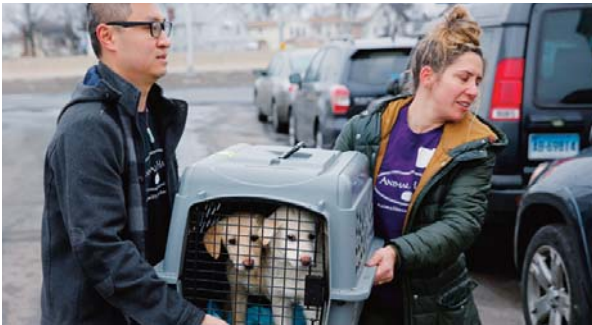
DHAKA: This file photograph shows ten-year-old Bangladeshi patient Sahana Khatun (left) and her father Mohammad Shahjahan as they pose for a photograph at The Dhaka Medical College and Hospital in Dhaka. —AFP

46 DOGS ARRIVE IN NY FROM SOUTH KOREA, SAVED FROM SLAUGHTER

NEW YORK: A dog meat farm in South Korea is missing 46 dogs that arrived at New York's Kennedy Airport after being rescued. After landing late Saturday, the animals were headed for shelters in New York, Maryland and Pennsylvania. The Humane Society International is responsible for saving the dogs that would otherwise have been slaughtered.

Humane Society officials say they

awaited death in dirty, dark cages, and were fed barely enough to survive. The farm was in Goyang, South Korea. In the United States, the dogs will be available for adoption. But first, the shelters plan to make sure each one is ready for a new life in someone's home. The Humane Society has helped save more than 800 South Korean dogs on farms since 2015. —AP



NEW YORK: A crate holding two puppies rescued from a South Korean dog meat farm are loaded onto an animal transport vehicle near Kennedy Airport by Animal Haven Director of Operations Mantat Wong, left, and volunteer Nicole Smith Sunday in the Queens borough of New York. —AP

MALARIA KILLS 150 IN ZIMBABWE AFTER HEAVY RAINS

HARARE: At least 150 people have died of malaria in Zimbabwe over the past two months, with nearly 90,000 infections recorded, a government official said yesterday, blaming the upsurge on intense rains. "We have seen increased cases of malaria due to the more rains received this year that increased the breeding grounds for mosquitoes," Joseph Mberikunashe, malaria director in the ministry of health, told AFP. Mberikunashe said 151 deaths and 89,261 malaria cases had been recorded in the past two months following heavy rains that also caused deadly floods.

He said that while a rise in malaria cases was expected after the rains, some of the deaths may have been caused by delays in seeking medical care. "The deaths are caused by lack of access to health facilities," he said. The most affected regions of the country are in the south where floods cut off access to health clinics. Heavy rains battered the southern African country from December until the end of February, leaving 246 people dead and at least 2,000 people homeless across the country while homes and schools were damaged and several dams burst. —AFP



BROOME, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, Australia : This undated handout from the University of Queensland released yesterday shows Dr Anthony Romilio and Linda Pollard from the university creating a silicon cast of sauropod tracks in the Lower Cretaceous Broome Sandstone in the Walmadany area of Dampier Peninsula, Western Australia. —AFP photos

‘UNPARALLELED’ NUMBER OF DINOSAUR TRACKS FOUND IN AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY: An “unprecedented” 21 different types of dinosaur tracks have been found on a stretch of Australia’s remote coastline, scientists said yesterday, dubbing it the nation’s Jurassic Park. Palaeontologists from the University of Queensland and James Cook University said it was the most diverse such discovery in the world, unearthed in rocks up to 140 million years old in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Steve Salisbury, lead author of a paper on the findings published in the *Memoir of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology*, said the tracks were “globally unparalleled”. “It is extremely significant, forming the primary record of non-avian dinosaurs in the western half of the continent and providing the only glimpse of Australia’s dinosaur fauna during the first half of the Early Cretaceous Period,” he said. “It’s such a magical place-Australia’s own Jurassic Park, in a spectacular wilderness setting.” He added: “Among the tracks is the only confirmed evidence for stegosaurs in Australia. There are also some of the largest dinosaur tracks ever recorded.” It was almost lost, with the Western Australian government in 2008 selecting the area as the preferred site for a massive liquid natural gas processing precinct. Alarmed, the region’s traditional Aboriginal custodians, the Goolarabooloo people, contacted Salisbury and his team to officially research what they knew was there.

They spent more than 400 hours investigat-

ing and documenting dinosaur tracks in the Walmadany area. “We needed the world to see what was at stake,” Goolarabooloo official Phillip Roe said, explaining the dinosaur tracks formed part of a songline that extends along the coast and then inland, tracing the journey of a Dreamtime creator being called Marala, the Emu man. Aboriginal Australians have developed and are bound by highly complex belief systems-known as the Dreamtime-that interconnect the land, spirituality, law, social life and care of the environment. A songline is one of the paths across the land which mark the route followed by localized “creator-beings”, stories that have been handed down through the generations.

“Marala was the Lawgiver. He gave country the rules we need to follow. How to behave, to keep things in balance,” Roe said. The area was eventually awarded National Heritage status in 2011 and the gas project subsequently collapsed. “There are thousands of tracks around Walmadany. Of these, 150 can confidently be assigned to 21 specific track types, representing four main groups of dinosaurs,” Salisbury said. “There were five different types of predatory dinosaur tracks, at least six types of tracks from long-necked herbivorous sauropods, four types of tracks from two-legged herbivorous ornithopods, and six types of tracks from armored dinosaurs.” Most of Australia’s dinosaur fossils have previously come from the eastern side of the vast country. —AFP



BROOME, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, Australia: This undated handout shows the topotype track of *Walmadanyichus hunteri* (Hunter’s mark of Walmadany) in Lower Cretaceous rocks of the Broome Sandstone.

DROUGHT-STRICKEN SOMALIA BATTLES HUNGER AND CHOLERA

BAIDOA, Somalia: An emaciated woman writhes on her hospital bed, weakly waving her bony hand to create a current of air. Cholera patient Zeinab Hussein, a 50-year-old farmer, is one of thousands of desperate Somalis who have streamed into Baidoa in southwestern Somalia seeking food and medical care as a result of the country’s prolonged drought. The influx has overwhelmed local and international aid agencies. The hospital ward is filled with the sound of crying, malnourished children, many fed through tubes in their noses. The new patients, mostly children, show signs of chronic malnourishment when they arrive at therapeutic clinics run by UNICEF, said aid workers.

The cholera epidemic is most prevalent among women and children. Cholera outbreaks often occur in refugee camps due to overcrowding and poor sanitation. Water scarcity also remains a major problem among the new arrivals in the refugee camps. In recent weeks, aid agencies have started a cholera vaccination campaign across Somalia. Somalia’s drought is threatening 3 million lives, according to the U.N. In recent months, aid agencies have been scaling up their efforts but they said more support is urgently needed to prevent the crisis from worsening.

More aid “is very important if we want to prevent the cholera from going out of control and also to prevent famine. We have to get the funding now to prevent it,” Steven Lauwerier, UNICEF’s representative for Somalia, said standing inside a Baidoa hospital ward. “We are still ahead of the curve of the famine because now is when we can save lives,” he said. “This is not the time to have doubts that funding is not needed.” Somalia’s emergency is joined by similar hunger crises in South Sudan, northeastern Nigeria and Yemen, which together make the world’s largest humanitarian disaster in more than 70 years, according to UN officials.

In Somalia, drought-stricken families have had to move from one place to another in order to reach international aid agencies that cannot distribute food in areas under the control of Al-Shabab, Somali’s homegrown Islamic extremist rebels who are affiliated to A-Qaeda. With her newborn baby, just 40 days old, Sangabo Madey walked for two days to reach a camp in Baidoa in search of food and water. Standing beside a hut of sticks and plastic sheeting, constantly blown by the wind, the mother of five said she does not know what to do next. “We were unable to feed our children. Because of the drought we did not have anything to eat,” Madey said. “We left our hometowns to come here, but there is little aid coming in and we still continue to suffer.” —AP



BAIDOA, Somalia: In this photo a Somali woman holds her child Dahabo Sheikh Mumin, 1, as they attend a health center in Baidoa, Somalia. —AP photos



BAIDOA, Somalia: Newly displaced Somali women gather near to their makeshift shelters at a camp in Baidoa, Somalia.

INDIAN FARMERS PROTEST WITH HUMAN SKULLS, RATS

NEW DELHI: Indian farmers hit by drought and debt displayed the skulls of fellow farmers believed to have committed suicide, and placed live rats in their mouths at a protest yesterday, calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to save them from starvation. The farmers, who travelled to the Indian capital from the southern state of Tamil Nadu, say lack of rains over the last year have led to crop failure, forcing many to take loans from banks and moneylenders to survive.

“These skulls are all that remains of our brothers who killed themselves because they could not repay their debts,” said P Ayyakannu, president of South Indian Rivers Linking Farmers Association, sitting by a row of eight human skulls. “It has come to the stage where hundreds of farmers are committing suicide due to the pressure of not being able to repay these loans, yet our prime minister is doing very little. We are here to demand Modi help us and write-off these debts.”

The Thomson Reuters Foundation could not verify if the skulls on display at the protest in Delhi’s city centre belonged to

farmers who had committed suicide. Tens of thousands of Indian farmers have killed themselves over the last decade - by drinking pesticides or hanging themselves from trees - as unseasonal rains and drought combined with lower global commodity prices have hurt farm incomes.

More than 12,600 farmers and agricultural laborers committed suicide in 2015 alone - making up almost 10 percent of all suicides in India, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). Almost 60 percent of the suicides were caused by bankruptcy and indebtedness or farming-related issues, said the NCRB, and almost three-quarters of victims were farmers cultivating land plots of less than two hectares (five acres).

Eat Rats

Since sweeping to power almost three years ago, Modi has introduced a national crop damage insurance scheme, promised to improve irrigation and input subsidies to farmers if a third of their crop is damaged. But farmers’ unions say the implementation of these meas-

ures has been slow. In searing midday heat, over 100 farmers dressed in green turbans and loin cloths sat bare-chested on the roadside.

They chanted slogans and shared stories of watching their rice and cotton crops wither away, and spoke of borrowing money to pay their children’s school fees, buy food and even to repay existing debts. Some held up large white rats and placed the squirming rodents between their teeth - saying they would be forced to eat them in order to avoid starvation. “This is not just about the farmers in Tamil Nadu, but about farmers all over India. We are all facing the same problems,” said Rakesh Tikait, president of the Bhartiya Kisan Union, a union representing thousands of farmers in northern India.

“We want the government to write-off all our loans, introduce a profitable prices for all agricultural products, and provide proper compensation for crop losses due to the drought,” Tikait said it was also necessary for the government to follow through on pledges to interlink river systems as a means of increasing water availability to drought-hit farmers. —Reuters

CLINIC PAGE



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HILL+KNOWLTON STRATEGIES LAUNCHES KNOWLEDGE+ TO BRIDGE COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS GAP IN MIDDLE EAST

Leading public relations and communications agency Hill+Knowlton Strategies (H+K) has launched Knowledge+, a communications training academy created as a solution to the talent development needs of the Middle East and North Africa region. Bridging the skills gap through skills transfer, Knowledge+ is targeted primarily at nationals in response to the commitment by governments to drive nationalization and develop the capacity of local talent.

The Knowledge+ academy offers a wide range of accredited training modules in both Arabic and English on topics including media coaching, engaging internal teams, crisis management and creative and digital communications.

Capacity building is achieved through the principle of Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) where experienced consultants are embedded into the communication teams of organizations to work alongside staff to facilitate the rapid transfer of skills and knowledge through daily mentoring and coaching.

The BOT model has been implemented successfully with large-scale



Bashar Al-Kadhi

government entities throughout the region, equipping departments with the technical skills and tools to run their own integrated marketing communications teams.

Bashar Al-Kadhi, CEO of Hill+Knowlton Strategies Middle East,



North Africa and Turkey, commented: "The Middle East is defined by its young population, and the region is going through a period of significant geo-political transformation. This places an imperative on the way in which governments and corporations

communicate with their constituents. "Knowledge+ equips a new generation of leaders with the essential skills they need to communicate in this new age, providing them with real experience and practical tools to adapt to and thrive in the modern

communications landscape." A recent study called The Leaders' Report - The future of government communication spanning government leaders in 40 countries - including several in the region - by H+K's parent company WPP showed that while 57

percent of respondents to the survey are educated to a Masters level or higher, many are inadequately equipped for the communications challenges they face.

Kadhi added: "With technology giving rise to the power of the public, we are living in a period of transformation, globalization and disruption. This means there has never been a greater need for clear communication to engage stakeholders.

"Alongside legislation, regulation and taxation, communication is one of the key levers of government but it is frequently regarded as a tactical, shared service, rather than a strategic function of policy delivery. Knowledge+ aims to bridge this gap."

Knowledge+ draws on Hill+Knowlton Strategies' 30 years of communications consulting, skills development and knowledge transfer in the MENA region to brands, businesses and government to give the leaders of tomorrow the skills they need in social data analysis, audience segmentation and citizen engagement.



Fatah Adour hands Dr Noha Al-Saleh a certificate of appreciation for her efforts in presenting a session on breast cancer awareness and ways to avoid it.



Fatah Adour and the employees pose for a group photo with Dr Noha Al-Saleh.

CITI CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN KUWAIT

Citi celebrated International Women's Day (IWD), a UN-designated occasion that celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women around the world through a series of events held at its branches across the globe. Citi's participation in International Women's Day is a unique opportunity to celebrate the contributions of women to Citi as well as emphasize the role they play in defining Citi's future. The

2017 International Women's Day (IWD) theme "It Takes All of US" reflects Citi's position that advancement of women requires the engagement of all employees, including men, as partners.

This year, Citibank Kuwait focused on health as a major contributor to the progress of women both professionally and personally. This was done by hosting Dr Noha Al-Saleh, Surgical Oncologist at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center who

gave a talk on Breast Cancer and how to avoid it. As part of the theme 'It Takes All of Us', the invitation to the talk was sent to all employees. "Our daily busy schedules make us oblivious to the importance of taking care of our health. This is why we clubbed the health awareness on Breast Cancer session to take place with International Women's Day," commented Fatah Adour, Acting General Manager of Citibank Kuwait.

"Furthermore, Citi's annual participation in IWD is a strong and positive reminder to all employees that the recruitment, involvement and advancement of women are business imperatives", he concluded. The 2017 events are a continuation of 2016 celebrations when Citi hosted more than 244 employee events and 41 client events representing 130 cities in 82 countries.



NEW COLLECTION WITH ATTRACTIVE COLORS FOR 2017 SPRING SUMMER SEASON AT AL-NASSER

Al-Nasser has launched its new seasonal collection of the Spring Summer season 2017. A selection of styles in the colors of the new trends featuring colorful designs and innovative graphics with a great value for money as always.

A collection combining in addition to the fashion look a comfortable feel mixing between the simple plain classic looks for those seeking a cool refreshing appearance and reaching to electric colors, sporty expressions and energetic yet comfortable statements all with an array of fashion items designed for ladies men and kids added to an assortment of footwear designed to celebrate a modern yet comfortable

steps. From ECKO to Champion, Converse, Lihota, Sketchers, to Grendha, Jessi girl, Disney and much more, summer has never been so refreshing with prices at the reach of every budget and a quality translated by a winning value for money formula across all Al-Nasser showrooms in Kuwait. It is worth mentioning that Al-Nasser collection is available for all ages, at prices more than suitable for all budgets and in line with all styles.

Al-Nasser Center is the most famous family shopping in Kuwait for more than 30 years and offers distinguished service in all its branches all over Kuwait. Fashion lovers enjoy shopping at the nearest branch;

which it includes the most important family needs in the fashion world which it maintained its leadership as a title and basic destination for lovers of fashion and sport in Kuwait.

Complete your wardrobe and innovate with your look by refreshing your style and adapting it to the new season incorporating some vibrant touches of waves to your lifestyle all in a relaxing mode to step in the new season with a confident appearance and an appearance like no other mixing the colors of life and the expressions of rejuvenation through a complete collection dedicated to enrich your personal flair with apparel and footwear picks like no other.



BURGAN BANK REVEALS SPECIAL PROGRAM WITH ALTA FITNESS GYM, PLATINUM GYM

Burgan Bank, the second largest conventional bank in terms of assets, announced yesterday an added value package to its Premier customers whereby they are entitled to a 20 percent discount at Alta Fitness Gym for women and Platinum Gym for men. The latest offers aim at encouraging active living and wellness in society and is in line with an increased consumer demand on fitness related services.

Alta Fitness and Platinum Gyms offer the best-in-class sports equipment and boast exceptional health clubs, where

Premier customers can enjoy a wide array of benefits. Premier customers registering at any of Alta Fitness Gym for women or Platinum Gym for men can avail this fantastic offer by simply using any of their Premier ATM Card or any of their Platinum Credit Cards.

Keen on delivering superior value to its customers as well as meeting their changing demands, Burgan Bank continues to engage in partnerships that bring together privileges and benefits tailored-made to the Premier customers' lifestyle, while creating a more enjoyable overall banking experience.

WHAT'S ON - SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All photos submitted for What's On should be minimum 200dpi. Articles must be in plain text and should include name and phone numbers. Articles and photos that fail to meet these requirements will not be published.

Please send them to
news@kuwaittimes.net



GULF BANK PARTICIPATES IN EARTH HOUR MOVEMENT



INN & GO KUWAIT PLAZA HOTEL MARKS EARTH HOUR

Inn & Go Kuwait Plaza Hotel staff joined millions around the world Saturday night in turning off their lights to mark Earth Hour, celebrating the ninth year of the annual event. Earth Hour was launched in Australia in 2007 as a way to draw attention to environmental issues including climate change. It has grown to a world-wide event involving 162 countries.

Gulf Bank was pleased to participate in Earth Hour, an international initiative led by the World Wildlife Fund. On Saturday, March 25, 2017, from 8:30 pm until 9:30 pm, Gulf Bank switched off its unnecessary lighting in several of its branches across Kuwait joining the movement to shine the light on the need for action on climate change.

For the eighth consecutive year, Gulf Bank committed to turn off all unnecessary lighting at its Head Office, Al-Saleh building, and in the following branches: Jabriya; Jaber Al-Ahmad; Al-Qairwan; Al-Jahra 1; Al-Jahra 2; Al-Ayoun; Al-Qasr; Al-Zour; Abu Fatira; and Maidan Hawalli. Floodlighting and signage lighting were switched off but without compromising the necessary security.

Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank said in a statement to the press: "Gulf Bank is happy to join this world-wide grassroots initiative which works to unite people to protect our planet. Earth Hour is not about how much energy is saved during the hour, rather, it's a chance to put the spotlight on the



issues facing the planet, and to inspire millions across the world to live more sustainably."

The bank has a policy to use energy considerably, and since year 2009, it has consistently

encouraged its staff to turn off any unused systems and lights to save electricity, while ensuring that the safety and integrity of the Bank's operations and security systems secure.



MARRIOTT HOTELS IN KUWAIT PARTICIPATE IN EARTH HOUR



The JW Marriott Hotel Kuwait City, Courtyard by Marriott Hotel Kuwait City, Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait and Arraya Ballroom managed by Marriott International participated in the Earth Hour 2017 - a global environmental event that took place on March 25th - to raise awareness about the importance of protecting the environment for now and generations to come. All the four properties have successfully observed Earth Hour 2017 by taking energy-saving measures for one full hour from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm, further underscoring the company's international commitment to environmental sustainability.

During the event, all Marriott Hotels in Kuwait dimmed lights in all public areas, restaurants and outside the buildings. In addition, they also turned off most of the lighting in operation areas. Moreover, guests were invited to participate in this global initiative by minimizing electric usage to as low as possible and using the bed sheet re-use cards to reduce laundry. Restaurants at the JW Marriott Kuwait, especially Crossroads Restaurant and Terrace Grill Restaurant, celebrated the Earth Hour 2017 by hosting candle-lit dinners in a very special ambience.

"We are honored to be part of such a global movement and join millions of people around the world in turning off lights to show our support and lower our impact on the environment" said George Aoun, Cluster General Manager at Marriott Hotels in Kuwait. "This initiative also falls in line with our ongoing spirit to serve environmental and sustainability programs," Aoun added.



OSN MOVIES

ACTION

01:45 Shark Lake
03:45 Ladder 49
06:00 Taken 3
08:00 Tracers
09:45 Pompeii
11:30 Last Action Hero
13:45 Taken 3
15:45 Beverly Hills Cop 3
17:30 The World Is Not Enough
19:45 Real Steel
22:00 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:50 Devoured: Man-Eating Super Snake Returns
01:45 Bondi Vet
02:40 Restoration Wild
03:35 Tanked
04:25 Escape To Chimp Eden
04:50 Stranger Among Bears
05:15 Gator Boys
06:02 Devoured: Man-Eating Super Snake Returns
06:49 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
07:36 Call Of The Wildman
08:00 Call Of The Wildman
08:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
09:15 Restoration Wild
10:10 Escape To Chimp Eden
10:35 Stranger Among Bears
11:05 Tanked
12:00 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
12:55 Bondi Vet
13:50 Restoration Wild
14:45 Gator Boys
15:40 Escape To Chimp Eden
16:05 Stranger Among Bears
16:35 Tanked
17:30 In Search Of The Giant Anaconda
18:25 Gangland Killers
19:20 Life At Vet University
20:15 Tanked
21:10 Stranger Among Bears
22:05 Gangland Killers
23:00 Life At Vet University
23:55 Gator Boys

BBC FIRST

00:05 Eastenders
00:40 Poldark
01:35 Last Tango In Halifax

07:00 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
07:25 Awesome Adventures
07:50 Bondi Vet
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Prototype This
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Bondi Vet
12:00 Ultimate Survival
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Dirty Jobs
14:30 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
14:55 Awesome Adventures
15:20 Mythbusters
16:10 Prototype This
17:00 Strip The Cosmos
17:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
18:40 What Happened Next?
19:05 What Happened Next?
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters
21:10 Strip The Cosmos
22:00 NASA's Unexplained Files
22:50 What Happened Next?
23:15 What Happened Next?
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:10 Hank Zipzer
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Violetta
01:45 The Hive
01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Hank Zipzer
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Violetta
04:15 The Hive
04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:10 Hank Zipzer
05:35 Binny And The Ghost
06:00 Violetta
06:45 The Hive
06:50 The 7D
07:00 Jessie
07:25 Jessie
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 The Zhuzhus
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Stuck In The Middle
09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place

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



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 Made By Destruction
01:35 Made By Destruction
02:00 You Have Been Warned
02:50 Impossible Engineering
03:40 Fast N' Loud
04:30 Storage Hunters
05:00 How Do They Do It?

21:10 Danger Mouse
21:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
22:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
22:35 Boyster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:05 Mariah's World
00:55 Mariah's World
01:50 El News
02:50 Hollywood & Football
03:45 Hollywood & Football
04:40 Hollywood & Football
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 LA Clippers Dance Squad
06:55 El News
07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:10 El News
09:10 Rob & Chyna
10:05 Rob & Chyna
11:00 Rob & Chyna
12:00 El News
12:15 Rob & Chyna
13:10 Mariah's World
14:05 Mariah's World
15:00 El News
15:15 Mariah's World
16:10 Mariah's World
17:05 Mariah's World
18:05 Celebrity Style Story
18:30 Celebrity Style Story
19:00 El News
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
23:00 El News
23:15 So Cosmo



00:00 Food Network Star
01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:00 Man Fire Food
02:30 Man Fire Food
03:00 Chopped
04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
05:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
05:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:00 The Kitchen
07:00 The Pioneer Woman
07:30 The Pioneer Woman
08:00 Siba's Table
08:30 Siba's Table
09:00 The Pioneer Woman
09:30 The Pioneer Woman
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 The Pioneer Woman
11:30 The Pioneer Woman
12:00 Siba's Table
12:30 Siba's Table
13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
13:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:00 Chopped
15:00 The Kitchen
16:00 The Pioneer Woman
16:30 The Pioneer Woman
17:00 Chopped
18:00 Iron Chef America
19:00 Tia Mowry At Home
19:30 Tia Mowry At Home
20:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
20:30 Dinner At Tiffani's
21:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
21:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
22:00 Guy's Grocery Games
23:00 Tia Mowry At Home
23:30 Tia Mowry At Home



00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
03:25 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
03:55 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
04:25 Paul O'Grady's Favourite Fairy Tales
05:15 Home Fires
06:10 The Chase
07:05 The Jonathan Ross Show
08:00 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
08:30 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
09:00 Paul O'Grady's Favourite Fairy Tales
10:00 Home Fires
10:55 The Chase
11:50 The Jonathan Ross Show
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 The Chase
15:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
16:00 Don't Tell The Bride
17:00 5 Star Family Reunion

17:50 Home Fires
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
21:00 Don't Tell The Bride
22:00 5 Star Family Reunion
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



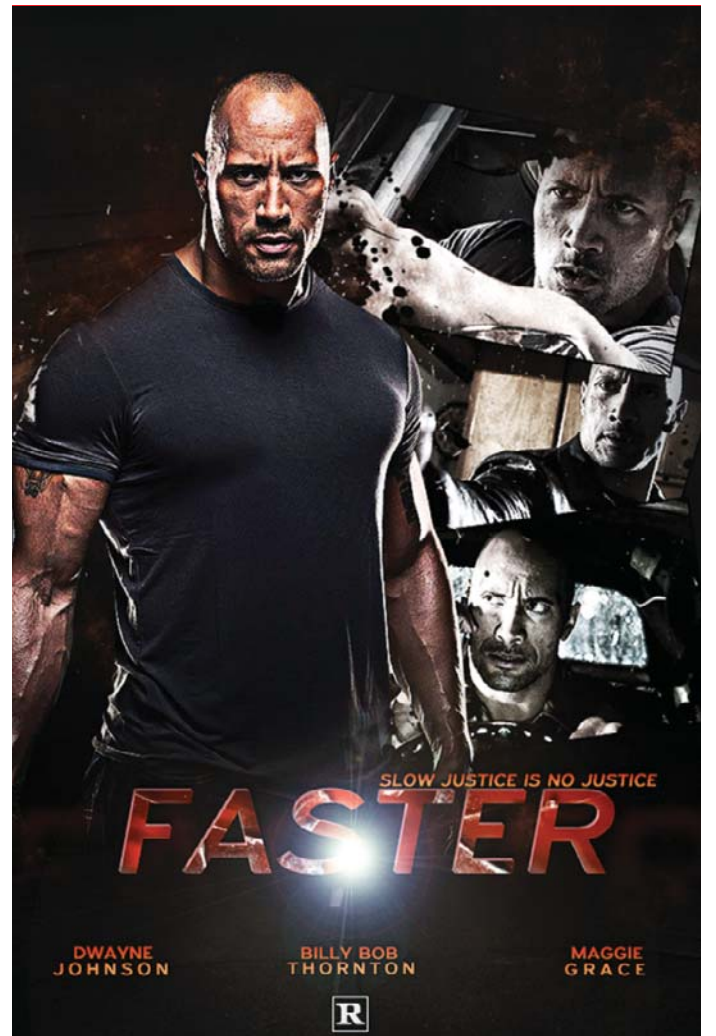
00:00 The Universe
01:00 WWII: Europe's Secret Army
02:00 Cities Of The Underworld
03:00 America's Book Of Secrets
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 Ancient Top 10
05:30 The Universe
06:20 WWII: Europe's Secret Army
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Cities Of The Underworld
09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Ancient Top 10
12:00 The Universe
13:00 WWII: Europe's Secret Army
14:00 Cities Of The Underworld
15:00 America's Book Of Secrets
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Ancient Top 10
18:00 The Universe
19:00 WWII: Europe's Secret Army
20:00 Cities Of The Underworld
21:00 America's Book Of Secrets
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Million Dollar Genius



00:20 Britain's Bloodiest Dynasty
01:10 Counting Cars
01:35 Car Hunters
02:00 Forged In Fire
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 American Restoration
06:50 Shipping Wars
07:15 Shipping Wars
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Car Hunters
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Alone
11:50 Time Team
12:40 Swamp People
13:30 Ax Men
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Shipping Wars
15:35 Shipping Wars
16:00 Counting Cars
16:25 Counting Cars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Forged In Fire
18:30 Counting Cars
18:55 Car Hunters
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
21:50 Search For The Lost Giants
22:40 Hunting Hitler
23:30 American Pickers



00:15 Bangkok Airport
01:05 The Best Job In The World
01:30 Dog Whisperer
02:20 Cool Spaces
03:10 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
03:35 Maximum Foodie
04:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
04:50 Wineroads
05:20 Raw Travel
05:45 Raw Travel
06:15 Andy And Ben Eat The World
06:40 Andy And Ben Eat The World
07:10 The Best Job In The World
07:35 Dog Whisperer
08:30 Cool Spaces
09:25 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
09:55 Maximum Foodie
10:20 Confucius Was A Foodie
11:15 Wineroads
11:45 Raw Travel
12:10 Raw Travel
12:40 The Best Job In The World
13:05 Dog Whisperer
14:00 Cool Spaces
14:55 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
15:25 Maximum Foodie
15:50 Confucius Was A Foodie
16:45 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
17:15 Raw Travel
17:40 Raw Travel
18:10 Restoration Man



FASTER ON OSN MOVIES HD

19:05 valentine warner Eats Scandinavia
19:30 Maximum Foodie
20:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
20:55 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
21:20 Raw Travel
21:45 Raw Travel
22:10 Restoration Man
23:00 The Best Job In The World
23:25 Dog Whisperer



00:10 Living Free With Kimi Werner
01:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
02:00 Mystery Of The Himalayan Mummies
02:55 Chilean Miners: Buried Alive
03:50 Living Free With Kimi Werner
04:45 Ancient X-Files
05:40 Yukon Gold
06:35 Science Of Stupid
07:00 Science Of Stupid
07:30 Ultimate Airport Dubai
08:25 Mega Factories: Supercars
09:20 Ancient X-Files
10:15 Hitler's G.I. Death Camp
11:10 Japan's Secret Weapon
12:05 Locked Up Abroad
13:00 Mega Factories: Supercars
14:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai
15:00 Science Of Stupid
15:30 Science Of Stupid
16:00 Apocalypse: The Rise Of Hitler
17:00 Apocalypse: The Rise Of Hitler
18:00 Locked Up Abroad
19:00 Science Of Stupid
19:30 Science Of Stupid
20:00 Apocalypse: The Rise Of Hitler
20:50 Apocalypse: The Rise Of Hitler
21:40 Locked Up Abroad
22:30 Science Of Stupid
22:55 Science Of Stupid
23:20 Yukon Gold



00:20 Africa's Blood River
01:10 Dangerous Encounters
02:00 World's Deadliest Snakes
02:50 Baby Animals In The Wild
03:45 Zoo Confidential
04:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
05:35 World's Deadliest Snakes
06:30 Baby Animals In The Wild
07:25 Zoo Confidential
08:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
09:15 Safari Brothers
10:10 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
11:05 Wild Australia
12:00 Alaska Fish Wars
12:55 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
13:50 World's Wildest Encounters
14:45 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
15:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
16:35 Safari Brothers
17:30 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
18:25 World's Weirdest
19:20 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
20:10 Unlikely Animal Friends
21:00 Safari Brothers
21:50 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
22:40 World's Weirdest
23:30 Alaska Fish Wars
01:00 Atlantis: The Lost Empire



FAMILY

03:00 Get Santa
05:00 The Unbeatables
07:00 Mars Needs Moms
09:00 Pooh's Heffalump Halloween
Movie
10:15 Step Dogs
11:45 The Unbeatables
13:45 Pooh's Heffalump Halloween
Movie
15:00 The Shaggy Dog
17:00 The Muppets
19:00 Atlantis: Milo's Return
20:45 Return To Oz
22:45 The Shaggy Dog



COMEDY

00:00 Tales Of Halloween
02:00 Christmas Eve
04:00 With This Ring
06:00 Other Plans
08:00 Christmas Eve
10:00 With This Ring
12:00 Other Plans
14:00 Outside Bet
16:00 Accidental Love
18:00 It Boy
20:00 The Brass Teapot
22:00 Life After Beth



FESTIVAL

00:00 Heaven's Gate
03:45 The Wave



REAL STEEL ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

02:30 DCI Banks
03:20 DCI Banks
04:05 Doctors
04:35 Eastenders
05:05 New Tricks
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Eastenders
07:00 Holby City
07:55 Father Brown
08:40 Doctor Who
09:35 New Tricks
10:30 Doctors
11:00 Eastenders
11:35 Father Brown
12:25 Doctor Who
13:20 New Tricks
14:15 Doctors
14:45 Eastenders
15:20 Father Brown
16:10 Doctor Who
17:05 New Tricks
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 Father Brown
20:00 Holby City
21:00 Mum
21:30 Uncle
22:00 The Detectivists
22:30 The Detectivists
23:00 Stag
23:55 Doctors



00:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
01:00 My Haunted House
02:00 Paranormal State
02:30 Paranormal State
03:00 My Crazy Ex
04:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
05:00 My Haunted House
06:00 Paranormal State
07:00 Crime Stories
09:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 Crime Stories
16:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
17:00 Homicide Hunter
18:00 Gangs Of Britain...
19:00 It Takes A Killer
19:30 It Takes A Killer
20:00 The First 48
21:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
22:00 Crime Stories
23:00 Homicide Hunter



00:30 Prototype This
01:20 Zoltan The Wolfman
02:10 Finding Bigfoot
03:00 What Happened Next?
03:25 What Happened Next?
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Dirty Jobs
06:20 Mythbusters

10:00 Wizards Of Waverly Place
10:25 A.N.T. Farm
10:50 A.N.T. Farm
11:15 Good Luck Charlie
11:40 Good Luck Charlie
12:05 Shake It Up
12:30 Shake It Up
12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
13:15 Gravity Falls
13:40 Hank Zipzer
14:05 Star Darlings
14:10 Austin & Ally
14:35 Jessie
15:00 Bunk'd
15:25 Kirby Buckets
15:50 Sunny Bunnies
15:55 The Zhuzhus
16:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
16:45 Elena Of Avalor
17:10 Stuck In The Middle
17:35 Descendants Wicked World
17:40 Girl Meets World
18:05 Bizaardvark
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Best Friends Whenever
19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
19:25 The Next Step
19:50 Austin & Ally
20:15 Star Darlings
20:20 Shake It Up
20:45 Backstage
21:10 Liv And Maddie
21:35 Cracked
21:40 Dog With A Blog
22:05 Best Friends Whenever
22:30 Jessie
22:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
23:00 Kirby Buckets
23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
00:35 The Hive
00:45 Loopedoo
01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
01:15 Calimero
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Zou
02:05 Loopedoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Zou
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopedoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopedoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Zou
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopedoo
07:00 Zou

05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Outback Truckers
06:50 Street Outlaws
07:40 Fast N' Loud
08:30 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA
09:20 Storage Hunters
09:45 How Do They Do It?
10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 Made By Destruction
11:00 Made By Destruction
11:25 You Have Been Warned
12:15 Impossible Engineering
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 Storage Hunters
13:55 Storage Hunters
14:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
15:10 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA
16:00 Outback Truckers
16:50 Fast N' Loud
17:40 Street Outlaws
18:30 How Do They Do It?
18:55 How Do They Do It?
19:20 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA
20:10 Storage Hunters
20:35 Storage Hunters
21:00 What On Earth?
21:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
22:40 The Wheel: Survival Games
23:30 Fast N' Loud



06:00 Gravity Falls
06:25 Counterfeit Cat
06:50 Atomic Puppet
07:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
07:25 Danger Mouse
07:40 Supa Strikas
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
09:00 Lab Rats
09:25 Lab Rats
09:50 Danger Mouse
10:20 Supa Strikas
10:45 Supa Strikas
11:10 Counterfeit Cat
11:35 Pair Of Kings
12:00 Pair Of Kings
12:30 Future-Worm!
12:55 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
13:20 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
13:45 Atomic Puppet
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Counterfeit Cat
14:40 Supa Strikas
15:05 Lab Rats
15:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
15:55 Right Now Kapow
16:25 K.C. Undercover
16:50 Future-Worm!
17:15 Gravity Falls
17:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:10 Mighty Med
18:35 Right Now Kapow
19:00 Atomic Puppet
19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
19:55 K.C. Undercover
20:20 Kickin' It
20:45 Mighty Med



CHRISTMAS EVE ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

CLASSIFIEDS



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

SHARQIA-1
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

SHARQIA-2
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

SHARQIA-3
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

MUHALAB-1
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

MUHALAB-2
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

MUHALAB-3
COLLIDE
COLLIDE
BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO
KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu
BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO
COLLIDE
COLLIDE
KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu

11:45 AM
2:00 PM
4:00 PM
1:45 PM
5:45 PM
7:30 PM
9:30 PM
9:45 PM

COLLIDE

12:30 AM

FANAR-1

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

FANAR-2

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

FANAR-3

AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic
BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO
BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO
AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic
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

FANAR-4

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

FANAR-5

LIFE
LIFE
LIFE
THE WINDMILL MASSACRE
THE WINDMILL MASSACRE
THE WINDMILL MASSACRE
THE WINDMILL MASSACRE

12:15 PM
2:30 PM
4:45 PM
7:00 PM
9:00 PM
11:00 PM
12:45 AM

MARINA-1

POWER RANGERS
POWER RANGERS
BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO
BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO
BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO
POWER RANGERS
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

MARINA-2

COLLIDE
COLLIDE

11:45 AM
1:45 PM

KONG: SKULL ISLAND

COLLIDE

KONG: SKULL ISLAND

COLLIDE

COLLIDE

MARINA-3

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

AVENUES-1

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

AVENUES-2

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

AVENUES-3

KONG: SKULL ISLAND
KONG: SKULL ISLAND
KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu
KONG: SKULL ISLAND
KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu
KONG: SKULL ISLAND
KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu
KONG: SKULL ISLAND

1:30 PM
4:00 PM
4:00 PM
7:00 PM
7:00 PM
10:00 PM
10:00 PM
12:45 AM

360°- 1

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

360°- 2

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

360°- 3

THE WINDMILL MASSACRE
THE WINDMILL MASSACRE

11:30 AM
1:30 PM



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 28/3/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05
KAC	1903	GYD	00:10
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:25
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15
KAC	102	London	01:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50
DLH	635	Doha	01:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05
KAC	354	BLR	05:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:35
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45
JZR	529	Asyut	05:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25
BAW	157	London	06:40
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00
AVV	651	Asyut	10:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
IRA	675	Lar	10:40
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55
QTR	8511	Doha	12:00
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
KAC	680	Dubai	12:55
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10
KAC	564	Amman	13:40
KAC	788	Jeddah	13:45
KAC	792	Madinah	13:50
BBC	143	Dhaka	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	692	Muscat	14:30
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
KAC	672	Dubai	14:50
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KAC	618	Doha	15:00
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
FDB	051	Dubai	16:25
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	118	New York	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50
NIA	251	Alexandria	17:55
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
KAC	746	Dammam	19:10
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	502	Beirut	19:30
KAC	778	Riyadh	19:35
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
KAC	514	Tehran	19:50
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	168	Paris	19:55
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
KAC	562	Amman	20:40
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
CLX	8675	Luxembourg	21:35
KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:35
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
JZR	125	Bahrain	22:05
KLM	415	Amsterdam	22:10
NIA	151	Cairo	22:10
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
PIA	239	Sialkot	22:35
JZR	241	Amman	22:45
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
JZR	555	Alexandria	23:20
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45

Departure Flights on Tuesday 28/3/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
ETD	920	Abu Dhabi	00:45

JOB VACANCY

A Leading Engineering and Contracting Company in Kuwait has the following requirement:

Field Service Engineer

Candidate should be familiar with the following:

- ◆ Knowledge of all type of electronic, pneumatic and basic process instruments with minimum 5 experiences in service field with any one of the reputed process instruments manufacturer.
- ◆ Good knowledge and hands on experience of installation, calibration & commissioning of field instruments analyzers.
- ◆ Efficient knowledge in identifying the P&ID diagrams, instrument loop diagrams (ILD), hook up diagrams and Knowledge of auto cad drawing with modification.
- ◆ Should have expertise in troubleshoot the field instruments, analyzer and control valve in wrong commissioning, configuration and wiring.

Candidates should have a transferable visa.

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Indian cook.

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EMERGENCY 112

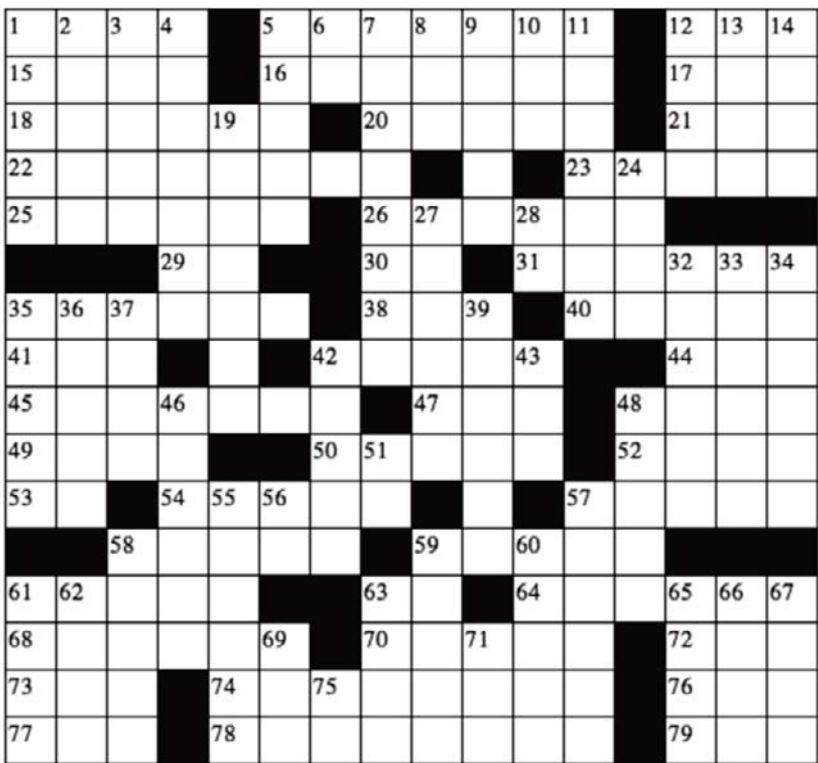
Automated enquiry
about the Civil ID card is
1889988

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 04:23
Shorook: 05:43
Duhr: 11:53
Asr: 15:23
Maghrib: 18:04
Isha: 19:21



CROSSWORD 1561



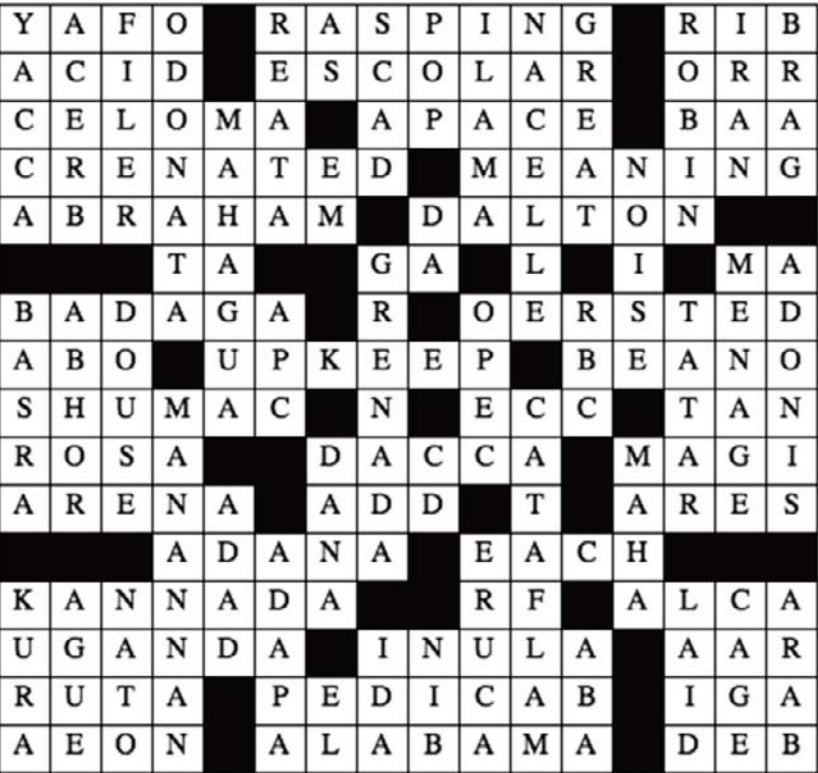
ACROSS

- 1. A short high tone produced as a signal or warning.
- 5. A city of east central Mexico (west of Veracruz).
- 12. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- 15. A feeling of intense anger.
- 16. Of or relating to or denoting numbers.
- 17. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- 18. (usually followed by 'to') Strongly opposed.
- 20. Make difficult to perceive by sight.
- 21. A woolen cap of Scottish origin.
- 22. (informal) Foolish.
- 23. Lower in esteem.
- 25. Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
- 26. A small tent used as a dressing room beside the sea or a swimming pool.
- 29. A soft yellowish-white trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- 30. A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
- 31. A woman's large folded hooped hood.
- 35. Large brown aquatic larva of the dobson-fly.
- 38. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- 40. (Greek mythology) A sorceress who detained Odysseus on her island and turned his men into swine.
- 41. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
- 44. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
- 45. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
- 47. A corporation's first offer to sell stock to the public.
- 49. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- 50. Back and sides of a hog salted and dried or smoked.
- 52. Group of people related by blood or marriage.
- 53. A heavy ductile magnetic metallic element.
- 54. Port city in the United Arab Emirates on the Persian Gulf.
- 61. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- 64. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
- 68. Small depression under the shoulder joint where the arm joins the shoulder.
- 70. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus Draba having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
- 72. The cry made by sheep.
- 73. Brief episode in which the brain gets insufficient blood supply.
- 74. Characteristic of or resembling hell.
- 76. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
- 77. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- 78. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- 79. Of a dull grayish brown to brownish gray color.

DOWN

- 1. Type genus of the Bramidae.
- 2. The overhang at the lower edge of a roof.
- 3. Eliminate from the body.
- 4. By chance.
- 5. Lake in northwestern Russia near the border with Finland.
- 6. A rare polyvalent metallic element of the platinum group.
- 7. Having a mental age of three to seven years.
- 8. The 26th letter of the Roman alphabet.
- 9. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- 10. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
- 11. An annual publication including weather forecasts and other miscellaneous information arranged according to the calendar of a given year.
- 12. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 13. By bad luck.
- 14. Informal terms for a (young) woman.
- 19. A room enclosed largely with glass and affording exposure to the sun.
- 24. An island in Indonesia east of Java.
- 27. Relating to or characteristic of Arabs.
- 28. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 32. Wild sheep of semidesert regions in central Asia.
- 33. Scarabaeid beetle considered divine by ancient Egyptians.
- 34. Capital of the state of Montana.
- 36. Talk pompously.
- 37. A small cake leavened with yeast.
- 39. A vertical cylindrical furnace for melting iron for casting.
- 42. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
- 43. The second day of the week.
- 46. A severe or trying experience.
- 48. Sour or bitter in taste.
- 51. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- 55. Remove the clip from.
- 56. Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
- 57. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- 58. Eurasian rose with prickly stems and fragrant leaves and bright pink flowers followed by scarlet hips.
- 59. Sorghums of dry regions of Asia and North Africa.
- 60. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 62. A monocotyledonous genus of the family Iridaceae.
- 63. Chief port of Yemen.
- 65. A United Nations agency created to assist developing nations by loans guaranteed by member governments.
- 66. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- 67. A quantity that is added.
- 69. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- 71. Black tropical American cuckoo.
- 75. A radioactive element of the alkali-metal group discovered as a disintegration product of actinium.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may want to make your office space neater or more attractive at this time. There is one thing in being professional and thinking professionally but there is another process to unfold as you think in creative ways and that is to have an uncluttered area. Now is the best time to rearrange or change the colors, posters, pictures or whatever is needed so that you are at your best creatively and professionally. Avoid the job politics and you will be a happy camper. You are wise to keep your own counsel when it comes to professional issues. You have your own creative mind as well as the internet, books, experience and examples that will help lead the way to a successful business year. Personal affairs have the green light.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may feel a bit scattered today but if you write out your priorities, you will find the order of the day makes more sense and your thinking gains a focus. Some policies end and some new rules begin and you will be wise to keep a reference file handy in order to keep the issues current in your mind. There is talk of temporary work among co-workers and it may be possible for you to join in with them and get some financial relief through the temporary work as well. Of course, this means you will have to modify some of your other activities. Making a good impression and putting your best foot forward will get you where you want to go. Do not forget to be kind to your body with the appropriate vitamins, water, nutritious meals, exercise and plenty of rest.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Good fortune will come from your creative skills-opportunities await you. A big project is at hand. Because of your creative abilities-you are able to land a special project for yourself. This is the opportunity for you to make lots of money and have recognition. There are many opportunities now for you to improve your talents and deepen your appreciation of your own abilities. After a bit of garden work or team sport or some other exercise later today, you will be able to relax and enjoy affairs of the heart. There is mammoth pleasure in group activities that involve your friends and family, if that is what you desire. Quiz games or some other group entertainment can be enjoyed. You will find a stabilizing factor for your relationships now.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may gain knowledge through reading about another person's experiences. You may shine in your particular position in the business and find that many people appreciate and respect your opinion. Although others appreciate your insight, you will benefit most from the humble attitude that you take. You could represent your family or profession in some community activity today. This could mean sports, politics or some other competition. Through observation, you will find new techniques that can be added to your own abilities. This afternoon you might have to set aside your own wishes for a time as you struggle to maintain the balance between fun, competition and responsibilities. Find constructive ways to teach the young people around you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Some projects progress in a steady manner today. A co-worker friend comes to you with some great ideas. You may find it easy to listen and give up some of your time and perhaps money to go along with the idea but it would be wise to check out all aspects before acting. Improvements and corrections in private matters are scheduled for the rest of the day. You are highly productive but you should take care to keep a balance in all of your affairs. This may mean you will paint one room at a time instead of the whole house. Mealtime should be a time of relaxation and nourishment-certainly never hurried. Soft music in the background is a wonderful way to relax and digest a good meal. Make it a point to discuss nonessential things at meal times.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This is a great time to be with others and to accomplish things together. You demonstrate good practical ideas and are encouraged to communicate with others and describe your thoughts. You are moved to express your sensitivity to the needs of others just now and are in a good position to communicate concerning others. Having and appreciating things of beauty and value play a big role in your life. Provided you do not spend it all on the fancy things that catch your eye, this can be a financially favorable period. Create regular exercise times, whether it is by yourself or with your friends. This will help you to have an avenue of release from your frustrations. Your dreams are very revealing tonight-take notes.

WORD SEARCH

Songs From the Year 2001

Find and circle all of the songs from 2001 that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 22 letters spell an additional song title from 2001.



AGAIN
ALL FOR YOU
ANGEL
AUSTIN
BE LIKE THAT
BEAUTIFUL DAY
BUTTERFLY
CONTAGIOUS
CRAZY
DANCE WITH ME
DIFFERENCES
DIG IN

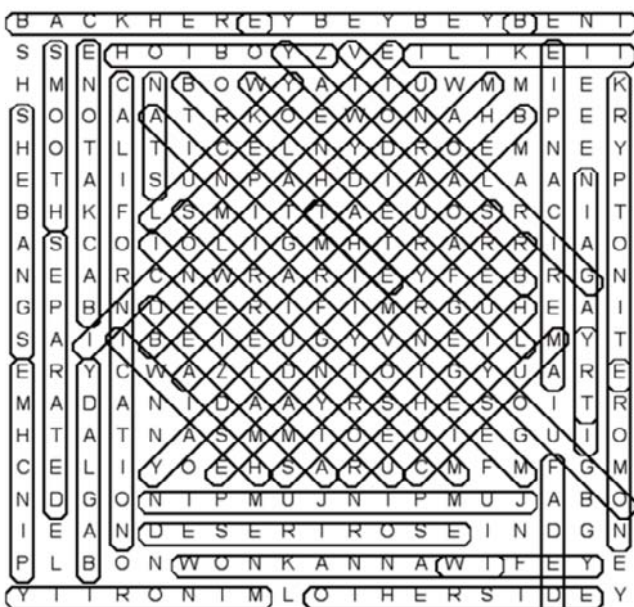
DRIVE
EMOTION
EVERYWHERE
FAMILY AFFAIR
FIESTA
FILL ME IN
FOLLOW ME
HERO
I WISH
IRRESISTIBLE
JADED

KRYPTONITE
LADY MARMALADE
LOVE
MISSING YOU
MOST GIRLS
MUSIC
MY BABY
ONE MORE DAY
ONLY TIME
OOCHIE WALLY
OUTSIDE

PLAY
PROMISE
RIDE WIT ME
SOUTH SIDE
STUTTER
SURVIVOR
THANK YOU
U REMIND ME
VIDEO
WALK ON
WHO I AM

Yesterday's Solution

Songs From the Year 2000



AMAZED
AMERICAN PIE
BACK AT ONE
BACK HERE
BAG LADY
BE WITH YOU
BEAUTIFUL DAY
BENT
BREATHE
BROADWAY
BYE BYE BYE

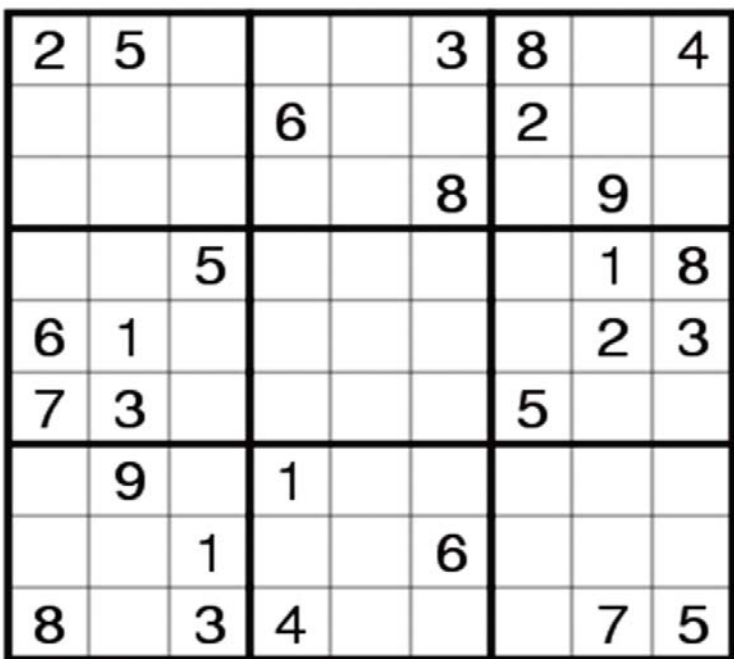
CALIFORNICATION
DESERT ROSE
FADED
GIRL ON TV
HIGHER
HOT BOYZ
I LIKE IT
I NEED YOU
I TRY
I WANNA KNOW
I WISH

INCOMPLETE
JUMPIN' JUMPIN'
KRYPTONITE
LUCKY
MARIA MARIA
MEET VIRGINIA
MINORITY
MOST GIRLS
MUSIC
NO MORE
OTHERSIDE

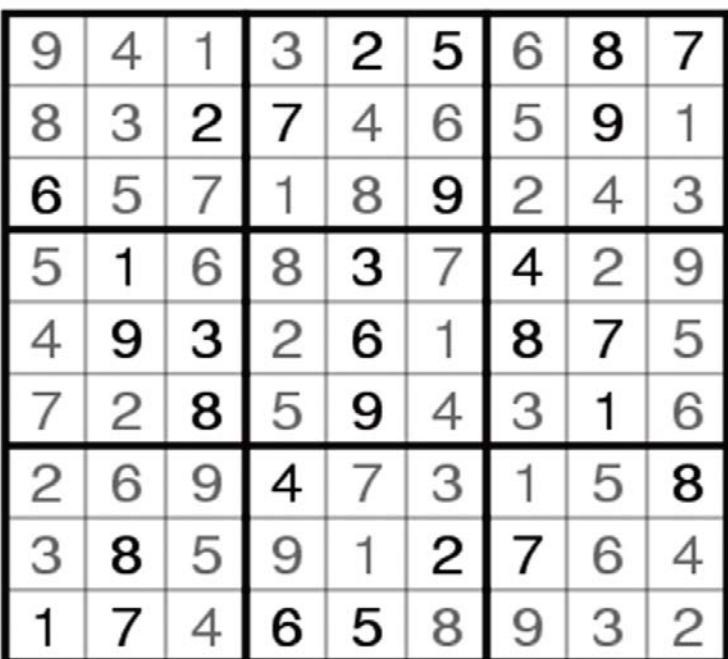
PINCH ME
SAY MY NAME
SEPARATED
SHE BANGS
SMOOTH
STAN
STRONGER
THERE YOU GO
TRY AGAIN
WIFEY
WONDERFUL

The hidden message is: SHOW ME THE MEANING OF BEING LONELY

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



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

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel 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 Ikhlis 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



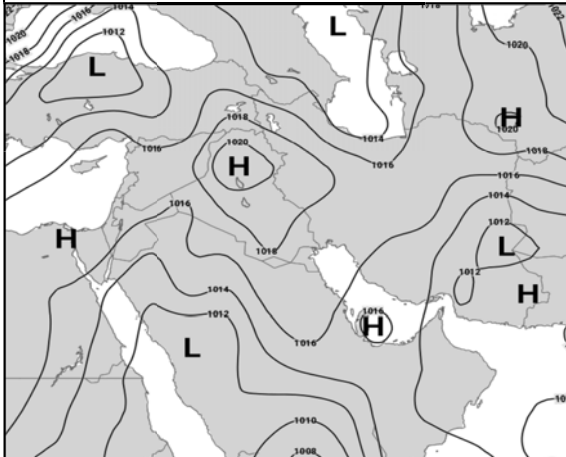
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Sunny with variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h

BY NIGHT: Fair with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 16 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 27/03/2017 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	27 °C	18 °C	 <p>MSL Analysis (hPa) Valid 0000 UTC 27 MAR 2017</p>	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28 °C	14 °C		
ABDALY	27 °C	14 °C		
BUBYAN	24 °C	15 °C		
JAHRA	29 °C	16 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	25 °C	16 °C		
SALMIYAH	24 °C	19 °C		
AHMADI	24 °C	19 °C		
NUWAISIB	27 °C	15 °C		
WAFRA	29 °C	13 °C		
SALMY	28 °C	14 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	03/28	Partly cloudy to cloudy+ chance for scattered rain	27 °C	17 °C	SE	15 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	03/29	Partly cloudy+ chance for scattered rain thundry at times	26 °C	17 °C	SE-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	03/30	Partly cloudy+ chance for scattered rain later on	29 °C	19 °C	VRB	08 - 20 km/h
Friday	03/31	Partly cloudy to cloudy+ chance for scattered rain thundry at times	27 °C	20 °C	SE	12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:23
Sunrise	05:43
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:03
Isha	19:21

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	27 °C
MIN. Temp.	13 °C
MAX. RH	100 %
MIN. RH	31 %
MAX. Wind	SW 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm



PRIVATE CLINICS

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

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



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

GOSSIP



Prince turned down Notorious BIG collaboration

Prince turned down duetting with The Notorious B.I.G. and P Diddy. The late hip-hop legend's pal Diddy has revealed the pair of them planned on collaborating with the 'Purple Rain' hitmaker - who passed away in April 2016 from a fentanyl overdose at his Paisley Park estate - but he refused their offer as he didn't want to be associated with the hip-hop genre at the time, which was predominantly blasphemous towards females. The 47-year-old rapper - whose real name is Sean Combs - recalled: "We met with Prince ... but this was during a time when (he) wasn't really rocking with hip-hop and wasn't really clearing any samples, so that really didn't go too well. "But we was always still cool with him and wound up sampling some of his records..." Despite not teaming up with the hip-hop stars for a duet, the 'Kiss' singer did let them sample some of his songs and was "proud" of what they were doing with the genre, although it made Diddy think about the foul-mouthed lyrics he was using. The 'I'll Be Missing You' rapper told Revolt TV: "He would just go through his phases and he came back to us and just let us know how proud he was

of us and the whole thing. "He was just really protective at one time of just what was going on as far as the whole bitch and hoe controversy. That was a real moment in hip-hop. That was a real reflection point in hip-hop where we were being kind of asked to take responsibility and think about what we were saying." Meanwhile, Diddy recently revealed he isn't over the death of Notorious - who was killed in a drive-by shooting aged 24 in 1997. Speaking about the impact his pal had on his life, in an Instagram video recently, he said: "This year is more of a sobering year. It's 20 years. For us, we lived 20 years of our lives without somebody that has been a big part of our lives that has basically been responsible for the legend of our careers. "He's fed a lot of families, made a lot of people dance, made a lot of people feel good. On this day we're going to reflect on him because we miss him, and 20 years later, time heals all wounds, but this one ain't healed yet."

Blossoms' Ogden wrote Honey Sweet about ex



Blossoms frontman Tom Ogden has told his ex-girlfriend their song 'Honey Sweet' is about her. The 23-year-old rocker has no idea if his former flame is aware that the track is about their relationship, but he's not fazed by it as he's been dating someone new for over a year and he doesn't speak "negatively" about her on the tune from their 2016 self-titled debut LP. In an interview with the Metro newspaper, he explained: "It's about my ex-girlfriend. We weren't speaking at the point I wrote the song but she's probably heard it and knows it's about her. "It doesn't affect me either way if she's heard it or not. "I don't think I'm saying anything negative." The 'Charlemagne' hitmaker is keeping his mystery new girl a secret, but says she doesn't work in the music business. He added: "I've got a girlfriend and I've been with her for nearly a year. I met her last summer but I'm not going to tell you who she is. "I've known her for a while and she

doesn't work in the industry." Meanwhile, the singer - who is joined by Charlie Salt, Josh Dewhurst, Joe Donovan and Myles Kellock in the indie group - has said they are not bothered that they didn't pick up the British Breakthrough gong, which went to Rag 'n' Bone Man, at last month's BRIT Awards as he doesn't think winning it would have had much of an impact on their career going forward. He said: "It's not going to affect us, the fact we didn't win. We didn't have our heart set on it but, once you're there, you do get a bit competitive." Blossoms will support their idols The Stone Roses at Wembley on June 17. They will be joined by Sleaford Mods and The G-O-D. Announcing the support slot on Twitter, Blossoms wrote: "WE'RE VERY PROUD & EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE WE'LL BE MAIN SUPPORT TO @thestoneroses @wembleystadium on SAT 17th JUN (sic)".



Royal Blood tease new song

Royal Blood have teased a new song. The rock duo - frontman Mike Kerr and drummer Ben Thatcher - shared a 48-second clip preview of new music along with footage from the studio in their first teaser of their eagerly-awaited follow-up to their 2014 self-titled debut this year. They captioned the clip posted on Twitter: "This is us then, where are you now? (sic)" The 'Figure It Out' hitmakers previously posted a 17-second video clip of 27-year-old frontman Mike getting tattooed with the year 2017 inked on his arm back in December, leading fans to predict they are to drop their eagerly-anticipated second record this year. Alongside the teaser posted on their Facebook page, they simply wrote: "2017." The 'Little Monster' rockers last gave an update on their next record in October 2015, when they revealed they'd built a mini recording studio inside their tour bus, whilst also admitting they won't release new music until it "sounds amazing". Mike previously said: "I built a studio in the back of our bus. "It's very hard to write when everything keeps falling over because the driver's taken a massive corner. It was our writing den - we'd have Clint Eastwood movies playing with the volume down." And, although the record has been a long time coming the band did share new track, 'Hook, Line and Sinker', which they debuted live at Reading Festival in August, a song which drummer Ben, 29, admitted is "the weirdest song" they'd written at the time. He said: "I think that song came about a few months before Reading. We were so desperate to play it, so we did. The writing process really has just begun. "Maybe that's like, the weirdest song on the record, I don't know yet - It's hard to say."

John Legend announces European tour

John Legend will bring his 'Darkness and Light' tour to Europe this September and October. The 38-year-old singer-songwriter will head out on a 24-date run kicking off at Glasgow's SSE Hydro Arena, Scotland on September 8, before wrapping up at Lisbon's MEO Arena, Portugal on October 14. The 'All of Me' hitmaker will perform at London's The O2 arena for just one night on September 16. The 'La La Land' star's tour announcement comes after his luggage was stolen at JFK airport in New York. The 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 'Ordinary People' singer, 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.



TALLIA STORM WANTS TO PROVE HERSELF

Tallia Storm wants to prove herself to Sir Elton John. The 18-year-old Scottish-born singer-songwriter shot to fame back in 2012 when she landed a gig with the 'Rocket Man' hitmaker after he listened to one of her demos and she went on to get signed to Capitol Music Group, and she thinks the time is right now to prove his faith in her was worthwhile. Speaking to BANG Showbiz, Tallia said: "I still pinch myself the fact that that happened, I feel like it's one of those stories where you're like did that really happen? Yessss, so I feel that now is my time to prove to him, he believed me, he backed the right one so I'm just trying to prove him right." And Tallia admits Elton is one of her biggest inspirations. When asked who inspires her, she replied: "Elton John 100 percent I wouldn't be where I am without him, he's such an inspiration. My family, I also grew up listening to Ella Fitzgerald and Dinah Washington, real jazz greats, I loved for them and the Great American Songbook is my anthem. "I also like Chance the Rapper - no one deserves more Grammys than him. The fact that he got recognized at the Grammys was incredible, I love his album 'Colouring Book'. [There's also] Kendrick Lamar and Frank Ocean, changing it up a bit." The 'Still in Love' singer is enjoying the 'fabulous' aspects of fame like glamorous red carpet events, but she insists singing is more important to her than anything else. he said: "For me it's about singing live, no matter how

small or how big the gig, music is my passion at the end of the day, everything else is a bonus - red carpets are fabulous but at the end of the day nothing beats just singing live on stage so I can't wait to keep releasing music and see where it takes us."



Gary Barlow confirms Star Wars cameo

Gary Barlow has confirmed he has a role in the new 'Star Wars' movie. The Take That singer, 46, was rumored to be portraying a stormtrooper in the next installment of the blockbuster sci-fi franchise, but he's now confirmed his cameo won't be as one of the soldiers of the Galactic Empire. The Sun newspaper's Bizarre columnist Dan Wootton revealed on British show 'Lorraine' yesterday: "So, catch this. Gary Barlow confirming he is going to appear in 'Star Wars'. I'm not joking." The 'Ghosts' hitmaker joked that he was worried that he may have scuppered his chances of having the part because the makers of the franchise like to keep details strictly confidential between the actors and team. Quizzed on his role, Gary said: "Well there is. I'm not a Stormtrooper. I am in it. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen keep it down. Having said that I'll probably be out. "I think the Star Wars people are so strict about information so probably by me saying that I've probably done myself out of a role." A source previously teased: "Gary is a huge 'Star Wars' fan so this is a dream come true. The process has been kept top secret, as he doesn't want anybody to find out. His connections in the film industry got him the part." Filming for the next movie is currently underway at Pinewood Studios in Buckinghamshire, England and is expected to be just as big a success as last year's 'The Force Awakens', which saw Harrison Ford make his comeback as Han Solo. Although details on the forthcoming film are being kept close to producers' chests, it was previously reported Ade Edmondson, 60, has also managed to secure a role after he impressed director Rian Johnson and

executive producer J.J. Abrams with his incredible acting ability. A source said: "Ade is one of the most-loved comedy stars in the UK but even he would admit Star Wars is a surprise move for him. While J.J. Abrams isn't directing, he is still heavily involved and he is really keen on British talent. "His character is top secret, like everything else to do with the film and its plot. But given his old comedy characters, it would make sense for them to give him an eccentric part." And Edmondson is just one of the many in a long line of Brits to join the 'Star Wars' family. Simon Pegg played Junkyard dealer Unkar Plutt in 'The Force Awakens', while John Boyega and Daisy Ridley played lead characters Finn and Rey respectively. 'Star Wars VIII', which has yet to be given an official name, is expected to hit cinema screens around the globe later this year.



Snoop Dogg to induct Tupac into Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Snoop Dogg is to induct Tupac Shakur into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The American rap star - who was killed in a drive-by shooting in Las Vegas in September 1996, aged 25 - is widely recognized as one of the most important figures in the history of rap music and his good friend Snoop has been given the honor of inducting him into the Hall of Fame next month. TMZ reports that Snoop will deliver a Tupac tribute performance at the ceremony, while Dr Dre - who also collaborated with the controversial rap star - is in talks to join him on stage. Tupac is part of the 2017 class, which also includes the likes of Pearl Jam, Yes, Journey, the Electric Light Orchestra and Joan Baez. Snoop was a close friend of Tupac and has previously admitted that the large-than-life star had a "different spirit" to other musicians he's collaborated with in the studio. He shared: "Pac brought a spirit to the studio that was different than anybody we ever worked with. He had a spirit - like this n**** could be in three different rooms at one time makin' music. He would never listen to it." Snoop also claimed he was the reason Tupac signed with the iconic rap label Death Row Records in the mid-90s. Snoop explained how he convinced label boss Suge Knight to sign Tupac after he had been shot in New York City and later sentenced to prison. He recalled: "Speaking with Suge [Knight] after [Tupac] had gotten shot [in 1994], I had flew to New York the next day. Things was going bad for him; he had gotten locked up. "Suge, we need to put that n**** with us, cuz."

GOSSIP



Hunnam's panicked preparation

Charlie Hunnam only had 10 days to prepare for 'The Lost City of Z'. The 36-year-old actor had just wrapped on 'King Arthur: Legend of the Sword' - in which he plays the titular character - and was "filled with panic" as he rushed to get into his 'Lost City of Z' character. He said: "King Arthur was incredibly demanding: I was in almost every scene and shooting long hours. By the time we finished shooting, I only had ten days before I started shooting this ['The Lost City of Z']. I was filled with panic. I used every second of that time to try and transform myself psychologically and physically because I was muscle bound and in action hero mode. "I went through this very rapid process of losing weight [approximately 60lbs in nine weeks]. I wanted to fill myself up with [Percy] Fawcett, I had been slowly and quietly researching. One of the things he admired most as a human characteristic was authenticity, and so it was important

for me to put a level of myself into playing him, as much as honoring who I thought he was. I fell in love with Fawcett and felt a responsibility to do him justice." And Hunnam admits there was a "real distance" between himself and his co-star Robert Pattinson and he was initially worried if he liked him or not. He added to ScreenDaily.com: "I had a couple of rehearsal sessions with Sienna [Miller], but I didn't spend any time with Tom [Holland] or Robert [Pattinson]. I wanted these relationships to evolve naturally on screen. Through the work, I don't think I said more than ten words to Robert off camera. "I didn't know if he was just 'in that zone' or if he genuinely didn't like me. There was a real distance between us. But it creates the right dynamic on screen. He's reached out to me subsequently, making overtures for us to be friends now, so I think it was about the work."

JAMES GUNN HAD MORE 'FREEDOM' WITH GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2

James Gunn had "a lot more freedom" on 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2'. The 46-year-old director feels he had much more scope to develop the characters and story in the second installment of the action movie. Speaking at the Writers Guild Festival in Los Angeles, California, over the weekend, he said: "On the second movie, I had a lot more freedom. "Because the first movie did well and it was great not having to explain the five major characters to the audience in the first half hour, we just go straight into the story ... This [the sequel] has to be its own thing and you can't start making this a s***** Xerox of the first one." Meanwhile, James previously confirmed plans for 'Guardians of the Galaxy 3'. He admitted: "There will be a 'Guardians 3', that's for sure. We're trying to figure it out. I'm trying to figure out what I want to do really, that's all it is. I got to figure out where I want to be, what I want to spend the next three years of my life doing. You know, I'm going to make another big movie; is it the Guardians or something else? I'm just going to figure it out over the next couple of weeks." And James feels the latest 'Guardians' movie has

been his most rewarding to-date. He shared: "At the end of the day, we're telling a long-form story that has many different moving parts and within those stories there's a lot of freedom to do what you want. "And I've been lucky in that the most creatively fulfilling freeing experience I've ever had making a film has been on 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2' - without a doubt. Because at the end of the day any choice was mine, if there's ever a disagreement we go in my direction. "The entire story was written by me alone in a room back in August 2014, and it stayed that way from the very beginning." 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2' - which is slated for release on April 28 in the UK and on May 5 in North America - stars Chris Pratt as Star Lord Peter Quill, Vin Diesel as the voice of Baby Groot, Bradley Cooper as the voice of Rocket, Zoe Saldana as Gamora, Dave Bautista as Drax the Destroyer and Karen Gillan as Nebula whilst newcomers Kurt Russell - who plays Quill's father Ego - and Sylvester Stallone also join the cast.



Jackman could appear in Deadpool 2

'Deadpool 2' writers are desperate to feature Hugh Jackman in the new movie. Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick, who are the creative masterminds behind the 2016 fantasy film starring Ryan Reynolds, are keen to see Hugh, 48 - who is known for playing Wolverine in 'X-Men' - appear in their upcoming production after Deadpool pinned a photograph of the dark-haired hunk on his face in the first installment. And although the Australian star has ruled out making an appearance as the metal claw-bearing mutant in future movies after starring in his swansong 'Logan', the writers believe there could be a possibility of twisting the plot to feature Hugh as himself. Speaking about their plans for the forthcoming production to The Hollywood Reporter, Reese said: "I like that. 'Deadpool' lives in a world where Hugh Jackman is out there. He's got the 'People's Sexiest Man Alive' cover that he staples to his forehead in the first movie, so maybe he could meet Hugh as Hugh. That would be really funny." Meanwhile, Reese has revealed the creative team are "very close" to submitting a final draft for 'Deadpool 2', and have teased they will begin shooting scenes for the follow-up within the next few months. He said: "We're very close to a draft that we'll go off and shoot in a couple of months and we couldn't be more thrilled. We don't want to put the cart before the horse, and often times with release dates that happens. "You end up racing and you end up being forced to do something you're not happy with and the great thing about 'Deadpool' is we spent a career trying to duck other movies. "How do we get off the release date of this or that?" I think in most cases, people are going to have to duck us. "Fox is probably going to be able to drop that thing on a date and everyone else is going to scatter, because no one will want to come out the same weekend ... our feeling is it's all about the movie." However, the team are not fazed about setting a particular release date because they are focused on creating "the best" film. Reese continued: "We just want to make the best movie possible and 'Deadpool' will find an audience, we feel at this point."

Beauty and the Beast becomes highest grossing live-action musical

'Beauty and the Beast' has become the highest grossing live-action musical of all time. The Bill Condon-directed film, which stars the likes of Emma Watson and Dan Stevens, has proven to be an incredible box office success and has already earned \$690 million world-

wide, making it the most successful live-action musical ever. And with enthusiasm for the Disney movie barely waning since its release earlier this month, industry experts have predicted 'Beauty and the Beast' will have made as much as \$1 billion within the next three to four weeks. The new movie has overtaken its nearest competitor 'Grease' to claim the crown, while other films on the list include 'Les Misérables' and 'Chicago'. But despite the overwhelming success of the movie, Disney recently confirmed there won't be a sequel. Walt Disney's Head of Production Sean Bailey explained that a spin-off movie or prequel is more likely, if the studio decides it wants to revisit the money-spinning franchise. Sean said: "There are currently no plans for a sequel and the studio won't try to force one. It will explore possible spin-off and prequel scenarios." The Disney executive also said the casting of Emma Watson in the role of Belle was down to the way she embodies an "empowered character" in her real life through her activism with the United Nations. He previously said: "We knew we wanted Belle to be a more empowered character, an ambitious, innovator version of the '91 film. "Emma embodied those things in her own life and it showed in her performance. Alan had the very long relationship with her from the Harry Potter films, and very early on he spoke about her traits, her activism, her work with the UN."



Jolie is the perfect match for Guerlain

Angelina Jolie felt she was a "match" for Guerlain. The 41-year-old actress was announced as the face of the beauty brand's Mon Guerlain fragrance in January this year, and the star believes her partnership with the company was a natural progression because the label "spoke to her" as she has been fond of the brand ever since she was a child and her mother used their products. Speaking about her latest venture, the brunette beauty said: "It was a brand my mother loved and that I knew from my childhood. It spoke to here, as it does to me, of beauty, history and quality. It's one of the oldest perfume houses in the world, from France - a country I love and feel connected to and spend time in. "As I talked to Guerlain about the artistry they devote to the making of the perfume and the way they work in communities, sourcing their ingredients, the pieces came together and I felt we were a match." The 'Maleficent' star - who has Maddox, 15, Pax, 13, Zahara, 12, Shiloh, 10, and eight-year-old twins Knox and Vivienne - has revealed she has always associated Guerlain products as being "feminine" even as a child. She told Hello! magazine: "My mother was a very natural woman. She never spoiled herself, hardly wore make-up and wore modest jewellery, but she always had a few special items for when she wanted to feel like a lady. One of those special items - and I remember it because it seemed so ele-

gant - was her Guerlain powder [Ladies in All Climates]. I think it speaks of all women having those few special things that make the feel feminine. And so when I was a little girl I would associate Guerlain with that."



MONAE SAYS LAGERFELD IS HER 'HERO'

Karl Lagerfeld is Janelle Monae's "hero". The 31-year-old singer-songwriter is known for her distinctive fashion taste and has admitted that the iconic German designer serves as her inspiration after the launch of Chanel's Fall 2017 collection. She shared: "Karl Lagerfeld is just my hero. When I saw that his show in Paris was NASA-themed, I was sick to my stomach because I wanted to be there. "When I saw the photos and videos online, it just



made me fall in love with fashion and think about how important of an experience it is." And Janelle - who has adopted a signature black-and-white style over the years - revealed that her deep-rooted love for the designer extends well beyond the show in the French capital. She told Vogue magazine: "He is someone who sticks to black and white, too. And he finds a lot of freedom in what he wears." Janelle has become almost as well known for her stunning outfits as her music, and the American singer admitted she spends lots of time trying to find the perfect outfit for her red carpet appearances. Janelle - who wore an eye-catching Elie Saab couture gown to the Oscars earlier this year - explained: "The more you know ahead of time what you want to wear, it just makes life easier. "I had a photo stream months before I went to the Oscars. I knew my dress. I knew what I was going to be wearing certain days when I went to press [events], so I wouldn't have to be stressed out trying to figure it out." Meanwhile, the singer also revealed her signature black-and-white outfits are inspired by her parents, who, as a janitor and a truck driver, were required to adopt a similarly uniformed look for work. She explained: "Wearing my uniform is not just a fashion rule that I live by, it also means something to me to think about my parents, who wore their uniforms, and all the people in the world serving to keep this country safe. "It just reminds me of where I come from, how far I've come, and where I am and how much further I have left to go."

SASHA PIETERSE'S SIMPLE DRESS

Sasha Pieterse wants a "simple" wedding dress. The 'Pretty Little Liars' star is well underway with the planning for her wedding to fiancé Hudson Sheaffer - who she got engaged to in December 2015 - and wants her dress to follow the "whimsical rustic vibe" the couple have planned for their big day. She said: "[I want a] whimsical rustic vibe. I'm going to keep long hair, for sure. "[For the dress,] I want a low back, I want really thin straps, detailed bodice. So still very simple, but got those little accents that'll make it pop." And the 21-year-old blonde beauty is using photo-sharing website Pinterest to find ideas for the wedding. She added to People magazine: "I can put my Pinterest board to use. [It's] really surreal but I'm glad that my fiancé Hudson and I are on the same page. We have the same style, so it makes it really simple, really easy ... "He's like, 'This is what's important to me, and then you can do whatever else you want,' which I respect.

There's nothing that he is crazy about - that I love too. We gel together really well. [Troian and I] shared a lot of inspiration with each other [too]. Meanwhile, Sasha previously confessed her own style is very different from that of her 'Pretty Little Liars' character Alison DiLaurentis. Speaking about Alison's fashion choices, she said: "I agree, she has got a very feminine soul ... It's so far away from my personal style. But when I am Alison yes I do think it fits her very well." Whilst costume designer Cameron Dale added: "We have explored some looks this year. Since we know Allison is a teacher we have done just a cute elevated look on what you would find a high school teacher wearing. "Alison is depending on every script I read. For Alison, the prints are very feminine, she is very feminine. I wanted to keep Alison feminine ... like a hometown kind of girl. I thought it was cute."



FEATURES



A man walks past posters and pictures of the French former soccer player and administrator Michel Platini in a museum owned by Philippos Stavrou Platini, who legally adopted his sports hero's surname, dedicated to Michel Platini, in Mosflioti, Cyprus on Sunday. — AP photos



Dogs sit near pictures of the French former soccer player and administrator Michel Platini in a museum dedicated to him, owned by Philippos Stavrou Platini.

Ooh la la! Cypriot renews Platini memorabilia record bid

A Cypriot fan of former soccer player and administrator Michel Platini renewed a bid Sunday to be entered in the Guinness Book of World Records for the biggest collection of Plantini memorabilia. Philippos Stavrou Platini - yes, he legally adopted his sports hero's surname - said he has nearly doubled the number of items he owns from the Frenchman's days as a player and as president of European soccer's governing body, UEFA, to 41,630. Stavrou Platini said that losing the record to a Brazilian collector four years ago made him more determined to be crowned the king of all things Platini.

The centerpiece of his collection is the official UEFA suit Plantini wore for years at official functions and gave to his Cypriot admirer as a gift in 2010, a year after visiting The House of Platini in this small village outside Cyprus' capital, Nicosia. The museum, which doubles as a kebab tavern in the evenings, teems with collectibles, including 13 jerseys signed by Platini himself from his former teams: Nancy, St. Etienne and Juventus. Stavrou Platini, who started his collection 30 years ago, also has what he says is an extremely rare banner from the tragedy-stricken 1985 European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus. Thirty-nine people were killed when a wall at Belgium's Heysel Stadium collapsed.

"I wouldn't sell any part of my collection, not even for millions," Stavrou Platini, 55, told the Associated Press. "This is my life. It's like an illness." He said he's aiming for two Guinness records, one for most sporting memorabilia and the other for most soccer memorabilia. Two members of Cyprus' parliament on Sunday certified Stavrou Platini's collection, which will be sent to Guinness judges for verification and approval. Stavrou Platini said his fascination with Platini began during his own days as a professional soccer player, when some likened his playing style to Platini's. As far as Platini's fall from grace, the Cypriot said he doesn't believe a word of it.

Plantini was handed a four-year suspension for soccer-related activities in 2016 for conflict of interest over a \$2 million payment he received in 2011 from FIFA. Stavrou Platini chalked the suspension up to the machinations of his idol's enemies who opposed his reforms. "It was a perfectly set trap for him and unfortunately it worked," Stavrou Platini said. "Whether they like it or not, Platini is a legend." — AP

Lucasfilm lost sleep over uncanny resurrections of 'Rogue One'



It grossed \$1 billion and picked up numerous awards nominations, but a particular aspect of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" proved one of the most controversial moments in the entire franchise. Fans were polarized by the computer-generated appearances of the long-dead Peter Cushing and a youthful Carrie Fisher, with some admiring the technical wizardry but many dismissing their inclusion as downright creepy. With Lucasfilm planning to release the DVD and Blu-ray of "Rogue One" on April 4, fans will get an insight into just how well the film's crew understood that its flirtation with the "uncanny valley" of computer-generated human images was a huge risk.

In a bonus featurette entitled "The Princess and The Governor," animation supervisor Hal Hickel discusses a cutting-edge special effects process he describes as a "long series of failures resulting in victory." "There were many dark days, many sleepless nights, laying awake, worrying about these shots," he says. Developed by a Japanese robotics professor in 1970, the "uncanny valley" is the hypothesis that human replicas that appear almost, but not quite, like real humans elicit feelings of revulsion. Its name refers to the sudden dip in our emotional response, which generally grows more positive the more human the replicas look-until they are so life-like that we are creeped out. "Close up digital human works is one of the hardest problems in computer graphics," visual effects supervisor John Knoll explains on the featurette. "You don't want to be sitting there in the theater saying 'Yeah, something doesn't look right. What do you think that is?'"

'Unnerving'

Unfortunately, this was the exact reaction of numerous otherwise rapt critics who thought the movie's perilous deep dive into the "uncanny valley" had undermined its many positive qualities. Cushing, who played villainous Death Star commander Grand Moff Tarkin in the original film, died in 1994, while Leia had stopped looking like 19-year-old Leia decades before her untimely death just two weeks after "Rogue One" came out.

So the idea of creating CGI versions of the actors was hugely divisive, with The Washington Times's Eric Althoff dismissing

their inclusion as "effing weird." Kelly Lawlor of USA Today complained that while Tarkin was "unnerving," the Leia cameo was "so jarring as to take the audience completely out of the film at its most emotional moment." Tarkin and Leia are played by Guy Henry and Ingvald Deila, with the digital likenesses of the original actors superimposed by San Francisco-based effects studio Industrial Light and Magic (ILM).

"It takes a lot of preparation to get into this character because everyone remembers Leia very well, so it needs to look exactly right," Deila explains on the featurette.

"And so they spent a lot of time on my hair, obviously. They dyed it twice and then added some extra hair... in the front because her hairline is a bit lower than mine. And also a big chunk of hair to make the buns. "Then all these dots were put on right before we started shooting so that they could put Carrie Fisher's face on top of mine."

'Carrie loved it'

While archived audio is mined for Leia's sole word of dialogue, Henry comes up with a passable Cushing impersonation for his substantial scenes of dialogue. "It was a very difficult process because there's no way to really go back in time and capture the appearances of these actors," said ILM creative director Paul Giacoppo. "So we had to really bring every single possible skill set to bear, to try to recreate the details of their facial appearance and skin likeness and performance."

Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy, a producer on the movie, says she wouldn't have green-lit the digital resurrections if visual effects supremo John Knoll hadn't been so confident he could pull it off. As for Fisher herself, the actress managed to see her cameo before her death last December 27 at the age of 60, Knoll told ABC News, and gave it her blessing. "She was involved in the process and, you know, she saw the final result and she loved it," he said. "She got to see the scene. (Kennedy) showed it to her. So, I got a call afterwards from Kathy saying, 'Well, Carrie loved it.'" — AFP



In this photo is a blown glass flower and fish by Brice Turnbull, a glass artist based in Salida, Colo.



A hot glass bubble is the first step and foundation in glass-work, shown here at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston.

Crafts: Glassblowing's gotten easier for amateurs to learn

On a chilly winter morning here, two furnaces inside the Massachusetts College of Art and Design burn at upwards of 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The heat is palpable as you enter the room, but it doesn't seem to bother a group of students working nearby. They're here learning the ancient art of glassblowing, a technique of blowing a bubble with hot molten glass and forming it into objects. The craft has been around since ancient times, but a few modern advancements have helped make it available to more people. "I found glass was the thing that caught my eye the most," said Sara MacNeil, a 19-year-old sophomore at MassArt, who is majoring in glass. Not too long ago, MacNeil might have had trouble accessing the artsy major - even at an art school.

The popularity of glassblowing in the United States has been steadily growing because of a development in the 1960s called the studio glass movement, when furnaces used to melt glass could be made much smaller. Until then, glasswork had to be done in an industrial furnace; now, the furnace is more the size of a small car. "It's been rapidly developing in the last 10 years," said James McLeod, a professor of glass at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Because of the studio glass movement, glass as a medium went from utilitarian objects - drinkware and windows - to fine arts. "It started being taught at colleges because it was so accessible," said James Yood, a professor of art history at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. "It left the manufacturer and went into the artists' studios."

College students trained in glassblowing became teachers, and glass studios began popping up in neighborhoods alongside urban mainstays like coffee shops, dry cleaners and pet

groomers. The studio glass movement all started with the work of Harvey K. Littleton, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he started the school's first glass program and where student Dale Chihuly learned his art. Some of glassblowing's popularity might be due in part to Chihuly's recognizable large-scale sculptures, which can be found around the world, from Las Vegas casinos to city botanic gardens and museums. Permanent Chihuly collections reside in at least 32 states. Chihuly, who also started the glass program at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1969, is the "pied piper" of glass, Yood said. "Every significant American city has a place where people could go and blow glass," he said.

Glass artist April Wagner, who owns Epiphany Glass studio in Pontiac, Michigan, said she has seen a greater interest in the technique lately. She makes glass sculptures for corporate buildings, hospitals and public spaces, but occasionally offers workshops on glassblowing. "People come in and try it for an hour," Wagner said. "You can start painting in your garage, but you can't necessarily start blowing glass in your garage." Her biggest goal for the workshops is to expose participants to the intricacies of glassblowing. "We wanted to increase the understanding of what it takes to create a glass work," she said. But Salida, Colorado-based glass artist Brice Turnbull said his career is still novel to many. "A lot of people are still very surprised that anyone does this," Turnbull said. "They're surprised anyone can make a living doing it." — AP



Wagner works with a blow torch and hot glass in her Detroit, Mich, studio.—AP photos

Review



Virus fears fuel chilling 'Before This is Over'

Author Amanda Hickie was living in Canada when severe acute respiratory syndrome - SARS - hit Toronto in 2003. The panicked response to that outbreak, spread first by travelers returning from Asia and then among health care workers and patients at Toronto hospitals, fuels Hickie's chilling new novel, "Before This is Over." As the novel opens, the deadly Manba virus is threatening to reach Sydney, Australia, where Hannah, a cancer survivor and mother of two, is preoccupied with disaster preparations that annoy her husband. An impending crisis is almost fun, an excuse to be selfish with a mild risk of looking a little foolish - until she actually must shut her family inside their home.

Within the confines of their house, Hannah feels like a hero and her family relaxes. The couple bickers, their kids get bored; breakfast has to be made, followed by lunch, and then there's dinner. Hannah obsessively checks the rising death toll online, but that's not as jarring as the sudden loss of electricity or the reappearance of a neighbor. Hickie packs mundane moments with a building sense of dread: Will Hannah's miscalculation about the amount of toilet paper one person uses be a fatal mistake, or just another inconvenience in their little domestic adventure?

Reading "Before This is Over" in Miami, just a few months after the city became the epicenter of a Zika outbreak in the United States, Hannah's reaction to a viral threat feels fresh and accurate. From her skepticism in the government's containment efforts to her smug relief when her preparations appear to pay off, Hannah's insistence that her children are more important than anyone else's family raises haunting questions not only about how far you'd go to protect yourself in a crisis, but also about whether anyone will make better decisions the next time public health is threatened on a hemispheric scale.

Hannah never seems afraid until it occurs to her that her quiet suburban street has remained so quiet throughout the Manba plague because her neighbors had the same ideas, too. "Before This is Over" follows the same suspenseful lines as the post-apocalyptic classic "On the Beach," which follows the day-to-day experiences of a group of Australians awaiting the fallout from nuclear war - but Hickie finds more to fear in disasters that have already happened than in any abstract threat. — AP



Models parading creations from CC by Su Xi Collection at China Fashion Week in Beijing. — AFP photos





Visitors enjoy the ball pit at "The beach" an interactive art installation that was designed by New York-based collective Snarkitecture and installed to mark the 20th anniversary of the French concept store Colette on March 25, 2017 at the Musee des arts decoratifs in Paris. — AFP

Between the lines: Historians put Stalin-era diaries online

Tatiana Panova holds a photograph of her great-grandfather as a solemn-faced student in 1923 in the Soviet Union, around 16 years before he died in a prison camp during the Stalin purges. While Alexander Yakovlev's death was over half a century before her birth, Panova, 25, has gained a tiny window into his thoughts and life thanks to an aged diary that her family preserved. Now, as memories of the Stalin era fade, a project run by young Russian historians is putting his journal and hundreds more like it online in a bid to bring to life the everyday experiences of those tumultuous times.

"Any diary has value," says 35-year-old historian Ilya Venyavkin, who is writing a book about diaries from the 1930s. "Don't think that if your relative wasn't an outstanding intellectual or a singer, or didn't live through the death of Stalin or the coronation of Nicholas II, that their diary has no significance." The site, called Prozhito, or Lived Through, was launched in 2015 and can be searched using the day, author or a keyword. It already includes more than 600 never-published journals.

The idea came from 33-year-old historian, Mikhail Melnichenko, after he wrote a book about Soviet political jokes using diaries as a source. Working in his apartment and without a scanner, Melnichenko photographed diary pages on a large windowsill where the light is good. He and around 350 volunteers—a broad range of enthusiasts from different backgrounds—then transcribe the diary entries. At a recent monthly gathering to discuss the journals, a group, many in their 20s, sat with laptops and smartphones poring over photos of browned papers. "It's some kind of social change," says Venyavkin. "We are suddenly interested in knowing in detail how people lived who often have no relation to us."

It's very mysterious

The pages of the diary of Panova's great-grandfather are brittle, with handwriting that is hard to decipher. "It's very mysterious," she says. "He's... a complete stranger, a person who lived 100 years ago." Her great-grandmother secretly preserved the diary after Yakovlev was arrested on suspicion of a "Trotskyite" plot and sent to a labour camp in the far-eastern city of Magadan where he died. Panova admits that initially she found his diary, written over three years in the 1920s, pretty dull. The electrical engineer drew up weekly tables detailing the time he had spent on activities such as gymnastics.



A picture taken in Moscow shows Soviet-era diaries on a windowsill during an AFP interview with historian Mikhail Melnichenko. — AFP photos

He also wrote about his studies, work on electrification, his debts and his troubled relationship with a girlfriend. "I'd say maybe he was a bit of a bore," Panova said. "He writes in detail every day what time he got up and went to bed." Although she feels emotional distance, she said she hopes to learn more now and access his criminal case file. Venyavkin says that some elements come up again and again in journals of the period: self-penned poems, fascination with cultural happenings such as films or statues and a sense that the tsarist era is ancient history. At the same time, most were living in overcrowded accommodation and felt hungry most of the time. "It's quite rare for someone to eat till they are full," Venyavkin said. Family archives are unusual in Russia due to war, evacuation and the terror that reigned during Stalin's 1922-1953 leadership, making such diaries valuable finds, said Venyavkin. "From the 1920s and 1930s I can imagine there are 10,000 diaries, at most 20,000," he said.

Dangers of diaries

The historians talk of a broad shift from the 1920s, when people were optimistic about the future and still discussed politics, to a mood of fear during the repressive Stalin Terror of the 1930s. "1920s-era diaries are relatively sincere because people didn't know what would come in the 1930s," says Melnichenko. Later, people, at times, inked out passages or cut out pages. Diaries in the 1930s, however, took on a sinister aspect as investigators often used them as evidence of anti-Soviet opinions. Many are still in secret police archives.

There are far fewer diaries from that decade, either because people did not write them or destroyed them. "Sometimes you get the sense diaries from the 30s were written specially for a hostile reader—so if your diaries fell into the hands of an investigator, he would conclude your absolute loyalty," says Melnichenko. "People, who wrote diaries, knew in general that this was quite dangerous, that a diary could be read," says Venyavkin.

He describes reading the diary of a teenager whose parents were arrested in the Stalin purges. When his father was arrested, he wrote three lines. When his mother was arrested, he noted simply: "It was easier than last time." "We are dealing with silence," says Venyavkin. "We can interpret not his text but the absence of what seems obvious." — AFP



Historian Mikhail Melnichenko, 33, speaking during an AFP interview in Moscow.

Bizarre News

Man passes driving test after 33 failed attempts

A man has passed his driving test after 33 failed attempts. Christian Whiteley-Mason from Barnsley went through 14 different instructors, had 85 lessons and over 25 years he's racked up a total of £10,000 trying to get his L plate. And now after taking his first test in 1992 he's finally passed and is in "shock". He told the Daily Mirror newspaper: "I can't believe I've actually finally passed after all these years," said the care home manager. "I'm still in shock!"



Woman has mushrooms cut out of her stomach

A woman had to have an operation to remove mushrooms from her stomach. The fungi had started growing inside her and had become lodged in the woman's gut - with some having sprouted to 7cms long, according to reports by The Mirror newspaper. Doctors ruled that the mushrooms had become stuck in her tummy after she claimed to have cooked dry mushrooms without soaking them and subsequently didn't chew them properly either. She was taken to hospital suffering from stomach ache and medics discovered the mushrooms had expanded and got stuck. The woman underwent surgery to remove the mushrooms.



London fitness fanatics more concerned with how they look than exercise

Looking good whilst working up a sweat is now more important than ever for Londoners according to a new survey. Research carried out by Hammerson, owners of Bullring (Birmingham), Brent Cross (London) and High Cross (Leicester) shopping centres, discovered 43 per cent of people try to keep as stylish as the Kardashians or Made in Chelsea (MIC) cast when breaking a sweat. A third of respondents (29 per cent) admitted they invested as much in maintaining their sports wardrobe as they do their fashion wardrobe. Fiona Campbell-Roberts said: "Sportswear and athleisure has seen massive growth as a category with

fashion brands extending their ranges to include fitness clothing." Londoners were the most style conscious - with 68 per cent admitting they like to make themselves Instagram-ready like MIC's Louise Thompson whereas 80 per cent of people surveyed in Wales are more concerned with exercising than what they are wearing.



Passenger leaves snake on plane

A passenger accidentally left their pet snake on an internal flight to Alaska. Customers on board a Ravn Alaska plane travelling between the village of Aniak and the city of Anchorage were left stunned when they were told through the tannoy that the 4 to 5 foot-long reptile had been discovered by a little boy, who was clambering over his seat, at the back of the aircraft underneath a bright yellow duffel bag. Although the staff and passengers remained relatively calm after the discovery and waited patiently for the pilot to decide what to do with the animal on board the plane. A flight attendant reportedly picked up the snake by its belly and placed it into a plastic rubbish bag before securing it in the overhead locker for the remainder of the flight. The flight arrived at its destination on time, according to Fox News, but it's not yet known whether the snake has been reunited with its forgetful owner. — Bang Showbiz

