

Envoy: Kuwait keen on Arab solidarity, cooperation



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'ALIEN' MPs HASHEM, HAYEF SPAR OVER PERFUME, PANTSUIT

FADHL'S IMMUNITY LIFTED, HARBASH, MERDAS SPARED

Min 16°
Max 28°
High Tide
00:27 & 12:53
Low Tide
07:01 & 19:16

AMIR ARRIVES FOR ARAB SUMMIT



AMMAN: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Jordan's King Abdullah II attend a welcome ceremony at Queen Alia International Airport yesterday ahead of talks on the eve of the Arab League summit. — AFP

By B Izzak and Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Tense discussions overshadowed the National Assembly's regular session yesterday, leading speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem to adjourn the meeting for today ahead of time. MP Safaa Al-Hashem, the only female member in the Assembly, clashed with Islamist opposition lawmaker Mohammad Hayef because he refused to allow her to sit next to him during a meeting of the committee fighting alien phenomena.

Hashem complained to the Assembly in a letter that Hayef, who heads the committee, refused to allow her to sit in her regular seat next to him. Hayef said that he cannot sit next to a woman wearing perfume and dressed like a man. The two traded strong words before the speaker ended the confrontation.

Several pro-government lawmakers also clashed with opposition MPs over a request to lift the immunity of two leading opposition MPs Jamaan Al-Harbash and Nayef Al-Merdas to be tried by court over charges of insulting HH the Amir. But a legal and legislative committee report recommended that the immunities should not be lifted and also requested that no debate was needed on the issue.

However, MPs Saadoun Hammad and Ahmad Al-Fadhli strongly objected to halting the debate and demanded that a full discussion should take place on the issue because it relates to the Amir. Following the debate, the Assembly voted in support of the committee's decision.

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KUWAIT: MPs Mohammad Hayef and Safaa Al-Hashem trade barbs during a session of the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

MAN KILLS WIFE WITH AXE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A citizen killed his wife yesterday with an axe in Jahra over a dispute, and was arrested by Taima

detectives. Preliminary information indicates that after a fight broke out between the couple, the husband hit his wife with a solid object on the head, killing her instantly.

TRUMP ROLLS BACK OBAMA ERA CLIMATE PROTECTIONS

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump signed an executive order yesterday to undo a slew of Obama-era climate change regulations that his administration says is hobbling oil drillers and coal miners, a move environmental groups have vowed to take to court. The decree's main target is former President Barack Obama's Clean Power Plan that required states to slash carbon emissions from power plants - a critical element in helping the United States meet

its commitments to a global climate change accord reached by nearly 200 countries in Paris in 2015.

The so-called "Energy Independence" order also reverses a ban on coal leasing on federal lands, undoes rules to curb methane emissions from oil and gas production, and reduces the weight of climate change and carbon emissions in policy and infrastructure permitting decisions.

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WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump, accompanied by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt (third left) and Vice President Mike Pence (right) is applauded as he holds up the signed Energy Independence Executive Order yesterday at EPA headquarters. — AP

PETROFAC WINS \$1.3BN CONTRACT IN KUWAIT

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MUSK DIVING INTO MINDS WHILE REACHING FOR MARS

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AMAZON EXPANDS GLOBAL REACH

TECH GIANT BUYS SOUQ.COM AFTER \$800M COUNTEROFFER

SAUDIS PLAN \$3BN JOINT INVESTMENT FUND FOR JORDAN

AMMAN: Saudi Arabia is to set up a \$3 billion joint investment fund for Jordan, among 15 cooperation agreements signed by King Salman during a visit to Amman, state media said yesterday. Other agreements include measures to boost power generation, tackle worsening water shortages, and improve housing and health services, Jordan's official Petra news agency said. It said the accords covered uranium mining and water desalination projects, and that a memorandum was signed to build a \$70 million solar power station on Jordan's eastern border.

The agreements, worth a total of \$3.5 billion, were signed on Monday evening shortly after Salman's arrival for an Arab summit later this week, Petra added. With desert covering 92 percent of its territory, the kingdom is one of the world's 10 driest countries and wants to use atomic energy to fire desalination plants to overcome its crippling water shortage. Jordan is thought to have significant uranium reserves and has struck deals over the years with foreign firms to mine for uranium in its central region, while also considering building a nuclear power plant.

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DUBAI: A truck is parked at the entrance of the Souq.com warehouse on Monday. — AP

DUBAI: Tech giant Amazon expanded its global reach yesterday with the announcement of a deal to buy Dubai-based Souq.com, the Middle East's largest online retailer. The agreement, the financial details of which were not disclosed, brings Amazon into a fast-growing market as it continues to invest in its core retail network despite expanding into a wide range of services.

It appears competition was fierce to acquire Souq.com, with the Amazon deal announced just a day after Dubai-based

Emaar Malls confirmed offering \$800 million to acquire the site. Amazon had walked away from talks with Souq.com earlier this year, but it reportedly came back with an offer of \$650 million. Founded in 2005 as an auction site, Souq.com has evolved into a retailer and a marketplace for third-party sellers.

In a joint statement announcing the agreement, the two companies said the deal would be finalized this year "subject to closing conditions".

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PUTIN MEETS ROUHANI AS TIES DEEPEN

MOSCOW: Russia signed yesterday a string of bilateral agreements with Iran as President Vladimir Putin hosted his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani for his first official visit to Moscow. The meeting between Putin and Rouhani, who have grown closer through their mutual support of Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad, mostly focused on flourishing economic ties in the fields of energy and industry. Putin said in televised comments after the meeting that trade between the countries had "grown more than 70 percent" last year.

"This is truly a good result considering that it was achieved in unstable global conditions and amid persistent volatility on the commodity and currency markets," Putin said. A joint statement published by the Kremlin said that "special attention" had been paid to cooperation in energy, with both sides pledging to continue efforts to stabilize the international market.

In addition to cooperation on Syria, energy and defense ties have deepened between Iran and Russia in recent years. Russia is to build

nine of Iran's 20 proposed nuclear reactors and has emerged as a long-term arms partner, supplying Tehran with its S-300 air defense missile system. The relationship has blossomed under Rouhani despite the countries having a complicated history over territory, oil and Communist ideology. Rouhani is looking to boost Iran's economy ahead of elections in May, in which he is expected to stand for a second term.

Putin also hailed the countries' role in ensuring peace in Syria, where both Russia and Iran have shored up Assad. The joint statement said that cooperation between Tehran, Moscow and Ankara to bring the Syrian regime and armed rebels to the negotiating table was "an important step on the road to the success of the Geneva negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations". Rouhani said that Moscow and Tehran had "begun effective cooperation" in countering "terrorists" in Syria, in a speech at Moscow State University where he was granted an honorary doctorate.

Although the two sides reiterated the

importance of cooperation on Syria, Rouhani's visit came as splits emerge between the countries over the role to be played by Turkey, which is backing opponents of the regime. Moscow has formed an unlikely alliance with Ankara since 2016, envisioning Turkey as part of a solution to the Syrian conflict. But Iran has been more wary about Turkey's involvement in efforts to end hostilities, with tensions mounting after Moscow and Ankara left Tehran out of a truce they brokered in December.

Moscow and Tehran helped Assad's forces gain ground in recent months, including in the Syrian army's major offensive last year to retake rebel-held eastern Aleppo. Russia's entry into the conflict in Sept 2015 - when it began launching air strikes to shore up Assad's forces - helped turn the tide for the Syrian regime, while Iran has provided military advisers and frontline militia fighters. More than 310,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict broke out in March 2011 with protests against Assad's rule. — AFP



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin meets his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani at the Kremlin yesterday. — AFP



Since 1994, Kuwait Times has organized 14 photography competitions to encourage the creativity and passion of the growing community of photographers in Kuwait and to foster a dialogue about the positive aspects of life in Kuwait. We believe in the benefit of a healthy and active lifestyle and recognize and appreciate all points of view, experiences and lifestyles that make up Kuwait.

Kuwait Times also believes in the power of using images to tell stories and the importance of recognizing and hearing the stories of all communities in Kuwait. The Kuwait Times photography contest is open to professionals and amateurs. It aims to encourage photography in Kuwait as a positive communication between the country's various communities.

Our goal is to foster a growing, global community of photographers, creating images that stand apart through their creativity, ability to move people and capacity for communication. The Kuwait Times contest is a forum that brings together people with a passion for photography and an active commitment to bettering their art.

The slogan of Kuwait Times Photography Competition 2017 is "Kuwait Scenery & Nature". The competition is open to citizens and residents. The contest begins on March 12, 2017 and extends till April 20, 2017.

WHAT TO ENTER

For the Kuwait Times Shoot and Win (Kuwait Scenery & Nature) contest, we want to see through your eyes. We like to know what does nature mean to you. Is nature in cities? Is it in the desert or parks in your area? Are there people, animals, birds or the tiniest details in it? How do you live amid nature? Capture these vibrant moments and express what nature means to you! To ensure eligibility for the contest, please submit files of a high resolution.

For photography camera, please submit original files (entries should include metadata if possible) in JPEG or .jpg format on CD or flash memory with hard copy on photo paper (size 300 x 400 mm - 11.81 x 15.75 inches)

For mobile phone or tablet camera, please submit original files in JPEG format on CD or flash memory with hard copy on photo paper (size A4 - 210 x 297 mm or 8.27 x 11.69 inches).

All photographs should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it appears. "High Dynamic Range" images are acceptable. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization or reasonable adjustments to exposure, color and contrast, etc) will be disqualified. Caption information should include: Name of location and detailed caption of subject matter. Previously published material for which non-exclusive rights were granted may be entered as long as you still maintain the right to grant us a license (see "Your Rights" below). If you choose to include people in your submission, you are responsible for obtaining the necessary permissions from the individuals depicted, and must be able to provide copies of these permissions to Kuwait Times upon request.

The following submissions are ineligible:

- Photographs of pets or domestic animals.
- Images of captive animals photographed in zoos and commercial game farms.
- Photos that violate or infringe upon another person's rights, including but not limited to copyright.
- Photos that contain obscene, violent or other objectionable or inappropriate content.
- Images that involve the willful harassment of wildlife, or damage to the environment by the photographer.
- Images that involve putting any individual or animal in danger.
- Digital images that are sent via mail or email will not be accepted.
- The Panel will evaluate all valid entries and pick the following winners in the following categories: Overall For photography camera and mobile phone or tablet camera (6 winners - 1 first prize, 1 runner-up, 1 second runner-up, 1 third runner-up, 1 fourth runner-up, 1 fifth runner-up and 1 sixth runner-up).
- The winners will be notified of their status within 10 days and will appear on Kuwait Times pages after the award ceremony.
- Questions and inquiries about contest rules can be emailed to photocontest@kuwaittimes.net
- You will retain all rights to any photograph you submit - including ownership if applicable.

Kuwait Times has all rights to use the photograph in internal and external communications materials including but not limited to websites and web publications, fact sheets, fundraising publications, advertising, multimedia, presentation and membership services, annual report and Kuwait Times magazines, or to other individuals and organizations for Kuwait Times' use in news stories, newsletters, reports, slide shows, displays, webpages, videos, membership premiums and the like.

Retain a digital copy of your photograph that will be archived in the conservancy photo library and accessible to Kuwait Times staff via the Kuwait Times internal or online photo archive.

Kuwait Times will endeavor to credit all photographs with the caption (person's name) when the full name is available.

Participation Form

If you are interested in participating fill in the form and send it to Kuwait Times.

• Name: _____

• Tel: _____ • Civil ID: _____

• e-mail: _____

• DSLR Camera • Mobile phone or tablet camera

• Caption information: _____

2017 KUWAIT SCENERY & NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

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KUWAIT'S LEADERSHIP KEEN ON ARAB SOLIDARITY, COOPERATION: AMBASSADOR

JORDAN HOSTS SUMMIT AMID UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES

DEAD SEA, Jordan: His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is keen on bolstering Arab solidarity and cooperation during his participation in the 28th Arab Summit due in Jordan today, a Kuwaiti diplomat said yesterday.

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Dr Hamad Al-Duaij said that the Arab region was going through an exceptional period, which required a strong and unified stance against challenges facing Arab countries.

Kuwait has always been on the front-line of supporting inter-Arab cooperation and dialogue, said the Ambassador who affirmed that the upcoming summit represented a true chance for Arabs to unite for the betterment and progress of their people. Ambassador Duaij lauded the Jordanian monarchy for its strong preparation for the grand Arab event, affirming that the summit will hopefully bring upon resolutions to resolve a number of vital Arab issues.

Jordan hosts the 28th Regular Arab Summit that kicks amid unparalleled conditions and challenges on the Arab scene, topped with developments in Syria and Yemen, and the Palestinian Cause. This is the fourth Arab summit that the Kingdom hosts. In 1987 it hosted an extraordinary summit, besides two regular ones, 1980 and 2001. Previously, the Arab League held 40 Arab summits since the organization was established on March 22, 1945, 27 regular and 13 extraordinary ones. Also, three economic summits were held.

The 28th regular summit is being held in Jordan after Yemen apologized for not being able to host the annual major meeting. According to the Arab League charter, the host country for the annual Arab Summit is decided by alphabetic order of member states. The following is a chronology of the previous Arab summits and the major outcome.

Palestine and Arab-Israeli Wars

The Anshas Extraordinary Summit in Alexandria, Egypt, was held on May 28 and 29, 1946 in support of Palestine. Participants in the summit prioritized the Palestinian Cause, and warned of a Zionist threat. They vowed to defend Palestine against any aggression.

A decade later, November 1956, the Beirut Extraordinary Summit was convened in the aftermath of the Tripartite Aggression, the British-French-Israeli attack on Egypt. The Arab leaders then emphasized Egypt's sovereignty over the Suez Canal according to the October 13, 1956 UN Security Council resolution 1888. They also hailed the Algerian people's struggle to attain independence.

The first Regular Arab Summit was held in Cairo in January, 1964, and called for dissolving disagreements among the Arab states, establishing a joint military command for Arab armies, and considering Israel a danger that threatens the Arab nation.

Then the second Regular summit was held in Egypt's Mediterranean city of Alexandria, September 5-11, 1964. It called for boosting Arab solidarity for the liberation of Palestine, enhancing the Arab cooperation in fields of nuclear research for peaceful purposes. The leaders also welcomed the formation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The third Regular summit was held in Casablanca, Morocco, September 13 to 17, 1965. It called for supporting the Palestinian cause in all international forums. The leaders also called for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and dissolving international conflicts peacefully. The summit witnessed the signing of the Arab Solidarity Charter.

The fourth Regular Arab Summit took place in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, August 29, 1967 following the Israeli 1967 War. The Arab leaders then announced the three Nos; no peace with Israel, no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel.

On December 23, 1969, the fifth Regular Arab Summit was held in Rabat, but was adjourned without making any resolutions. The third Extraordinary Arab Summit was held in Cairo on September 27, 1970, and called for immediate Palestinian-Jordanian clashes.

The sixth Regular Arab Summit was held from November 26 to 28, 1973 in Algeria and demanded the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories including Jerusalem. It also called for giving the Palestinian people their legal rights. The summit welcomed Mauritania's joining the Arab League.

The seventh Regular Arab Summit, held in Rabat, Morocco, October 26-29, 1974, stressed the importance of liberating all Arab territories seized in the June 1967 attack, rejecting all that might affect Arab sovereignty over Jerusalem. The summit acknowledged the PLO as the only legal representative of the Palestinian people.

Rebuilding Lebanon

Saudi Arabia called for a mini extraordinary Arab summit in support of Lebanon. The summit that was held in Riyadh on October 16-18, 1976, rejected the division of Lebanon and called for reconstruction in the country. It also urged further support to Arab solidarity.

The eighth Regular Arab Summit convened in Cairo on October 25-26, 1976. It approved the resolutions made by the Riyadh summit and urged the Arab states to contribute to the reconstruction of Lebanon.

The ninth summit, held in Baghdad, Iraq, on November 2-5, 1978, reiterated support to the PLO and rejected the Israeli-Egyptian Camp David agreement, saying it opposed the resolutions made by the Arab summits. The Arab leaders agreed to boycott Egypt and to temporarily freeze its membership in Arab League. They also decided to transfer the Arab League's headquarters from Egypt to Tunisia.

The tenth Regular Arab Summit was held in Tunis, November 20-22, 1979. Condemned the US policy supporting the Israeli aggression on the Palestinians. The 11th Regular Arab Summit, held in the Jordanian capital of Amman, November 25-27, 1980, discussed the UN Security Council Resolution 242. It called for settling the Arab-Arab disagreements, and a ceasefire between Iraq and Iran.

The Moroccan city of Fes hosted the 12th Regular Summit, held on two phases, the first on November 25, 1981 while the second was on September 6-9, 1982. The summit approved Saudi then King Fahad's project for peace in the Middle East, which offered an Arab project for peace. The Arab leaders taking part in the Summit denounced the Israeli

and reduce dependency on Israel in this respect. With the start of the new millennium, the 13th Regular Arab Summit was held in Amman in March 27-28, 2001. Summiteers asserted solidarity with the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate rights. The Arab leaders renewed boycotting of states that transform their embassies to Jerusalem.

Peace Initiative

The 14th Regular Arab Summit was held in Beirut, Lebanon, on March 27-28, 2002. A peace initiative proposed by late Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz for the Middle East was adopted and dubbed the 'Arab Peace Initiative.'

The 15th Regular Arab Summit took place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on March 1, 2003. The Arab leaders then asserted their condemnation of using force against Iraq and threatening the security of any Arab state.

On March 22-23, 2004 the 16th Regular Arab Summit was held in Tunisia. The leaders called for lifting the siege on the Palestinian people. They also agreed to reform the Arab League Charter. The 17th Regular Arab Summit was held in the Algeria, March 22-23, 2005. The leaders reiterated



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen off by Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as he prepares to leave to Jordan to attend the 28th Arab Summit. — Amiri Diwan photo

aggression against Lebanon, reaffirming support to the country regarding the implementation of the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, which demanded Israel's withdrawal to the internationally acknowledged borders.

Casablanca, Morocco, hosted the fourth Extraordinary Arab Summit on August 7-9, 1985, which reiterated full commitment to the Arab Solidarity Charter, forming two committees to clear the Arab atmosphere. The summit emphasized a strong will to put a rapid end to the Iraq-Iran war through a peaceful, just, and honorable solution. The fifth Extraordinary Arab Summit was held in Amman on November 8-11, 1987. The Arab leaders then voiced solidarity with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq in the face of Iran's threats and provocations. On June 7-9, 1988, the sixth Extraordinary Summit was held in Algiers, calling for full support to the Palestinian Intifada (Uprising). It also called for organizing the proposed international conference for peace in the region under the UN umbrella, taking international legitimacy and the UN resolution as references. It also condemned the US aggression on Libya.

Casablanca hosted the seventh Extraordinary Arab Summit on May 23-26, 1989, welcoming Egypt's full-membership return to the Arab League. It also discussed the formation of a committee to be tasked with settling the Lebanese crisis. The Iraqi capital of Baghdad hosted the eighth Extraordinary Arab Summit, May 28-30, 1990, which called for backing the Palestinian Intifada and condemned the Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. It also welcomed the unification between North and South Yemen.

Iraqi invasion

In the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, Cairo hosted the ninth Extraordinary Summit, August 9-10, 1990, which condemned the aggression and its consequences. The summit emphasized Kuwait's sovereignty and, at the same time, denounced Iraq's threats to the rest of GCC states. Arab countries responded to demands by Saudi Arabia and decided to send troops to defend the Kingdom and the region.

The Egyptian capital again hosted the tenth Extraordinary Summit, June 21-23, 1996 which in principle, approved setting up an Arab Court of Justice. It entrusted the Arab Economic and Social Council, an affiliate of the Arab League, to take the necessary steps for setting up an Arab free trade zone.

The 11th Extraordinary Summit was held in Cairo October 21-22, 2000. The summiteers established Al-Quds Fund with a capital of \$200 million, and to support the families and dependents of those killed in the Palestinian uprising. Al-Aqsa Fund was also founded with \$800 million for projects to preserve the Arab and Islamic identity of Al-Quds, and to back the Palestinian economy

their commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative, and condemned Israel's continued construction of a separation barrier. They also expressed support to Lebanon's right to practice its political options freely.

In Khartoum, Sudan, where the 18th Regular Summit was held March 28-29, 2006, the major theme on the agenda was the situation in the Palestinian territories. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. The 19th Regular Summit was held in Riyadh in March 2007, reiterated the UAE's absolute sovereignty over its three islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Mousa. It also stressed the Arab solidarity. In March 2008, Damascus hosted the 20th Arab Regular Summit that called for overcoming the Arab-Arab differences, rejected the US sanctions against Syria and called for respecting Iraq's unity and sovereignty.

Qatar's capital of Doha hosted the 21st Regular Summit in March 2009. The Arab leaders rejected the warrant of arrest issued by the International Criminal Court for Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir. They also called for a time framework for Israel to honor its commitments toward the peace process. The 22nd Regular Summit was held in Sirte, Libya, in October 2010, and called for drawing up an Arab action plan to save Jerusalem and preserve Al-Aqsa Mosque in cooperation with the international community.

The 23rd Regular Summit was held in Baghdad, March 2012, and announced the adoption of a comprehensive reform vision in the Arab World. It also endorsed three basic documents of strategic dimensions in water security, stimulating the Arab tourism, and curbing consequences of catastrophes. Doha hosted the 24th Regular Summit, March 2013, which agreed to establish the Arab Court for Human Rights, and a fund for supporting Jerusalem. It also recognized the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, as the only representative of the Syrian people.

Kuwait's summit

Kuwait hosted the 25th Arab Regular Summit in March 2014, when leaders pledged support to the Arab countries that were experiencing political and social transformation. It also urged the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities and find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The 26th Regular Summit was held in Egypt's Sharm El-Sheikh in March 2015. The Arab leaders then agreed to form a joint Arab military force to "face the challenges and preserve the Arab national security."

Mauritania then hosted the 27th Regular Summit, July 2016, which condemned Iran's continuous interference in the affairs of the Arab countries. It also decided that the Arab Economic Summit would be held every four years, to be merged with the ordinary summit. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Engineer Mohammad Al-Aleem, Musaad Al-Dhafeeri, and Dr Bader Al-Nashi. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf also received Shareeda Al-Maousharji. — KUNA



AMIR CONGRATULATES MINISTER ON RECEIVING FRENCH MEDAL

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, congratulating her on receiving an honorary medal bestowed upon her by French President Francois Hollande.

This came following His Highness the Prime Minister's reception of Sabeeh on Monday to congratulate her on receiving the Order of Legion d'Honneur, the highest decoration in France, from the French President.

She noted that she has presented the order of honor to His Highness the Prime Minister in

Paris and top state officials working under Sabeeh. The minister was honored for transparency in selecting senior officials and assessing their performance, in addition to her role in boosting bilateral relations between Kuwait and France.

Speaking on the occasion, ambassador Nakhle reviewed highlights from Sabeeh's career and stressed that she has earned the Kuwaiti leadership's trust for the second time when she was included in the Cabinet's formation last February.

Meanwhile, Sabeeh hailed the Kuwaiti-French relations, pointing out continuous efforts to expand them to new height for the benefit of both countries. She also expressed her pride as a Kuwaiti woman to be granted such a profound accolade. "This honor is an accolade I would like to dedicate to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister, as well as to my mother, my family and each and every Kuwaiti woman and citizens," she said.

Sabeeh also said that bilateral cooperation has no limits between both countries, adding that delegations from both states exchanged visits recently to review Kuwait's development plan and the most important strategic projects that major French private companies could invest in.

Asked about cooperation with the French National School of Administration (ENA), Sabeeh stressed that a memorandum of understanding was signed between ENA and the Civil Services Commission, adding that another memorandum will be signed with the Supreme Council of Planning and Development soon.

Responding to a question about the problem facing Indian laborers who were unpaid for months, Sabeeh stressed that immediate measures were taken against the company in question, adding that the company's financial deposit was liquidated to pay the laborers' two-month overdue wages.

expression of gratitude over His Highness's pride of seeing a Kuwaiti female cabinet member being decorated with such order.

The accolade was presented to Sabeeh, on behalf of president Hollande, by French Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Nakhle during a special ceremony organized by the French Embassy. The ceremony was attended by undersecretaries, assistant undersecretaries



KUWAIT: French Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Nakhle honors minister Hind Al-Sabeeh with the Order of Legion d'Honneur. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent similar cables to Minister Sabeeh. Minister Sabeeh on Monday hailed Kuwaiti-French relations, noting efforts to expand them to new height for the benefit of both countries.



KUWAIT: Social Affairs Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh and Greek Ambassador to Kuwait Andreas Papadakis cut the ceremony's cake. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Greek Ambassador to Kuwait Andreas Papadakis welcomes the Russian Ambassador Alexey Solomatn.



KUWAIT: Greek Ambassador to Kuwait Andreas Papadakis welcomes the Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain.



KUWAIT: Greek Ambassador to Kuwait Andreas Papadakis welcomes the Omani Ambassador Hamid bin Said.

DIRECT FLIGHTS TO GREECE SOON

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh commended the deep-rooted relations that Kuwait shares with Greece. She announced that direct flights from Kuwait to Athens would be launched soon.

"We hope this move would help increase the number

of Kuwaiti travelers to Greece," she said during a reception organized by Greek Ambassador to Kuwait Andreas Papadakis on the occasion of his country's National Day on Sunday. She also hoped that mutual trade and economic relations would give impetus to the Kuwaiti national economy. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder visits the location of military exercise 'Eagles Resolve 2017'. — KUNA

KUWAITI ARMY CHIEF SURVEYS SITE OF MAJOR MILITARY DRILL

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder toured yesterday the location of a monumental military exercise involving the armies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the United States. Khoder was received at the site of the drill entitled, 'Eagles Resolve 2017,' by senior military officials taking part in the ongoing annual event, a statement by the Ministry of Defense noted.

Moreover, Khoder said that he was gratified with the preparations that have been made for the drill that brings together entities from across Kuwait's defense spectrum. He also pointed out that the country's leadership has always been a proponent of such military exercises, adding that he was satisfied

that the drill will meet its objective of boosting defense capabilities. Since its inception in 1999 and with its 14 edition this year, the 'Eagles Resolve' exercise has morphed into a showcase for military adroitness.

Earlier yesterday, Khoder met with Commander of UK Field Army Lieutenant General Patrick Sanders. During the meeting, they discussed ways of promoting and bolstering military cooperation between Kuwait and UK, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense said in a statement. They also exchanged views on several issues of mutual interest, the ministry added. The meeting was attended by Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans Major General Ahmad Al-Omairi.



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY of KUWAIT

FACULTY OPENINGS (2017-2018 AY)

The College of Business and Economics at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) invites applications for faculty positions in the following fields:

ACCOUNTING

(Position Code No. 17-1601- AUKWEB 02):

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(Position Code No. 17-1701- AUKWEB 02):

Rank Assistant Professor or higher, depending upon qualifications and experience. Ph.D. in HRM, Management, or Organizational Behavior is required, preferably from an AACSB accredited business program.

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(Position Code No. 17-1301- AUKWEB 02):

Rank Assistant or Associate Professor. Ph.D. in Marketing is required, preferably from an AACSB accredited business program.

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Rank Assistant or Associate Professor. Ph.D. in International Business, or a closely related field is required, preferably from an AACSB accredited business program.

A strong teaching record and evidence of research accomplishments, including publications in legitimate peer reviewed journals and in line with the College's drive for AACSB Accreditation, are expected. Faculty duties include teaching, research, student advising, and service to the department, college, and university. All-but-dissertation candidates are also encouraged to apply, subject to completion by the time they join AUK. **Priority given to Kuwaiti nationals.**

AUK offers competitive compensation, as well as an attractive and comprehensive benefits package. Contracts are issued for 3 years and are renewable.

Candidates should submit a current CV, writing samples (two), graduate transcript, teaching evaluations, three letters of reference, and a cover letter describing how their teaching and research fits within the mission of the American University of Kuwait and the disciplines of Business and Economics.

Application packages are to be submitted electronically to: faculty@auk.edu.kw (max. 10 MB per e-mail).

In completing your application, please quote the position code number. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

www.auk.edu.kw

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Cars drive on the Istiqlal - Fahaheel Expressway during rush hour in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES HOLDS 2ND MEETING OF WOMEN'S NETWORK



(From left) Asha Baby, Dina Al-Sharekh, and Danielle Dorsainvil speak during the panel.

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, announced its second meeting of the Alghanim Industries Women's Network (AIWN), this network was launched to provide female employees in the company a solid platform to connect with peers, gain exposure, and promote opportunities for upward career mobility.

The second meeting for the Alghanim Industries Women's Network (AIWN) took place on Tuesday, 14 March 2017 at Al-Hamra Grand Cinemas. The meeting was facilitated by Dr Alanoud Al-Sharekh, one of the most accomplished advocates for women's rights in Kuwait and the region. She was recently awarded a knighthood by the French Government (National Order of Merit) for her work promoting women's rights in the region. Dr Sharekh participated in the gender diversity conference with Alghanim Industries last May as a panelist and is currently a Consulting Partner for Ibtakar, a boutique Strategic and Public Relations Consultancy firm.

The lecture entitled 'Aspirational Leadership for Women' covered some of the most motivational female leaders of our time and what really works when it comes to making gender diverse cultures a reality. The related discussion panel afterwards included three female employees at Alghanim Industries: Finance Manager, Asha Baby, Senior Government Relations Manager, Dina Al-Sharekh, and Senior Compliance Specialist, Danielle Dorsainvil. Dr Sharekh explored each panelist's individual experiences, reflections and advice on leadership and success at Alghanim Industries.

Chief Human Resources Officer at Alghanim Industries, George Lambros confirmed Alghanim Industries' commitment towards gender diversity saying: "Alghanim Industries Women's Network (AIWN) is one of the many ways that the company demonstrates its commitment to gender diversity in the workplace. This network provides our female employees with a platform to explore areas of common interest, network with colleagues and voice their feedback on various subject matters which exemplifies the company's vision to attract, develop and retain talented women."

Commenting on the event, Dr Sharekh said, "It was a pleasure to lead the Ibtakar Aspirational Leadership for Women workshop within the amazing kaleidoscope of female professionals at Alghanim Industries. The panel discussion where employees shared their experiences with integrity and passion was a great learning experience for all in the room."

Adding on the subject, Asha Baby from Alghanim Industries said, "It was great to sit with all the female employees in the company and openly discuss the common challenges and

experiences we face as women in the corporate world, this is a good initiative to empower each other and knowing that we are not alone when we deal with such issues".

Alghanim Industries has actively prioritized gender diversity at the company, and worked on multiple fronts to address issues related to recruiting and retaining female talent. The company

introduced improved maternity leave policies, including extending the paid maternity leave up to 90 days. Alghanim Industries also co-organized a gender diversity conference that hosted local and international guest speakers, along with CEO Omar Alghanim who highlighted the company's commitment to female talent during his keynote speech.



Dr Al-Anoud Al-Sharekh



Alghanim Industries female employees at the meeting listening to Dr Al-Anoud Al-Sharekh.

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ISSUES TISSUES - PART 3



By Talal Al-Ghannam

local@kuwaittimes.net

Good morning dear and honorable brothers and sisters, and I wish all of you a blessed week. In this article, I would like to talk about some issues that do not seem hard to address, but the bureaucracy and wasta (connections) that are prevailing in this country transform easy tasks to mountains-like dilemmas. I will start by talking about the Ministry of Higher Education, in which I started work in the early 1990s. Back then, the process of having an academic certificate evaluated took less than a week. But now, I have heard from so many friends that the same transaction takes from one to two months depending on the influence of the 'wasta' that the applicant has. And if there is no 'wasta', the process might even take longer. I appeal to the concerned authorities in these departments to ease the suffering of those people and get their issues taken care of efficiently.

The second issue is the family visit visa which has been banned for a number of nationalities, while it is open for others. This issue is of great significance to expats whose wives and kids are back home, and have no chance to bring them to Kuwait even for a visit or on a dependent visa; whereas this transaction is simple for people of other nationalities who can bring in their families without hardships. Kuwait welcomes people of all nationalities, and therefore these bachelors working here need to be close to their loved ones, especially their wives and kids, so that they can feel the warmth of parenthood and family belonging, instead of being separated from them; which is a matter which can have a bad impact on entire families.

I have heard so many divorce cases in Pakistani families in which the husband works here and is unable to bring his wife and kids over because of the ban imposed on people holding this nationality. Pakistan had a brave stance towards Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion, and in the ongoing Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. Pakistan has always supported Kuwait in all regional and international arenas. Yet, issues of its nationals remain unresolved in Kuwait.

The third issue is the importance of allowing domestic workers to have the right of self-sponsorship rather than having to be sponsored by a third party. In this case, the worker, being male or female, can have the right to switch employers if they believe that they are being treated badly or unjustly. Every one of us would feel the same if we are put in a place where there is no justice or good treatment; in which case we would seek to move to another place where we can feel happier. These low-wage workers are humans as well, and they have feelings. Whether we are good to them or not will be judged by Almighty Allah in the afterlife.

The fourth issue is an appeal to the Interior Ministry to stop the roaming taxi business in Kuwait. I am not being biased against roaming taxi drivers, but I am saying this because these poor drivers are always chased and bothered by many policemen even if they are abiding by the traffic law. They will always find a reason to pull them over; either a slight scratch on the vehicle's exterior, a small window crack, or if the taxi is carrying female passengers. Some policemen tend to find fault with the taxis just so that they can fill up their citation records, so that they can get rewarded with a bonus at the expense of these helpless taxi drivers. If this is the case, then destroy all the taxis and make decent buses that do not produce heavy smoke from their exhausts, do not break down in the middle of the street and most importantly, those which do not race among themselves as clearly seen, especially on Jahra Road.

The fifth and final issue is the need to have road maintenance across Kuwait. Citizens and expatriates have got fed up with this issue for having to fix their cars' windshields and struts thanks to the thousands of manholes and flying gravel; a matter that has prolonged for years without being fixed. In the United States, affected people can sue the state for this, because they are paying road taxes and the government must be committed to clean and fix the roads from this tax money. Whereas here, no one pays tax, thus they should bear with the consequences.

Till the next article insha Allah!

COURT STAFF URGED TO 'BE PATIENT' WITH PUBLIC

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: In a positive gesture highly applauded by the public, the notary department's director at the comprehensive court Hashim Al-Qallaf urged his employees to be patient and helpful while serving the public, even if any of them loses their temper. Qallaf put these instructions on signs pasted on various walls, with instructions such as: 'Dear employees, we deal with some quick-tempered people. Be sure that this might be the result of uncontrollable circumstances only they know about. So, please help and serve them with a smile.' Commenting on the posters, some lawyers said that they usually see posters threatening the public with prison if they threaten employees, and that such notes have angered many people. "This is the first time employees are asked to smile, even when dealing with an angry person," they said.

Demonstration

A group of inspectors at the Public Authority for Manpower demonstrated yesterday in protest against mandating them to use the fingerprint check in and out system. Demonstrators said that the system does not match the nature of their work and expressed willingness to use it in the morning, but stressed that it would be difficult to use it to check out, especially since they work out of their offices inspecting various companies and institutions that are most often distantly located from their offices, which makes it hard to return to office to punch out. Demonstrators slammed the decision made by the deputy director for human resources and financial affairs Kholoud Al-Shehab, as inspectors had been always exempted of the measure. They urged Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh to immediately intervene and resolve the problem.



The Palace of Justice

POLICE INTERVENTION ENDS WORKERS' SIT-IN

THREE OFFICES FOR RESIDENCY MISDEMEANORS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Policemen dealt with a gathering of nearly 80 workers and broke it up peacefully. The workers agreed to end their demonstration after receiving promises that their demands will be considered. The employees complained that their employer failed to pay their health insurance fees.

Police had received a call about a gathering of workers employed by a company contracted with Kuwait Oil Company (KOC). The demonstration was taking place on Abdaly road. Officials from KOC and the contracted company came over to negotiate with the workers; and the negotiation resulted in ending the strike.

Residency misdemeanors

The Criminal Investigations Department (CID), in cooperation with the nationality and passports sector, opened three offices for residency misdemeanors to receive violators' transactions and their Kuwaiti sponsors. The Relations and Security Information

Department said an office for residency misdemeanors opened at the Residency Affairs Directorate in Jahra, a similar office was opened in Ahmadi and a third at the CID building in Salmiya. In other news, the Interior Ministry announced yesterday that its service center in the Ministries Complex in Sharq has been closed temporarily for renovations.

Violators

Residency detectives carried out a campaign that resulted in the arrest of 38 residency law violators of various nationalities. The department received tips about a residence that harbored people holding "article 20" (domestic helper) visas engaged in vice crimes. The house was searched, and the arrestees confessed to the charges. Meanwhile, four violators were arrested at a bogus domestic help office for swindling citizens and expats. They were all reported absconding. In a separate case, an Asian woman was arrested for running a brothel, and four women on tourist visas were also arrested.

KD 6.3 BILLION DEFICIT IN 2016-2017 BUDGET

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The 2016-2017 budget deficit totaled KD 6.3 billion till the beginning of March - a deficit of KD 5 billion plus KD 1.3 billion deducted for the future generations fund, well-informed sources said. Notably, Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh had stated two months ago that total expected revenues in the fiscal year 2017-2018 starting at the beginning of April would be KD 13.3 billion, while total expenditure would be KD 19.9 billion, which means a KD 6.6 billion deficit.

One-window department

Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan issued a decision suspending the acceptance of company foundation applications at the ministry's partnerships department by the end of this month, and instead using the one-window department to file in such applications, where commercial license would be issued within a maximum of five working days.

Sports law

Meanwhile, Acting Director of the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Humoud

Flaiteh said the board of directors will meet on Sunday upon a request from Roudhan. Informed sources said Roudhan will discuss the final version of the new sports draft law set in collaboration between the government and the parliamentary youth and sports committee.

Delayed projects

Auditing bodies recently made repeated recommendations to Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) concerning extra delays in some of its projects and asked the company to coordinate with the State Audit Bureau to handle the reasons leading to the delays in the clean fuel and Al-Zour refinery projects. In a response KNPC submitted to the parliamentary budgets and final statements committee, KNPC stressed that both projects are a top priority during its weekly meetings, and that periodic meetings were held with the contractors to discuss any delays and overcome the problem. The same auditing remarks were made to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), urging it to accelerate the execution of oil projects according to schedules, control their cost and coordinate with auditing bodies and take their advice into consideration.

KGUG CHIEF ADVOCATES GIS

KUWAIT: The use of a Geographical Information System (GIS) has become necessary in order to stay afloat in today's ultra-developed world, honorary Chairman of Kuwait GIS-ESRI User Group (KGUG) Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said yesterday.

In a speech to open Kuwait's ninth GIS User Group Conference, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah said that developed nations are usually foresighted and innovative. On the use of GIS, he said that it is a potent tool that can ensure a more productive life, adding that the Kuwaiti GIS-ESRI User Group have immersed themselves into meticulous studies over the perks that come with the system.

Moreover, he chronicled the group's recent accomplishments, which include the publication of a glossary complete with GIS terminology. Meanwhile, Director of Kuwait's Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Qusai Al-Shatti said that the two-day conference will feature discussions over significant issues related to development. — KUNA

MAJOR ROAD DEALS

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa signed yesterday a pair of contracts dealing with the construction of a rainwater drainage network and road repairs, at a collective cost of KD 9.8 million (\$32.17 million). The first project, worth KD 1 million, entails the overhaul of a rainwater drainage network in Al-Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates, where the system will be closely examined to detect any malfunctions, a statement by the Ministry of Public Works noted. Moreover, the statement carried by Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) yesterday added that the second contract, which costs KD 7.8 million, involves the repair of the sixth ring road, which includes bridges and overpasses. Heavy rain over the weekend had flooded many streets south of the country, drawing state-wide condemnations about state departments' level of readiness to handle cases of emergency.

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KIB SPONSORS THE 5TH IDEAL MOTHER AWARD



KUWAIT: In line with its ongoing support of people with disabilities, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced its sponsorship of the 5th Ideal Mother Award honoring mothers of disabled children. Organized by Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center, under the patronage of the President of the Kuwait Foundation for Disabled Children, Sabeeka Al-Jasser, the Award sought to recognize the efforts hard work and dedication of mothers of children with mental disabilities.

A press conference was recently held to announce the winners of this year's Award, with winners from Kuwait, the GCC and the Arab region. The press conference was attended by the Secretary General and the President of the organizing committee for the Ideal Mother Award, as well as a diverse group of participating parties and sponsors.

Speaking at the press conference, Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at the Bank, said: "KIB's sponsorship of this award for the third consecutive year reflects our belief in the need to recognize the pivotal role parents play in the lives of children with disabilities. This is especially true of mothers, who not only nurture their children but also push them to overcome their disabilities, helping them channel these very disabilities into positive action for the benefit of themselves and their community." He added that this sponsorship came as part of KIB's strategy to support people with disabilities, as the Bank is keen on supporting and sponsoring all initiatives that target this segment. Within this context, Najia pointed out that KIB recently redesigned six of its branches in order to accommodate the needs of customers with special needs, including those who are visually impaired and deaf.



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• Canon Camera IXUS 180 BLACK + free Camera Bag.
• One Economy class ticket Kuwait-Dubai-Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

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• **All photographs** should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it appears. "High Dynamic Range" images are acceptable. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization (removal of dust, cropping, reasonable adjustments to exposure, color, contrast, etc.) will be disqualified.
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القلمس

Al-Qabas

WHO DRAWS THE ARAB FUTURE?

By Abdelmohsen Jamal

Foreign interference in most Arab countries is at its highest point since the so called 'Arab Spring' started. The fuel of Arab-Arab wars is the Arab youth and money, and its back bone is foreign arms. What decides when such wars start and end, and the way they go, are foreign statements that say so many strange things. Arabs fight in their countries and on their land, yet they meet in Western countries to find solutions for their fights through foreign resolutions that start from the United Nations and end with the superpowers which had divided the Arab countries among themselves.

Daesh was found by the West, according to US President Donald Trump who made that acknowledgment during his election campaign that took him to the presidency. Today, Daesh has become the gate through which Western countries enter Arab states. The French foreign minister tells us that 'liberation' of Syrian cities will happen within days. Meanwhile, the Turks say they will participate in the liberation process, while the Americans say they have sent their experts to draw the liberation plans.

At the same time, the Russian-

American dialogue continues away from the Arab presence. The Arab League disappeared from the beginning, and handed the files of Arab struggles to the United Nations. They did that collectively after being divided between superpowers individually. Although we in Kuwait say in popular proverbs that 'nothing scratches your back better than your nail', the Arab reality says otherwise.

If the Arab struggle continues this way, and foreign interferences remain, then Arab rights will be lost between our weakness and the West's greed. What is required is that we the Arabs should meet again under one umbrella, and have discussions with a futuristic view to draw a future that takes into consideration the margin of tolerated differences and the nature of opposing views in order to draw Arab solutions for Arab events. Our countries do not lack wise men, and our elders do not lack solutions, and their solutions do not lack the possibility of implementation. We must trust ourselves and our abilities away from foreign interference; which will increase the tension of crises and will not draw a future except in foreigners' interests. —Translated by Kuwait Times



ZAIN EXTENDS PARTNERSHIP WITH KUWAIT DIVE TEAM

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, extended its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Dive Team, part of the Environmental Voluntary Foundation. The company's support comes in line with its Corporate Sustainability strategy towards the preservation of Kuwait's marine life.

Zain dedicated a brand new boat to the Kuwait Dive Team, which will be utilized to carry out marine preservation projects throughout the upcoming years. The boat is fully equipped with the latest state of the art equipment, and will be used for removing wrecked ships and boats from the bottom of the ocean, removing abandoned fishing nets, installing and maintaining environment-friendly anchors, monitoring coral reefs, cleaning shores, islands, and beaches, documenting marine life, and more.

Zain's support to the Kuwait Dive Team throughout the past 14 years comes under its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the environmental sector. The company's sustainable goals closely focus on preserving the Kuwaiti environment, especially Kuwait's

marine life, and seeks to raise awareness of protecting it within the community.

During October 2016, the Kuwait Dive Team honored Zain in the occasion of completing 800 marine preservation missions using a boat the company dedicated to the team back in 2003. Today, the newly dedicated boat from Zain is much more advanced, and features state of the art equipment that will ensure easy and fast marine preservation missions throughout the upcoming years.

As part of its numerous environmental contributions, Zain recently sponsored the 'Kayak 4 Kuwait' expedition, which aimed at raising awareness about the importance of preserving marine life in the Arabian Gulf. The expedition, considered the first of its kind, featured Kuwaiti travelers Bashar Al Huneidi and Mansoor Al Safran kayaking from Kuwait across the GCC countries and reached Oman throughout 90 days, crossing over 2,000 kilometers. The company also partnered with the Environment Public Authority (EPA) to distribute awareness messages about the new environmental laws aimed at preserving a green and clean environment in the country.

النبا

Al-Anbaa

GOVT INNOCENT FROM FRIDAY RAIN CRISIS

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

The recent catastrophic rainfall that flooded several roads, blocked others and trapped citizens in fear inside their vehicles for hours, is the result of a natural weather disaster the government cannot be blamed for because it happens in various countries worldwide. This is true, and I remember that it was used by governmental sources when previous similar disasters with the same magnitude took place. "Floods even happen in London and hurricanes strike the United States, yet nobody there blames the government for them," the sources said then.

I personally tend to believe and emphasize that no matter how powerful the government is and how much capable of controlling an entire nation's will through controlling the parliament it can be, it still remains incapable of controlling the weather. This is an undeniable fact. We cannot blame the government for what happened last Friday and, according to social media images and videos, we temporarily turned into an afflicted country.

Yes it is not the government's fault. Is that not what you want us to say? Yes, the downpour was larger than rain drainage networks' capacity. Is this not the excuse your officials are expected to use in statements to justify their absolute failure in facing a rain shower that only lasted 45 minutes? Well, I will go along with that.

Yet the real inexcusable problem here is that no state department has the slightest idea about managing a crisis of this caliber. None of the security, medical, electricity emergency departments, Kuwait Municipality or Ministry of Public Works has an emergency or crisis management team. That is why they all improvised on dealing with last Friday's crisis. This is a fact the Friday 45-minute rain exposed. Yes, gentlemen, you did not have any emergency plans or a crisis management team, and that is why the damage was great and could have been greater. People were affected, houses were flooded and traffic was jammed because of a slight unpredicted weather change.

Nonetheless, the government should have emergency plans and all government bodies responsible for it should be held accountable. What does it mean to react after the disaster takes place without even having a plan in the first place? What if the rain lasted longer, say for two, three or six hours? I am sure more serious disasters would have happened and people would have died. I dare the government's official spokesperson to claim that they have even half a plan, which they do not.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

CLEANER CAUGHT IN FIRE

KUWAIT: An Indian cleaner received burns and was hospitalized after the room he was cleaning caught fire. The man, who was working alongside a Syrian colleague, was using combustible chemicals to clean a room when a machine in the room started up, sparking and causing the whole place to catch fire.

Obscene gesture

A citizen reported to Maidan Hawally police that he witnessed an unknown person make an obscene gesture in public. He provided the license plate number of the car the person was driving.

Suspected drug abuse

Jahra police arrested a bedoon in an abnormal condition, as a police patrol noticed he was driving erratically. Police found pills and herbs on him suspected of being drugs.

Reckless driving

A citizen in his twenties was arrested for his reckless driving. He was charged with tinting his car's windows above the allowed limit, endangering other people's lives and not complying with traffic laws. His car was impounded as he was detained.

Beatings

A security student told police he was beaten by a colleague in Bayan area. Meanwhile, a woman told Qairawan police her retired husband beat her at their house. And in another violent incident, a female student filed a police complaint against her maternal uncle, accusing him of beating her and tearing her clothing. She submitted a medical report to back up her claims. In the meantime, an Indian man who lives in Manqaf was beaten in Jahra by five men in dishdashas, using sticks and sharp objects, and he lost consciousness in the process. A passerby took the Indian to Jahra hospital where he was revived and treated. Detectives are investigating. — Translated from the Arabic press



Violent protest in Paris; Chinese man shot dead

'INCITEMENT' OR HISTORY? ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DEBATE RAGES

'MONSTER' CYCLONE BATTERS NORTHEAST AUSTRALIA

AYR: A "monster" cyclone smashed into northeast Australia yesterday, cutting power, damaging buildings and uprooting trees, with coastal residents battling lashing rain and howling winds. Great Barrier Reef islands popular with foreign tourists were battered by the category four storm which slammed into the coast of Queensland state with destructive wind gusts of up to 270 kph near its broad core. There were fears its arrival would coincide with early morning high tides and cause severe flooding, but it slowed before making landfall between the towns of Bowen and Airlie Beach in the early afternoon.

By late evening it had been downgraded to category two and was expected to weaken further. At least one person was seriously injured, but the extent of damage was not expected to be known until daybreak with conditions too dangerous for emergency crews to venture outside despite hundreds of calls for help.

"At first light tomorrow, we'll be sending people in to do a rapid assessment of the damage," said Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, with flash flooding and still powerful winds making it hard to do this at night. "Everyone is going to be in shock tomorrow, just to see the full impact of this cyclone. I'm bracing myself for it."

The federal government said it was on standby to help with the clean-up, with soldiers, helicopters and planes ready to mobilize. The effects of the storm were felt across a huge swathe of coast that would span the distance between London and Berlin, although not all areas were badly hit. "It felt like we were underneath a freight train for most of the night, strong bass rumbles as the... wind rattled past and made the buildings shake," Cameron Berkman, who is holidaying on Hayman Island, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Queensland politician Mark Ryan said it was also chaotic at Airlie Beach, the mainland holiday gateway to the Whitsunday islands.

"Trees down in Airlie Beach and reports of windows shattering and some roofs starting to cave in," he tweeted. Queensland Police Commissioner Ian Stewart said there was "certainly structural damage", and at least one person had been badly hurt by a collapsing wall. "I think the public and the community of Queensland need to understand that we are going to get lots of reports of damage and sadly I think we will also receive more reports of injuries, if not deaths," he said. The Bureau of Meteorology, which forecast up to 50 centimeters of rain, urged people to stay calm but not be complacent.

Homes without power

Palaszczuk, who called the storm a "monster", said at least 45,000 homes were without power with communications down in many areas and hundreds of schools and childcare centers closed. People sandbagged and boarded



AYR: Palm trees blow in the wind in the town of Ayr in far north Queensland as Cyclone Debbie approaches yesterday. Lashing rain and howling winds battered northeast Australia as towns went into lockdown ahead of a 'monster' cyclone making landfall, with thousands evacuated amid fears of damage and tidal surges. — AFP

up homes after warnings to prepare for the worst weather to pummel the state since Cyclone Yasi in 2011, which ripped houses from their foundations and devastated crops. Yasi, which struck less populated areas, caused damage estimated at Aus\$1.4 billion. Debbie has officially been declared a catastrophe by the Insurance Council of Australia, allowing them to prioritize claims from the disaster. Some 3,500 people were evacuated between the towns of Home Hill and Proserpine, around 100 kilometers south of Townsville, a tourist hotspot and access point to the Great Barrier Reef.

Another 2,000 people in Bowen also moved, officials said, with many camped in cyclone shelters. Up to 25,000 more in low-lying parts of Mackay headed to higher ground. In the small town of Ayr, the main shopping street was deserted with buildings boarded up. Farmer Anthony Quirk's main concern was for his 150 hectares of mung beans. "If it comes through here it will be over. It will lay flat on the ground, we won't be harvesting, we will have no crops left," he said. "It means we start from scratch again. All the money down the drain. That is not good." — AFP

GERMAN ACCUSES TURKEY OF 'INTOLERABLE' SPYING

BERLIN: Germany will not tolerate foreign espionage on its territory, the interior minister said yesterday, in a robust response to media reports that Turkish secret services were spying on supporters of the Gulen movement in Germany. Fethullah Gulen, a US-based Muslim cleric with a large following in Turkey, is accused by Ankara of orchestrating a failed military coup last July. Ankara has purged state institutions, schools and universities and the media of tens of thousands of suspected supporters of the cleric.

The media reports of Turkish espionage in Germany have deepened a rift between the NATO allies in the run-up to a referendum next month in Turkey that proposes to significantly expand the powers of President Tayyip Erdogan. The Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper and two broadcasters reported that Turkey's National Intelligence Agency had given Germany's foreign intelligence service a list of names of hundreds of supposed Gulen supporters living in Germany.

Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere, speaking in Passau in southern Germany, said he was not surprised by the report and added that the lists would be looked at individually. "We have told Turkey several times that such (activity) is not acceptable," he said. "Regardless of what you think of the Gulen movement, German law applies here and citizens who live here won't be spied on by foreign states," he said. The reports said the list included the names of more than 300 people and more than 200 associations, schools and other institutions and a German investigation indicated some of the photos may have been taken secretly.

Warning

The northern state of Lower Saxony even said it was warning suspected Gulen movement supporters about possible reprisals if they travelled to their homeland. "I think that is a justified and necessary measure to be able to warn people," said state interior minister Boris Pistorius. "The intensity and ruthlessness being (used) on people living on foreign soil is remarkable." Concerns about Turkish spying are not confined to Germany. Swedish public service radio broadcaster SR reported that Turkey's ruling AK Party was putting pressure, via the Union of European Turkish Democrats, on Swedish Gulen supporters to supply information about fellow Gulen supporters in the country.

Germany is already investigating possible spying by Turkish imams in Germany. A spokesman for the chief federal prosecutor's office said that probe continued. German politicians, including Chancellor Angela Merkel, are angry about Erdogan's repeated comparisons of their country to Nazi Germany in response to cancellations of planned campaign events targeting the Turkish diaspora in Germany. Germany says the cancellations were prompted by security concerns.

The speaker of the Bundestag lower house of parliament said in a speech late on Monday that Turkey was turning into an authoritarian system and that its president was effectively staging a coup against his own country. Norbert Lammert, a member of Merkel's conservatives, said the referendum was about "transforming an undoubtedly fragile but democratic system into an authoritarian system - and this second coup attempt may well be successful". — Reuters

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'INCITEMENT' OR HISTORY? ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DEBATE RAGES

RAMALLAH: At Amin Al-Husseini secondary school in the occupied West Bank, with an Israeli settlement visible in the distance, singing the Palestinian national anthem is a daily ritual of student life. For the Palestinians, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, former grand mufti of Jerusalem, is the hero of a 1936 revolt against the British mandate over Palestine. To Israelis, he was an ally of the Nazis and naming a school after him is an example of incitement to hatred of Israel and Jews.

Few topics are more indicative of the starkly different viewpoints of Israelis and Palestinians than the debate over incitement in schools. While Israel says it is a main cause of violence, Palestinian officials call such accusations baseless propaganda that seeks to deny them their right to teach children their history. Last month, at his first White House meeting with President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said incitement was a key factor in the long-running conflict with the Palestinians.

"They continue to call for Israel's destruction inside their schools, inside their mosques, inside the textbooks. You have to read it to believe it," he said. "I think the Palestinians have to get rid of some of that hate that they're taught

from a very young age," Trump said, responding to a reporter's question about concessions each side needs to make. "It starts in the school room," he added. Israeli public security minister Gilad Erdan said that the 1.19 million Palestinian students learn "from kindergarten to university" that Israel has no right to exist.

Israel does not appear on the maps in their schoolbooks or on the walls of their schools, which are named after "terrorists", according to Erdan. Tharwat Zeid, curriculum chief at the Palestinian education ministry, flatly denies the Israeli accusations. "Our books are not for inciting hatred but for teaching," he said. "Historical Palestine"-the Palestinian territories and Israel-is taught to children "because it is our history and it was our land," he explains. Israel came into existence as a state in 1948 and the war surrounding its creation resulted in hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees.

'Odes to the Israelis'

Since the end of the 1980s, the Palestinian leadership based in the West Bank-unlike Hamas, which runs the Gaza Strip-has recognized the Jewish state's existence. School programs are inspected by the international donors who

finance the Palestinian Authority and therefore public education. UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has said in a report that nothing in the Palestinian study programs under its oversight supports charges of inciting hatred against Israel or anti-Semitism. However, Israel alleges that Palestinians are encouraged to hate Jews, citing examples such as what it calls the glorification as "martyrs" of people who carry out attacks. Israelis point to schools named for those responsible for attacks, while many Palestinians see such figures as heroes of their struggle against the occupation.

The Palestinians say it is the Israeli curriculum that teaches hatred and ask whether teaching their own history should be off-limits. "Should we write odes to the Israelis and the occupation? Should we teach the history of Israel?" asked Al-Husseini teacher Ziad Khadash. The debate gained resonance when a new wave of violence broke out in October 2015 that has killed 256 Palestinians, 40 Israelis, two Americans, one Jordanian, an Eritrean and a Sudanese national, according to an AFP count. Most of the Palestinians who lost their lives were carrying out knife, gun or car-ramming attacks, according to Israeli authorities. Many were young people acting on their own.



RAMALLAH: Palestinian students are seen inside a classroom of the Amine Al-Husseini secondary school in the Israeli occupied West Bank town of Al-Bireh. — AFP

'The other as the enemy'

Israel blames Palestinian education, social media and children's TV programs, whether broadcast by the Islamist Hamas movement or the Palestinian Authority dominated by president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party. Zeid says it is more likely that it is the overall situation created by the occupation that fuels hatred rather than schools.

The Gaza Strip, ruled by Hamas, which calls for Israel's destruction, has been under an Israeli blockade for 10 years.

The West Bank has been occupied for 50 years, is criss-crossed by Israeli checkpoints, largely blocked off on its western edge by Israel's security wall.

It is also dotted with Israeli settlements around which clashes are frequent. Some students are forced to make wide detours to reach their schools due to settlements in the area. In the Gaza Strip, ravaged by three wars since 2008, the last conflict in 2014 destroyed 24 schools and damaged 190 others. —AFP

CIVILIAN DEATHS FORCE MOSUL BATTLE RETHINK

POLICE SNIPERS CLOSE TO SYMBOLIC MOSQUE

MOSUL: Perched in bombed-out apartments overlooking west Mosul, Iraqi police snipers have in the last few days advanced to within a few hundred meters of the mosque where Islamic State leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi declared his caliphate nearly three years ago. Through holes knocked in walls, troops have a clear view of the Al-Nuri mosque's crooked, brown minaret and Islamic State's black flag on its white tip—a hugely symbolic target in the battle to recapture Mosul now in its sixth month.

through tight, densely populated streets, where fleeing residents say they are used by militants as cover. "We know that once the mosque falls this is the end of the Caliphate," said Staff Sgt Hassan, a Federal police sniper watching the maze of houses below. "But first we're trying to protect families coming out."

Recapturing Mosul will deliver a major blow to Islamic State as preparations increase to retake its main base in Raqqa, Syria. Iraqi Special Forces, federal police, Kurdish forces and Shiite

the Old City. "I saw one Russian, by his accent, he spoke only some Arabic."

Even in retreat, militants are still dangerous. Two suicide bombers in an armored bulldozer ploughed through military barricades two weeks ago, detonating the huge explosive-laden vehicle to destroy Humvees and Abrams tanks at one post. But the US-led coalition say it has degraded Islamic State weaponry, jamming small drones they use to drop munitions, cratering roads where commanders suspect suicide bombers will speed into army positions, and targeting mortar crews.

Ancient alleys

In recent battles around the Old City, troops describe tough, street-by-street fighting in wrecked buildings, where narrow alleys are often cleared by grenades. Streets are blocked by earth barricades manned by tank crews and troops with shoulder-fired rockets to stop suicide attackers. Next comes Mosul's Old City, whose origins date back to the Assyrian empire and whose alleys, streets and ancient fortress walls reflect Roman, Ottoman and Persian conquests. Even people born there say they sometimes get lost. "We sometimes don't see the enemy face to face," said Abu Taib, a federal police officer draped in ammunition. "In the smaller alleys, we don't even go in, it's too dangerous. Sometimes we surprise them, sometimes they surprise us."

That kind of terrain, and the risk of more civilian casualties prompted a rethink of tactics as Iraqi forces push to finish the Mosul campaign. US Army Brigadier General John Richardson, a commander from the US-led coalition, said Iraqi forces were considering isolating the Old City rather than fighting through it while opening up a second front to split militant ranks and clear the rest of Mosul. "They know the old city is the centre of gravity and they know they are going to have to eventually go in clear it. The mosque is symbolic," he said. "They have run into some tougher resistance, but it's the terrain rather than the enemy."

Federal police and Iraqi army sources also say initial plans are for the military to seal off the Old City and to evacuate civilians to allow US-trained CTS Special Forces to take a larger role in carrying out incursions inside. Bringing the 9th Army division in from the north would also force Islamic State to fight on two fronts and draw fighters away from the Old City, where commanders fear civilian casualties may undermine security and fan the sectarian tensions that helped Islamic State thrive. — Reuters



MOSUL: A man sits next to the body of Khadeer Hassan, who was killed during fighting between Iraqi security forces and Islamic State on the western side of Mosul. — AP

Al-Nuri maybe tantalizing close, but risky close-quarters fighting in the narrow alleys of Mosul's Old City near the mosque and reports of huge casualties after an air strike are forcing Iraqi and coalition commanders to change tactics. Eyewitness from Western Mosul's Al-Jadida district and Iraqi officials this week said a coalition air strike a week ago on IS targets may have collapsed homes where rescue officials say as many as 200 people were buried in the rubble.

Conflicting accounts are emerging. But if confirmed, it would be one of the worst massacres since the 2003 US invasion as Iraq's Shiite-led government tries to avoid alienating Mosul's mostly Sunni population. Already the battle around the Old City had slowed, forcing Iraqi forces and coalition allies to rethink how to push

militias surround militants in Mosul, cutting off routes to Syria. Backed by US-led coalition air strikes and advisors, counter terrorism troops (CTS) captured eastern Mosul by January. Since then, CTS, federal police and rapid response brigades have pushed through about half of the west.

In Islamic State-held areas, residents describe well-prepared militants who stayed behind. Some are foreign, some Iraqi. They force residents to leave their homes, breaking down walls to make tunnels. They make families retreat with them or herd them into buildings from which fighters fire on troops. "They drive around on motorbikes looking for high positions on buildings, and they have tunnels between the homes," said Walid, a resident who fled from near

IS LAUNCHES COUNTERATTACKS

TABQA DAM: Clashes raged around a key northern Syrian town yesterday after the Islamic State group launched a counter-attack to fend off a US-backed advance near the jihadists' stronghold Raqa. Backed by air power from an international coalition bombing IS, the Syrian Democratic Forces are laying the groundwork for an assault on the heart of the jihadists' so-called "caliphate". A key part of the campaign is the battle for the IS-held town of Tabqa on the Euphrates River, as well as the adjacent dam and military airport.

The SDF seized the Tabqa airbase late Sunday and began pushing north towards the town itself, but IS fighters doubled down on their defenses yesterday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. "The fighting is a result of IS launching a counter-offensive to exhaust the Syrian Democratic Forces around the Tabqa military airport," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. He said the SDF was working to "consolidate its positions" near the airport ahead of a final push for the town. SDF fighters are also bearing down on the Tabqa dam after capturing its northern entrance on Friday from IS fighters.

The fight around the structure has been backed by forces from the US-led coalition, with American-made armored vehicles bearing the markings of the US Marine Corps seen moving along a nearby road. An AFP correspondent at the dam yesterday said it was generally quiet around the dam itself, despite the occasional IS-fired mortar that landed in SDF-controlled parts of

the riverbank. Airplanes could be heard humming above as SDF forces patrolled the northern entrance of the structure.

'Acceptable' water levels

Yesterday, coalition forces could be seen standing near military vehicles less than two kilometers (one mile) from the dam, their mortar rounds casually stacked nearby.



This still image taken from drone footage posted online shows smoke rising near the Tabqa Dam, in Raqa, Syria. US-backed forces in northern Syria paused military operations near a major dam held by the Islamic State group in order to allow engineers to fix any problems after conflicting reports about its stability. — AP

After a brief pause in fighting on Monday to allow technicians to enter the dam complex, SDF fighters resumed their operations around the structure, said spokeswoman Jihan Sheikh Ahmed. "IS amassed its fighters and attacked our forces in the area, which forced us to respond and resume the operations to liberate the dam," she said.

Earlier this year, the United Nations raised concern about the prospect of damage to the dam in fighting, warning that water levels—which put pressure on the structure—were already high. IS has also 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". Yesterday, technicians accompanied by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent could be seen examining the dam to assess whether water levels had risen in recent days.

"The explosions and the clashes are threatening the dam, and we ask for all sides to distance themselves from it," said Ismail Jassem, an engineer from the SDF-controlled Tishreen Dam in neighboring Aleppo province. — AFP



This file photo shows Former South African President Nelson Mandela (center) and former political prisoner Ahmed Kathrada (right) holding the Olympic Flame at the entrance to the former maximum security prison on Robben Island, Cape Town. Celebrated South African anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Kathrada, a Robben Island prisoner and one of Nelson Mandela's closest colleagues in the struggle against white rule, died yesterday aged 87. — AFP

TRIBUTES FLOOD IN FOR S AFRICAN ANTI-APARTHEID ICON KATHRADA

JOHANNESBURG: Celebrated South African anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Kathrada, a Robben Island prisoner and one of Nelson Mandela's closest colleagues in the struggle against white rule, died yesterday aged 87. Kathrada was among those tried and jailed alongside Mandela in the Rivonia trial in 1964, which drew worldwide attention to the brutalities of the apartheid regime. He died in hospital in Johannesburg after a short illness following brain surgery, his charity foundation said.

Kathrada spent 26 years and three months in prison, 18 of which were on Robben Island, the notorious jail off the coast of Cape Town. After the end of apartheid, he served from 1994 to 1999 as parliamentary counselor to President Mandela in the first African National Congress (ANC) government. Leading a flood of tributes, retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu described Kathrada as "a man of remarkable gentleness, modesty and steadfastness", hailing him a moral leader of the anti-apartheid movement. "These were people of the highest integrity and moral fibre who, through their humility and humanity, inspired our collective self-worth—and the world's confidence in us," Tutu said in a statement.

Lifelong activist

Kathrada's activism against white-minority apartheid rule started at the age of 17, when he was one of 2,000 "passive resisters" arrested in 1946 for defying laws that discriminated against Indian South Africans. The ANC party was banned in 1960, and two years later Kathrada—often known as 'Kathy'—was placed under house arrest. Soon afterwards, he went under-

ground to continue the struggle as a member of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

In July 1963, the police swooped on Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, outside Johannesburg, where Kathrada and other senior activists were meeting in secret. At the famous Rivonia trial, eight of the accused were sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour on Robben Island. His fellow prisoners included Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Denis Goldberg. "The nation has lost a titan, an outstanding leader and a great patriot," the ANC said. "His life is a lesson in humility, tolerance, resilience and a steadfast commitment to principle." The Nelson Mandela Foundation lauded him as "the embodiment of promise" during the apartheid years, saying Kathrada was "a comrade, associate and close friend of Nelson Mandela's through seven decades."

Key negotiator

Released from prison in 1989, the softly-spoken Kathrada belonged to the golden generation of freedom fighters untainted by later corruption scandals. In jail, he was a teacher for fellow prisoners and a strategic thinker who formed part of the ANC delegation in the negotiations that finally ended apartheid. "He will be remembered as an unassuming freedom fighter, whose wisdom, tolerance, humility, steadfastness and humor earned him the love and respect of our people," said South Africa's Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.

"After the achievement of democracy and the adoption of a new democratic constitution... 'Kathy' was determined to continue to serve the people." — AFP

ISRAELI BAN ON MP VISITS TO FLASHPOINT SITE CHALLENGED

JERUSALEM: An Israeli lawmaker petitioned the Supreme Court yesterday against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ban on visits by MPs and ministers to a flashpoint religious site in Jerusalem, his office said. The petition comes with concerns over whether violence will again flare up for the upcoming Jewish holiday of Passover beginning April 10. The ban was aimed at helping restore calm following a previous surge in violence.

Yehuda Glick, who was once shot over his campaign for Jewish prayer rights at the site, calls the 17-month ban "discriminatory" in the petition. The hilltop site in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem is known to Muslims as the Haram Al-Sharif compound, which includes the Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, and to Jews as the Temple Mount. The holiest site in Judaism and the third-holiest in Islam, it is central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Netanyahu had in October 2015 instructed police to bar ministers and lawmakers from visiting. The order was

part of attempts to restore calm following an outburst of Palestinian violence, fuelled in part by fears among Muslims that Israel was planning to assert further control over the site. Jews are allowed to visit the compound but not pray there, and the site has been the scene of regular incidents when Jews try to break the rule and Muslims intervene to stop them.

'Political' ban

On Monday, Israeli media reported that Netanyahu had decided to reexamine the ban at the end of June, after the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. But Glick went ahead with his petition nonetheless, railing in a video against the "intolerable and strange reality". "This is a place that any person from around the world can enter except (Israeli) lawmakers," he said. Glick noted a "return of calm" at the compound following Israel's 2015 decision to outlaw the Murabitat and Murabitun, funded by the Islamic Movement in Israel and acting as self-appointed sentinels who harassed Jewish visitors. — AFP



US Navy veteran Stephen Matthews sits for a photograph in the bedroom of a relative's home in Warwick, where he and his family lived after being evicted from their home. — AP

US VETERAN HOMELESSNESS; BUDGET COULD HURT EFFORTS

PROVIDENCE: The push to end homelessness among veterans would suffer without the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, which is up for elimination under President Donald Trump's proposed budget, nonprofits and local officials say. The council coordinates the efforts of 19 federal agencies that play a role in preventing and ending homelessness among all Americans. But the strides made with the subset of veterans - for whom homelessness has been effectively ended in three states and dozens of communities amid a concerted effort - make the proposed cuts particularly upsetting to advocates.

Homeless advocates in any given state consult the council, whose annual budget is about \$3.5 million, on which strategies are working elsewhere as they seek to house veterans.

They worry momentum will slow. "We've learned how to end homelessness," said Nonie Brennan, chief executive of the nonprofit All Chicago. "It would be a tremendous shame if we were not able to continue to implement these strategies in our communities across the country."

Ire and confusion

Adding to the ire and confusion, the budget proposal also says the Trump administration will support Department of Veterans Affairs programs for homeless and at-risk veterans and their families, but doesn't elaborate. Trump, who promised on the campaign trail to support veterans, wants to give the VA a 6 percent increase. Still, the federal government needs someone to make sure housing resources are well spent, and to look across agencies for solutions instead of just down at their own, advocates say.

"Without coordination and oversight and giving some thought to how the money should best be spent, the money may not go to the people who need it most," said Hank Hughes, of the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness. The White House's \$1.15 trillion plan, released this month, emphasizes military and other security-related spending and slashes many domestic programs. The proposal is the first step in a lengthy process that requires congressional approval. Proponents of small government praised it. The interagency council, created during the Reagan administration, is one of 19 independent agencies for which Trump proposed eliminating fund-

ing. "The federal government needs to prioritize what it does," said Dan Holler at Heritage Action for America, the advocacy arm of the conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation. It's the community groups and local officials who know best how to help homeless people and other underserved groups in their area, he added.

The White House Office of Management and Budget didn't respond to a question about the rationale for eliminating the council. Navy veteran Stephen Matthews, 55, doesn't want to see a system changed that has helped him and many others. "There are other programs they could cut. We don't need to go to Mars," he said, referring to legislation Trump signed last week adding human exploration of the red planet to NASA's mission. "Don't eliminate these programs that are helping people."

13.2 percent cut

Matthews was homeless last year and now uses a federal rental assistance voucher to help pay for his apartment in Rhode Island. Some advocates fear that in addition to the loss of the council, fewer rental assistance vouchers will be available for the homeless. The budget proposes a 13.2 percent cut to the Housing and Urban Development Department.

The number of homeless veterans nationwide is down 47 percent, or about 35,000 people, since 2010, but there are roughly 40,000 more, HUD said in August. Homelessness among veterans is effectively ended in Virginia, Connecticut and Delaware and in about 40 communities, according to the council, including New Jersey's most populous county.

"We would not have dared to attempt such a bold goal without their leadership," said Julia Orlando, director of the Housing, Health and Human Services Center in Bergen County. The council ensures agencies aren't duplicating spending and efforts, or spending money at cross-purposes, and it serves as a clear way into the federal process for communities tackling the issue, said Jake Maguire, spokesman for the nonprofit Community Solutions, which does similar work to tackle homelessness. He's hopeful the president, a businessman, will learn more about the council and keep it. "I think anyone who has worked in business knows that if you have 19 people working on something," he said, "you need someone coordinating that work." — AP

BRITONS IN GERMANY PUT DOWN THEIR ROOTS TO WEATHER BREXIT

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Former Royal Air Force airman Paul Hughes never imagined saying it, but he admits that he was almost "ashamed of my fellow countrymen" when Britons voted to leave the EU last June. "I was devastated," he said. Since the fateful referendum last summer, 34-year-old Hughes-along with a growing fraction of the roughly 106,000 British citizens in Germany-has taken the unexpected step of applying for German citizenship. "I'd prefer not to have to go through the process and the rigmarole of doing it, but I want to keep the rights and the ability to travel within Europe," he explains.

Over the past three and a half years, the former serviceman has made extensive use of the EU freedom to live and work in any of the bloc's 28 member countries, moving with his German wife first to Amsterdam and then to Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt. But that freedom has come under a cloud in recent weeks, as the British government has refused calls to guarantee the rights of EU citizens to remain in Britain once Brexit goes ahead.

That leaves unresolved the question of a reciprocal guarantee from Brussels for the roughly one million Brits living in other EU countries. Hughes says he realized that in London, "nobody's looking out for us, nobody cares"-prompting his first visit to the immigration office. Authorities in Hamburg, Berlin, Bavarian capital Munich and the federal state of Hesse said growing numbers of Brits are doing the same.

Dual nationality

So long as Britain remains an EU member, those who don't want to give up their allegiance to Queen and country can become dual citizens, adding a German passport emblazoned with the austere federal eagle to the UK's lion-and-unicorn coat of arms. But Germany does not allow dual citizenship for non-EU nationals, except in certain circumstances: such as children with one German and one foreign parent or descendants of those per-

secuted by the Nazis. That window of acquiring a second passport is therefore fast closing as Prime Minister Theresa May is set to trigger two-year exit negotiations this month. "I wouldn't give up my citizenship," says former airman Hughes, thinking of his medals and service history in Iraq. Nevertheless, he says that the Brexit vote has made him less likely to move back in the near future.

When he visits family and friends in Swindon, "we can't talk about Brexit around the table, because it turns into a fight". The subject is touchy enough that Hughes has so far avoided bringing up his plan to become German on visits back to the UK. German citizenship in particular throws up challenging questions for modern-day Brits.

Hamburg-based journalist, author and translator Brian Melican recounts how friends in France and the UK-countries with deep memories of war with Germany-noticed he had begun saying "we" when referring to his adopted homeland. New Germans "take on not guilt but responsibility" for their country's inescapable history, the 32-year-old feels. "It's changed the way I view myself. Living in Germany for nine years and fluent in the language, Melican's intention to apply for citizenship crystallized when then-Prime Minister David Cameron claimed a surprise majority in 2015 elections, after promising voters a referendum on EU membership.

He found himself at a naturalization ceremony by December that year. "I certainly feel less British now" he muses. "It's just a big change, it's on a par with marriage and having children. It's one of the biggest changes of status you can have." A big part of the sense of responsibility the naturalization process hammered home is engaging with politics and civil society. "Now I'm observing elections as somebody who will be taking people at their word. It's made me take more of a stake here," he says. — AFP

US ATTORNEY GENERAL ESCALATES PRESSURE ON 'SANCTUARY' CITIES

SESSIONS THREATENS TO CUT OFF GRANTS

WASHINGTON: Attorney General Jeff Sessions has threatened to cut off US Justice Department grants to cities that fail to assist federal immigration authorities, moving the Trump administration closer to a potential clash with leaders of America's largest urban centers. Sessions' statements were aimed at a dozens of cities and other local governments, including New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, that have joined a growing "sanctuary" movement aimed at shielding illegal immigrants from stepped-up deportation efforts.

Police agencies in those jurisdictions have barred their officers from routinely checking on immigration status when making arrests or traffic stops. And they have refused to lock up individuals longer than otherwise warranted at the request of federal agents seeking to deport them. Trump administration officials says the deportation crackdown is focused on illegal immigrants convicted of serious crimes. They insist public safety is jeopardized when police refuse to notify US Immigration and Customs Enforcement of plans to release such a person from local custody.

"Failure to deport aliens who are convicted of criminal offenses puts whole communities at risk, especially immigrant communities in the very sanctuary jurisdictions that seek to protect the perpetrators," Sessions said at a White House news briefing. His threat to withhold grants as punishment drew swift condemnation from California and New York officials. California Senate leader Kevin de Leon, a Los Angeles Democrat, called Sessions' threat "nothing short of blackmail," accusing of "race-based scapegoating" in its crackdown on immigrants.

Critics also argue that enlisting police cooperation in rounding up immigrants for removal undermines communities' trust in local police, particularly among Latinos. And they question whether the administration is really targeting dangerous criminals. President Donald Trump, who made tougher immigration enforcement a cornerstone of his campaign, directed the government to cut off funding to sanctuary jurisdictions in a Jan 25 executive order. That order has yet to be put into effect, but Sessions' announcement seemed to be the first step in doing so. The Justice Department grants typically are used to help police improve crime-fighting techniques, buy new equipment and assist victims



Attorney General Jeff Sessions

of crime. Sessions may find his ability to sway local decision-making through the Justice Department's purse is limited, because only a fraction of its grant dollars flow directly to city and county governments. Federal records show the Justice Department doled out \$1 billion to state governments and \$430 million to nonprofits, but only \$136 million directly to cities and counties last year. New York state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said his office would continue helping local governments "have the tools they need to protect their immigrant communities."

Local defiance

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, whose city is home to one of the largest US immigrant communities, also denounced Sessions' threat to use funding as a form of coercion. "LA's values are not for sale," Garcetti said. "Slashing funds for first responders, for our port and airport, for counterterrorism, crime-fighting and community-building serves no one." So far no state has adopted policies barring coopera-

tion with immigration authorities, though Maryland's Democratic-controlled House of Delegates approved such legislation last week. The state's Republican governor, Larry Hogan, has said he would veto the bill. California's De Leon is backing a bill that would essentially make all of the most populous US state a sanctuary, but he does not currently have the votes to pass it.

Sessions sought to frame the debate as a public-safety issue, citing the case of a woman shot to death in San Francisco two years ago by illegal immigrant who had already been deported five times and had seven felony convictions. San Francisco may not be affected by the new restrictions, as the city and county received no funding from the department in the most recent fiscal year. However, Sessions' order could impact other jurisdictions. New Orleans, Philadelphia, Chicago and New York City - all singled out as possibly noncompliant by an inspector general's report last year - collectively received \$15 million in Justice Department grants. — Reuters



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BACKLASH OVER BREXIT BATTLE OF THE LEGS HEADLINE

LONDON: Britain's Daily Mail newspaper faced a backlash yesterday for comparing the legs on show when British Prime Minister Theresa May and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon held talks. While the two leaders clashed over Brexit, which May is set to trigger today, and Sturgeon's push for another Scottish independence referendum, the Mail spun it as a battle of the legs and focused on what could be read into their outfits and body language.

"Never mind Brexit, who won Legs-it!", the tabloid's front page said, alongside a picture of the two leaders meeting in a Glasgow hotel on Monday. "It wasn't quite stilettos at dawn, but there was a distinctly frosty atmosphere," it read underneath. Inside, the paper's style editor compared their "boxy navy blazers, skirts that stopped just above the knee, shiny nude tights and pointy shoes—a look replicated by career women of a certain age worldwide."

And in what the tabloid called a "light-hearted verdict on the big showdown", columnist Sarah Vine asserted: "What stands out here are the legs and the vast expanse on show. 'There is no doubt that both women consider their pins to be the finest weapon in their physical arsenal. 'May's famously long extremities are demurely arranged,' she said, while "Sturgeon's shorter but undeniably more shapely shanks are altogether more flirty." Sturgeon's pose was "a direct attempt at seduction... 'Come, succumb to my revolutionary allure,' she seems to be saying. 'You know you want to'."

'Laughable and ridiculous'

The coverage sparked a swift backlash against Britain's second-most popular newspaper, which sells 1.5 million copies daily. Former women and equalities minister Nicky Morgan called it "appalling sexism" that Britain's most senior female politicians were



LONDON: Newspapers are seen displayed for sale in London yesterday. Britain's Daily Mail newspaper has sparked complaints with a front page photograph focusing on the legs of Prime Minister Theresa May and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. — AP

being judged for their legs. Opposition Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn said: "It's 2017. This sexism must be consigned to history. Shame on the Daily Mail." His predecessor Ed Miliband tweeted: "The 1950s called and asked for their headline back #everydaysexism."

In a BBC radio discussion on the Mail's front page, Catherine Mayer, co-founder of the Women's Equality Party, said it was "laughable and ridiculous" to present two government figureheads in such a way. "This isn't treating women as professionals: this is treating two national leaders as unlikely sex symbols," she said. "It's precisely meant to diminish their power." Newspaper columnist Angela Epstein countered that May and Sturgeon knew "exactly what they were doing". "Both have done photo-shoots with Vogue, they both understand that clothes are a tool by which we can communicate who we are," she said. She added: "They've both got fantastic legs." — AFP

News

in brief

US police investigate vandalism at mosque

FORT COLLINS: Police are asking for the public's help in identifying the person who overturned benches, broke windows and threw a Bible into a mosque near Colorado State University, a case they are investigating as a hate crime. Police released two clips of surveillance video that captured the vandalism at the Islamic Center of Fort Collins before dawn Sunday. In one, a man wearing a hoodie, believed to be in his late teens or early 20s, is shown picking up a paving stone and walking away. In another clip, he kicks a door. The center's president, Tawfik Aboellail, said the man tried to break into the mosque about 4 am Sunday, but he did not get inside. The vandalism prompted the center to cancel religious classes for children that morning, but it has also led to an outpouring of support. The Coloradoan reports that congregants from Plymouth Congregational Church visited after their morning service, and later about 1,000 people gathered at the mosque for a rally of support organized by a rabbi Sunday evening.



BRUSSELS: Georgia's Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili (left) is welcomed by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the European Commission in Brussels. — AFP

Georgia celebrates, hails EU visa waiver

TBILISI: Pro-Western former Soviet republic of Georgia yesterday hailed the "historic" first day of visa-free travel to Europe for its citizens as a waiver agreed with the European Union entered into force. The new regulation allows Georgians to travel to the EU for non-work purposes for up to 90 days, over any 180-day period, but does not apply to the United Kingdom or Ireland. "Historic day for Georgia to enjoy visa free travel to the EU! Thanks to our friends! Go Georgia towards European integration!" Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili wrote on Twitter. To celebrate the first visa-free travel day, Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili and his cabinet members, some MPs and a group of students flew from Tbilisi to Athens, and then on to the Belgian capital, Brussels. "Georgia is returning to the European family," Kvirikashvili tweeted. "Today, together with students, we are travelling to the oldest cultural capital of Europe-Athens... MIDDAY, we will travel to the political capital of Europe-Brussels to celebrate this big achievement," he said in separate televised remarks.

Heroin found hidden in dog crate at US airport

NEW YORK: Two men were arrested on drug charges after heroin was found hidden in the false bottom of a dog crate containing a Labrador retriever that had been shipped from Puerto Rico to New York. Samuel Seabrooks, 35, of the Bronx, and Carlos Betancourt-Morales, 27, of Carmel, were arraigned on drug possession and conspiracy charges Sunday, according to the Queens district attorney's office. Prosecutors said Seabrook and Betancourt-Morales met up at a Bronx IHOP restaurant Friday night and traveled in separate vehicles to the American Airlines Priority Parcel Services at Kennedy Airport. The two men had a brief conversation before Betancourt-Morales entered the cargo building and signed for a delivery receipt for the dog crate, prosecutors said. He was stopped by police as he pushed the crate on a rolling cart toward the building's exit. After obtaining a search warrant, authorities recovered 10 plastic wrapped packages containing more than 22 pounds of heroin with a street value of more than \$1 million.

Congo tensed; bishops withdraw from talks

KINSHASA: Isolated unrest broke out in Democratic Republic of Congo's capital yesterday after Catholic bishops withdrew from their role as mediators between the government and opposition in talks aimed at paving the way for delayed elections this year. Demonstrators, some burning tyres at city crossroads, took to the streets in several areas in Kinshasa. In one instance, police fired tear gas to disperse a small group of youths. Many shops remained closed and some schools called parents to collect their children, a Reuters witness said. President Joseph Kabila's mandate ran out in December but polls were not held due to what the government said were budgetary constraints, sparking violent protests at the end of last year in which security forces killed at least 40 people. Congo's conference of Catholic bishops (CENCO) helped negotiate a Dec 31 deal aimed at avoiding a political crisis by ensuring an election this year to elect Kabila's successor.

VIOLENT PROTEST IN PARIS; CHINESE MAN SHOT DEAD

CHINA URGES FRANCE TO PROTECT CHINESE COMMUNITY

PARIS: China yesterday urged France to protect its citizens in Paris after police there killed a Chinese father of four, sparking violent protests in which 35 people were arrested. Paris police said around 150 "members of the Asian community" gathered late Monday outside a police station in the northeast of the capital and clashes broke out. Three officers were slightly injured in the confrontation and one police vehicle was damaged by an incendiary device.

The angry demonstrators were protesting after a police officer shot and killed the Chinese man on Sunday night. A police source said that officers were called to his house after reports of a domestic dispute. The source said the man attacked the officer with a knife "as soon as the door opened", injuring him. A police colleague then opened fire, killing the Chinese man, authorities say. Lawyer Calvin Job said the family of the dead man "totally disputes this version of events." "He didn't injure anyone," Job said, adding that the man had been "trimming fish with a pair of scissors" when the police came to the door.

Beijing complaint

As tempers frayed between Paris and Beijing, the Chinese foreign ministry said it had filed an official complaint to France over the events in the French capital. Beijing calls on Paris to "guarantee the safety and legal rights and interests of Chinese citizens in France and to treat the reaction of Chinese people to this incident in a rational way," ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular press briefing. "Meanwhile, we hope that our citizens... in France can express their wishes and demands in a lawful and reasonable way," the spokeswoman added. The man's family insist that there was no domestic dispute and a neighbor had called the police after hearing shouting. "Police forced open the door of the apartment, pushing him back," Job said. The man did not rush towards the officers, and the police "shot without warning," he said.

A police watchdog was to interview the family yesterday, Job said. Estimates put the size of the Chinese community



PARIS: Demonstrators from the Asian community protest outside Paris' 19th district's police station yesterday. Violent clashes in Paris between baton-wielding police and protesters outraged at the police killing of a Chinese man in his home have seen three police officers injured and 35 protesters arrested. — AP

in Paris at between 200,000 and 300,000. Many of the first-generation Chinese nationals who live in the French capital came here in the 1980s and many work in the textile industry. French police have come under fire for suspected vio-

lence in recent months following the highly publicized case of a black youth worker allegedly sodomised with a police baton. Several demonstrations have been staged since the February 2 incident involving the 22-year-old. — AFP

'CARLOS THE JACKAL' SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR 1974 PARIS BOMBING

PARIS: Self-styled revolutionary 'Carlos the Jackal', already serving two life terms for murder, was given a third life sentence yesterday for a deadly 1974 Paris bombing. Prosecutor Remi Crosdon du Cormier had told the court in Paris on Monday that "all evidence gathered in this investigation points to Carlos" while admitting that investigators had found no DNA, fingerprints or CCTV evidence from the grenade attack on a store in the French capital that left two dead and 34 injured on September 15, 1974.

The flamboyant white-haired defendant, wearing a black shirt and jacket with a trademark kerchief in the breast pocket, blew kisses at supporters at the start of the hearing, taking the stand to denounce the "absurdity of a trial held 43 years after the fact". Lawyers for the 67-year-old Venezuela native, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, had derided the two-week trial as "judicial palaeontology".

Defense lawyer Francis Vuillemin, calling for an acquittal, said a conviction would only feed the cult status of his client, who has been in prison in France since he was arrested by French elite police in the Sudanese capital Khartoum in 1994. "If you convict him, he wins, if you acquit him, he loses," Vuillemin told the three-judge panel. "So acquit Carlos and he will take it out on his lawyers." Carlos was the world's most wanted fugitive in the 1970s and early 1980s, when Europe was repeatedly targeted by groups sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. He boasted at the start of the trial: "No one in the Palestinian resistance has executed more people than I have."

'You don't snitch'

He has claimed personal responsibility for 80 deaths but repeatedly denied responsibility for the Paris attack on the Drugstore Publicis store in the upmarket Left Bank district of Saint-Germain. Carlos argued that he should not be required to testify against himself and said he faced death if he divulged operational information. Yesterday he returned to his "Palestinian resistance" rulebook, saying: "You don't snitch, and you don't cooperate with a court you don't recognize."

Little known at the time of the Drugstore Publicis attack, Carlos rose to international notoriety the following year when his commando group burst into a meeting of the powerful OPEC oil cartel in Vienna, taking 11 people hostage. Three people were killed. Carlos is serving life sentences for the murders of two policemen in Paris in 1975 and of a former comrade who betrayed him.

He was also found guilty of four bombings in Paris and Marseille in 1982 and 1983, some targeting trains, which killed a total of 11 people and injured nearly 150. He was dubbed "Carlos the Jackal" by the press when he

was giving international security services the slip while on the run. The nickname came from a fictional terrorist in the 1971 Frederick Forsyth novel, "The Day of the Jackal", which was turned into a popular film.

Georges Holleaux, a lawyer representing the two widows of the men killed and 16 other people affected by the attacks, said before the trial that his clients relished the chance of seeing Carlos face justice. — AFP



This combination of file pictures shows (left to right) a portrait of Venezuelan self styled revolutionary Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, also known as 'Carlos the Jackal' taken in the early 1970s. — AFP

UN EXPERTS SLAM UAE

GENEVA: UN experts warned yesterday that the United Arab Emirates' arrest of an award-winning rights activist violated international law, and demanded his immediate release. UAE authorities ordered the arrest of Ahmed Mansoor just over a week ago, accusing him of using social media platforms to "sow sedition, sectarianism and hatred," according to the official WAM news agency. The UN working groups on arbitrary detention and on enforced disappearances, along with the UN's top experts on human rights defenders, freedom of expression, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association, disputed that there were any legitimate grounds for the arrest. "We regard Mr Mansoor's arrest and detention as a direct attack on the legitimate work of human rights defenders in the UAE," they said in a statement.

They warned that his arrest on March 20 and detention in an unknown location since then "may constitute an act of reprisal" for his work with UN human rights bodies, for his statements on social media and for being

an active member and supporter of rights organizations like Human Rights Watch. They also cautioned that "the fact that Mr Mansoor is being held in an unknown location puts him at serious risk of ill-treatment and torture." "The lack of an arrest warrant or any judicial oversight of his arrest and detention represents a breach of fundamental principles of due process under international human rights law," they said.

The experts called on the UAE authorities to halt all "harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders" and to respect the right to freedom of expression, including on social media. Mansoor, a 47-year-old father of four, won the 2015 Martin Ennals award, often dubbed the Nobel prize for human rights, for his efforts to introduce greater political and civil rights in the UAE. The award was named after the former secretary general of Amnesty International, and is given to human rights defenders who show deep commitment to their cause despite huge personal risk. — AFP



KASHMIR: A Kashmiri protester throws rocks at Indian security forces during a protest near the site of gun battle in Chadoora town, about 25 kilometers south of Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir yesterday. — AP

FOUR KILLED IN KASHMIR

SRINAGAR: Three civilians and one rebel were killed and at least 28 people were injured yesterday in clashes between protesters and troops and police in Indian-administered Kashmir, police said. The clashes started when soldiers cordoned off a house in a village in central Kashmir's Chadoora area in which at least one armed militant who was killed later in the day was hiding, said Inspector General of Police, Javid Gillani. Hundreds of villagers, in a show of support for the rebels, threw stones at soldiers who had cordoned off the house.

Three people were killed in the ensuing clashes in which government forces fired tear gas and ammunition to disperse the protesting crowds, Gillani said. Another police officer speaking on condition of anonymity said at least 28 people were injured, including eight government forces personnel. One militant was killed in the operation and one weapon was recovered from the scene, said army spokesman

Colonel Rajesh Kalia. Armed encounters between rebels fighting to end Indian rule over Kashmir and government forces have become more frequent since widespread unrest last year, sparked by the killing in July of a popular rebel leader.

That unrest left more than 90 civilians dead and thousands injured. On Sunday two militants were killed when police ambushed their car in the southern Kashmir valley. With elections next month for two seats to the national parliament, security has been stepped up and the government has sent in 20,000 troops. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British rule in 1947. Both claim the Himalayan territory in its entirety.

Rebel groups have for decades fought Indian soldiers deployed in the region, demanding independence or a merger of the territory with Pakistan. The fighting has left tens of thousands, mostly civilians, dead. — AFP

INDIAN POLICE ARREST FIVE OVER ATTACK ON AFRICANS

AFRICANS IN INDIA FREQUENTLY FACE DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE

NEW DELHI: Police arrested five men yesterday after hundreds of angry residents of a north Indian city attacked Africans with sticks and metal chairs following the death of a local teenager from a suspected drug overdose. Around a dozen people were wounded in the violence late Monday in Greater Noida, a satellite city of New Delhi where hundreds of African students are based. "Rumors were being spread that Africans are behind the youth's death and racist comments were made on social media. It looks racially motivated," senior police officer Sujata Singh said.

"Five attackers have been arrested and four others are on the run," she said, adding that 300 people were involved in the rioting. The violence came after police released five African students detained over the youth's death without bring-

ing charges, citing a lack of evidence. Singh said around 500 people had assembled to hold a candle-lit vigil to demand justice for the teenager, and became violent after spotting a group of Nigerians. One television station showed an angry mob hitting a car with sticks, while another showed dozens of attackers hitting shoppers in a mall with metal chairs.

Africans living in India frequently face discrimination and even violence, and are often accused of involvement in the illegal drug trade. The issue was thrown into the spotlight after a Congolese national was stoned to death last year in a dispute over an auto-rickshaw. After that, African ambassadors in New Delhi threatened to advise students from their countries to avoid schools in the capital for their own safety.

India's foreign minister said authorities were investigating the attacks. "There will be a fair and impartial investigation into this unfortunate incident," Sushma Swaraj tweeted.

The latest attack stemmed from the death of a local 16-year-old from an apparent drug overdose. Police detained five Nigerian students in connection with the case after a group of local people went to their home and accused them of murder. The students were later released after police failed to find any evidence against them. African student leader Samuel Jack said Monday's attack was just the latest example of racist violence against them. "We are targeted because of our color," Jack said, adding that many African students were leaving the area out of fear. — AFP

SAUDI SHOOTS DOWN MISSILES

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia intercepted four missiles fired by Yemeni rebels yesterday, a Saudi-led coalition said, in what it described as evidence of arms smuggling through a rebel-held Red Sea port. The coalition has said previously that it destroyed much of the Shiite rebels' missile capability early in its two-year-old bombing campaign and says persistent launches show they are receiving new deliveries from abroad. "Early this morning, four missiles were intercepted," the coalition said.

"The ongoing missile attacks on Saudi cities provide clear evidence of the arms smuggling that continues to take place in Yemen, notably through the port of Hodeida." The coalition said that the missiles targeted Khamis Mushait, which houses the coalition's main airbase for its operations in Yemen, and Abha, another city close to the Yemeni border. It said they were intercepted without casualties or damage. The coalition has previously accused Shiite Iran of smuggling weapons to its coreligionists, a charge Tehran denies.

The coalition has enforced an air and sea blockade of rebel-held areas since the start of its intervention in March 2015. Hodeida is the main port of entry for UN-supervised aid deliveries to rebel areas. The UN World Food Program said on Friday that a third of Yemen's 22 provinces were on the brink of famine. It said it was providing food to around seven million people each month but that was less than half the 17 million who were going hungry. Earlier this month, the coalition called on the United Nations to take full control of Hodeida to facilitate "ending the use of the port for weapons smuggling."

The UN rejected the request, saying the responsibility to protect infrastructure and civil-

ians could not be shifted to other parties. Sunday marked the second anniversary of the launch of the coalition's intervention. Hundreds of thousands poured into the streets of Sanaa in a show of support for the Shiite rebels, who still control the capital as well as most of the north and the Red Sea coast. More than 7,700 people have been killed since the intervention began, most of them civilians, according to World Health Organization figures. — AFP

THE MALDIVES RULING PARTY SACKS LEADER AFTER REVOLT

MALE: The Maldives' ruling party has sacked the country's former strongman president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom as its leader after he led an unsuccessful rebellion against his half-brother, who is now in power. The decision came late Monday after Gayoom entered a pact over the weekend with exiled opposition leader Mohamed Nasheed and then tried to persuade his supporters to vote against the government in parliament. National President Abdulla Yameen had recently taken executive control of the party, but his half-brother was its nominal president.

"Gayoom has been accused of sympathizing with the opposition," said a Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) official who asked not to be named. "His ideology no longer aligns with that of the PPM," the official said. Gayoom had urged PPM legislators to vote with the opposition on Monday to impeach the speaker of the house, a move aimed at undermining Yameen's hold on power before 2018 elections.

Nasheed had hoped that the surprise alliance with Gayoom would provide enough

parliamentary support to oust the speaker. Instead there were chaotic scenes in parliament as opposition legislators staged a rowdy protest before losing the vote. Media were not allowed access, but images posted on social media showed several opposition-aligned MPs being physically removed from the house. "What we saw in Majlis today was a total disgrace" Gayoom tweeted after the vote, referring to the country's parliament. "The extent of gov't fear of a free vote. All the reason why we must overhaul the system!"

There was no immediate comment from Gayoom, currently on holiday in neighboring India, on his sacking from the party. He ruled the Maldives for three decades before founding the party when the country embraced multi-party democracy in 2008. Nasheed became the Maldives' first democratically-elected president in 2008 by defeating Gayoom. But he narrowly lost the 2013 runoff elections to incumbent Yameen. He now lives in exile in London after he was convicted in 2015 on terrorism charges widely seen as politically motivated. — AFP



UTTAR PRADESH: An Indian man chops meat at a meat shop in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh state, India. Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state is running out of meat, with the government cracking down on illegal slaughterhouses and meat shops. — AP

HARDLINE HINDU PRIEST - A HANDFUL FOR MODI IN HEARTLAND INDIA STATE

MUSLIMS IN UTTAR PRADESH STATE UNNERVED, LAY LOW

GORAKHPUR: Since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stunned the political establishment by promoting a hardline Hindu priest to one of the country's most powerful positions, Yogi Adityanath has sounded more statesman than rabble-rouser. Gone is the fiery anti-Muslim rhetoric and promotion of Hindu supremacy for which the saffron-robed 44-year-old is known, and in its place is a message of social inclusion more akin to Modi's language since sweeping to power in 2014.

"My government will be for everyone, not specifically for any caste or community ... We will work for development of all sections and castes," Adityanath said shortly after being made chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. The words jar with what the shaven-headed leader of the Gorakhnath sect has been saying from public platforms throughout a political career spanning nearly 20 years. In his northern power base - the down-at-heel town of Gorakhpur near the Nepalese border - Adityanath's more conciliatory comments have done little to dispel unease among members of the Muslim community, who make up nearly a fifth of Uttar Pradesh's 200 million or so people.

"We should just go about doing our job and pray the Hindu Yuva Vahini doesn't take over mosques to build new temples," said local driver Aijaz Sheikh, referring to the Hindu

Youth Force set up by Adityanath in 2002 to carry out his agenda. "If we react then we will pay the price. The loss will be ours and no Hindu will come to stand with us in Gorakhpur." Adityanath's ascent has prompted widespread questions about India's secular status, and whether Modi, himself a product of a nationalist Hindu upbringing, intends to pursue more aggressive pro-Hindu policies as he pursues economic reforms.

Adityanath was a key campaigner for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Uttar Pradesh elections, and the thumping victory he helped deliver underlined how a divisive candidate could eclipse rivals who tried to reach out across communities. "With Yogi Adityanath's appointment, vigilanism has been upgraded into state policy," said Gilles Verniers, assistant professor of political sciences at Ashoka University outside Delhi.

Abattoirs and 'Romeo squads'

In a gleaming white temple compound in Gorakhpur, people crowd Adityanath's offices to petition his band of fanatical followers in the Hindu Youth Force to settle their personal grievances. Clerks hammer out their requests on old mechanical typewriters, handing them to members of the force to deal with. Not all disputes concern religion, but Adityanath's devotees say their main mission is to fight against creeping encroachment by Uttar Pradesh's

Muslim community. "It was a very difficult period for Hindus and for Yogi ji," Mahesh Poddar, a textile merchant who was one of the first people to join the youth force, told Reuters in the temple compound. "We felt like we were living in a country that doesn't belong to us."

Adityanath declined requests for an interview on past actions and his plans as chief minister. Since his March 19 swearing-in, he has pushed policies that are an extension of Modi's nationwide agenda, notably demanding state ministers declare their incomes and assets as part of a crackdown on corruption. At the same time, he has instructed officials to prepare to shut down all mechanised abattoirs, part of a campaign pledge that appealed to Hindus because they view cows as sacred and because slaughterhouses are run mainly by Muslims.

The slaughter of cows is, in fact, prohibited in Uttar Pradesh, although not always enforced, but a blanket ban would also hurt buffalo meat exports. Meat traders in the state said on Monday they had launched a strike to protest against the closure of butcher's shops and slaughterhouses considered illegal. "We are not selling drugs or indulging in criminal activities."

We sell meat to feed our families but the government is targeting us because we are Muslims," Raza Quereshi, a member of the Meat Producers' Association said. — Reuters

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AUSTRALIA CANCELS VOTE ON 'CHINA EXTRADITION TREATY'

A SETBACK IN CHINA'S OVERSEAS HUNT FOR CORRUPT OFFICIALS

SYDNEY: Australia cancelled a vote yesterday to finally ratify an extradition treaty with China, 10 years after it was signed, with the government set for an embarrassing defeat on the vote. Australia's inability to ratify the treaty is a setback in China's overseas hunt for corrupt officials and business executives who have fled abroad with their assets, dubbed Operation Fox Hunt. Political opposition to the treaty in Australia stems from concerns over China's humanitarian record, with human rights groups regularly accusing Beijing of obtaining confessions through torture or under duress.

The planned parliamentary vote was to be held two days after China Premier Li

Keqiang left Australia, where trade deals underpinned fast improving Sino-Australia relations. But a spokesman for Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the vote had been cancelled, after opposition politicians who control the upper house Senate made clear they would not support the treaty. "It has been in our national interest to have this agreement with China," Foreign Minister Julie Bishop told a news conference. "We will speak with our Chinese friends in more detail and decide what to do."

If Australia had ratified the pact, it would have become one of the few Western countries besides France and Spain to enter into

an extradition treaty with China. In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the treaty would allow both countries to go after cross-border criminals and was in their joint interests. "We hope that Australia keeps in mind the broader picture of bilateral relations and continues to promote the relevant domestic process so the treaty can go into enforcement as soon as possible," Hua told a daily news briefing.

In an article published on the eve of Li's visit, China's ambassador to Australia, Cheng Jingye, highlighted his country's hopes for the extradition treaty to enter into force soon. "The visit seems to have

been very successful on the economic merits, but this inability to ratify the extradition treaty will inevitably lead to a sense of deflation," said Euan Graham, director of the national security program at Australian think-tank Lowy Institute. It is also a blow for Turnbull, who revived the long-dormant process of ratification a year ago, with Australia seeking closer cooperation with Chinese law enforcement to stem a rising tide of synthetic drugs trafficked from southern China. Three Australian employees of casino operator Crown Resorts Ltd remain in Chinese custody following their arrest in November 2016 for alleged gambling offences. — Reuters



Taiwan's former President Ma Ying-jeou

TAIWAN EX-LEADER FOUND 'NOT GUILTY' IN LEAKS CASE

TAIPEI: A Taiwanese court day found former president Ma Ying-jeou not guilty in a political leaks case, one of a series of lawsuits brought against him since he stepped down last year. Ma was acquitted of leaking secrets and of defamation. He will face a new trial after state prosecutors brought fresh leaks charges against him earlier this month.

"Defendant Ma Ying-jeou is found not guilty" of violating the Communication Security and Surveillance Act and the Personal Information Protection Act, said Judge Wu Yung-yi. Ma was not present when the verdict was announced. Throughout the trial he had denied any wrongdoing. Yesterday's case, which had been filed by lawmaker Ker Chien-ming, accused Ma of asking the then-prosecutor-general to leak information to him about a confidential judicial probe in 2013. Ma was also accused of defamation by implying that the lawmaker had sought to influence a court case which he (Ker) was facing.

The judicial probe was investigating whether the parliamentary speaker at the time—a political rival of Ma—had improperly influenced the case against Ker in an attempt to benefit the lawmaker. While still in office Ma had immunity from prosecution. But since he stepped down in May last year after serving the maximum two terms, the 66-year-old has been hit with a series of corruption and other allegations.

Ma's Beijing-friendly Kuomintang (KMT) party held power from 2008 to 2016, before it was trounced by Tsai Ing-wen and her opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

The KMT hailed yesterday's ruling and urged lawmaker Ker not to appeal the case to avoid "political name-smearing and wasting judicial resources". But Ker's lawyer Zan Keng-goan expressed shock at the verdict and vowed to appeal. The leaks controversy sparked a political storm in 2013 and saw two top officials resign, while thousands of protesters took to the streets to demand Ma's resignation. The DPP, then in opposition, compared the probe to the Watergate scandal in the United States, as information allegedly implicating the parliamentary speaker was obtained by a wiretap on lawmaker Ker's phone.

Ma won the presidency in 2008 with the biggest landslide in Taiwan's democratic history, as voters registered disgust at the graft scandals of his predecessor Chen Shui-bian of the DPP. Chen was indicted after leaving office and had been serving a 20-year sentence for corruption until he was freed on medical parole in 2015. However, Ma's popularity plummeted during his eight years in power, with public disquiet at policies seen as linking the island too closely to China and benefiting big business rather than ordinary people. — AFP

NOBLE SON OR KILLER? CHINESE COURT CASE PROMPTS DEBATE

BEIJING: A virtuous son or a vigilante murderer: The case of a man who killed a debt collector in defense of his mother has sparked heated debate in China, as an appeal court decides whether to uphold his life sentence. Social media erupted after 22-year-old Yu Huan was convicted for stabbing to death a man who had beaten and humiliated his parent. In a country where law enforcement is weak and frequently seen as corrupt, some web users saw his actions as a proportionate and justified response when police failed to step in. Others have insisted that "the law is the law" and Yu should serve his full term. The public fury has reached such a fever pitch that the Supreme People's Procuratorate, China's highest investigation agency, has opened a rare probe into the incident.

'Don't use your fists'

Court documents reveal that Yu Huan's mother, Su Yinxia had borrowed more than one million yuan (\$145,000) for her auto parts manufacturing company from a local real estate developer. Little by little, she told police, she had paid him back 1.5 million yuan. But the ten percent monthly interest payments kept piling up, making it difficult for her to get out from under her debt. The developer, Wu Xuezhao who has reportedly been detained by police for connections to organized crime—sent a gang of loan collectors to Su's factory in April 2015, where, Su says, they began yelling at her and her son. Yu says a man named Du Zhihao then exposed himself.

A police officer arrived on the scene a short time later, witnesses claim, but rather than stepping in to stop the abuse, he issued a mild warning: "If you're here to settle debts don't fight, don't use your fists—just talk it out." After the officer left, a fracas

erupted. Su insists the debt collectors started the violence. But Yu finished it, pulling out a fruit knife and stabbing four of the men, including Du, who died from blood loss. The debt collectors deny Su and Yu's claims that they had hit and humiliated them. Yu was convicted of intentionally causing harm that resulted in death, and sentenced to life. Wu has since been arrested for gang-related activities, according to local media.

'What is the law for?'

Much of the discussion on social media has centered on whether the country's rule of law has deteriorated to the extent that children need to step in to protect their parents when authorities fail to help. "If the law doesn't bring justice to this kind of person, what is the law for, anyway?" asked one user on the Weibo social network. "If anyone dared do that to my mom, I'd kill them right away," wrote another. It is a sticky issue for the government, which has strongly promoted filial piety—even passing laws requiring children to visit their parents as part of a nation-wide push to promote traditional values.

In an unusual critique of law enforcement, the nationalistic Global Times on Sunday called for Yu to receive a fair sentence. "We welcome the Supreme People's Procuratorate's probe into whether Yu was legitimately acting in self-defense and whether the police officers' behavior can be considered a dereliction of duty," the column said. Yu's lawyer, Yin Qingli said he was hopeful his client would be shown leniency by the Shandong Higher People's Court when it hears the appeal. "Under the present circumstances, I believe there is a very high chance that Yu Huan's sentence will be changed," Yin said. — AFP



CHINA: This undated handout picture released by the family of Yu Huan, shows Yu Huan at an unknown location. — AFP

INDONESIAN LEADER 'OPEN' TO DEATH PENALTY REVIEW

JAKARTA: Indonesia's President Joko Widodo said he would restore a moratorium on the death penalty if he won the backing of the people, after a spate of executions that drew international condemnation. Widodo declared an anti-drugs campaign soon after coming to power in 2014 and refused all requests for pardons from death-row drug convicts, ending a four-year moratorium. But in recent months he has softened his position. Asked in an interview with AFP on Monday whether he would consider a moratorium, Widodo said: "Why not? But I must ask my people. "If my people say OK, they say yes, I will start to prepare," he said.

A moratorium could be the first step towards abolishing the death penalty, a move which needs approval in parliament which has been discussing the issue for the past year. However, Widodo said it would be difficult to secure parliamentary backing without clear public support in a conservative, Muslim-majority country where voters are deeply concerned about high levels of addiction. He cited a 2015 survey by a private pollster that found 85 percent of Indonesians support the death penalty for drug traffickers.

Jungle killings

Since Widodo came to power, Indonesia has hauled 18 people - 15 of them foreigners—before the firing squad for drug trafficking. They include a group of eight-two Australians, a Brazilian, an Indonesian and four Nigerians—who were put to death in a single night in April 2015 on the prison island of Nusakambangan. The convicts were taken to a jungle clearing on the island, which houses several high-security prisons, and tied to stakes before being shot, in a move that triggered global revulsion.

The executions of Australian drug smugglers Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran in particular caused tensions, with Indonesia's neighbour Australia temporarily recalling its ambassador from Jakarta. Among the foreigners currently on death row are Frenchman Serge Atlaoui and Filipina Mary Jane Veloso, who were both pulled from the April 2015 round of executions. A British grandmother, Lindsay Sandford, is also on death row in Bali after she was caught smuggling a huge stash of cocaine into the

resort island which attracts millions of visitors to its palm-fringed beaches every year. Widodo has insisted that the death penalty is part of Indonesia's law and serves as deterrent against drug trafficking. However, last November he said he was "open for options" to abolish it. In another concession, only drug convicts from countries that implement the death penalty were executed last year.

'Good sign'

International and domestic rights groups have appealed to Indonesia to put a stop to capital punishment, arguing that miscarriages of justice are inevitable in a judicial system deeply compromised by corruption. Ricky Gunawan from Community Legal Aid Foundation, a group calling for the abolition of the death penalty, said Widodo's latest comments were "a good sign that he is shifting from his stubbornness".

"But the downside is he leaves it to the people to decide, and a good leader should make a stance instead of leaving to the people to decide," he said. Gunawan urged President Francois Hollande, who will visit Indonesia this week, to press the issue during their talks. France scrapped the death penalty at a time when public support for it was high. Some analysts have said that since Widodo is the first Indonesian president from outside the establishment—he was not in the military nor part of the elites—he needed to show a strong hand on law enforcement. Halfway into his term, Widodo is faced with rising religious intolerance in a country that has always prided itself as a moderate Muslim nation.

In a case seen as a major test for pluralism, the governor of Jakarta—an ethnic Chinese Christian - is currently on trial on allegations of blasphemy against Islam. Widodo said that extensive freedoms have opened the way for hate speech, but played down the extent of intolerance, saying that a "small" number of incidents was "normal" in a nation that embraces many religions and ethnicities. "People must know the balance of rights and duty... if they are too free, it is not good for our country," he said. "Indonesia is one of the most tolerant countries in the world." — AFP



JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo gets up after an exclusive interview with AFP at the Merdeka Palace in Jakarta. — AFP

News

in brief

Exploding ball injures an Australian woman

SYDNEY: A woman in Australia suffered burns to her face and arms when a basketball exploded as she picked it up, police said yesterday as they sought an explanation for the bizarre incident. Detectives said the 21-year-old was walking along a beach in Melbourne when she spotted the ball on the sand. "As she went to pick it up, it exploded, leaving her with burns to her face, head and forearms," Victoria state police said. "She then rushed to the water to try and cool down and was later transported to hospital by paramedics." The Arson and Explosive Squad recovered the ball and were investigating. But so far they are not sure why it exploded on March 18, although police said it "may have had sparklers or similar attached to it". "Police were told a group of males had possibly rolled the ball towards the woman and then walked away," they added.

Tunisian official 'caught red-handed taking bribe'

TUNIS: A Tunisian allegedly caught red-handed taking a bribe was among three regional officials sacked on Monday by Prime Minister Youssef Chahed, who has vowed to fight graft. A government statement announced the sackings but did not say why the three were relieved of their duties. A spokesman for a provincial prosecutor said one of the officials had been arrested during a police sting allegedly pocketing money from a businessman who had complained to authorities that he had been asked to pay bribes. According to spokesman Mohamed Ali Barhoumi, the businessman told authorities the official pestered him with demands for payment for the renewal of the lease for his shop. The suspect allegedly pocketed 500 dinars (around 200 euros/dollars) from the shop owner in the police sting operation, Barhoumi said. Corruption was widespread under longtime president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who was ousted in a 2011 uprising, and has remained endemic since.



KABUL: Afghan students from the American University of Afghanistan wait for the start of classes at the beginning of a new term in Kabul. — AFP

Kabul's American University reopens after deadly attack

KABUL: Hundreds of students returned yesterday to the elite American University in Kabul seven months after militants stormed the campus—including those wounded in the bloody assault that killed 16 people. Security has been increased at the campus in the Afghan capital after the attack last August, in which students trapped during the nearly 10-hour raid sent anguished pleas for help on social media. "I don't think anything un-Islamic or against any group is taught here," said Rahmatullah, a returning student who was one of those wounded in the attack. "It is just a centre to promote knowledge and that is going to succeed," he said. The attack was one of the first major militant assaults on a prominent university in Afghanistan. The university, which opened in 2006 and has more than 1,700 students, was long seen as a high-profile target for militants, partly because it attracts foreign faculty members.

Amid tensions, North Korea, China inaugurate new flight

BEIJING: The inaugural flight of a new charter service from North Korea's capital to the northeastern Chinese city of Dandong landed yesterday, the official Xinhua news agency said. The launch comes amid ongoing tensions on the Korean peninsula over the hermit state's missile and nuclear tests, which it says are in response to joint drills between the United States and South Korea military. The twice-weekly flight by Air Koryo, the North's national carrier, will connect Pyongyang with the "booming" border town of Dandong that is "mainly engaged in border trade with the DPRK", Xinhua said, using the official name for North Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Air Koryo flies to only a handful of destinations and already offers regular flights to Beijing and northern China's Shenyang city. Traders in Dandong have complained in recent months of a slump in business as Beijing seemed to become increasingly willing to tightening cross-border trade in response to Pyongyang's missile tests.

Legal spat in US over naming a child 'Allah'

WASHINGTON: A civil rights group is suing the US state of Georgia because it will not let a couple give their toddler daughter "Allah" as her last name. Parents Elizabeth Handy and Bilal Walk want to name their 22-month-old daughter Zalykha Graceful Lorraine Allah. But state officials at the Department of Public Health said that under Georgia law, the child's last name should either be Handy, Walk or a combination of the two, according to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution newspaper. The Georgia branch of the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the state on March 23. "Government has no business telling parents what they can and cannot name their children," said ACLU of Georgia Executive Director, Andrea Young. The parents said they gave her the child the name Allah because it was "noble" and it had nothing to do with religion. The parents said that because of the state's actions, they cannot get a birth certificate for the child and therefore they cannot obtain a social security number either.

NATO, Russia ambassadors try to resolve differences

BRUSSELS: Ambassadors from NATO and Russia will meet this week for the first time this year in a fresh attempt to resolve some of their differences. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said in a statement Tuesday that a NATO-Russia Council - their main forum for dialogue - would be held at the military alliance's Brussels headquarters tomorrow. Disputes over meeting agendas, particularly on the thorny issue of the conflict in Ukraine, have held up talks in the past. Stoltenberg said after the last NATO-Russia Council in December that the 28-nation, US-led military alliance and Russia "have profound disagreements on the crisis" in Ukraine.



Commuters pass through Parliament Square by the Elizabeth Tower of the Houses of Parliament during morning rush hour in London yesterday. — AFP

AMAZON EXPANDS GLOBAL REACH

Continued from Page 1

Souq.com chief executive and co-founder Ronaldo Mouchawar called the agreement "a critical next step in growing our e-commerce presence on behalf of customers across the region." "By becoming part of the Amazon family, we'll be able to vastly expand our delivery capabilities and customer selection much faster, as well as continue Amazon's great track record of empowering sellers," he said in the statement.

Amazon senior vice president Russ Grandinetti said the deal made sense as both companies "share the same DNA." "We're both driven by customers, invention and long-term thinking," he said. "We're looking forward to both learning from and supporting them with Amazon technology and global resources." Souq.com won a major vote of confidence last year and emerged as the highest-valued internet company in the region when it secured \$275 million in funding from international investors to support its growth. At the time, Mouchawar said the e-commerce market in the Middle East was "growing very fast" and expected to reach \$20 billion in 2016.

Known for its huge online retail operations, Amazon has been expanding into areas including cloud computing and streaming video where it is trying to rival Netflix. But online shopping remains at its core, with its retail operations taking in \$26 billion in North America and \$14 billion in the rest of the world in the last quarter of 2016.

Samih Toukan, the head of Jabbar Internet Group, an early investor in Souq, hailed the deal on Twitter, writing: "History is made". He described the acquisition as the "biggest regional tech deal" since Yahoo! in 2009 purchased Maktoob, the first provider of Arabic email services. Mouchawar launched Souq from within Maktoob, which he joined after he landed in the United Arab Emirates in 2000. Born in Syria, Mouchawar had studied engineering and worked for several tech companies in the United States.

"This is a milestone for the online shopping space in the region," he said in a later statement to staff posted on Souq.com's website. "Over time, I'm excited for what this acquisition will mean for every customer across the region," he added. In an interview with Al-Arabiya news channel, Mouchawar said he would remain as the chief executive of Souq.com, and that the company would keep its workforce.

Souq.com attracts over 45 million visits per month. But the Middle East continues to have a "significant untapped e-

commerce potential", according to a report last year by consultancy McKinsey, which put the region's e-commerce at around one percent of total retail. In buying Souq.com, Amazon will leapfrog into the crucial Mideast markets of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, where the Dubai-based retailer already has local operations. As a private company, Souq.com hasn't had to file public earning reports, though the website last year raised more than \$275 million in a round of financing that the company said would help fuel its future growth.

Souq.com's status as a free-zone firm also means Amazon will be able to run a 100-percent foreign-owned operation. Amazon's entry into the UAE comes after Apple Inc. opened its first stores in the Arab world in Dubai and the UAE capital of Abu Dhabi in Oct 2015. The website's major investors have included Tiger Global Management LLC and South Africa-based Naspers Ltd.

Rumors about Amazon's interest in Souq.com have circulated for months. In November, Emaar Chairman Mohamed Alabbar reportedly met Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos at the state-backed firm's cavernous Dubai Mall, home to a massive aquarium and in the shadow of the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building it built. On Monday, Emaar Malls PJSC made public its \$800-million bid for Souq.com in a filing on the Dubai Financial Market. The short filing, signed by Emaar Malls vice chairman Ahmad Thani Al-Matrooshi, said the bid was made "in line with the strategy to align e-commerce with physical shopping".

Last year, Alabbar received a \$1 billion investment in a forthcoming e-commerce venture from the Saudi government's Public Investment Fund, the same sovereign wealth fund that invested \$3.5 billion in the ride-hailing app Uber. That project, called noon.com, has yet to begin operations. Alabbar also holds stakes in the delivery company Aramex, which could prove useful for his online retailer.

Dubai, the commercial capital of the United Arab Emirates, home to the long-haul carrier Emirates and the world's busiest international airport, also has luxury malls that even include an indoor ski slope. Its summer heat of over 50 degrees Celsius makes malls a major attraction for both shopping and leisure time in the city. While Uber and other online services firms work in Dubai, online retail shopping has yet to truly take off like it has in Western countries. Amazon's entry into the market likely will change that. — Agencies

TRUMP ROLLS BACK OBAMA ERA CLIMATE...

Continued from Page 1

"I am taking historic steps to lift restrictions on American energy, to reverse government intrusion, and to cancel job-killing regulations," Trump said at the Environmental Protection Agency headquarters, speaking on a stage lined with coal miners.

The wide-ranging order is the boldest yet in Trump's broader push to cut environmental regulation to revive the drilling and mining industries, a promise he made repeatedly during the presidential campaign. But energy analysts and executives have questioned whether the moves will have a big effect on their industries, and environmentalists have called them reckless. "I cannot tell you how many jobs the executive order is going to create but I can tell you that it provides confidence in this administration's commitment to the coal industry," Kentucky Coal Association president Tyler White told Reuters.

Trump signed the order with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Vice President Mike Pence by his side. US presidents have aimed to reduce US dependence on foreign oil since the Arab oil embargo of the 1970s, which triggered soaring prices. But the United States still imports about 7.9 million barrels of crude oil a day, almost enough meet total oil demand in Japan and India combined.

While Trump's administration has said reducing environmental regulation will create jobs, some green groups have countered that rules supporting clean energy have done the same. The number of jobs in the U.S. wind power industry rose 32 percent last year while solar power jobs rose by 25 percent, according to a Department of Energy study.

Environmental groups hurled scorn on Trump's order, arguing it is dangerous and goes against the broader global trend toward cleaner energy technologies. "These actions are an assault on American values and they endanger the health, safety and prosperity of every American," said billionaire environmental activist Tom Steyer, the head of activist group NextGen Climate. Green group Earthjustice was one of many organiza-

tions that said it will fight the order both in and out of court. "This order ignores the law and scientific reality," said its president, Trip Van Noppen.

An overwhelming majority of scientists believe that human use of oil and coal for energy is a main driver of climate change, causing a damaging rise in sea levels, droughts, and more frequent violent storms. But Trump and several members of his administration have doubts about climate change, and Trump promised during his campaign to pull the United States out of the Paris climate accord, arguing it would hurt US business.

Since being elected Trump has been mum on the Paris deal and the executive order does not address it. Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change who helped broker the Paris accord, lamented Trump's order. "Trying to make fossil fuels remain competitive in the face of a booming clean renewable power sector, with the clean air and plentiful jobs it continues to generate, is going against the flow of economics," she said.

The order will direct the EPA to start a formal "review" process to undo the Clean Power Plan, which was introduced by Obama in 2014 but was never implemented in part because of legal challenges brought by Republican-controlled states. The Clean Power Plan required states to collectively cut carbon emissions from power plants by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Some 85 percent of US states are on track to meet the targets despite the fact the rule has not been implemented, according to Bill Becker, director of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, a group of state and local air pollution control agencies.

Trump's order also lifts the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management's temporary ban on coal leasing on federal property put in place by Obama in 2016 as part of a review to study the program's impact on climate change and ensure royalty revenues were fair to taxpayers. It also asks federal agencies to discount the cost of carbon in policy decisions and the weight of climate change considerations in infrastructure permitting, and reverses rules limiting methane leakage from oil and gas facilities. — Reuters

SAUDIS PLAN \$3BN JOINT INVESTMENT FUND...

Continued from Page 1

One joint venture between Jordan Energy Resources Incorporated and the French company Areva was, however, terminated in 2012, months after they said that the overall uranium potential on a licensed area exceeded 20,000 tonnes. The Jordan Atomic Energy Commission said in 2012 that a leading Australian company had discovered uranium resources in central Jordan that were more than double that amount. In 2014, the Jordan Times newspaper quoted the head of

state-owned Jordan Uranium Mining Company, Samer Kahook, as saying that central Jordan has reserves of 36,389 tonnes of uranium oxide.

Neighboring Saudi Arabia is one of Jordan's main financial backers. The Jordanian economy has been badly hit by the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees from the conflict in neighboring Syria, which have put a huge strain on already stretched resources. Arab foreign ministers were wrapping up two days of talks in the Jordanian Dead Sea resort of Sweimeh yesterday ahead of today's summit. — AFP

'ALIEN' MPs HASHEM, HAYEF SPAR OVER PERFUME...

Continued from Page 1

Harbath and Merdas were among dozens of opposition activists who repeated parts of a controversial speech by prominent opposition leader and former MP Musallam Al-Barrak, for which he was sentenced to two years in jail. A number of pro-government MPs openly charged that calculation of votes was tampered with and the actual result should have supported lifting the immunity of the two lawmakers.

The Assembly then voted to lift the immunity of Fadhil at the public prosecution's request. But Fadhil's secretary told Kuwait Times that Fadhil himself had sent a letter to the legislative committee requesting to lift his immunity, as he aims to stand in front of the judge to defend himself in any court case and clear his name. Up to 34 MPs, out of 47 attending, voted in favor of stripping the immu-

nity of Fadhil in relation to an appeal case titled "Al-Salam's misdemeanor".

The Assembly could not debate a draft law stipulating to amend the administrative court law to allow legal recourse for those who have their citizenship revoked. But MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei said that 10 lawmakers filed a petition yesterday calling to give priority for debating the amendment, which allows those who have their citizenship revoked to complain to the court.

At present, courts are not authorized under the law to debate citizenship issues because they are sovereign matters, although courts have repeatedly taken up citizenship complaints. Speaker Ghanem said that he received the petition, and will have the Assembly vote on it today. He however said that the government has the right under the constitution to request a delay of two weeks.



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• Kuwait 1 (The New str.) • Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower) • Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.) • Hawalli 2 (Bin Khalid str.) • Shuwaikh (4th Ring road) • Al-Rai (4th Ring road) • Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.) • Farwaniya (Behind police Station) • Fahaeel (Opp. General Parking) • Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op.) • Airport (Departure Hall)

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Focus


HEIR ENJOYING JET-SET
LIFE AFTER HIT-AND-RUN

The Ferrari driver who allegedly slammed into a motorcycle cop, dragged him along the road and then sped away from the mangled body took just hours to find, as investigators followed a trail of brake fluid into the gated estate of one of Thailand's richest families. But the prosecution of Red Bull heir Vorayuth "Boss" Yoovidhya has been delayed almost five years. When Vorayuth, 31, has been called in to face authorities, he hasn't shown up, claiming through his attorney that he's sick or out of the country on business. And while statutes of limitations run out on key charges this year, it's widely assumed he's hiding, possibly abroad, or quietly living locally, only going out in disguise.

He isn't. Within weeks of the accident, AP has found, Vorayuth was back to enjoying his family's jet-set life, largely associated with the Red Bull, an energy drink brand co-founded by his grandfather. He flies around the world on Red Bull jets, cheers their Formula One racing team from Red Bull's VIP seats and keeps a black Porsche Carrera in London with a custom plate: B055 RBR. Boss Red Bull Racing.

Last month, social media clues led AP reporters to the sacred city of Luang Prabang, Laos, where he and his family enjoyed a \$1,000-a-night resort, visited temples and lounged by the pool. Critics say inaction in this case epitomizes longstanding privilege for the wealthy class in Thailand, a politically tumultuous country that has struggled with rule of law for decades. The Yoovidhya family attorney did not respond to AP's request to interview Vorayuth. He's due at the prosecutors' office again, tomorrow.

Vorayuth 'Boss' Yoovidhya



Blood Money

His brother is nicknamed Porsche, his sister Champagne. Vorayuth and his siblings grew up in a family whose fortune expanded from millions to billions. He attended a \$40,000-a-year boarding school in the United Kingdom. In rural Thailand, police Sgt Maj Wichan Glanprasert didn't have such opportunities. The youngest of five, he was the first to leave their coconut and palm farm, the first to get a government job, to graduate from college. He paid for his parents' medical care and, with no children of his own, planned to put his brother's kids through college.

Their lives collided predawn on Sept 3, 2012, when Vorayuth's Ferrari roared down one of Bangkok's main drags. The bloody accident scene made national headlines. The policeman's family grieved, but they figured at least there would be justice. Wichan was a police officer. Certainly his killer would be held responsible. "At first I thought they'd follow a legal process," said his brother Pornan. Now he's not so sure. "We will not let this police officer die without justice. Believe me," Comronwit Toopgrajank, then Bangkok police commissioner, said after the accident.

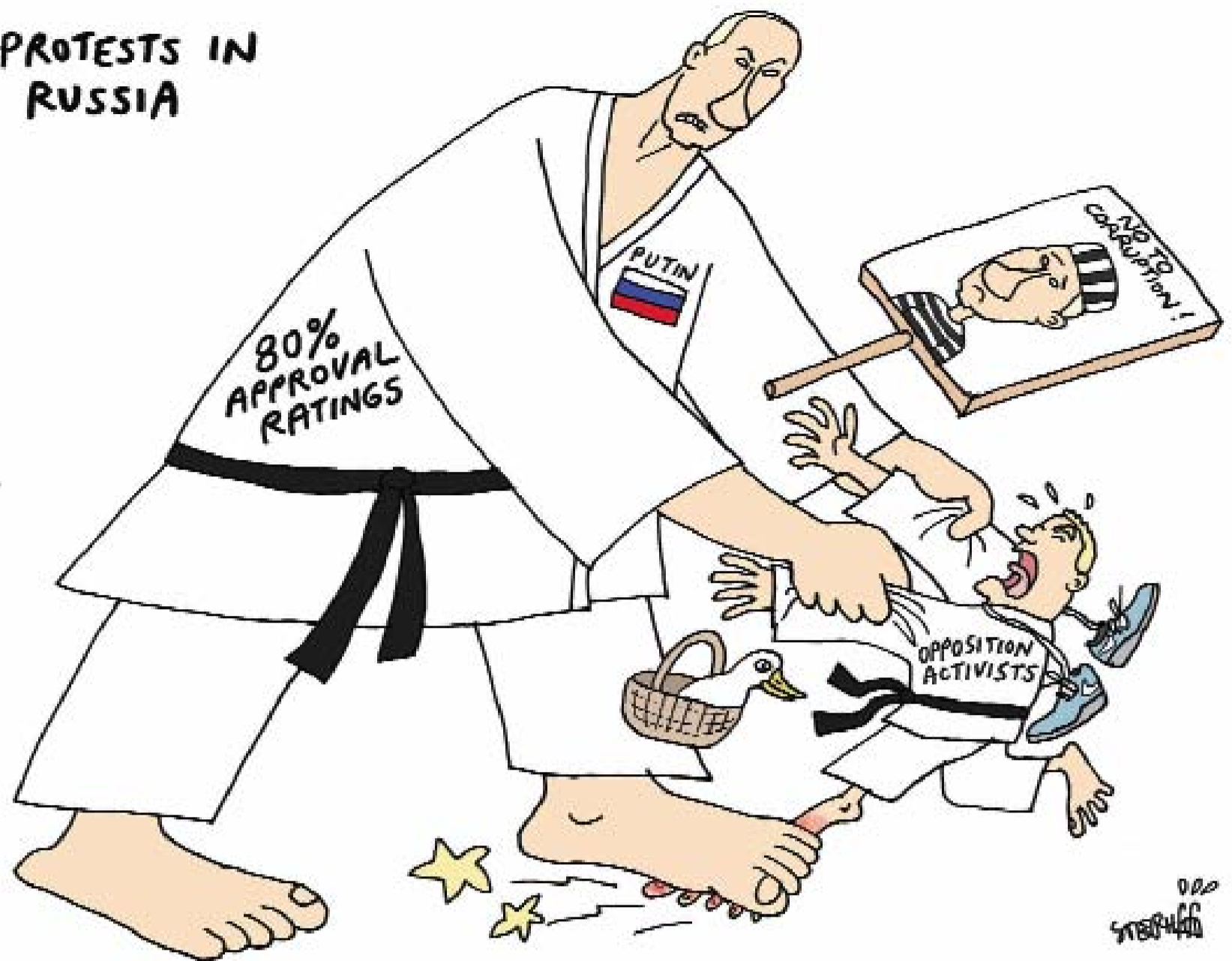
As the case unfolded, the Yoovidhya family attorney said Vorayuth left the scene not to flee, but to tell his father; and that his blood alcohol levels were high because he drank later to settle his nerves. Wichan's family accepted a settlement, about \$100,000. In turn, they promised not to press criminal charges. "Blood money," says Pornan, whose share sits in the bank.

Laying Low

Meanwhile, Vorayuth failed to show up when ordered to face criminal charges of speeding, hit-and-run, and deadly, reckless driving. Police say Vorayuth disputes the reckless-driving charge, claiming the officer swerved in front of him. The speeding charge expired after a year. The more serious charge of hit-and-run, which police say could lead to a six-month sentence, expires in September. Complicating matters, Yoovidhya's attorney has repeatedly filed petitions claiming unfair treatment by authorities. Police said prosecutors need to charge him. Prosecutors, without elaborating, said extra investigation is needed. Thammasat University law professor Pokpong Srisanit said the situation is "not normal" but does appear legal.

Meanwhile, Thai media figure he's laying low. Last year the Bangkok Post said that after paying the settlement in 2012, Vorayuth "has been out of the country or otherwise unable to answer the criminal case against him in the years since." A few weeks after the article appeared, a photo of Vorayuth was posted online. He was on the beach at a seaside resort south of Bangkok. — AP

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PROTESTS IN
RUSSIA

PLAYING WITH LIFE AND DEATH TO REACH EUROPE

In the dead of night, as wild animals howled nearby, Syrian migrant Aras Mahmoud clung to his children as they slept on damp grass in the Bulgarian mountains en route to Serbia, praying that his family would live another day. "In those mountains, you are not sure if something will eat you or attack you," said Mahmoud, 38, in Arabic through an interpreter at a migrant centre in the Serbian capital Belgrade. "My two children got very scared. They used to tell me, 'No father, we don't want to go with smugglers, we don't want to go to the forest.' We suffered in the mountains."

Scared and helpless, in those dark moments Mahmoud said he wrestled with his decision four years ago to gamble everything - his money and the lives of his wife and children - to pay nameless strangers to smuggle them to safety, becoming another pawn in the global people trade widely known as "The Game." "If you go, you succeed. If you don't go, you lose. That's why they call it a game," said 20-year-old Afghan migrant Ahmad Shakib who made it to Serbia from Bulgaria after three games.

Ali, a 16-year-old Afghan boy who travelled alone to Serbia in southeast Europe and declined to reveal his real name, said he failed several times to cross the border towards western Europe. "The smuggler put me through seven games, but it didn't work, I couldn't cross," he said. "God willing, the way will become open and I will succeed in any games that the smugglers make."

No Turning Back

Over the past two years, around 1.5 million migrants have fled fighting and poverty across the Middle East, Africa and Asia, many entrusting their lives to people smugglers who charged exorbitant prices to help them reach Europe. This has created a global business as profitable and sophisticated as drug trafficking, according to authorities who are struggling to stop the teaming up of migrants and smugglers.

For those with no legal migration route, it's proved to be a risky game of life and death with a record 7,495 migrants dying worldwide in 2016 in their quest for a new life and thousands of others stranded en route to their dream destination. Having paid \$58,000 (\$62,000) - 16 times the annual average salary in Syria - Mahmoud and his family of eight have been stranded in Serbia for the past six months, penniless after their smuggler took their life savings and disappeared.

"The money is gone, the smuggler took it. Everything my father and I made over 38 years, we spent it in six months," said Mahmoud in a small room he shares with his children, wife, siblings and mother at the state-run migrant center in Belgrade. But there is no turning back now, he said. "We left Syria with its rockets, bombs, planes, killing and no security. The children were terrified. We were forced to leave the country, it was not our choice," said Mahmoud who had hoped to get to Germany to join an older brother. "I will never find a place more beautiful than my country. But Syria is gone, there is no more Syria."

'Smuggling is a Game'

People smuggler Sarwar Jet is proud that he has helped migrants flee conflicts - and especially proud of earning a reputation for being quick and efficient. "My work is fast. That is why my passengers and other smugglers call me 'Sarwar Jet'. My work is like the speed of a jet," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a phone interview from Afghanistan's capital Kabul. "I make two to three attempts to cross the border in one month. All of them cross... Smuggling in itself is a game. If the passengers cross the borders, we win the game," said the 30-year-old, who has smuggled migrants from Afghanistan to Iran via Pakistan in the past seven years.

Europol, Europe's police agency, said people-smuggling generated up to \$6 billion in 2015, but profits dropped by about a third in 2016 after a European Union (EU) deal with Turkey last March largely stemmed the migration flow. Most of the money for passage is raised and transferred by migrants' relatives around the world. The smuggling rings exploit consumers thousands of miles apart - migrants seeking freedom or opportunity and their families back home and in the West, who are willing to pay to ensure their loved ones make it.

"Little by little, different countries started to build fences and introduce stricter regulations so smuggling flourished," said Cecilia Manzotti, a migrant smuggling and trafficking researcher at the United Nations Office

for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Jet said he made up to \$300 per migrant, dodging border guards to drive illegally into Iran, before handing them over to smugglers in Turkey to continue their westward journey.

But with borders shut, Jet gave up the lucrative business four months ago to sell cars in Kabul. If borders reopen, he said he would happily go back to doing what he does best. "Once someone becomes famous in a business, people won't leave him alone," said Jet, adding that he had no regrets as a smuggler because he helped his customers to safety. "We would put our lives at risk for our passengers and take them to their destination. It's true that we took money off them. But if we didn't help these passengers, maybe one day, they'll get killed in a suicide attack in the country."

Exploitation

It's a deadly reality 28-year-old Jamshid Shadab knows too well. When Taliban militants discovered he worked as a translator for the US army, he was faced with two choices: Leave Afghanistan or suffer the same fate as his colleagues. "In one of the highways from Kabul to Kunduz, (the Taliban) was searching for everybody who was working for the Afghan or American army. They were taking them to one of the mountains and shooting them," said Shadab.

It's been a gamble since Shadab paid agents \$4,000 (\$4,300) to smuggle him out of Afghanistan last July, leaving behind his elderly father, wife and two children. But it's a game Shadab said he's forced to play, no matter the cost, with his life on the line when he was held ransom in Bulgaria by smugglers until his father sent more money. "They call your family (and say), 'These guys are in trouble if you don't pay the money. I might break their legs or hands,'" he said outside warehouses near the main train station in Belgrade, where he has been staying for three months.

UNODC's Manzotti said the abuse and exploitation migrants endure along the journey remains underreported since they have no-one to turn to and smugglers know they can get away with it. "We talk a lot about people who die at sea, but actually the risks and the abuses that migrants and refugees face along the smuggling journey are much more," she said. An arrangement that began as smuggling can spiral into extortion, kidnapping and even forced marriage - all forms of trafficking with victims deceived and exploited, Manzotti said.

"Our relationship (with smugglers) is financial. They will care for us in order to get the money. But for those who do not pay, it's a disaster," said Syrian migrant Otr Al-Khadra, 58, who has been living with her two sons in the same refugee center as Mahmoud in Belgrade for nearly six months.

Game On

Serbia, which is not part of the EU, was a focal point for migrants in 2015 when hundreds of thousands of migrants travelled through the Balkans to reach western Europe. Although that route was closed off last March, Serbian authorities estimate a further 110,000 migrants have passed through the country, many using smugglers to cross Serbia and its barbed-wire border with Hungary. There are around 7,800 migrants in Serbia, the UN's refugee agency UNHCR reports, with some 6,700 people housed in government-run centers, mostly families, women and children.

Other migrants, like Shadab, live in empty warehouses in Belgrade's city center, preferring to sleep rough so they can contact smugglers more easily and leave at a moment's notice. Migrants who have money left wait anxiously for calls and social media messages from smugglers ready for the next 'cat-and-mouse game' with border guards. "It's very easy to find a smuggler. Everyone here would know more than 10," said Shadab who was deported twice to Serbia from Croatia. "We're stuck because the borders are closed. Every day (the smuggler) tells us, 'The next day, tomorrow we're leaving.' But the next day never comes."

Money Trail

Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre has struggled to crackdown on the booming trade in the face of the largest migrant crisis since World War Two, the explosion of social media use, and the sprawling network of elusive money exchanges between relatives and smugglers. "The biggest challenges, not just for us but also law enforcement in Europe, are the size of the criminal demands and the number of the people trying

to reach destination countries," said the center's chief, Robert Crepinko, in a phone interview.

Formed last year, Crepinko said the center helps police forces inside and outside Europe share intelligence and helps with rapid deployment of emergency police forces as new migrant routes emerge. The group said it identified about 17,460 new suspected smugglers in 2016 alone. It also found more than 2,500 fake travel documents and 1,150 social media accounts used for migrant smuggling. But following the money trail is near impossible, even for Europol, which can't pinpoint where all the money goes. "This is the one million euro question," said Crepinko. "Of course, some of this money stays in Europe, but a lot of it leaves Europe."

Migrants tend to pay smugglers in cash, often under a "pay as you go system," and via money transfer services like the hawala network, where a local agent, usually in the migrant's country of origin, collects money from friends or relatives and, when told, transfers the funds to another agent.

Innovative

Europol's Crepinko said no matter how impenetrable borders seem at first, smugglers will always find a way to cross. "The smugglers are trying to exploit the vulnerabilities and weak spots in the border management systems," he said. "Smugglers are very innovative and they are adjusting their criminal activities very quickly to new obstacles in their way."

Through social media platforms like Facebook, or encrypted mobile apps such as WhatsApp, Imo and Viber, smugglers can easily bypass police detection and communicate freely with migrants or their relatives to negotiate payments and logistics. "I myself might have used more than 100 mobile phone SIM cards," said Afghan smuggler Jet. "I might have more than 40 to 50 Facebook accounts. I activated them as needed, and when my passengers arrived at their destination, I deactivated them. And I would throw away the SIM card."

Smugglers also use Facebook to advertise their services, including the cost, type of transport, success rate, and, in some cases, information on asylum policies or family reunification processes across the EU, says the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. Maegan Hendow, a researcher at the Austria-based institute, said many smugglers rely on word-of-mouth recommendations from migrants who have successfully reached their destination. In some ways, migrants can hold smugglers to account by 'rating' them through social media, she said.

But it's still a losing game for those like Syrian migrants Khadra and Mahmoud, who send thousands of dollars into the abyss and are never certain the stranger on the other side will deliver. "I reached this point with no more money and there is nothing I can do. I can't file a complaint against a smuggler nor fight with one. They are like a mafia, and I am one person, so I can't do anything. What's done is done," Mahmoud said.

'My Only Concern is Safety'

As the EU continues to tighten its borders, migrants grow more desperate daily, Hendow said, with some risking prosecution to work as guides on behalf of smugglers in exchange for cash or a discount on their smuggling journey. Lone migrant children the Thomson Reuters Foundation interviewed stranded in Belgrade said some boys were so destitute they had to sell sex for money. In March the EU's chief migration official said member states should be ready to detain more migrants who have no case for asylum to prevent them from fleeing before deportation.

But Hendow said such "stop gap" policies will fail to curb migration flows to Europe in the long-term. "Looking at just one piece of the puzzle is not going to stop it. You have to deal with it holistically, because closing borders is clearly not working," Hendow said. She said such short-term measures have serious consequences for migrants who fear deportation and have no certainty for their future, despite risking everything. "It's like carving a rock to reach safety. I am devastated, devastated," said Syrian migrant al-Khadra, whose family has been living in limbo in Belgrade for the past six months. "There are families that can afford to continue with smugglers. We are broke." For Mahmoud, just the chance to offer his children a peaceful life was worth all the money in the world, he said. "My only concern is to take my children to safety in a country that grants me asylum. If God wants this for me and my children, then it will happen," he said. — Reuters

UAE COACH ALI QUILTS AFTER AUSTRALIA DEFEAT

SYDNEY: United Arab Emirates coach Mahdi Ali resigned yesterday after a loss to Australia dealt an all but fatal blow to the country's chances of reaching next year's World Cup in Russia. Ali, who led the UAE to a third-place finish at the Asian Cup in 2015, called time on a highly successful stint in charge of his country in the wake of the 2-0 defeat by the Socceroos in Group B of Asian qualifying. The loss left the Emiratis, who had started their campaign with a stunning victory away to Japan, fourth in the group and clinging to faint hopes of finishing third and reaching Russia via two playoffs. Ali said he had offered to resign after the UAE beat Iraq in a qualifier last November but had been persuaded to stay on. "I think after five years, I have done my best, we have many achievements," he told reporters. "This is a very bad time for me, I wish I could leave the national team in a better condition. But this is life, we have to accept it. I tried my best with all the tools I have. But the coach is only one part of the team. —Reuters

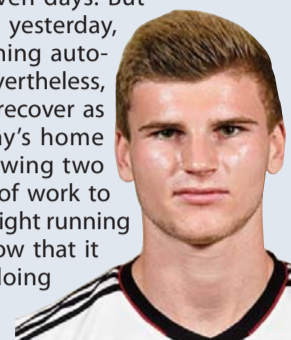


KENYAN OLYMPIC BOARD OKS REFORMS AFTER IOC SPAT

NAIROBI: Kenya's under-fire Olympic committee (NOCK) yesterday agreed to make changes to its constitution and call for fresh elections in May after its Rio Games debacle. The committee's decision comes after it twice failed to reach consensus to enact the reforms, prompting the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to freeze funding to Kenya earlier this month. "We are happy that we have reached a unanimous agreement to save our country and the future of our youth," NOCK chief Kipchoge Keino told AFP. "An independent electoral body will be named in the next seven days to oversee the NOCK elections which will be held on May 8." The IOC assisted in the drafting of new laws following a national outcry over corruption and the treatment of the Kenyan team at last summer's Olympics. The new document strips the incumbent NOCK executive committee members, including Kipchoge, of a voting monopoly which allowed them to maintain their grip on power. Under the previous system, the 13 members of the executive committee each had a vote, while the 21 sports associations had one vote per body. —AFP

WERNER BACK TRAINING AFTER INJURY 'CATASTROPHE'

BERLIN: Germany striker Timo Werner returned to training with Bundesliga high-fliers RB Leipzig yesterday, less than a week after tearing a thigh muscle while making his debut for the world champions. Werner, 21, hurt his left thigh in last Wednesday's 1-0 home win against England, which RB coach Ralph Hasenhuetl labelled a "catastrophe" as his club prepare to play three games in seven days. But Werner completed a 30-minute training run yesterday, then finished with some sprints, before signing autographs and posing for pictures with fans. Nevertheless, Hasenhuetl says Werner still needs time to recover as second-placed Leipzig prepare for Saturday's home match against bottom side Darmstadt following two successive league defeats. "It was just a bit of work to activate the muscle, the fact he can do some light running is normal," said Hasenhuetl. "We already know that it will probably take some time. We are just doing what we can." —AFP



OOREDOO CUP FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT KICKS OFF

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, kicked off its third Ooredoo Cup football tournament last week in Hassan Abul Sports Center in Dasma. The tournament will be ongoing for a week, in a friendly environment away from the office life. This comes in alignment with Ooredoo's core values of caring, connecting and challenging, and the compa-

ny's philosophy of investing in its employees who are the cornerstone of the establishment. The tournament includes 16 teams from the company's different departments, with players from across the organization including the company's CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani, in addition to heads of other departments and units. The tournament

also includes players working in Ooredoo's head office from other organizations, such as Huawei, FASTtelco, Phono, as well as the security officers in the building. Commenting on this event, Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Director Mijbil Alayoub said: "We're happy to organize this event for the third consecutive year here in

Ooredoo Kuwait. The tournament aims to fortify the brotherly relationship between Ooredoo staff across the organization, and is an embodiment of our core values of caring and connecting." He added that the tournament is a great opportunity for employees to interact with the company's upper management in a

friendly setting, and a chance for employees to enjoy a friendly atmosphere with their families. He noted that the games include a number of awards for best player voted by the audience, in addition to best supporter. The event comes as part of Ooredoo's year-long plan of internal activities, aiming to engage employees and entertain them.



SHEIKH JABER AL-ABDALLAH AL-JABER AL-SABAH ANNUAL SHOOTING TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah annual shooting tournament will be held on Thursday and will last for three days in the 10m air pistol and rifle, skeet, trap, double trap and Olympic archery with the participation of club and National Guard shooters.



Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi

Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi said the Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah Cup tournament has its special status with the Kuwait shooting community, as all proudly remember the support it receives from Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah to the shooters and the club since it was established. He added that this contributed a lot to the launch of this noble sport and was able to make many achievements in the name of our dear country Kuwait.

Al-Osaimi said the club is keen on organizing this tournament each year in recognition of the support it receives from Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The closing ceremony will be Sunday 2, April at 7:30 pm as medals and prizes will be distributed to the winners.

KIB'S SHOWJUMPING TEAM EARNS NEW ACCOLADE

KUWAIT: The Kuwait International Bank (KIB) showjumping team recently earned a new impressive accolade, adding to its growing roster of achievements, with jockey Ahmad Al-Mudaheka nabbing first place in the 135cm competition at the First Champion Show Jumping Competition.

Al-Mudaheka, along with teammates Ghazi Al-Juraei Abdullah Hamadah and Ahmad Al-Ansari, compete locally and internationally under the banner of KIB's name.

This win comes as the latest in a string of achievements earned by the team, who had recently garnered a slew of prestigious accolades, both in Kuwait and abroad.

On his part, Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, congratulated the young equestrian on his exceptional performance and well-deserved win. He added: "We are incredibly proud to be a part of the journey of this amazing team.

These young men have proven themselves time and again to be true champions and praise-worthy sportsmen. They are a source of inspiration to us all, with their unwavering dedication and tireless commitment to their sport."

Najia further noted: "Our sponsorship of the showjumping team comes as part of our ongoing efforts to support talented youth in Kuwait across all fields, but especially in the realm of sports. It also comes in line with our multitude of ini-

tiatives geared towards supporting the local sports culture, where we are especially focused on sponsoring talented Kuwaiti athletes to enable them to participate in various local and international competitions."

Najia concluded by saying: "We wish Al-Mudaheka and the rest of the KIB team the best of luck in all their upcoming competitions. I am sure they will continue to make themselves and their country proud."



NFL

NFL OWNERS APPROVE OAKLAND RAIDERS' MOVE TO LAS VEGAS

SAN FRANCISCO: National Football League team owners gave the green light on Monday to the Oakland Raiders to move to Las Vegas, paving the way for the building of a \$1.9 billion stadium in the US gambling capital. The plan by Raiders owner Mark Davis, who has been the driving force behind the relocation effort, won the support of 31 of the league's 32 owners, with only the Miami Dolphins' ownership dissenting.

"My father used to say that the greatness of the Raiders was in its future," Davis said, referring to Al Davis, from whom he inherited the team in 2011.

"The opportunity to build a world-

class stadium in the entertainment capital of the world will give us the opportunity to achieve that greatness," he told reporters following the vote. The Raiders will play the 2017, 2018 and possibly 2019 seasons in Oakland before kicking off the 2020 season in Las Vegas, Davis said. It marks the second time Oakland fans will see the Raiders leave the city where they began play in 1960 in the old American Football League.

The team, known for its black and silver uniforms and working-class appeal, played in Los Angeles from 1982 to 1994 before returning to Oakland. The team won two Super Bowl championships in

Oakland in 1977 and 1981 and one in Los Angeles in 1984.

Oakland is also about to lose the Golden State Warriors National Basketball Association team, which is building an arena in neighboring San Francisco. Davis acknowledged some fans in Oakland would be disappointed and even angry at the decision, but said frustration should be directed at him and not the team's coaches or players. He said his goal in the meantime was to "bring a championship back to Oakland."

MOVE HAD BEEN IN DOUBT

The Las Vegas relocation plan

appeared to be all but dead after casino mogul Sheldon Adelson and later Goldman Sachs changed their minds earlier this year about helping to finance the stadium construction.

Adelson had pledged up to \$650 million toward construction of the domed stadium but pulled his support in January after the team presented a lease proposal without his knowledge.

The Raiders secured financing to replace Adelson's portion from Bank of America Corp.

An additional \$750 million will come from public funds via a visitor's tax on Las Vegas strip hotel rooms.

The Raiders will become the second major professional sports franchise to be based in Las Vegas. The National Hockey League's Vegas Golden Knights begin playing in the 2017-18 season.

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf made an 11th-hour push over the weekend to convince the owners and the NFL to delay the vote so she could promote a plan to keep the team in Oakland. It included a new, \$1.3 billion stadium.

The plan would also have set aside land for the Oakland Athletics baseball team, which currently shares the 51-year-old Oakland Coliseum with the Raiders. —Reuters

FIGURE SKATING

VIRTUE, MOIR RETURN IN ICE DANCE AT HELSINKI WORLDS

HELSINKI: Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir returned from a two-year hiatus following their silver medal at the Sochi Olympics to post the two highest ice dance scores of all time, the Canadian power couple making it clear they're still among the best in the world. They'll be chased at the World Figure Skating Championships by the most dominant nation. The US is sending a contingent to Helsinki this week led by reigning silver medalists Maia and Alex Shibutani that has every reason to believe it can knock Virtue and Moir from the top step of



MARSEILLE: In this Dec. 10, 2016, file photo, Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir of Canada compete in the Ice Dance Free Dance Program during ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Marseille, southern France. —AP

the podium. Madison Chock and Evan Bates are the reigning bronze medalists, while Madison Hubbell and Zach Donohue are coming off silver medals at Skate America and Trophée de France.

"We've competed against a lot of these teams for many years, so in some ways it

hasn't changed," Virtue said. "But what has changed is the depth in the field and the technical aspect."

"Skaters are executing extremely clean turns and technical callers are recognizing those," she said. "The specific elements are much more pertinent. You can't miss. But there's also a little more freedom creatively, which is nice. We watched the world championships last year from the stands and we were awed at the level of ice dance in the world right now." Their worlds in Finland begin with the short dance Friday and conclude with the free dance Saturday, and are an important benchmark heading into next year's Winter Olympics.

Along with the Canadians and Americans, all eyes at Hartwall Arena will be on the pairing of Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron. The French team has captured the past two gold medals, and will be trying for the first three-peat in ice dance in two decades.

But in those previous victories, Papadakis and Cizeron didn't have Virtue and Moir in the field.

WORLD RECORD

The 2010 Olympic gold medalists won gold at Skate Canada and the NHK Trophy last fall, then won their first Grand Prix Finals in December. In doing so, Virtue and Moir broke their own world record with 197.22 points, two points clear of what Americans Meryl Davis and Charlie White posted when they won gold at the 2014 Sochi Games.

Virtue and Moir credit much of their success to moving their training base to Montreal, and parting with longtime coach Marina Zoueva for Marie-France Dubreuil and Patrice Lauzon - who just happen to coach Papadakis and Cizeron, creating an intensely competitive camp. "We're very lucky we train at a rink that has seven teams going to the world championships, and kind of using that motivation to keep us moving," Moir said. "To be perfectly frank, this is probably the most prepared we've been for a world championships in our whole career." They aren't the only ones brimming with confidence. The Shibutani siblings followed their US title by taking silver at Four Continents behind Virtue and Moir, with the other two American teams nipping at their heels. —AP



RALEIGH: Detroit Red Wings' Henrik Zetterberg (40), of Sweden, controls the puck while Carolina Hurricanes' Victor Rask (49), of Sweden, chases in front of Red Wings goalie Petr Mrazek (34), of the Czech Republic, during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Raleigh, N.C., Monday. —AP

NHL

LACK LEAVES ON STRETCHER AS WINGS WIN IN OT AGAIN

RALEIGH: Andreas Athanasiou crashed into Eddie Lack as he scored in overtime on Monday night, giving the Detroit Red Wings a 4-3 NHL victory over Carolina on a play that left the Hurricanes goalie with a frightening injury. Lack remained down for several minutes before he was taken off on a stretcher, with both teams remaining on the ice and forming a semicircle to watch him. Lack flashed a thumbs-up sign as he was wheeled away. Team spokesman Mike Sundheim said Lack was moving his arms and legs after he was taken off the ice. An official review determined that the puck was in the net before Athanasiou made contact with Lack. Lack finished with 23 saves for Carolina.

LIGHTNING 5, BLACKHAWKS 4, OT

Yanni Gourde had a breakaway goal 4:25 into overtime as Tampa Bay rallied from a three-goal deficit to beat Chicago. Victor Hedman set up the winner with his third assist of the game. Tampa Bay, which trails Boston by a point for the second Eastern Conference wild card, got two goals from Jonathan Drouin. Ondrej Palat and Anton Stralman also scored, and Andrei Vasilevski, who got pulled 14 minutes into the first after allowing three goals on eight shots, returned to start the second and finished with 25 saves. Artemi Panarin, Patrick Kane, Tomas Jurco and Richard Panik scored for the Western Conference-leading Blackhawks, who were coming off a 7-0 loss Saturday night at Florida. Scott Darling stopped 25 shots.

PREDATORS 3, ISLANDERS 1

Viktor Arvidsson scored early in the second period and Jusse Saros stopped 24 shots as Nashville held on to beat New York for its fourth straight win. Kevin Fiala and Ryan Johansen also scored to help the surging Predators win for the seventh time in eight games and remain in control of third place in the Central Division. Josh Bailey scored and Thomas Greiss finished with 28 saves for the Islanders, who remained two points behind Boston for the second wild card in the Eastern Conference. New York has lost six of its last nine overall (3-5-1) and is 0-4-1 in its last five at Barclays Center since earning a point in 11 straight (9-0-2) on home ice.

BLUES 4, COYOTES 1

Jaden Schwartz scored twice and Jake Allen made 21 saves to help St. Louis continue its mastery over Arizona. St. Louis has won 10 straight games against Arizona, outscoring the Coyotes 42-13 in that time. The Blues have won 10 of their last 12 overall and trail Nashville by a point for third place in the Central Division. Arizona has lost six of its last seven. The teams meet again Wednesday in Phoenix. Alex Pietrangolo and Vladimir Tarasenko also scored for St. Louis, which is 16-1-1 against Arizona since 2011-12. Allen improved to 7-0 lifetime against Arizona. He has won eight of his last 10 starts, allowing just 13 goals. Arizona goalie Mike Smith stopped 24 shots.

SABRES 4, PANTHERS 2

Brian Gionta scored while playing his 1,000th

NHL results/standings

Calgary 4, Colorado 2; St. Louis 4, Arizona 1; Tampa Bay 5, Chicago 4 (OT); Detroit 4, Carolina 3 (OT); Buffalo 4, Florida 2; Nashville 3, NY Islanders 1.

Western Conference						Eastern Conference					
Central Division						Atlantic Division					
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Chicago	48	21	7	229	197	Ottawa	41	25	8	194	191
Minnesota	44	24	7	240	190	Toronto	35	24	15	227	219
Nashville	39	25	11	225	206	Boston	39	30	6	214	202
St. Louis	41	28	6	211	200	Tampa Bay	37	29	9	210	210
Winnipeg	34	35	7	225	241	Florida	33	31	11	195	213
Dallas	31	33	11	206	238	Buffalo	32	32	12	192	218
Colorado	20	52	3	147	253	Detroit	31	32	12	188	220
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division					
Anaheim	41	23	11	199	185	Washington	49	17	8	238	163
San Jose	42	26	7	201	182	Columbus	48	19	7	232	171
Edmonton	41	25	9	223	195	Pittsburgh	46	18	11	258	211
Calgary	43	29	4	211	204	NY Rangers	46	26	4	241	201
Los Angeles	35	32	7	180	186	NY Islanders	35	28	12	219	228
Vancouver	30	36	9	172	219	Carolina	33	27	14	196	212
Arizona	27	40	9	181	244	Philadelphia	35	32	8	197	220
						New Jersey	27	35	13	171	220
Eastern Conference						Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)					
Atlantic Division											
Montreal	42	24	9	204	187						

career game to help Buffalo beat Florida. Ryan O'Reilly, Zach Bogosian and Marcus Foligno also scored for the Sabres, who led 3-0 after Gionta's goal 1:25 into the second period. The goal drew a large cheer from the crowd after the 15-year NHL veteran was honored during a pregame ceremony. Robin Lehner stopped 30 shots, including punching his glove hand out to get a piece of Smith's backhand on a penalty shot 5:23 into the third period.

FLAMES 4, AVALANCHE 2

Sean Monahan scored his team-leading 26th goal and added three assists as Calgary inched

closer to clinching a playoff spot with a victory over Colorado. With six games remaining, Calgary can clinch a playoff spot for just the second time in the past eight seasons with a regulation win over Los Angeles today. Micheal Ferland, Troy Brouwer and Johnny Gaudreau, with an empty-netter, also scored for Calgary, which has won nine of its past 10 games at home. The Flames remain fourth in the Pacific Division but are just one point back of both the Edmonton Oilers and San Jose Sharks, who each hold a game in hand. Sven Andrighetto scored both goals for Colorado. —AP

FEDERER ROLLS INTO FOURTH ROUND AT MIAMI OPEN

KEY BISCAYNE: Roger Federer took a look around as he entered the stadium court at the Miami Open, immediately feeling the energy of the crowd. He gave them quite a show. Federer advanced to the fourth round at Key Biscayne on Monday, beating Juan Martin del Potro 6-3, 6-4. Federer, who was facing del Potro for the first time since 2013, never lost serve and improved to 15-1 this year. He broke del Potro twice, once in each set, and that was all he needed. "I feel like I earned it more," said Federer, the 2005 and 2006 champion on Key Biscayne. "I was more the aggressor. It was more my racket, and I like it that way." The first break put him up 5-3 in the first set, and the fourth-seeded Federer then fought off four break points in the ensuing game before closing out the set.

Another break for a 3-2 lead in the second set, not long after del Potro got his oft-problematic left wrist taped on a changeover, put

Federer in control. Serving at 4-3, Federer faced a break point - Argentine fans serenaded del Potro beforehand with "Ole! Ole! Ole!" - but escaped when a serve return sailed long. "I did my best," the 29th-seeded del Potro said. "He played well in the break-point moments and I think that was the only difference in the match."

It had the feel of a final, not a third-rounder on a Monday afternoon. The stadium court, largely empty for the first two matches of the day, was filled - with huge roars greeting both players as they entered for warmups, many fans wearing hats or shirts with Federer's "RF" logo, many others either donning Argentine soccer jerseys or carrying that nation's flag in support of del Potro.

"It was really a great, nice atmosphere," Federer said. "It was a lot of pleasure playing in nice weather, great opponent, great crowd. What else do you need?" —AP

CYCLING

DOCTOR IN DOPING ROW INSISTS HE GAVE WIGGINS LEGAL DRUG

LONDON: The doctor at the centre of a doping rules row involving British cycling great Bradley Wiggins has insisted he gave the multiple Olympic champion a legal decongestant. UK Anti-Doping is currently investigating just exactly what was in the contents of a now infamous 'jiffy bag' sent to Dr Richard Freeman at the end of the 2011 Criterium du Dauphine race in France amid suggestions it could have contained a banned substance.

Richard Freeman, the then Team Sky doctor, has said the package contained the legal decongestant Flumucil.

Freeman had been due to appear before a committee of British lawmakers on March 1 but was too ill to attend. In that hearing Nicole Sapstead, the head of United Kingdom Anti-Doping, said it was impossible for her to be certain about the contents of the package as Freeman had told her the relevant medical records had disappeared when his laptop was stolen while on holiday in Greece in 2014. It has been alleged that the package contained the banned corticosteroid triamcinolone.

Freeman was due to appear before the same committee of MPs on that date but withdrew, citing ill health.

However, the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee has now published a letter it received from Freeman in which he said the package contained "only Flumucil".

Freeman said the Flumucil was for use in a nebuliser and that many doctors believe it to be "helpful in managing stage riders, who... are prone to chestiness and excess respiratory mucus production" because of the demands of elite-level cycling.

Freeman added he had gone to the trouble of sending the medicine via a British cycling employee because he wished to avoid a repeat of the 2002 incident that cost British skier Alain Baxter an Olympic medal when he bought an over-the-counter nasal spray in the United

States that contained a banned substance not used in the UK version.

Team Sky, Wiggins and Freeman have all repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. Freeman said it would have been "desirable" if he kept a copy of his medical notes, adding: "I regret not doing this."

Last week five-time Olympic gold medalist Wiggins promised to "shock a few people" when he finally comments on the case after the UKAD inquiry is complete. Wiggins retired in November last year, some two months after his medical records were revealed by the Russia-based Fancy Bears computer hacking group. British Cycling, which has presided over one of the country's most successful Olympic sports of recent Games, has also come under fire for how it dealt with sexism allegations involving former coach Shane Sutton. Tuesday saw Britain's Press Association publish a letter from Liz Nicholl, the chairman of UK Sport, the national funding agency, to British Cycling in which she revealed her "serious concerns" about the way it was dealing with those allegations.

Sutton resigned in April last year after rider Jess Varnish alleged he had told her to "go and have a baby" following her failure to qualify for the Rio Olympics. —AFP



Bradley Wiggins



Goal Qualifiers

NEYMAR JR'S FIVE QUALIFIERS CONCLUDE IN HASSAN ABUL FIELDS ON APRIL 3 & 4

In a 4-day period, Goal Shaab (Shaab) and Premiere Academy (Bayan) fields crammed with participating teams who competed with immense passion and dedication to make it to the national final of Neymar Jr's Five in Kuwait. Competently, ten teams managed to qualify and only six remaining teams from Hassan Abul fields (Dasma) 2-day qualifiers (April 3 and 4) shall join the other teams

in the national final on April 6. Hassan Abul qualifiers will allow those who could not make it during the first two qualifiers to register their teams and try again, it also invites all amateur and professional players to join the final qualifiers to compete in the national final, and perhaps be lucky enough to go to Brazil for the World Final this summer.

Neymar Jr's Five's five-a-side championship by Red Bull is inspired by street football: it caters to amateurs and professional football players aged between 16-25 years, but for the first time two over-aged players are allowed as part of each squad. Tens of thousands of players will set out with the hope of making it all the way from regional qualifiers to their national final and on to

the World Final at the Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr in Praia Grande, Brazil. Neymar Jr himself is dreaming too – of more success with FC Barcelona and Brazil in 2017, and a long-term future in the country that excites him most. "It's a fun, fast and technical game – it's the kind of football I've always loved to play and this time we play it with a special twist

to it: the five-player teams lose one player each time they concede a goal until there are no players left, or the 10-minute game ends. This will be even more exciting," says Neymar Jr. Teams of 5 to 7 players can sign up now on www.neymarjr5.com for a chance represent Kuwait in Brazil and meet Neymar!



Abtal Barcelona managed to qualify to Kuwait's Final.



Goal Qualifiers



Goal Shaab Qualifiers



Goal Shaab Qualifiers



Goal Shaab Qualifiers



Goal Shaab Qualifiers

FORMER CAPTAIN VAUGHAN BACKS PLANNED ENGLISH T20 TOURNAMENT

LONDON: Former England captain Michael Vaughan has given his support after officials on Monday set in motion the procedure that could lead English cricket to have a new eight-team Twenty20 tournament.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chiefs, having seen the success of the Indian Premier League and especially Australia's city-based Big Bash Twenty20 tournaments, believe they need something similar to help them reach family audiences and encourage children to become fans of the sport.

However, the proposal has proved hugely controversial as, if enacted, it will mean that for the first time there is a major domestic cricket tournament in England that does not feature all 18 first-

class counties. At present, the ECB's rules state all those clubs must be involved in its competitions—the first-class County Championship, the 50-over One-Day Cup and the Twenty20 Blast.

But ECB chairman Colin Graves will formally ask his board on Tuesday to trigger a change in those regulations in a bid to initiate the process for creating the new tournament. "This new Twenty20 league is a risk but sometimes you have to gamble to grow a sport," wrote Vaughan in his Daily Telegraph column published online on Monday.

"Australia, India, Pakistan and the Caribbean already have big Twenty20 tournaments. We are just playing catch up and it is about time too.

"Those of us close to the game think

cricket is the centre of the world. But people outside cricket are not talking about our sport. It just does not grab the country's attention often enough outside Ashes series," the former Yorkshire batsman insisted.

The IPL and the Big Bash are the only senior domestic Twenty20 events in India and Australia respectively but the ECB plans to keep the Blast going alongside its new tournament, which it hopes to launch in 2020.

Monday saw the ECB present what it says was a "detailed overview" of its plans to its 41 members, comprising the counties, recreational boards and MCC.

'SECURING OUR FUTURE'

It looks as if the ECB will get the 31

votes they require for a rule change, with the first-class counties guaranteed £1.3 million (\$1.6 million, 1.5 million euros) annually for five years if the tournament comes into being.

"This is about growth and securing our future," said ECB chief executive Tom Harrison. "As guardians of the game, it is the responsibility of all of us to steer cricket to a strong future and to pass it on in even better shape."

Although the identities of the eight teams in the new event have yet to be revealed, it is expected that they would be city-based, with two in London, two in the north of England, two in the Midlands and one each in the west, including Wales, and the south. Although the teams won't have any

formal link to an existing county, they could all be based at an existing Test match ground, although there has been talk of playing matches at larger venues such as the London Olympic Stadium.

The ECB said the event would see each of the sides involved have a 15-man squad featuring three overseas players, selected by a draft as happens in the IPL.

They would compete in a 36-game tournament played over a 38-day window with four home games per team.

Vaughan, who said the new tournament might not have been needed had the Blast been shown on terrestrial television, added: "Now cricket has to try and grab new fans. I am convinced they are out there. — AFP

SOUTH AFRICA REELING BUT HAVE PRAISE FOR WILLIAMSON

HAMILTON: South Africa paid homage to a "fabulous" Kane Williamson yesterday after the New Zealand captain's 176 left the Proteas on the ropes with a day to play in the deciding final Test in Hamilton.

"We've got a mountain to climb," assistant coach Adrian Birrell said after South Africa were reduced to 80 for five at stumps on day four, 95 runs short of making New Zealand bat again.

"Kane Williamson's innings was a fabulous innings and you've got to sometimes doff your cap to a good player."

With Colin de Grandhomme also firing with the bat with a quickfire 57, New Zealand started the day seven runs ahead and added 168 before they were all out for 489. De Grandhomme then ignited the assault on the South African top order in the sixth over when he removed Dean Elgar for five and later took a smart catch to dismiss Hashim Amla for 19.

Theunis de Bruyn was run out for 12 in a bizarre mid-pitch collision when he was ball-watching and veered into Amla, leaving the batsmen sprawled on the ground.

Birrell said the Proteas' batting mayhem was part of the flow-on effect from Williamson's marathon innings.

"One hundred and sixty two overs is a long time to be in the field and it was a hard day. Players are fatigued and to bat on the back of that is always going to be difficult," he said.

"Once they got ahead of us by 100 runs it was always going to be a survival match." Faf du Plessis and Quinton de Kock were both 15 not out at stumps. Birrell said they were looking for de Kock, who set up their eight wicket win in the second Test to go 1-0 up in the series, to go on the attack when play resumes. "If he goes into a defensive mode it's probably the worst thing for him, so we look for him to score. Ninety-five

runs, we start getting the positive, and every run in the positive is one they have to get and is time wasted." The Zimbabwe-born de Grandhomme was not required for the first Test when Elgar scored 140 and 89 but in four innings since then he has removed the opener for scores of nine, 17, five and five.

The loss of Elgar should have signalled to South Africa it was time to dig in but instead wickets fell at regular intervals.

After the de Bruyn run out for 12, Amla progressed from eight to 19 when he edged a ball from Jeetan Patel which rebounded off Watling's glove to the sole slip of Grandhomme. Patel also bowled JP Duminy (13) and Matt Henry had Temba Bavuma caught behind for one to leave South Africa 59 for five, before du Plessis and de Kock survived 12 overs to stumps.

Should New Zealand level the series it will be a remarkable turnaround from the eight-wicket, three-day hiding they suffered in the second Test. It would also have been achieved without injured strike bowlers Trent Boult and Tim Southee as well as senior batsman Ross Taylor. After Williamson and Mitchell Santner (41) consolidated with a patient 88-run stand for the fifth wicket, de Grandhomme finished the innings with a flourish, smacking five fours and two sixes in his 70-ball stay. Williamson had looked assured throughout until he hooked Morne Morkel to Vernon Philander at long leg after 449 minutes in the middle. He faced 285 deliveries and struck 16 fours and three sixes. BJ Watling contributed 24, Henry 12 and Patel five before the innings folded with de Grandhomme gloving a Morkel flyer through to wicketkeeper de Kock.

Morkel took four for 100 and Kagiso Rabada four for 122 while de Kock held five catches behind the stumps. — AFP



DHARAMSALA: Indian team poses with the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after winning the Test cricket series against Australia in Dharamsala, India, yesterday. India won the four-match series 2-1. — AP

CRICKET

'UNBELIEVABLE' INDIA THRASH AUSTRALIA, TAKE SERIES

DHARAMSALA: Skipper Virat Kohli said Australia were no longer his friends after India wrapped up a bad-tempered Test series 2-1 with a thumping eight-wicket win in Dharamsala yesterday. Chasing 106 on the penultimate day of the fourth Test, opener Lokesh Rahul hit 51 not out at India's newest Test venue as the hosts seized back the Border-Gavaskar trophy from Australia.

India's stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane (38 not out) hit two sixes in a row off paceman Pat Cummins en route to the team's seventh successive Test series victory, a run that kicked off with their triumph in Sri Lanka in 2015. But Kohli, who sat out the final Test with a shoulder injury, said any warm feelings he had toward Australia before the Test had evaporated during the bitter contest that ensued between the world's top two sides. "I thought that was the case, but it has changed for sure. As I said in the heat of the battle, you want to be competitive but yeah I have been proven wrong," Kohli told a post-match press conference. "The thing I said before the first Test (about being friends), I have certainly been proven wrong, and you won't hear me say that ever again." The 28-year-old skipper caused a furore in the second Test after accusing his counterpart Steven Smith of repeatedly abusing the decision review system. But Kohli, who managed only 46 runs in the series, said the hard-fought series against Australia was the most satisfying of India's recent run, that included victories over New Zealand, England and Bangladesh in an extended home season.

"Unbelievable. This is the best series win so far," said Kohli, who received the Test mace on behalf of India for ending the season as the world's top side.

"The way the Australian team gave us a fight was really amazing, but the way the (India) guys kept bouncing back showed the true character of the side." India's cricket board rewarded their players who featured in all four Tests with a cash bonanza of \$77,000. Smith meanwhile apologised for letting emotions get the better of him. On Monday footage indicated he called Murali Vijay a "cheat" for wrongly claiming a catch. "I have been pretty intense throughout this series. I really wanted to do well for the team. At times I have been in my own bubble and have let my emotions slip. I apologise for that," said Smith.

JADEJA ON FIRE

In the maiden Test played in Dharamsala, India scored 332 in their first innings in reply to Australia's 300, before the tourists collapsed for just 137 on the third day.

On day four, India lost Vijay to fast bowler Pat Cummins and Cheteshwar Pujara to a run out. But these were the only scares for the hosts, who reached their target in less than 24 overs.

The main architect of India's victory was all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who was named man of the match and series for his exceptional performance. He top-scored with 63 in the first innings before taking three wickets with his left-arm spin during Australia's second knock. "The way the guys handled situations and the way Ajinkya led was outstanding," Kohli said.

"But the maturity and the responsibility shown by all the guys in the team was pleasing to see," he added. Kohli's own behaviour was parodied in the Australian media, some of whom disparagingly compared him to US President Donald Trump. The contest will also be remembered for the fine form of Aussie captain Smith, who amassed 499 runs with three centuries, becoming only the sixth visiting batsman to hit as many hundreds. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

HAMILTON, New Zealand: Scoreboard yesterday on the fourth day of the third cricket test between New Zealand and South Africa at Seddon Park.

South Africa, 1st Innings 314		New Zealand, 1st Innings (Overnight: 321-4)	
Tom Latham c de Kock b Morkel	50	Bavuma 2-0-7-0.	
Jeet Raval c de Kock b Morkel	88		
Kane Williamson c Philander b Morkel	176		
Neil Broom lbw b Rabada	12		
Henry Nicholls c de Kock b Rabada	0		
Mitchell Santner c Duminy b Rabada	41		
B.J. Watling b Maharaj	24		
Colin de Grandhomme c de Kock b Morkel	57		
Matth Henry c Elgar b Maharaj	12		
Jeetan Patel c de Kock b Rabada	5		
Neil Wagner not out	0		
Extras (12lb, 5w, 7nb)	24		
TOTAL (all out)	489		
Overs: 162.1. Batting time: 712 minutes.			
Fall of wickets: 1-83, 2-273, 3-293, 4-293, 5-381, 6-397, 7-443, 8-477, 9-489, 10-489.			
Bowling: Vernon Philander 33-7-79-0 (2nb), Morne Morkel 36.1-7-100-4, Kagiso Rabada 34-3-122-4 (5w, 5nb), Keshav Maharaj 50-8-118-2, J.P. Duminy 6-0-38-0, Dean Elgar 1-0-13-0, Temba			



HAMILTON: Theunis de Bruyn (L) is run out after he and Hashim Amla (R) of South Africa run into each other during day four of the third Test cricket match between New Zealand and South Africa at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

DHARAMSALA, India: Scoreboard yesterday on fourth day of fourth test cricket test between India and Australia at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium.

Australia 1st Innings: 300	Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-46
India 1st Innings: 332	Did not bat: Karun Nair, Wriddhiman Saha, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Umesh Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar.
Australia 2nd Innings: 137	Bowling: Pat Cummins 8-2-42-1, Josh Hazlewood 6-2-14-0, Steve O'Keefe 4.5-1-22-0, Nathan Lyon 5-0-19-0.
India 2nd Innings (overnight 19-0)	Result: India won by 8 wickets
Lokesh Rahul not out	51
Murali Vijay c Wade b Cummins	8
Cheteshwar Pujara run out	0
Ajinkya Rahane not out	38
Extras: (4b, 5lb)	9
TOTAL: (for 2 wickets)	106
Overs: 23.5. Batting time: 111 minutes	Series: India won 2-1
	Player of the match: Ravindra Jadeja, India
	Player of the series: Ravindra Jadeja, India

LANKA-BANGLADESH ODI WASHES OUT

DAMBULLA: Heavy rain washed out the second one-day international of a three-match series between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Dambulla yesterday.

Bangladesh could not start their innings due to the downpour after bowling out Sri Lanka for 311 runs in 49.5 overs. Fast bowler Taskin Ahmed grabbed a late hat-trick to finish

with 4-47. Kusal Mendis earlier hit 102 off 107 balls, his maiden one-day international century, and shared 111 runs for the second wicket with skipper Upul Tharanga to lay the foundation for Sri Lanka's innings. Tharanga, playing his 200th ODI, made 65. Bangladesh lead the series 1-0 thanks to their 90-run win in the opening match on Saturday. — AFP



DAMBULLA: Umpires S Ravi (L), Ranmore Martinez (C) and Ruchira Palliyaguruge (R) walk off the covers as rain stops play during the second one day international (ODI) cricket match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at The Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla yesterday. — AFP

CAPTAIN NEYMAR SEES BRAZIL AS BEST TEAM IN THE WORLD

SAO PAULO: In his first press conference as a Brazil player in more than 240 days, striker Neymar was not shy on Monday: he believes he is in the top moment of his career and plays for the best national team in the world.

The 25-year-old star also admitted he had to mature after a series of controversies on and off the pitch and promised Brazil would be one of the favorites in the next World Cup in Russia. "There was never a dependency on Neymar. This is Brazil. If focused, our team is the best," he

told journalists before the South American zone leader's World Cup qualifying match against seventh-place Paraguay on Tuesday. "We know this, we are humble enough to respect our adversaries, we have to play. Sometimes one part or the other didn't fit. But coach Tite arrived and made adjustments. We are playing football. The players are not so different - it is the way of playing. Now everyone turns up."

But Neymar also accepted he had to change to get to the current level of play.

"We only learn when we get hurt or do something wrong. I already argued unnecessarily. I got yellow and red cards, harmed myself, harmed my teammates. But time makes us more mature. Nowadays I only think about playing football, I am better in every aspect," Neymar said in a press conference, alongside Tite.

"Everyone needs time to get their heads straight so things calm down. I had my moment of being a little more silent, but now I am speaking again."

Beyond troubles on the pitch, Neymar also faces legal challenges in Spain due to suspicions of irregularities in his transfer from Santos to Barcelona. Tax authorities in Brazil are also investigating and have fined the striker, over which he is appealing. But that didn't stop the coach from giving the star the captaincy band for the game, a position Tite usually rotates. "Neymar deserves the band, he is a skill leader and he is maturing despite unhuman pressure," Tite said. Brazil's coach singled out a moment in his

team's 4-1 victory at Uruguay on Thursday to show how much Neymar, who was often accused by rivals of diving and simulating injuries, had changed.

"In the last three games he was fouled more than 50 times and still remained focused on his game. Before he scored the third goal in the previous match, he knew (Uruguayan defender) Coates had already been booked and would be sent off if he had fallen. But he stood on his feet and scored," Tite said.—AP



PARIS: Ivory Coast's midfielder Zoro Cyriac Gohibi scores a goal during the friendly football match Ivory Coast vs Senegal, on Monday, at the Charlety Stadium in Paris. — AFP

SOUTHGATE IRKED BY PALACE CHIEF'S ZAHA REMARK

LONDON: England manager Gareth Southgate has taken issue with Crystal Palace chairman Steve Parish's views on the international tug-of-war involving Ivory Coast winger Wilfried Zaha.

Zaha was capped twice by England, in 2012 and 2013, but switched allegiances to Ivory Coast, the country of his birth, late last year and has since made six appearances for them.

He scored a fine solo goal in Ivory Coast's 2-0 friendly win over Russia last week, prompting Parish to tweet: "Never wavered in my belief of @wilfriedzaha, why is this goal not for @England?"

"I'm not sure it's helpful as a comment. I wouldn't comment on his decisions," Southgate told reporters after England's 2-0 World Cup qualifying win over Lithuania at Wembley on Sunday.

"I know the chairman's got quite a vociferous view on it. Steve's an intelligent guy who's done a great job for that football club." Southgate, a former Palace captain, previously coached Zaha during his time as England Under-21s manager. The Palace winger, 24, was the first player he watched after being confirmed as England's perma-

nent manager last November, but by then it was too late.

"I didn't really appreciate there was this disappearing egg timer on him going to the Ivory Coast," Southgate admitted.

"I didn't want to just pick him because there was a chance that that might happen. The first opportunity I had as permanent manager, I did go and speak to him."

Despite his disappointment at missing out on Zaha, Southgate says he is only interested in players who have a burning desire to play for England.

"Any time you leave a player out of squads, you run the risk of them going across to another country," he said. "But in the end I have to focus on the players that are desperate to play for England."

"If you don't feel that internal, 100 per cent passion for playing for England, I'm not sure it's for me to sell that to you. It should be your desire to do it."

"The inherent desire to play for your country is the most important thing if we're going to be successful. Part of your identity as a national team has got to be pride in the shirt. So for me the commitment has to come from the player." —AFP

SOCCER

TOP EUROPE CLUBS DROP SUPER LEAGUE PROPOSAL

RUMMENIGGE WANTS FEWER INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

ATHENS: The decision-making process that led FIFA to increase the number of teams at the World Cup to 48 starting with the 2026 tournament is unacceptable, European Club Association (ECA) chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said yesterday.

The ECA, an organisation representing 220 soccer clubs, opposes the world governing body's decision which Rummenigge, the former Germany international who is also Bayern Munich's chief executive, has previously dismissed as "nonsense".

Rummenigge said yesterday there were also issues with transparency in that specific FIFA process, without elaborating.

"I believe it is quite clear FIFA knows we are unhappy that they increased the number of (World Cup) participants by 50 percent," Rummenigge told reporters after the ECA general assembly.

"This is a fact. The way of the decision-making and the transparency was not acceptable from our point of view. They are using our players, our employees in favour of the World Cup," he said. "We have every right to find a solution."

FIFA voted in January to increase the size of the World Cup from 32 teams to 48 from 2026, fulfilling a campaign promise of its president Gianni Infantino, who was elected last year.

FIFA says the tournament will not last longer than it does at present but big clubs in particular are angry at the prospect of losing even more players to their national teams.

CROWDED CALENDAR

Clubs have already complained about what they say is a crowded calendar of international matches for which they must release their players on a regular basis.

"I would call now especially on FIFA and (European soccer's governing body) UEFA to



ATHENS: European Club Association Chairman (ECA) Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (R) gives a press conference next to Juventus football club president Andrea Agnelli after the ECA general assembly in Athens, yesterday. — AFP

reduce the number (of international matches). We (have) arrived at a point where players have to play too many games," Rummenigge said.

These organisations should "think more about football and not financial and political issues," he added.

Last year the ECA supported controversial changes to the Champions League club competition, which critics said put finance before football. European body UEFA rearranged the group stage slots in favour of its four top-ranked

leagues—Spain, England, Germany and Italy—by guaranteeing them four places each among other changes. "The club competition reform is without a single doubt very good news for all clubs in Europe," Rummenigge, whose association has threatened to set up a pan-European league of its own in the past.

"Everyone in European club football... will benefit from this reform. The reform will make the Champions League more emotional and stronger than ever before." —Reuters

MESSI BANNED FOR FOUR INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

ZURICH: Argentina forward Lionel Messi has been banned from their next four competitive internationals, starting with Tuesday's World Cup qualifier in Bolivia, for swearing at a match official, FIFA said yesterday. The decision was announced less than six hours before kickoff of the match in La Paz and means that the five-times world player of the year will play in only one of Argentina's remaining five World Cup qualifiers.

His absence will be a severe blow to the two-times world champions who are struggling in the marathon South American campaign where their results have included home defeats by Ecuador and Paraguay and a 3-0 mauling by arch-rivals Brazil. FIFA said Messi had "directed insulting words at an assistant referee" during the 1-0 win over Chile on Friday, in which he scored the only goal from a penalty.

Television pictures showed him swearing at Brazilian linesman Emerson Augusto de Carvalho at the end of the match after being harried and fouled by Chilean player Jean Beausejour. The official patted him on the head and tried to calm him down but Messi kept ranting. FIFA said in a letter to the Argentine Football Association (AFA), published by Argentine media, that the incident was not detailed in the referee's report at the time and was brought to their attention by the media. According to the letter, Carvalho said he did not understand at the time what Messi was saying. "I only realised he was swearing afterwards on reading the press," he said.

Messi, 29, will also miss games away to Uruguay and home to Venezuela and Peru. The Barcelona forward will be eligible again when Argentina visit Ecuador on Oct. 10. Argentina are third in the 10-team South American group with

22 points from 13 games but have only a two-point cushion over sixth-placed Chile, with Colombia (21) and Ecuador (20) sandwiched in between. The top four qualify directly for the tournament in Russia and the fifth side play off against a team from a different confederation for another place. "This decision is in line with the FIFA Disciplinary Committee's previous rulings in similar cases," FIFA said.

Messi has not enjoyed the same success with Argentina as he has with his club Barcelona and announced his international retirement earlier this year before back-tracking on his decision.

He was frustrated after they lost 1-0 after extra-time to Germany in the World Cup final in 2014, then on penalties to Chile in the Copa America the following year and again on penalties to Chile in the Copa Centenario final last year. — Reuters



BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's forward Lionel Messi (2nd-R) argues with second assistant referee Marcelo Vangasse (2nd-L) next to Brazilian referee Sandro Ricci (L) and first assistant referee Emerson Augusto de Carvalho (R) in the half time of their 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia South American qualifier football match against Chile, at the Monumental stadium in Buenos Aires, on March 23. FIFA yesterday suspended Messi for four Argentina games. — AFP

EURO HEARTACHE AND VEGAN LIFESTYLE FUEL DEFOE

LONDON: Fuelled by the pain of past rejections and revitalised after turning vegan, Jermain Defoe insists he can defy father time by firing England to the World Cup.

Less than a year ago, Defoe feared his England career was over after Roy Hodgson ignored the striker's fine form with Sunderland and left him out of the Euro 2016 squad.

Defoe was devastated and the blow was even tougher to take because Hodgson didn't deem it necessary to personally deliver the news. "I didn't get a call. I found out on the telly," he said. "I still think about it. It keeps the fire in my belly because I love playing for my country."

Despite the sting of that snub, the 34-year-old had always relished every opportunity to pull on an England shirt and he refused to give up hope of a recall.

Fast forward to Sunday and it was no wonder Defoe wore a smile as wide as the famous Wembley arch when he marked his first England appearance since 2013 with his first international goal in over four years. Steering home Raheem Sterling's cross with a typically predatory finish, Defoe opened the scoring in Sunday's 2-0 World Cup qualifying win over Lithuania at Wembley.

Well aware it wasn't just Hodgson who regarded him as yesterday's man, it was a cathartic moment for Defoe and the former Tottenham striker said: "I never gave up."

"Never once did I think 'I'm going to retire from international football.' With the previous manager I didn't really feel I was getting the opportunity."

"Last season I was scoring goals, but I wasn't selected for the Euros even though I finished the season strong."

"I've worked so hard and I still feel sharp. I always thought if I did get selected I could still score goals at this level."

WELCOME TONIC

Having scored 14 goals for Sunderland

this term, Defoe's strong showing against Lithuania suggests he will remain in England manager Gareth Southgate's plans for the foreseeable future.

At an age when many of his peers have faded into obscurity, Defoe looks as sharp as ever and he puts his longevity down to a new-found commitment to sports science and his girlfriend's successful attempt to make him go vegan. "I'm into sports science. I want to do things right and looking after myself," he said.

"I've got a better understanding of my body now. It's stuff I don't necessarily enjoy, but I'm trying to do it like I'm loving it. It's working because I'm not feeling fatigued at the end of games. "So it's aquatherapy, massage, eating the right things. I'm trying to turn vegan."

"My girlfriend said I've got to do it. She puts on these documentaries and stuff."

"It's a funny one because when I go to my mum's she's got every meat you can imagine on the table."

In an era when many young players seem to regard England duty as something to be endured rather than enjoyed, Defoe's delight at his return to the international stage is a welcome tonic.

The blissful sensation of scoring for England in front of his family and the seriously ill young Sunderland fan he has befriended made everyone of those ice baths, tofu dinners and early morning fitness sessions worth the effort. And he isn't finished yet. Saving Sunderland from relegation would be a start and there's still the possibility of making an impact at the World Cup next year.

"I don't find it hard doing all this. I love the feeling of scoring goals," he said.

"When I get in the ice bath I don't want to do it, but I think surely I will be rewarded on a Saturday."

"My mum always said it's not how you start, it's how you finish. I'm 34 and still scoring goals for my country." —AFP

Sports

Virtue, Moir return in ice dance at Helsinki worlds



'Unbelievable' India thrash Australia, take series 2-1



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2017

MESSI BANNED FOR FOUR INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

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TEHRAN: Iran's Mehdi Taremi (17) plays against China's Zhang Linpeng during the 2018 World Cup qualifying football match between Iran and China at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

IRAN CLOSE IN ON W CUP, AUSTRALIA BEAT UAE

SYDNEY: Iran took a significant step towards qualifying for next year's World Cup finals with a 1-0 win over China yesterday that pushed Marcello Lippi's team closer to the brink of elimination. Mehdi Taremi scored the only goal of the game less than a minute after half-time as Iran remained unbeaten in the third round of Asia's qualifying tournament for Russia 2018.

Carlos Queiroz's team moved on to 17 points from seven games, four clear of second-placed South Korea, who got their own

campaign back on track with a 1-0 win over Syria that reduced the mounting pressure on coach Uli Stielike. China, however, failed to build on last week's morale-boosting win over Stielike's side in front of a packed-out Azadi Stadium. They remain fifth in the group, eight points adrift of the Koreans, who occupy the second of the two automatic qualifying berths. "The experience of the last two rounds has shown that there is still room for us to improve," said Lippi, who took over as China coach in October. "They were two good

matches, but when facing a strong side like Iran our defence needs to improve."

Uzbekistan put a disappointing run of results behind them with a 1-0 win over Qatar thanks to Shanghai SIPG midfielder Odil Ahmedov's curling free kick.

Qatar, who will host the 2022 World Cup finals, are bottom of the group with four points, nine outside the automatic qualification places with three games remaining.

Japan confirmed Thailand's elimination with a 4-0 thumping at Saitama Stadium in

Group B that strengthened their own qualifying hopes. Japan are three points ahead of third placed Australia, who picked up their first win in five games with a 2-0 victory over the United Arab Emirates, whose coach Mahdi Ali resigned after the game.

"Very proud of the players, it was a challenging 10 days for us," Australia coach Ange Postecoglou told Fox Sports.

"We always know at home we're a dominant team. We worked awfully hard, we pressed the way we wanted to and created

opportunities. And we deserved the victory," added Postecoglou, whose side won with goals from Jackson Irvine and Mathew Leckie. Ali stepped down after his side slipped to their second defeat in less than a week, following last Thursday's reverse against Japan. That leaves the UAE, who had high hopes of qualifying, in fourth place in Group B, four points behind the Australians. Saudi Arabia, who led the group at the start of the day, face 2007 Asian Cup winners Iraq in Jeddah in the final game of the round later. — Reuters

BASKETBALL

SPURS DROP CAVS TO 2ND IN EAST, WESTBROOK'S THUNDER ROAR BACK

SAN ANTONIO: Kawhi Leonard scored 25 points to help the San Antonio Spurs dismantle the ailing Cleveland Cavaliers 103-74 on Monday night in a showdown that turned into a major letdown for the defending NBA champions. LaMarcus Aldridge and Pau Gasol added 14 points apiece for the Spurs, who won their fifth straight. Cleveland (47-26) dropped its second in a row, set a season low for points and fell a half-game behind Boston (48-26) for the top seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs. Cavaliers star LeBron James was injured late in the third quarter after taking an elbow to the base of his neck. He remained on the bench for a while receiving medical attention, then headed toward the locker room and didn't return to the game. James finished with 17 points, eight rebounds and eight assists in 29 minutes. Kyle Korver (foot) and Iman Shumpert (knee) sat out with injuries for Cleveland. San Antonio (57-16) is two games behind Golden State for the league's best record entering a home showdown with the Warriors today.

THUNDER 92, MAVERICKS 91

Russell Westbrook hit a pull-up jumper with seven seconds left as Oklahoma City erased a 13-point deficit in the final four minutes to beat Dallas. Westbrook scored 37 points, including 16 in the fourth quarter, with 13 rebounds and 10 assists for his third straight triple-double and 37th of the season. The Thunder finished on a replay reversal with 13 seconds to go. Westbrook then hit the decisive shot from just beyond the free throw line over Wesley Matthews. Westbrook scored 12 of the final 14 points. Harrison Barnes missed a long 3-pointer just before the buzzer, clinching the first losing season for the Mavericks (31-42) since 1999-2000, the season that owner Mark

Cuban bought the team with Dirk Nowitzki, who's still with the team, in his second year. The Thunder (42-31) won for the seventh time in nine games since a four-game losing streak that matched a season high.

KNICKS 109, PISTONS 95

Derrick Rose scored 27 points and Kristaps Porzingis had 25 as New York handed Detroit another damaging defeat. Carmelo Anthony added 21 points for the Knicks after missing two games with a sore left knee. New York snapped a five-game losing streak and avoided playoff elimination. Marcus Morris scored 20 points but the Pistons dropped their fourth straight and fell 11 1/2 games behind Miami for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. Ish Smith had 15 points while former starting point guard Reggie Jackson didn't play. Andre Drummond had 10 points and 15 rebounds for the Pistons, who have lost seven of eight.

RAPTORS 131, MAGIC 112

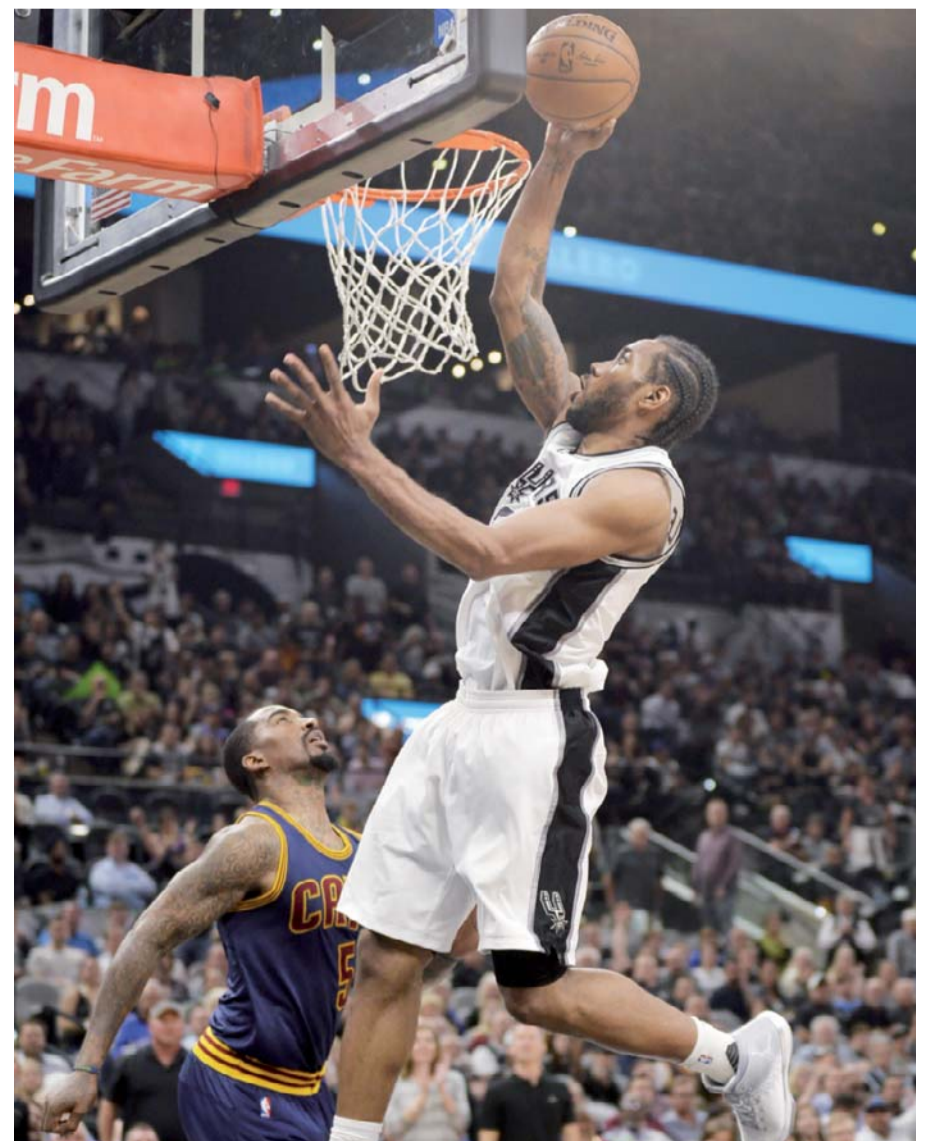
DeMar DeRozan scored 36 points and Cory Joseph had 15 points and 13 assists as Toronto defeated Orlando for its sixth straight victory. DeRozan, selected the Eastern Conference player of the week earlier in the day, scored 18 in the first quarter. Joseph added six rebounds and Jonas Valanciunas had 17 points and nine rebounds for the Raptors (45-29). Elfrid Payton had 22 points and nine assists for Orlando (27-47). Evan Fournier added 20 points, and Nikola Vucevic had 12 points and 15 rebounds. It was the first game between the teams since the Raptors traded Terrence Ross to the Magic for Serge Ibaka in February. Ross finished with 17 points, while Ibaka had 16 points and seven rebounds.

KINGS 91, GRIZZLIES 90

Darren Collison scored 23 points and made two crucial free throws in the closing seconds to help Sacramento hand slumping Memphis its fourth consecutive loss. The victory was the second straight for the Kings, both over playoff-bound teams. Sacramento rallied from an 18-point deficit in the final five minutes to defeat the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday. Mike Conley had 22 points and nine assists for the Grizzlies, and Zach Randolph added 17 points and 15 rebounds. Memphis has lost nine of 13 and sits in seventh place in the Western Conference. Randolph hit two free throws with 32.9 seconds left, giving the Grizzlies a 90-89 lead. But then Collison made both free throws to put the Kings up by one with 5.7 seconds left. Randolph missed an open 3-pointer with a second left that would have won it for Memphis. The Grizzlies played without leading rebounder and second-leading scorer Marc Gasol, who missed his second consecutive game with a strained left foot. Buddy Hield had 14 points for the Kings, and Willie Cauley-Stein contributed 12 points and nine rebounds.

JAZZ 108, PELICANS 100

Rudy Gobert had 20 points, 19 rebounds and five blocks to lead Utah over New Orleans. Rodney Hood scored 20 points, Joe Ingles added 19 and George Hill chipped in with 17 as that Jazz trio combined to make a dozen 3-pointers. Utah (45-29) swept the season series 3-0 after dominating from the perimeter for four quarters. Anthony Davis had 36 points and 17 rebounds for New Orleans, which played its second consecutive game without injured center DeMarcus Cousins (sprained ankle). Jrue Holiday scored 19, but the Pelicans (31-43) lost for only the third time in nine games. — AP



SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Spurs forward Kawhi Leonard dunks during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Cleveland Cavaliers, Monday, in San Antonio. — AP

Kuwait Times ^{ANNIVERSARY} 55 _{YEARS} BUSINESS

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US consumer confidence
hit 16-year peak in March

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Ethihad's Dreamliner
starts services into Amman

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S Africa's Gordon
returns, awaits
decision on sacking

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KUWAIT'S TRADE SURPLUS DROPS TO 11-YEAR LOW

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BIRMINGHAM: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May, during the Qatar-UK Business and Investment Forum in Birmingham yesterday. The energy-rich nation of Qatar says it plans to invest 5 billion pounds in the British economy within the next half decade. — AP

QATAR TO INVEST 5BN POUNDS IN UK OVER 3-5 YEARS DOHA EYES MORE GAS SUPPLIES TO BRITAIN AFTER BREXIT

DUBAI: The energy-rich nation of Qatar says it plans to invest 5 billion pounds in the British economy within the next half decade. Prime Minister Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Thani announced the \$6.3 billion investment at an investment forum in London. He said the outlay would come over the next three to five years through investment funds and other "relevant parties" in the Gulf Arab country, a major exporter of natural gas.

The 2022 World Cup host nation has already invested heavily in Britain. Its holdings include a stake in British bank Barclays and several prominent London properties, including the iconic Harrods department store. The OPEC member announced plans to invest \$35 billion over five years in the United States in 2015.

Qatar sees Britain's exit from the European Union as an opportunity to boost supplies of liquefied natural gas to the world's fifth-largest economy and is open to investing in British energy assets, Qatar's energy minister said.

The Gulf state has 40 billion pounds (\$50 billion) of investments in Britain and delivers 90 percent of Britain's imports of liquefied natural gas. Qatar, the world's biggest exporter of LNG, pledged 5 billion pounds of investment in Britain on Monday in a show of support as Prime Minister Theresa May begins the formal process of negotiating a divorce settlement with the EU.

"The UK will have a new era post-Brexit ... The negotiations will start among Europeans and nobody is extremely clear about where the

negotiations will lead to," energy minister Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada said in an interview late on Monday.

"However, we can sense the possibility of the UK's manufacturing power going higher, and with that the need for energy. For that, Qatar will always be there to supply the energy required. Certainly we can contribute to the UK's need." Britain started receiving LNG from Qatar in 2008 via ships that dock at South Hook in Kent, one of Europe's largest LNG terminals, which is owned by Qatar.

Qatar faces rising competition in Asia from other LNG producers as new projects in the United States and Australia come online in the next few years, and Doha has said it will focus on expanding contracts in Europe. "Europe is an

important market. The UK is a very important market," Sada said.

When global oversupply of gas peaks in the next two to three years, a possible rise in demand for energy in Europe and Britain could present an opportunity for Qatar, he added.

Doha has made billions of dollars securing long-term contracts with Asian consumers such as Japan and has the world's largest fleet of LNG carriers. Like other Gulf economies, Qatar is trying to restructure its economy to rely less on hydrocarbons, and Sada said Britain could contribute. "They can also help us in our endeavor of diversifying the economy - we can complement each other."

Sada said Qatar supported a free-trade agreement with Britain that the six-nation Gulf

Cooperation Council, which also includes Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, hopes to draw up ahead of Brexit to ensure preferential arrangements. "Qatar is supporting that. That would be excellent. Qatar will do its best to further this agreement." The head of Qatar Petroleum has said Qatar plans to increase its investments in upstream energy assets overseas. It has been exploring for gas in Cyprus and looking at assets in Mozambique, sources told Reuters last year.

Asked whether Qatar would consider investing in British energy assets, Sada said: "Although I cannot mention projects by name, Qatar is fully open-minded about considering projects as long as they are economically viable." — Agencies

BRITAIN'S NEW POUND COIN ENTERS CIRCULATION

LONDON: Britain's new £1 coin with the symbols of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland goes into circulation from yesterday on the eve of the launch of a Brexit process that has put national unity in doubt. The 12-sided coin is the first change to the shape of the £1 coin since its introduction in 1983. Britain's finance ministry said the new coin would be "the most secure of its kind in the world" to prevent a rise in counterfeiters.

About three percent of the current round-shaped coins are fakes. The new pound coins will be thinner, lighter and slightly bigger than the old ones and will have a hologram-like image that changes from a "£" symbol to the number "1" when viewed from different angles. "Staying ahead of sophisticated counterfeiters remains a constant challenge and this coin helps in that battle," said Adam Lawrence, head of the Royal Mint, which is producing around 1.5 billion new coins.

The new bi-metallic coin has the same shape as the popular old "Threepenny bit" that was introduced in 1937 and went out with decimalization in 1971. Queen Elizabeth II's portrait will be on the obverse side of the coin, while England's rose, Scotland's thistle, Wales's leek and Northern Ireland's shamrock will be on the other side, held in a crown.

The old coins cease to be legal tender on October 15. Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday is set to formally notify the European Union

of Britain's intention to leave the bloc in a process that has caused a steep plunge in the value of the pound compared to the euro and dollar. The United Kingdom as a whole voted to leave the

EU in a referendum last year. Most voters in Scotland and Northern Ireland wanted the UK to stay in the EU, but a majority in England and Wales opted for Britain to leave the bloc. — AFP



LONDON: In this posed photograph, newly-issued 12-sided £1 (one pound) coins are pictured in London yesterday. Britain's new £1 coin with the symbols of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland went into circulation from yesterday on the eve of the launch of a Brexit process that has put national unity in doubt. — AFP

BRITAIN'S POUND STEADY ON EVE OF BREXIT TRIGGER

LONDON: Currency traders showed little sign of heightened nerves yesterday ahead of Britain's formal launch of negotiations on leaving the European Union. British Prime Minister Theresa May will trigger Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty with a formal notification of Britain's intent to leave the bloc on Wednesday, kicking off a two-year period of exit talks.

Most analysts said the actual triggering of Article 50 will only have symbolic significance for investors, with the real driver for sterling being how negotiations with the EU will play out, and the health of the British economy going forward. "We don't expect to see anything market moving in the Article 50 letter itself," said Nomura currency strategist Jordan Rochester.

Investors' main fear is that a "hard" Brexit-one in which Britain would lose preferential access with its largest trading partner-would damage the British economy, which is showing signs of faltering. Worries are also growing that Britain's exit negotiations could be tough and protracted, as both Theresa May and European leaders take bold opening stances.

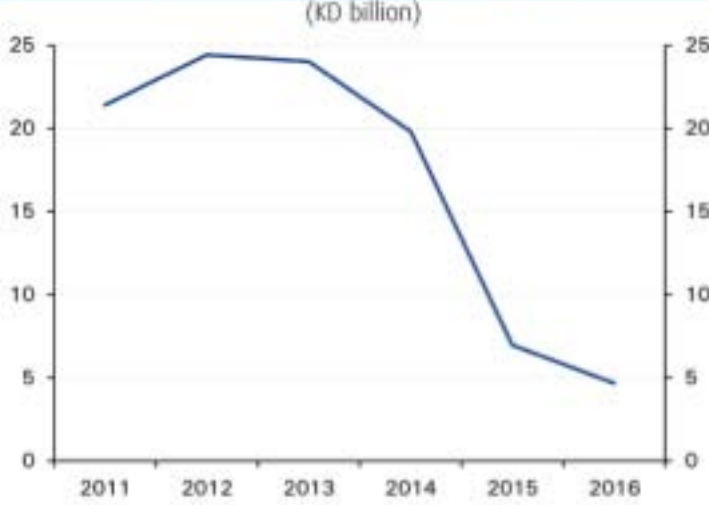
"The market will care whether the exit and new arrangement discussions can take place in parallel, or if the EU sticks to a sequential process with exit talks first and nothing else

discussed until they are finished. Given that would lengthen the talks, it is likely to increase that 'cliff edge' pricing," Rochester added, saying that would be negative for sterling. The pound, which has yooyed in the past month between \$1.21 and \$1.26 was flat on the day around \$1.2553. It was also flat at 86.52 pence per euro. "What many market participants may be underestimating is how difficult the negotiations would be ... because the pound has been doing quite well recently and hasn't been under pressure much," said Thu Lan Nguyen, a currency strategist with Commerzbank in Frankfurt.

Stronger-than-expected UK inflation and signs the Bank of England is edging towards raising interest rates have helped the pound over the past two weeks. It hit a two-month high of \$1.2615 on Monday in a move driven chiefly by broader weakness of the dollar. But uncertainty surrounding the terms of Britain's exit from the EU continues to weigh on the currency, still down by nearly 20 percent against the dollar since last June's Brexit vote.

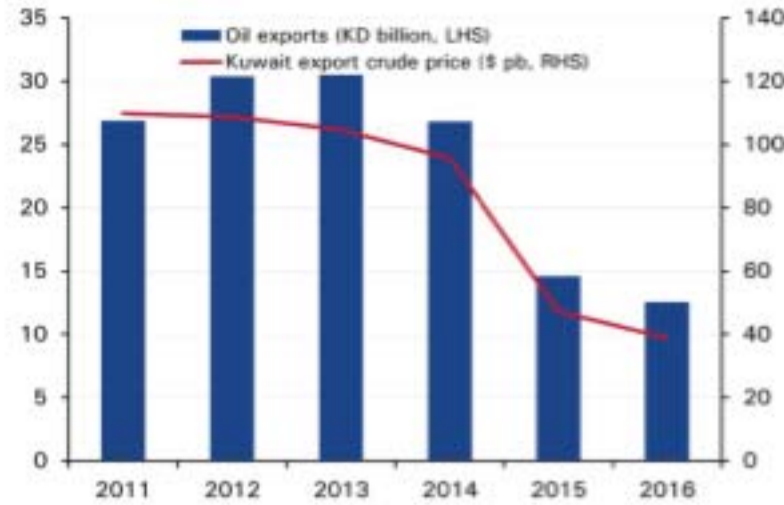
Adding to unknowns for investors have been rumblings of another Scottish independence referendum, which threatens a potential breakup of the UK just as it departs the EU. — Reuters

Chart 1: Balance of trade in goods



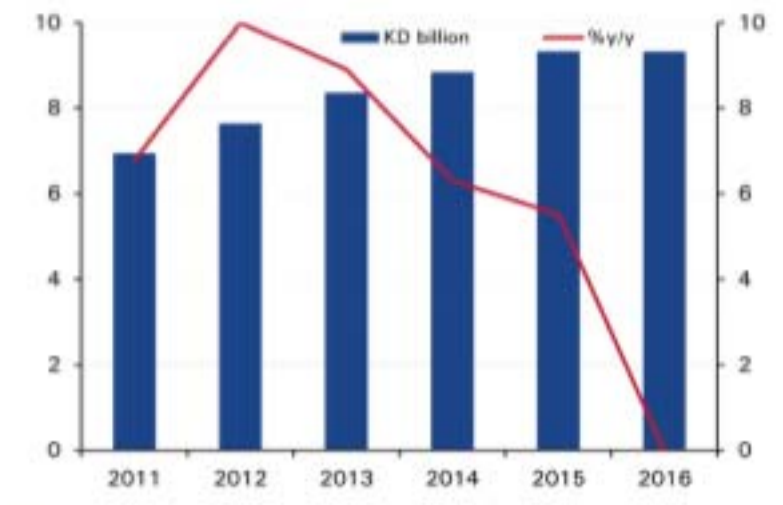
Source: Central Statistical Bureau

Chart 2: Oil exports



Source: Central Statistical Bureau, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation

Chart 3: Imports



Source: Central Statistical Bureau

KUWAIT'S TRADE SURPLUS DROPS TO 11-YEAR LOW

KUWAIT: Kuwait's trade surplus retreated to an 11-year low of KD 4.7 billion in 2016 or 14 percent of GDP, as oil export earnings remained weak against a backdrop of limited import growth. Oil export revenues continued to be weighed down by lower oil prices, though we expect them to pick up in 2017 amid a sustained recovery in prices. Meanwhile, imports were flat in 2016, with the weakness mainly stemming from the continued contraction in consumer goods imports. By contrast, growth in imports of capital goods remained healthy, reflecting the strong momentum seen in capital spending and investment.

Oil export receipts declined by 14.1 percent in 2016 to KD 12.5 billion, its lowest level in just over a decade. Oil

NBK Economic Update

export revenues remained in decline amid a depressed global oil price environment in 2016. The Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) price was down 18 percent during the year after logging in an annual average of \$39 per barrel. However, oil export revenues are expected to recover in the near-to-medium term on the back of a sustained recovery in oil prices. KEC has averaged \$52 per barrel during 1Q17 to-date through mid-March, almost double the reading witnessed during the same period last year.

Non-oil exports also fell in 2016 mainly due to markedly lower ethylene prices. Non-oil export earnings, which consist predominantly of ethylene, declined by 17 percent in 2016 on the back of an 11 percent drop in ethylene prices. A stronger Kuwaiti dinar against most major currencies (with the exception of the US dollar) has also dampened growth in non-oil export receipts. However, this segment is expected to recover in the near-to-medium term, as ethylene prices recover; indeed, prices are already up 23 percent

y/y through the middle of March. Import growth was flat in 2016, as healthy gains in imports of capital goods were offset by weakness in consumer goods imports. Consumer goods imports were down 9.0 percent in 2016, on the back of softer consumer demand, particularly in the passenger motor cars component. Imports of passenger motor cars were down by 20 percent in 2016, starkly higher than the 2.5 percent decline witnessed in 2015. By contrast, imports of capital goods (a good gauge of the level of investment in the economy) remained healthy, rising by a strong 10.9 percent in 2016, reflecting a resilient non-oil economy and the government's improved implementation of its development projects.

FADING OIL INDUSTRY BRINGS ECONOMIC CRISIS IN GABON

LIBREVILLE/DAKAR: Charles Lekabi lived comfortably as a driver for an oil company in Gabon's industrial town of Port Gentil until he was laid off three years ago.

"Today, I struggle to pay my rent," said Lekabi, who worked for French oil company Total for seven years before he was let go for economic reasons. "Since I was laid off, I bought a car to do taxi rides. At least with this car I can continue to feed my family." A steep drop in oil prices in 2014 hit the oil industry worldwide. In OPEC member Gabon, production is in decline, the recovery is slow and may not come at all.

The oil sector has accounted for 80 percent of exports, 45 percent of gross domestic product, and 60 percent of budget revenue on average in the past five years, according to World Bank data. With revenues declining and the population feeling the squeeze, President Ali Bongo is facing the strongest opposition in years and some social upheaval including a spate of strikes by oil workers demanding better pay and new contracts.

"Depleting oil revenues are pushing Gabon's economy towards the cliff edge," said Maja Bovcon, senior Africa analyst at global risk firm

Verisk Maplecroft. "Gabon is confronted with an unlucky combination of political and economic circumstances." Bongo said that economic growth last year was expected to have reached 3 percent, a slowdown from the average of 6 percent since he first took office in 2009.

The budget was cut by over 5 percent in 2017 because of declining oil production and prices. Income per capita rocketed from \$3,090 in 2000 to \$10,410 in 2014 as oil prices shot higher. But it fell in 2015 for the first time in 15 years, as oil prices slid. Companies including two of the largest producers Total and Royal Dutch Shell have scaled back, costing thousands of jobs. Exploration in deep water off the pristine Atlantic coastline that was supposed to make up for falling onshore output has yielded little.

Harnessing anger

The former French colony is also still reeling from a disputed election last September that turned violent in the beachside capital Libreville, harnessing anger among poor people who say oil revenues never trickle below the moneyed elite. Bongo was initially handed victory, but opposition leader Jean Ping called the election a

sham, declared himself president and demanded a recount in the Haut-Ogooue province, a Bongo stronghold where initial results showed the president won 95 percent of the votes on a 99.9 percent turnout.

The case went to the Constitutional Court, which ruled in Bongo's favor. Bongo, whose family has ruled the country of nearly 2 million for 49 years, has said he will diversify the economy beyond oil into mining, forestry and agriculture. He aims to rein in spending and increase social programs, though it is unclear how much progress has been made so far.

Bongo said last year Gabon was building a manufacturing industry for wood products instead of only exporting the raw commodity from its forests and was developing mining by producing manganese. He also said the government was distributing land to boost agriculture.

The International Monetary Fund said that progress had been made to diversify the economy but recommended "decisive action" to address short-term revenue problems, without elaborating. In a statement in February the IMF said it had begun discussions about a "possible financial arrangement" with Gabon.

PRESSURE GROWS ON NIGERIA'S CB CHIEF

LAGOS/LONDON: Earlier this year, an open letter in the Nigerian media from a group of businessmen attacked the "shameful" record of central bank governor Godwin Emefiele and demanded that he should go. With Africa's largest economy in recession for the first time in 25 years, the letter reflects growing anger directed at Emefiele, whose insistence on keeping the naira artificially high is believed to have worsened Nigeria's oil-price induced slump.

Three years into his tenure, the flak is flying around the 55-year-old career banker once admirably described by colleagues as a discreet man who gives little away. The advertisement, which appeared in several newspapers and online news portals, is the most prominent expression so far of widespread discontent with the government's naira policy among senior figures from the worlds of business and investment. "Whatever hard-won reforms we had, (the benefit) has been undone in the past two years by (Emefiele)," one of the signatories, accountant Feyil Fawehinmi, told Reuters. Another ad is being planned, he said.

Emefiele imposed currency restrictions in 2015, defying bankers' advice to float the naira and raise interest rates as some other oil exporters had done. Investors fled as the once promising emerging market was ejected from key bond indexes. Economists and investors say they have given up seeking any clues from Emefiele, who once read out a 32-

page statement on interest rates without referring to the issue uppermost on his audience's mind - the frozen naira.

They are scathing about Emefiele, citing policies that have choked off the flow of dollars to official channels, fuelled a naira black market and ravaged domestic industry. "Emefiele is responsible for the currency mismanagement. If someone achieves to beat down a currency like that, then a foreign investor like me can't support that," Lutz Roehmeyer, director at Landesbank Berlin Investment, told Reuters. "Absolutely no one trusts or believes that this central bank is still able to fix this," he said, describing the forex policy sarcastically as a "masterstroke" that destroyed the economy.



Godwin Emefiele

Strong currency
That policy accords with President Muhammadu Buhari's desire for a strong currency. A 74-year-old former military ruler, Buhari has reminisced publicly about the 1980s when the naira traded at 1.3 per dollar, apparently viewing currency strength as a matter of national pride. But Kingsley Moghalu, a former central bank deputy governor, says that does not absolve Emefiele of blame.

"Of course, there are many concerns that the bank is not being run in an independent manner in terms of policy ... But we all know that one of the burdens central bankers always have to carry is to do the right thing even if it is not popular," said Moghalu, who teaches now at Tufts University. —Reuters

TESCO HANDED \$268M PENALTIES

LONDON: Supermarket Tesco has agreed to a fine and compensation costs totalling £214 million (\$268 million, 247 million euros) after an accounting scandal at Britain's biggest retailer, the Serious Fraud Office said yesterday.

Under an SFO deal that draws a line under the scandal stretching back three years, Tesco will not face prosecution. However, charges have previously been brought against three former Tesco executives, who will face trial over alleged fraud and false accounting. "Tesco... has in principle reached a deferred prosecution agreement with the UK Serious Fraud Office regarding historic accounting practice," the supermarket giant said in a statement. This "is a voluntary agreement under which Tesco Stores Limited will not be prosecuted provided the business fulfils cer-

tain requirements, including paying a financial penalty of £129 million".

In addition, Tesco will compensate shareholders by around £85 million in total. Tesco had been accused of overstating profits by £326 million between February and September 2014.

Following the incident, the company appointed outsider and former Unilever executive Dave Lewis to replace long-standing chief executive Philip Clarke and oversee a drastic restructuring of the group, which in recent years has also faced fierce competition in the UK from German-owned discount retailers Aldi and Lidl.

"Over the last two and a half years, we have fully co-operated with this investigation into historic accounting practices, while at the same time fundamentally transforming our business," Lewis said

in the statement. "We sincerely regret the issues which occurred in 2014 and we are committed to

doing everything we can to continue to restore trust in our business and brand." —AFP



LONDON: This file photo shows customers leaving a branch of a Tesco supermarket in London.—AFP

PETROFAC WINS \$1.3BN PROJECT IN KUWAIT

LONDON: UK-based Petrofac, an oilfield services firm, announced yesterday that it had been awarded a \$1.3 billion project for Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) gathering centre project, GC 32, located in the Burgan oil field.

The project is the first of its kind to be

developed in the field and will process crude oil and associated gas recovered from the Arifjan, Marat, Minagish Oolite and Burgan Wara high Hydrogen Sulphide fields. The oil and gas services company said work will begin shortly and is scheduled to be completed in mid-2020.

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	Selling Rate
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

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.640
Thai Bhat	9.755
Turkish Lira	84.755

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
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
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.224387	0.236387
New Zealand Dollar	0.208576	0.218076
America		
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		
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		
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

FORD INVESTING \$1.2BN IN 3 MICHIGAN PLANTS

DETROIT: Ford Motor Co is investing \$1.2 billion in three Michigan facilities, including an engine plant where it plans to add 130 jobs. President Donald Trump, who has pressured automakers to invest more and create jobs in the US, applauded the move yesterday in an early morning tweet.

"Big announcement by Ford today. Major investment to be made in three Michigan plants. Car companies coming back to US JOBS! JOBS! JOBS!" Trump tweeted hours ahead of the announcement.

The investments were in the works well before Trump took office, however. Ford announced plans to upgrade some of its Michigan plants in November

2015 as part of a new contract with the United Auto Workers union. Ford Americas President Joe Hinrichs said the company told the White House about the investments Tuesday morning. Hinrichs said it's not unusual for the company to reach out to state and national political leaders before such an announcement. Hinrichs said yesterday's announcement was timed to a state meeting where officials were expected to approve tax incentives for Ford.

The automaker expects to receive \$30 million in tax abatements and other incentives over 15 years. Ford will spend \$850 million to upgrade the Michigan Assembly Plant next year to build the Ford

Ranger midsize pickup and Ford Bronco SUV. Ford plans to build the Ranger starting at the end of 2018 and the Bronco starting in 2020.

The suburban Detroit plant currently makes small cars, which are moving to a plant in Mexico. Trump has needed Ford and other automakers in the past about plans to move small car production to Mexico. Amid slowing sales of smaller vehicles, Ford did scrap plans for a brand new plant in Mexico, but will continue to build small cars at an existing facility there.

Hinrichs said the Michigan Assembly Plant will operate on two shifts unless demand dictates that a third shift be added. The plant used to operate on

three shifts, but it cut a shift and 673 factory workers in 2015 because of slumping sales of small cars.

Ford will spend \$150 million to upgrade its Romeo Engine Plant outside Detroit. The company says it will create or retain 130 jobs at that plant, which will make components for a new engine. Ford also is spending \$200 million on a data center that will store information collected from self-driving and connected cars.

The data center will be located at an assembly plant in the Detroit suburb of Flat Rock. Ford announced in January that the Flat Rock plant would get \$700 million in upgrades and 700 new jobs to make electric and self-driving cars. —AP

COURT OF APPEAL INSTRUCTS MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE TO REGISTER ALGHANIM AUTO AS THE FORD DISTRIBUTOR

KUWAIT: The administrative Court of Appeal affirmed a first instance judgment in favor of Alghanim Auto confirming the validity of its registration with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce as a Ford dis-

tributor in Kuwait. The judgment dated March 27, 2017 reinstates Alghanim Auto's registration as an officially authorized distributor of Ford vehicles and products in Kuwait from March 2016. Additionally, the court ruled that the Ministry of Commerce

and Industry's decision to revoke such registration is illegal and therefore annulled.

Ford Motor Company had appointed Alghanim Auto to be the authorized distributor for Ford in Kuwait, to sell new Ford vehicles and provide aftersales support and warranty repairs, as well as genuine Motorcraft and Ford spare parts for Ford and Lincoln customers in Kuwait. Alghanim Auto had established Ford-compliant sales and aftersales facilities, which include a new vehicle showroom, service and spare parts center that is located in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area opposite to SIRBB circuit, and is operated by a highly qualified team of employees and Ford-certified technicians.

It is noteworthy to mention that since the agreement between Alghanim Auto and Ford Motor Company last year, Alghanim Auto has committed to providing service excellence to Ford and Lincoln customers in Kuwait including warranty repairs and honoring Ford Extended Service Plans (ESP), irrespective of their start dates.



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US CONSUMER CONFIDENCE HIT 16-YEAR PEAK IN MARCH

HOME PRICES ROSE IN JAN BY MOST IN 2-1/2 YEARS

WASHINGTON: US consumer confidence continued to soar in March, hitting its highest level in more than 16 years, the Conference Board announced yesterday.

The index, which hit a 15-year record in February, spiked nearly 10 points, backed by the enthusiastic short-term outlook among consumers. The index now stands at 125.6, a big jump from 116.1 in February, and the highest since December 2000. Analysts had been expecting a decrease of nearly three points. "Consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions improved considerably," said Lynn Franco, the Conference Board's director of economic indicators.

"Consumers also expressed much greater optimism regarding the short-term outlook for business, jobs and personal income prospects," she said in a statement. The Federal Reserve has cited rising consumer sentiment when it tightened benchmark interest rates twice in recent months. President Donald Trump's election in November sparked a wave of economic optimism on hopes for his aggressively pro-growth agenda of tax cuts, slashed regulation and infrastructure spending.

The good mood coincided with steady job growth and falling unemployment, trends inherited from the prior administration. However, the cut-off date for the survey was March 16, meaning it did not incorporate last week's collapse of Trump's efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Some observers say defeat of a primary campaign promise threatens to derail other key parts of his agenda and it sparked a pullback on a previously exuberant Wall Street.

The survey nevertheless captured a very positive mood. The share of respondents saying business conditions are "good" rose to 32.2 percent from 28.3 percent, while those saying conditions are "bad" fell to 12.9 percent from 13.4 percent. The short-term outlook also showed strong gains, with those expecting business conditions to improve in the next six months jumping 3.2 points to 27.1 percent and those fearing they would worsen falling 2.1 points to 8.4 percent. Consumers also expected more and better paying jobs in the months ahead, with those expecting more plentiful employment rising 3.9 points to 24.8 percent and those foreseeing higher pay increasing by 2.3 points to 21.5 percent. US home prices jumped in January from a year earlier at the fastest pace in nearly 2-1/2



LOS ANGELES: In Jan 17, 2015, file photo shows a sign advertising a house for sale in Los Angeles. US home prices jumped in January 2017 from a year earlier at the fastest pace in nearly 2-1/2 years, as a tight supply of houses for sale spurred bidding wars in many cities. — AP

years, as a tight supply of houses for sale spurred bidding wars in many cities.

The Standard & Poor's CoreLogic Case-Shiller 20-city home price index, released yesterday, increased 5.7 percent in January, the most since July 2014. Americans stepped up home buying in January, even as mortgage rates rose. Many buyers likely sought to close their deals before rates increased further.

The Federal Reserve implemented its third rate hike in two years March 15, but economists at S&P Dow Jones Indices say higher rates won't slow sales until later this year.

The biggest price gains were in Seattle, Portland and Denver, which have topped the other cities in the index for months. Mark Fleming, chief economist at First American, said that still-low mortgage rates and steady hiring will likely support further housing demand.

"Low mortgage rates and economic growth set against a low inventory of homes for sale will drive a strong sellers' market and further rising prices this spring," Fleming said.

David Blitzer, chairman of the S&P Dow Jones Index Committee, said that the Fed's most recent

increase won't push up mortgage rates very much and shouldn't affect sales. Average 30-year mortgage rates typically track the yield on the 10-year Treasury note.

That yield is usually driven by several factors, including broader economic conditions and investor demand for safe assets such as Treasuries. Still, should the Fed raise rates three or four more times this year, "rising mortgage rates could become a concern," Blitzer said. Fed officials currently forecast two additional hikes.

Robust price gains could eventually make housing less affordable, Blitzer said. That may already be discouraging some homeowners from "trading up" to a new home, making the supply crunch worse as fewer people put their homes up for sale.

"At some point, this process will force prices to level off and decline - however we don't appear to be there yet," Blitzer said.

There were just 1.75 million homes listed for sale in February, 6.4 percent lower than a year ago, near the lowest level since the National Association of Realtors began tracking the data in 1999. — Agencies



SEOUL: Women walk past a commercial sign advertising a sale at a shopping district in Seoul yesterday. Asia's fourth-largest economy grew slightly more than previously thought in each of the past two years, South Korean authorities said yesterday. — AFP

SOUTH KOREA RAISES 2016 ECONOMIC GROWTH TO 2.8%

SEOUL: Asia's fourth-largest economy grew slightly more than previously thought in each of the past two years, South Korean authorities said yesterday.

The central Bank of Korea raised its figure for the 2016 economic growth rate by 0.1 percentage points to 2.8 percent, saying the manufacturing sector performed better than earlier estimated.

It also raised the 2015 figure from 2.6 percent to 2.8 percent, so that last year's rise in gross domestic product (GDP) was unchanged from the previous year. Decades of rapid growth saw the South rise from the ashes of the Korean War to become a member of the OECD group of leading economies, but expansion has slowed more recently. Economic frustra-

tions were among the factors underlying the giant anti-corruption protests that saw president Park Geun-Hye impeached.

Per capita gross national income (GNI) came to \$27,561 in 2016, up 1.4 percent from the previous year, the Bank of Korea said. The manufacturing sector expanded 2.3 percent last year, it said, rather than the 1.7 percent figure it gave in January and the 1.8 percent in 2015. Exports grew 2.1 percent in 2016, a reverse from a 0.1 percent contraction the previous year, while imports increased 4.5 percent, up from 2.1 percent. South Korea issues its first figure for the previous year's growth in January. It then revises it in March, and the final statistic is given in the same month the following year. — AFP

CHINA SOUTHERN, AMERICAN AIRLINES ANNOUNCE TIE-UP

SHANGHAI: China Southern Airlines said yesterday it would sell almost a one-tenth stake to American Airlines in a \$200 million tie-up that could see two of the world's biggest carriers cooperate in a range of areas. American Airlines is the world's largest carrier by scheduled passengers carried, while China Southern is fourth globally and the biggest in Asia, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The deal could give American a foot in the door of China's rapidly expanding air transport market, while China Southern said the move would support its own ambitions of expanding its global presence. China Southern will

sell more than 270 million, or 8.83 percent, of its Hong Kong-listed shares to American, according to a statement by the Chinese airline filed with the Hong Kong stock exchange.

The HK\$5.74 per share fee was a 4.6 percent premium to Monday's closing price and values the deal at HK\$1.55 billion (\$200 million). China Southern also is listed in Shanghai. The deal gives American 2.68 percent of all the Chinese carrier's shares traded across both markets. China Southern said in the statement that the two companies "may seek to increase cooperation" in code-sharing, staffing, sales, passenger loyalty programs and sharing of airport facilities, but gave no specifics. — AFP

GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-DANAH DAILY DRAWS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 26 March 2017 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 19 March - 23 March 2017.

The Al-Danah daily draws include draws each and every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner.

The winners are:
(Sunday 19/3): Meshari Awdah Mansour Safi, Rashed Khalif Salem Khaleefa
(Monday 20/3): Jassim Mohammad Abdullah Salem, Karema Ali Abdulrazzaq Al-Muhana
(Tuesday 21/3): Abdullah Yaser Khather Daham, Nawal Ajeel Yaser Jalee
(Wednesday 22/3): Ebtesam Abdulrazzaq Al-Aroug, Muneera Barrak Abdulmuhsen Al-Asfour
(Thursday 23/3): Jaber Saud Mohammed



Al-Shemali, Isshaq Amin Abu Al-Yamin
Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2017 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day and each receive KD1000). Al-Danah's 1st Quarterly draw for the prize of KD200,000 will be held on 30 March, the 2nd Quarterly draw for the prize of KD250,000 will be held on 29 June and the 3rd Quarterly Draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be held on 28 September. The final Al-Danah draw for KD1 million will be held on 11 January, 2018 whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

EU FARMERS RUSH TO PLANT SUGAR, TO SEEK EXPORTS AS QUOTAS END

LONDON/PARIS: EU farmers are ramping up production of sugar beet this year when they will be freed at last to grow as much as they want and sell it globally, after a decade of strict output quotas and export limits. Farmers have started drilling the first post-quota crop this month in several EU member states, including top EU producer France where planting is expected to increase by 20 percent, in line with an expected rise across the bloc.

Their return to global trade means European producers will compete for business with emerging beet sugar exporters like Russia and Ukraine, as well as refiners that import cane to make white sugar, such as the United Arab Emirates. But it also means farmers now face the sort of risk they have not seen for years: exposure to prices that can go down as well as up. After rallying to a 4-year high in September, benchmark ICE white sugar futures have slumped more than 17 percent, touching their weakest in over 9 months last week.

"We are bound to see price volatility but that's something we face in other crops as well. This is part of a farmer's job these days. It's up to us to find ways of withstanding it," said Alexandre Pele, whose family has grown sugar beet on a farm 60km south of Paris for more than a century.

EU farmers say they are now ready to compete globally after the sector was thoroughly restructured, following a 2005 ruling by the World Trade Organization that the EU unfairly subsidized its sugar producers, which led to a sharp cutback of exports. For the past decade, Brussels took steps to limit the crop with quotas, while guaranteeing a floor price for farmers. The EU went from exporting nearly a third of its sugar crop to becoming a net importer, under a regime now set to be dismantled in October.

For their first season of free trade, farmers have so far been offered contracts with a good rate of return, by cooperatives and other buyers that want to encourage planting to build up a surplus for export. Pele, who sells through Cristal Union, one of France's main sugar beet buying cooperatives, plans to increase his planting area by around 10 percent this year.

"We have certain strengths in France after the restructuring of the sugar industry in 2006, so I think we're ready for the world market," he said. French sugar cooperative Tereos, which says it collects more than 40 percent of the French crop, expects to boost output by 25 percent. The

group said it signed contracts to buy 19 million tons of beet from its members in 2017/18, up from 15 million.

Sowings have also begun for the next season in the EU's number two grower, Germany, where there could be "double-digit" growth in the planted area, said Guenter Tissen, CEO of industry association WVZ. Sugar beet sowings are set to climb by one-third in Britain, although this partly represents a rebound after a bumper crop in 2014/2015 forced farmers to scale back planting. Under their new contract with processing company British Sugar, farmers will receive a minimum price for their beet, as well as a bonus amount if world sugar prices climb.

"We have for the first time a sugar beet contract in the UK that does begin to reflect an element of market return," said William Martin, who plans to sow 220 acres of sugar beet in his Cambridgeshire farm this year. However, Britain will remain a net importer in the short-term and output in the long term could depend on trade deals struck with major sugar cane producers like Brazil following last year's UK vote to leave the European Union.

Sweet opportunity

While sugar yields depend on weather, an initial estimate from Green Pool pegs EU production for 2017/2018 at 18.3 million tons in white sugar value, with exports of 3.4 million tons. Platts is forecasting total production for that season at 19.27 million tons, with exports estimated at 2.4 million tons. By comparison, the European Commission forecasts production at 16.6 million tons in the previous 2016/2017 season now coming to a close. In the 2005/2006 season, before output was curbed, the EU produced 18.9 million tons and exported 7.4 million tons, International Sugar Organization figures show.

Sugar beet is used to produce 20 percent of the world's sugar. While sugar cane is usually cheaper as a raw material for refineries, white sugar from beets can be competitive in international trade when total costs are factored in.

The EU's return to the global stage is likely to intensify competition in its historically traditional export markets in the Middle East and North Africa, increasingly supplied by cane sugar processed in Dubai, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. — Reuters



BEIJING: A construction worker walks outside a building site in Beijing yesterday. Prices for goods at the factory gate in China beat expectations slightly in February, rising for the sixth straight month as strong demand boosts the world's second-largest economy. — AFP

STOCKS REBOUND ON EASING TRUMP TAX CONCERNS

LONDON: European stock markets defended small gains yesterday as Wall Street turned lower with investors wondering whether Donald Trump will be able to push through his economy-boosting agenda despite last week's healthcare debacle. The dollar struggled to bounce back against major rivals with uncertainty surrounding the pace of future US interest rate rises.

"There's little or no reason for the on-going 'risk-off' mood to turn decisively positive," said Fawad Razaqada, a market analyst at Forex.com.

"Thus, equities could fall back later on today or this week, even if technically the markets look

more stable," he said. Equities across the world mostly slid on Monday after Trump's repeal of Obamacare fell at the first hurdle as he failed to garner enough votes from his own Republican party, which controls both houses of Congress.

The failure fuelled worries Trump would not be able to drive his much-vaunted tax-cutting, infrastructure spending, deregulation plans, with analysts pointing out it would leave the administration with less cash to pay for such measures. Hopes for his stimulus plan helped fuel a surge in global markets and in the dollar since the November election.

European markets meanwhile also worry about the fallout from London launching

Britain's exit from the European Union. "Whether the momentum can be maintained remains to be seen however as investors remain cautious ahead of the UK government's likely triggering of Article 50 tomorrow," said Andy McLevey, head of dealing at stockbroker Interactive Investor.

Prime Minister Theresa May today is set to formally notify the European Union of Britain's intention to leave the bloc in a process that has caused a steep plunge in the value of the pound against the euro and dollar.

Greenback subdued
The dollar hit at four-month lows against the

yen yesterday, while the euro has been buoyed by upbeat data out of the eurozone. Weighing on the greenback were comments from the head of the Chicago branch of the Federal Reserve Charles Evans that it might only need to raise borrowing costs twice this year considering an uncertain outlook for inflation and Trump's big-spending and tax-cutting agenda.

The yen has climbed more than seven percent against the dollar since the start of the year while the single currency is up about five percent. Even the pound, which

was battered last year by Britain's vote to leave the European Union, has risen five percent from its January lows.

The US unit had already been under pressure after Fed boss Janet Yellen said this month that the pace of rate rises would be slower than initially expected. "The market will be...interested-or hoping (vainly) for new insights from Fed Chair Yellen's address" later Tuesday, said David de Garis, director of fixed income, currencies and commodities at National Australia Bank. —AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report										
Tuesday 28 March 2017										
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low					
Price Index	▲ 19.58	7,051.84	7,032.26	7,062.78	7,003.92					
Weighted Index	▼ -3.46	417.93	421.39	422.08	415.90					
KSX 15	▼ -8.74	939.06	947.80	949.37	934.14					
Trades										
Security	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	1,240	1,220	9,799	11,955	6	1,220	▲ 0.0			
ENFRGYH	39.0	36.5	82,200	3,031	9	37.0	▼ -2.0			
GPI	49.5	47.5	2,534,050	123,420	73	48.5	▼ -1.0			
ABAR	91	88	79,265	6,992	12	88	▼ -1.0			
Oil & Gas			2,705,315	145,388	100	971.36	▼ -5.68			
KFOUC	320	305	149,000	46,240	13	315	▼ -5.0			
BPCC	580	570	297,723	169,712	14	570	▲ 0.0			
ALKOUT	700	700	2,481	1,737	1	700	▲ 0.0			
ALQURAIN	350	340	2,161,459	747,623	58	345	▼ -10.0			
Basic Materials			2,610,663	965,312	86	1330.97	▼ -17.92			
KCEM	510	500	8,500	4,255	2	510	▲ 10.0			
CABLE	490	475	49,182	23,631	19	485	▲ 0.0			
SHIP	212	206	20,030	4,126	2	212	▲ 2.0			
PCEM	1,080	1,060	132,289	140,518	20	1,080	▲ 0.0			
PAPER	405	390	6,772	2,707	2	390	▼ -20.0			
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	76	▲ 0.0			
ACICO	305	295	285,450	79,570	15	305	▲ 5.0			
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	216	▲ 0.0			
KBMMC	112	96	8,950	962	8	112	▲ 10.0			
NICBM	216	216	1,000	216	1	216	▲ 0.0			
EQUIPMENT	59	58	849,184	49,844	36	59	▲ 0.0			
NCCI	110	106	21,923	2,410	8	110	▲ 10.0			
GYSUMF	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0			
SALBOOKH	74	71	1,739,350	125,032	76	72	▼ -4.0			
AGLTY	650	640	354,976	230,603	27	640	▼ -10.0			
EDU	280	265	6,010	1,593	2	280	▼ -5.0			
CLEANING	54	51	4,209,890	219,317	120	51	▼ -5.0			
KGL	67	66	310,100	20,692	10	67	▼ -1.0			
KCCP	164	164	15,000	2,460	1	164	▲ 0.0			
HUMANSOFT	3,100	3,100	298,594	925,641	11	3,100	▲ 0.0			
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	240	▲ 0.0			
GFC	67	61	790,200	49,099	37	65	▼ -1.0			
MAYADEEN	29.5	29.0	639,010	18,786	20	29.5	▼ -0.5			
CGC	530	500	762,849	396,068	72	520	▲ 10.0			
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0			
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	790	▲ 0.0			
ALAFACI	242	240	152,000	36,584	5	240	▲ 0.0			
MUBARRAD	80	79	1,426,250	112,694	36	80	▲ 1.0			
LOGISTICS	75	73	1,868,500	138,204	44	74	▼ -1.0			
GCEM	92	89	535,481	48,148	18	89	▼ -4.0			
SCEM	89	88	1,353,800	119,573	24	88	▼ -1.0			
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	86	▲ 0.0			
FCEM	92	90	150,500	13,546	4	90	▼ -1.0			
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	▲ 0.0			
SPEC	92	90	293,350	28,445	17	91	▲ 2.0			
Industrials			16,269,137	2,792,722	637	1732.56	▲ 25.71			
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			
CATL	216	216	20,500	6,372	3	216	▲ 6.0			
DANAH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0			
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,400	▲ 0.0			
Consumer Goods			29,500	6,372	3	1151.91	▲ 5.25			
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	370	▲ 0.0			
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	▲ 0.0			
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	275	▲ 0.0			
Health Care			0	0	0	1470.30	▲ 0.00			
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,380	▲ 0.0			
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	260	▲ 0.0			
SULTAN	67	66	379,176	25,156	28	67	▲ 2.0			
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	22.5	▲ 0.0			
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0			
OUFAH	182	182	240	44	1	182	▼ -10.0			
OLUAFUEL	134	130	592,640	78,052	34	132	▲ 0.0			
MUNTAZAHAT	88	88	138,000	11,888	9	88	▲ 0.0			
JAZZERA	590	570	91,409	53,902	7	590	▲ 10.0			
SOOR	130	130	66,647	8,224	18	130	▲ 2.0			
FUTUREKID	124	124	2,000	248	1	124	▲ 10.0			
ALRAI	180	178	292,098	52,015	19	180	▲ 2.0			
ZIMAH	57	55	994,500	55,298	28	56	▲ 0.0			
Mozzan	1,020	1,000	154,988	158,030	8	1,020	▲ 0.0			
Consumer Services			2,713,698	443,538	153	942.16	▲ 9.42			
ZAIN	455	450	2,342,277	1,063,472	84	455	▲ 5.0			
OREDOO	1,180	1,100	1,582	1,733	6	1,120	▲ 2.0			
HITSTELEC	53	49.5	11,794,849	603,638	164	50	▲ 0.0			
VIVA	860	860	120,692	105,600	45	890	▲ 10.0			
Telecommunications			14,259,380	1,774,444	299	648.84	▲ 6.60			
NBK	690	660	3,211,428	2,158,888	95	670	▼ -10.0			
GBK	255	250	1,915,405	478,508	40	250	▲ 0.0			
CBK	455	440	3,854	1,744	5	450	▼ -5.0			
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	305	▲ 0.0			
ALMUTAHED	470	460	49,108	22,786	13	460	▼ -5.0			
KIB	242	240	2,142,189	515,252	23	242	▲ 0.0			
BURG	335	330	1,208,830	400,748	44	335	▲ 5.0			
KFIN	610	590	4,680,513	2,813,377	122	590	▼ -20.0			
BOUBYAN	410	405	792,090	320,799	58	405	▼ -5.0			
AUB	270	255	10,442,258	2,719,334	125	260	▼ -5.0			
ITHMR	51	50	1,111,100	55,887	33	51	▲ 0.0			
WARBANK	265	260	1,627,776	424,674	81	260	▲ 0.0			
Banks			27,184,551	9,912,996	639	965.75	▼ -8.48			
KINS	265	250	26,594	6,649	4	265	▼ -10.0			
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	550	▲ 0.0			
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	495	▲ 0.0			
WINS	100	100	20,000	2,000	3	100	▲ 0.0			
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0.0			
FTI	62	60	102,901	6,257	19	60	▼ -1.0			
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	55	▲ 0.0			
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0			
Insurance			149,495	14,905	26	1085.40	▼ -7.50			
Trades										
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change			
SOKOUK	49.5	47.0	125,588	602,715	171	47.5	▼ -2.0			
KRE	71	68	27,249,854	1,877,209	149	69	▼ -1.0			
URC	97	97	36,000	3,492	3	97	▲ 1.0			
NRE	106	104	795,100	84,081	38	106	▼ -2.0			
SRE	370	365	22,500	8,313	3	370	▼ -5.0			
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	445	▲ 0.0			
AREFC	176	176	1,450	255	3	176	▲ 6.0			
MASSALEH	50	50	30,000	1,500	2	50	▲ 0.0			
ARABREC	42.0	40.0	2,048,321	83,576	58	41.5	▼ -0.5			
ERESCO	43.5	43.0	880,920	38,176	19	43.5	▲ 0.0			
MABANEE	840	850	188,342	157,494	16	830	▲ 0.0			
INJAZZAT	99	96	1,822,414	177,900	44	96	▲ 2.0			
INVESTORS	29.0	28.0	5,853,315	166,411	53	28.5	▼ -0.5			

NISSAN MAKES TWO KEY APPOINTMENTS IN MIDEAST

DUBAI: Kalyana Sivagnanam has joined Nissan as Regional Vice President, Marketing and Sales, for Africa, the Middle East and India. He will also be President of Nissan Middle East. The appointment comes as the region becomes increasingly significant for Nissan's global business.

Nissan already has a strong and growing presence in the region with more than 15,000 employees supporting the business across 87 countries. Nissan has four major regional hubs controlling Marketing and Sales, and related functions, in the United Arab Emirates, India, Egypt and South Africa - as well as satellite offices in other key markets including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Manufacturing facilities are located in India, Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria with a combined annual production capacity of more than half a million units.

In his new role Shivi will oversee all Marketing and Sales in the Africa, Middle East and India region. He will also assume overall responsibility for Nissan's business in the Middle East including Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Shivi, who is an MBA graduate from the UK, said: "I am delighted to join Nissan and look forward to building on the company's success in Africa, the Middle East and India."

"This region includes some of the fastest-growing, most promising economies in the world. Nissan is committed to offering our customers the best cars

and customer service whether they are a first-time car-owner buying a Datsun redi-GO in India, or the latest generation of their family to purchase a Nissan Patrol in the Middle East." Shivi has more than 18 years of experience in the automotive industry. He has joined Nissan from Ford where he led the development of the Lincoln and Ford brands in the Middle East and Africa as Vice President of Marketing, Sales and Service. Previously he was a Regional Director for Ford in Europe where he was instrumental in turning around the performance of the Northern Region - from worst to best - in eighteen months.

"Shivi brings to Nissan a deep knowledge of Africa, the Middle East and India and a strong track record of success," said Jose Munoz, Nissan's Chief Performance Officer. "The region is becoming increasingly important to Nissan, and we are focusing on offering vehicles even more closely tailored to the needs of our customers in these markets."

Kargar appointed

Nissan has appointed Peyman Kargar as Senior Vice President and Chairman of its Africa, Middle East, and India region (AMI), effective from April 1st 2017. In this role he will lead the regional management committee and be responsible for business strategy and performance for both the Nissan and Datsun brands with all functional heads reporting to him.



Kalyana Sivagnanam



Peyman Kargar

Kargar, 49, joins Nissan from its Alliance partner Renault, where he has worked since 1996 in a number of senior management posts spanning engineering, quality, service, projects and after-sales.

His most recent position was as Renault's Vice President Sales & Marketing, Africa, the Middle East and India since 2014. Peyman effectively established the new region for Renault and gained extensive market knowledge through working in over 50 countries. Since 2010 he has also been responsible for expanding Renault's business in the Middle East as Managing Director for the Renault Group in Iran, where he oversaw

a trebling of sales volume. His scope was enlarged considerably in 2012 when he was promoted to Managing Director Middle East Operations, responsible for all industrial and commercial activities across 13 countries.

Nissan's global Chief Performance Officer, Jose Munoz, said: "The AMI region is poised for significant and sustained, long-term growth and is becoming an increasingly important market for Nissan. Peyman brings with him a wealth of senior experience from this part of the world with our Alliance partner Renault, which will be vital in continuing to drive our business forward by meeting the needs of an expanding and evolving customer base."

Kargar, who is a father of three, began his career in 1992 as an engineer working for UK-based Amjet Company after graduating from INSA engineering school in Lyon and London Business School, where he gained his MBA. Commenting on his appointment, he said: "I am delighted to join Nissan at what is an exciting time for the region. A strong foundation has already been laid in terms of compelling products, strengthening brand and expanding industrial presence and I'm looking forward to building on this in the coming years."

Kargar replaces Christian Mardrus who takes up the newly created position of Senior Vice President, Digital Transformation for Nissan Motor Co., following two years as AMI Chairman.



BANGKOK: A motorcycle taxi driver waits for his passenger who stopped to buy a snack from a food street vendor in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP

BERLIN AIRPORT GROUND STAFF AGREE THREE-YEAR PAY DEAL

BERLIN: Germany's Verdi union has agreed a three-year pay deal for its 2,000 ground staff at Berlin's airports, the union said yesterday, ending the threat of further strikes and flight disruption.

The deal, reached through mediation, envisages an average 14 percent rise over three years made in four stages, an increase in the hourly wage and improvements in workers' contracts, Verdi said in a statement. The deal still has to be approved by union members. "We had to make comprehensive and painful compromises to get a result but the employers also moved in the end," Verdi negotiator Enrico Ruenker said in a statement.

Three days of walkouts by ground staff over the dispute earlier this month led to the cancellation of more than 1,800 flights, equivalent to almost all of the flights that should have operated from Berlin's two airports on those days. Carriers Air Berlin, Lufthansa, easyJet and Ryanair, operate flights from Berlin's two airports. Several sectors have

already negotiated solid wage rises this year, including civil servants and steel workers.

Economists are watching the pay deals closely, with domestic demand seen driving growth in Europe's largest economy at a time of record-high employment, increased job security, and rock-bottom borrowing costs. As part of a complex set of demands, Verdi had sought an increase in pay for ground staff to 12 euros (\$12.76) an hour from about 11 euros as part of a one-year collective agreement. Management first offered about 10 cents more an hour over four years and then improved that offer to an 8 percent increase over three years. The ground staff are responsible for check-in, loading and unloading planes and directing aircraft on the tarmac at Berlin's airports.

The employers, which include WISAG, Aeroground, Ground Solution, AHS and Swissport Berlin, said they had made tough concessions. "We went to the limit of what is economically affordable and a bit further still," a spokesman for the employers said. — Reuters

S AFRICA'S GORDHAN RETURNS, AWAITS DECISION ON SACKING

RAND, GOVT BONDS WEAKER AFTER GORDHAN RECALL

JOHANNESBURG/PRETORIA: Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan flew back to South Africa yesterday, obeying an abrupt recall from President Jacob Zuma, and said "let's wait and see" when asked about reports that he was about to be sacked. The rand fell two percent against the dollar in volatile trade, extending losses seen on Monday after Zuma ordered Gordhan's immediate return from a trip to Britain, rattling investors who see the minister as a focus of stability.

"The president is my boss so if he asks us to come back, we come back," Gordhan said. "There are many in government who want to do the right thing and make sure we keep our economy on track and keep our development moving in the right direction," he added without elaborating.

Zuma's order cut short Gordhan's investor roadshow in Britain and the United States, triggering jitters that a long-running power struggle between the two men was coming to a head, threatening more turmoil for Africa's most developed economy. Talk Radio 702 said Gordhan's dismissal had been discussed at talks between Zuma and the South African Communist Party, allies of the ruling African National Congress, on Monday. The six most senior members of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party had approved Gordhan's removal, ANN7 television reported, citing unnamed sources. ANC Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe, one of the ANC's top six, told Reuters he could not comment on the report.

Gordhan went to the ANC's Luthuli House headquarters in downtown Johannesburg after his arrival, eNCA channel said. Some pundits say Gordhan is being pressured by a faction allied to Zuma, which has criticized his plans to rein in government spending as the economy stagnates and rapped his running of the tax agency. Gordhan has wrangled for months with the head of the agency. "Were Pravin Gordhan to actually be removed, we think that the rand could fall by another 5 percent against the USD," Capital Economics Africa economist John Ashbourne said in a note.

The main opposition Democratic Alliance party asked Zuma to explain his order to recall Gordhan. "Why does he simply not tell South Africa?" it said in a statement.

Gupta case

Gordhan first served as finance minister from 2009 to 2014 and was brought back by Zuma in December 2015 to calm markets spooked by the president's decision to replace respected finance



CAPE TOWN: In this Feb 22, 2017 file photo South Africa's finance minister Pravin Gordhan (center) arrives at the South African Parliament to deliver the annual Budget speech in Cape Town. — AP

minister Nhlanelo Nene with a little-known politician. South African media reports suggest Zuma and Gordhan have an uneasy relationship, though the president has denied suggestions he is "at war" with his finance minister. Gordhan returned as a court hearing over the closure of accounts belonging to friends of the president, the Gupta brothers, started. The case has been a particular bone of contention between Zuma and his finance minister. Zuma has come under mounting political pressure since South Africa's anti-graft watchdog called last year for a judge to investigate allegations of influence peddling in his government, in particular allegations that brothers Ajay, Atul and Rajesh Gupta wielded undue influence over the president.

Zuma has said the Guptas are his friends, but denies there is anything improper about the relationship and the brothers have denied any wrong-doing. Gordhan has said the Guptas have repeatedly asked him to intervene to reverse a decision by major banks to close some of the business accounts of the brothers' Oakbay Investments. In December, Gordhan asked the High Court to rule he was not allowed to interfere in the banks' decisions. The state attorney said Zuma had applied to be represented in the case as an interested party, but the court rejected his application. Separately, Zuma said yesterday he was not considering setting up a commission of inquiry into the banking sector in written answers to parliament. — Reuters

NREC ANNOUNCES 4.4% GROWTH IN NET PROFIT

KUWAIT: National Real Estate Company (NREC), a leading regional and developer with \$2 billion in projects under development in the UAE, Egypt, and other markets, yesterday released its financial results for the year 2016.

2016 Financial Highlights
Operating Revenue: KD33.9 million, up 19.2%
EBITDA: KD19.9 million, down 10.0%
Net Profit to shareholders: KD16.1 million, up 4.4%
Earnings Per Share (EPS) of 17.14 fils.

The company's 19.2 percent revenue growth was driven by income generating assets in Kuwait, Jordan and Egypt, where NREC is developing a 3.8 million square meter residential community. The company is also developing Reem Mall, a two million square foot major shopping destination in Abu Dhabi. Reem Mall will house more than 450 stores including 85 restaurants, a large hypermarket, and family entertainment zones that include the

world's largest indoor snow-play park. NREC CEO Samuel Sidiqi said, "Though the regional macroeconomic business environment hasn't improved, we are pleased with the above-peer performance of our properties and sales activities. Our diversified asset portfolio continues to show its resilience, yielding a double digit growth in operating revenues and continued profitability for five years in-a-row. Our business is healthy and standing on solid fundamentals.

Looking ahead, we expect to start construction of Reem Mall through a strong support of equity and debt financing. Reem Mall has further been bolstered by a key senior management hire and recently announced partnerships with Dubai Holding Group, Landmark Group and Majid Al Futtaim Retail. In Egypt, where we see a stabilizing economy and currency, and a revived demand on residential real estate, we expect a robust performance in 2017 and beyond."



NREC CEO Samuel Sidiqi

EUROPE'S TOP COURT UPHOLDS SANCTIONS AGAINST ROSNEFT

LUXEMBOURG: Europe's top court yesterday upheld European Union sanctions on Russia over the Ukraine conflict, including on its largest oil group Rosneft, in a ruling that asserts the court's jurisdiction over the bloc's foreign policy. The EU slapped sanctions on Russia after it annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and stepped them up as Moscow went on to support a separatist rebellion in Ukraine's industrial east. Rosneft's head, Igor Sechin, is a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) said "restrictive measures ... in response to the crisis in Ukraine against certain Russian undertakings, including Rosneft, are valid." With the ruling, the ECJ established its juris-

diction to rule on matters of the EU's common foreign and security policy, an area of fierce contention between Brussels and national governments seeking to maintain sovereignty.

A lawyer for Rosneft told reporters he was disappointed with the outcome. "I would also say it is a setback for judicial protection in the EU in the area of sanctions because the court accepts (...) the fact that a company is partially state-owned is sufficient for it to be a target of sanctions," Lode van den Hende said. The court said it believed encroaching on Rosneft's right to do business was in proportion with the severity of sanctions imposed on Russia over the Ukraine crisis. — Reuters

BANKS TRY TO CALM STAFF NERVES WITH STAGGERED BREXIT SHIFT

LONDON: Banks are trading carefully, enacting two-stage contingency plans, to avoid losing nervous London-based staff as they work out how many jobs will have to move to continental Europe as Britain exits the European Union.

British Prime Minister Theresa May will trigger formal EU divorce proceedings today, launching two years of negotiations that will shape the future of Britain and Europe as well as London's place as a global financial centre. The move will also mark the point when investment banks, whose priority will be to ensure they can continue servicing their clients across Europe after March 29, 2019, begin taking concrete steps to prepare for Britain being outside the bloc. "Everybody is prepared for a cliff edge scenario, which means you need to move or leave, in a very short period of time, people on the ground making sure whatever happens you are set," Hubertus Vaeth, head of Frankfurt Main Finance, a group backed by local government to promote the city, said.

This first phase involves relatively small numbers to make sure the requisite licenses, technology and infrastructure are in place, while the next requires longer term thinking on what the their European business will look like in the future, which is when bigger moves might take place. "We see a very short term dispersal of a small number of people ... in the next couple of months," Vaeth said.

Anxiety in the city

Brexit is making many of Britain's 2.2 million financial industry workers anxious about whether they risk losing their jobs or will have to

consider relocating to Frankfurt, Dublin, Paris, Luxembourg or even Malta. "If I ... stand up in front of my staff in London and say 'I'm moving 1,000 of you to Frankfurt', how many do you think will stick around?" a senior executive at a global bank said. Employers must decide whether to try to move London-based staff or pay them off and hire again where any foreign operation is set up.

This means they need to identify which roles will be impacted, which is likely to take some time. Bank executives say moving significant numbers of jobs will likely form part of the final phase of adaptation to Brexit, but will not happen before any final deal is struck.

"Don't look for a 'big bang' the day after Brexit in March 2019," another senior executive at an international bank said. "Banks will be looking to use what they have to be able to continue operating and servicing clients in the EU. The jobs that will move, the impact will be known in 2025 and 2030 not 2019," the executive added.

In this so-called initial phase, staff moves are expected to be in the low hundreds, with the majority not taking place until at least 2018, banking sources told Reuters.

"It's not staff moving, it's jobs moving," said one source. "There will also be some natural attrition whereby roles will not be filled in London. It won't really be so noticeable and there likely won't be any big announcement."

Stuart Gulliver, chief executive of HSBC, has softened his tone on his bank's plan to move 1,000 staff to Paris, saying that half are French people who would be returning home and the

bank is nowhere near talking to staff about the move. "Within one to two years, the City of London will have completely replaced the jobs that will have moved," he said. Banks only need around 30 people to get a subsidiary in Europe up and running, including setting up the infrastructure, legal and technology systems, the Association of Foreign Banks in Germany says.

Destination unknown

While Europe's financial centres are fighting for the spoils of Brexit, banks are unlikely to converge on a single city at first and are likely to want to retain some flexibility. "There won't be a single location - country teams will likely be based more in situ," another banking source familiar with contingency plans said.

Goldman Sachs International, the European arm of the Wall Street bank, said last week it would begin by moving hundreds of people out of London in what its chief Richard Gnodde called "contingency plans" for the first phase. Meanwhile, US rival Morgan Stanley, which one source told Reuters will ultimately have to move up to 1,000 jobs out of London, but may initially shift just 300 staff, according to reports in February. And although Dublin is Bank of America's default destination for a new base within the EU because it already has a fully licensed operation there, others are being examined.

"We are playing through all the scenarios. Nothing has been decided. Dublin is an option, just as Frankfurt or Amsterdam," Nikolaus Naerger, Bank of America's head of corporate banking in Germany said. — Reuters

AL-MAZAYA MAKES KD 10.25M NET PROFIT FOR 2016

AGM ENDORSES 8% OF SHARE NOMINAL VALUE IN CASH FOR SHAREHOLDERS

KUWAIT: Al-Mazaya Holding's Ordinary General Assembly convened yesterday at Al-Mazaya Tower, strategically located in Al-Mirqab Area in Kuwait City, one of the company's three high-rises in the downtown capital of Kuwait. Up to +++++ percent of the members attended the GA meeting, which was opened by Rasheed Al-Nafisi, Board Chairman of Al-Mazaya Holding, in presence of the company's esteemed shareholders, board members and group CEO, Engineer Ibrahim Al-Soqabi.



The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, auditing offices, and heads of the company's different business departments, investors and a large number of media representatives working in Kuwait and other GCC states.

Aimed at reviewing company plans and achievements across the year in a streamline, documented manner, the GA's agenda kicked off with a documentary divided into

three main parts: company history since its establishment, Al-Mazaya Holding's 10-Goal Strategy, and Milestones in 2016. The meeting featured footages and videos documenting all the projects executed by the company over the year.

Addressing the meeting, Board Chairman Rashid Al-Nafisi said that Al-Mazaya Holding has managed anew to maintain its eminent position in all its business platforms, reporting impressive growth and positive deliverables that kept its efficient and competitive edge and enviable stature among other real estate companies working in the region. He noted that company has made great strides in 2016 as reflected by the significant milestones that have been achieved thanks to the company's rich portfolio of diverse and balanced revenue streams.

He underlined the company's ability to continue to grow and develop in line with its strategy to keep its leading market position locally and regionally. Al-Nafisi added that in 2016, Al-Mazaya achieved a net profit of KD 10.25 million from KD 9.32 million, a 10.02 percent increase over 2015. Earnings Per Share (EPS) reached 16.51 fils, compared to 15.04 fils in 2015.

"Al-Mazaya Holding has achieved new heights with the results for 2016, proving that our prudent strategy, comprehensive vision and well-formulated targets are continuing to drive growth across all areas of the business. The company was able to follow the schedules precisely and efficiently, boosting the process of sales, leasing, delivery and increasing operating revenue to KD55.17 million by the end of 2016," he noted. Al-Mazaya Board Chairman also credited the jump in revenues to strong marketing campaigns, with huge revenues generated from increasing sales to KD47.81 million. Revenues generated from leasing activities grew by 15.19 percent (KD7.11 million) by the end of 2016, up from KD6.17 million for



the same period in 2015. Al-Nafisi underlined the company's pioneering position in all its business platforms, noting that during 2016, the company experienced considerable growth following the successful implementation of its developments in a number of new markets it has tapped over the past years. These successes have reflected positively on the company's total assets which increased to KD 254.78 million by the end of 2016, as opposed to KD 251.04 in 2015, with the total ownership stakes reaching KD 119.61 million by the end of 2016 as opposed to KD 111.45 by the end of December 2015.

Following the positive financial results achieved for 2016, the company's board of directors recommended distribution of 8 percent of the company's share nominal value in cash for all shareholders, which is equal to 8 fils per share.

"The decision to distribute the earnings in cash comes as a good sign to reflect the company's strength in recurring cash flows and its balanced future planning outlook,"

he said, adding that the recommendation was raised to the General Assembly and endorsed as per the requirements of all state departments concerned, including the Capital Markets Authority.

Concluding, the Board Chairman reiterated the board's commitment to spare no effort to fulfill all the expectations while following the best world standards in areas of management, planning and execution to reach further heights of distinction.

General assembly agenda

Al-Nafisi reviewed the remainder of the meeting's agenda topics, which were all approved. The attendees listened to a report by the accounting auditor on the fiscal year ending on December 31st 2016 and hence, endorsed it. They also were informed on the financial statements of the fiscal year ending on December 31st 2016 an endorsed it. They approved a recommendation by the company's Board of Director to distribute 8 percent of the company's share nominal value in cash for every shareholder,

which is equal to 8 Kuwaiti fils per share. The GA also approved that the Board Chairman or any of the board members may combine the memberships of two competing companies, work in any business platforms that may be deemed as posing a competition to the company, or trade share for himself or for any other person in an area of business which Al-Mazaya Holding may hold in 2017.

The GA also removed all Board Members of any responsibility for any of their legal transactions for the fiscal year ending on December 31st 2016. The meeting also approved a deduction of 10 percent of the company's net profits in favor of its mandatory legal financial reserve and deduction of an additional 10 percent of the net profits in favor of its optional reserve - this amount will be kept to meet any future commitments, if any.

Company milestones

Eng. Ibrahim Al-Soqabi, Group CEO of Al-Mazaya Holding, said the milestones reached by the company add to its track record of significant achievements and translate the well-thought out vision adopted to create innovative and balanced revenues streams in new markets. He added that the new achievements made in 2016 have bolstered the company's stature as a regional business pioneer in areas of real estate and investment.

While consistently focusing on real estate development projects in different business platforms, including health, housing, office and retail trade, the company spares no effort in launching significant investments in areas of hospitality, said Al-Soqabi. He attributed the successes achieved to the company's comprehensive strategy to optimize its performance and maximize its returns in line with well-thought out plans aimed to mitigate risks and stamp out obstacles.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS' DREAMLINER STARTS SERVICES INTO AMMAN

GUESTS WILL EXPERIENCE INDUSTRY-LEADING, NEXT-GENERATION CABINS

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways has started operating its state-of-the-art Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner on the Abu Dhabi - Amman route, as part of its daily schedules between the two capitals.

The new two-class Dreamliner features the airline's next-generation Business and Economy Class cabins, featuring 299 seats - 28 in Business Class and 271 in Economy Class, representing a 65 per cent capacity increase on the route. Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways' Chief Executive Officer, said: "Since launching flights between Abu Dhabi and Amman thirteen years ago, we have experienced huge growth and have enjoyed strong demand from both business and leisure travellers."

"The decision to upgrade to the Boeing 787 reflects the importance of the Jordanian market to Etihad Airways, and the sustained development of economic relations between the two countries. The UAE enjoys historic ties with Jordan and there are broader and brighter prospects for economic relations between these two Arab states, particularly through business partnerships and tourism."

Recent local reports show that the trade exchange between the two countries witnessed remarkable growth to just over Dhs3 billion, while the volume of UAE investments in Jordan rose to more than \$15 billion. The Business Studios in Business Class offer direct aisle access, a fully-flat bed of up to 80.5 inches in length, and an increase of 20 per cent in personal space. Upholstered in fine Poltrona Frau leather, the



Business Studio is equipped with an in-seat massage and pneumatic cushion control system which enables guests to adjust the firmness and comfort of their seat. The airline's Boeing 787 fleet is equipped with the latest Panasonic eX3 inflight entertainment system featuring over 750 hours of movies and programs, as well as hundreds of music choices and a selection of games for both adults and children. Each Business Studio has an 18-inch personal touch-screen TV with noise-cancelling headsets. Guests can also

enjoy mobile connectivity, onboard Wi-Fi and seven satellite channels of live TV.

Economy Smart Seats provide enhanced comfort with a unique 'fixed wing' headrest, adjustable lumbar support, a seat width of approximately 19 inches and an 11.1" personal TV monitor on each seat. The aircraft has been designed with enhancements including humidity controls while air pressure levels are set to ensure a smoother flight, allowing guests to arrive feeling fresher.



GROW YOUR SAVINGS WITH ABK'S 'SIMPLER BANKING' STRATEGY

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently launched its Savings and Deposits campaign, giving clients a variety of deposit and savings accounts to choose from.

Short and long 'term deposits', offer customers the opportunity to grow their savings at market leading rates. Customers have the flexibility to save from one month to three years, with interest credited directly to their account every month or upon maturity. In addition ABK offers loans against these deposits, with the option of opening the account in KD or in other major currencies.

ABK also offers the Al-Manal - Daily Interest Savings Account, I-SAVE Youth and Bedayati Kids Savings accounts, thus offering a variety of savings products for all age segments, allowing customers to 'Save More with Less'.

ABK's Savings accounts offer flexible tiered interest rates calculated on a daily, monthly or half yearly basis, tailored to the clients' needs. Savings can start with an opening balance of KD 100 with unlimited deposits and

withdrawals. Customers who opt for this option also receive a free debit card with the new 'Quick Read' feature and SMS alert service. Moreover; ABK's Al-Manal savings account provides unique flexible options; as it pays like a fixed deposit but works as a savings account, giving customers the opportunity to 'Spend and Save' at the same time, growing savings with full access to funds. The opening balance for the Al-Manal account is KD 5,000, offering competitive interest rates, unlimited deposits with no penalty on withdrawals and tiered interest rates where the higher the daily balance, the higher the interest, along with SMS alert services.

Additionally, ABK account holders have 24/7 access to their accounts with ABK's simple, fast and secure e-banking channels.

With the launch of this new campaign ABK aims to encourage the public to have financial discipline and long-term savings and investment plans while making banking 'simpler' to encourage savings.

BURGAN BANK TO HOLD ITS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SHAFAFIYA FORUM TODAY



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced that its Annual General Assembly meeting for shareholders will be held today at 12pm at the KIPCO Tower - 56th floor. Stemming from its corporate philosophy of advocating transparency with its investors, Burgan Bank will hold its annual Shafafiya forum

following the AGM. Furthermore, the forum will serve as a platform to highlight the main events of the year 2016 and an overall look into what 2017 has in store for its shareholders, partners, institutional investors and other members of the financial community.

\$1,000 CASH BACK ON RENAULT DUSTER WITH RENAULT AL-BABTAIN

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Renault vehicles in the State of Kuwait is delighted to announce a new offer that entitles customers for an immediate \$1000 cash back.

In addition, Renault Al-Babtain offers a package available on all Renault Duster which includes a ten-year warranty or 500,000 Km with free registration and third party insurance, and a 1 year service or 20,000 Km.

The offer that extends up to 15th of April 2017, is a testament to the brands superior quality and popularity that has grown since its inception. Notable upgrades that deliver increased performance amongst premium car drivers include redesigned interiors with its brand new modern dashboard, technological advancements such as the hands-free Bluetooth, four-wheel drive transmission and new Media Navigator 2.0 multimedia system that gives easy access to highly practical features due to its 7" touch screen: 2D or 3D navigation, audio streaming.

The Renault Duster has been designed to

transform modern life into an everyday adventure with its robust design that can tackle all-terrain capabilities. Demonstrating superb agility and enhanced off-road performance, the car is also equipped with a high seating position with seamless visibility to the driver and many safety features as standard Electronic Stability program, anti-lock braking system, tire pressure monitoring, ISOFIX for children's seats, front driver and passenger airbags.

With only a few weeks left to enjoy the special deal presented by Renault Al-Babtain, customers can now visit Renault Al-Babtain showroom located in Al-Rai and avail this valuable offer. In 1948, late Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain established a small automotive business. Today Al-Babtain Group is a conglomerate organization located in the State of Kuwait. Al-Babtain Group integrated honesty, integrity and dedication in all aspects of the business. The Group has established strongholds in the local, regional and international market. Al-Babtain Group experienced continuous success throughout the past 60 years.



The winners with members of Al-Babtain top management.

INFINITI AL-BABTAIN CONDUCTS KUWAIT SALES COMPETITION

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized distributor of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, conducted the 2016 Infiniti National Sales Competition. The contest highlights and showcases the Sales Executives skills of AABC and is also to select the national champion who will go on to compete in the Regional Infiniti Sales Skills Competition which will be held in the Dubai April 2017.

The competition focuses on various sales skills in the areas of brand, product, customer journey and general automotive knowledge. After a preliminary written test round and a qualifying interview and vehicle presentation

session, two sales ambassadors were chosen to compete in the final contest in March 2017. The final contest day's program consisted of a written examination, interview round, mystery box session and product walk-around presentation.

First place was awarded to Mohamed Darwish and the runner up was Ramy Al-Hourany. The awarding ceremony was attended by members of Al-Babtain top management including COO Mohamed Shalaby.

Also attended Fatma Zenagui, Deputy General Manager - Training & Dealer Network Development, Nissan Gulf. Commenting on the event, COO Shalaby said, "Such competitions are

a chance for the staff to demonstrate their talents in a competitive environment and prove their hard work and dedication to the organization and brand.

Our objective is not only to choose the undisputed champion, but endeavor to improve and advance skills of all the participating members and give them motivation.

Keeping knowledge and skills up to date enables our staff to deliver high quality service that meets the expectations of our customers and safeguards the reputation of our organization. Al-Babtain owes its success to quality customer service and a dedicated workforce."

CANON ME PARTICIPATES IN 'WALK FOR A CAUSE'

ABU DHABI: As a part of its commitment to encourage and inspire the community, Canon Middle East (CME), a leader in imaging solutions, has partnered with Etihad Aviation Group to organize its fifth annual community engagement "Walk for a Cause," under the patronage of H.H. Sheikhha Shamsabint Hamdan bin Mohamed Al-Nahyan. The event which was held at Umm Al-Emarat Park, Abu Dhabi was to support women empowerment projects locally in the Western region of Abu Dhabi and internationally, as well as raising awareness on a global education project in Indonesia. It witnessed an overwhelming response as more than 600 guests, including women and young children participated and contributed to this noble cause.

Highlight of the event was the arts and crafts section, which was designed by Canon using Creative Park. Creative Park is an exclusive online portal housing a remarkable number of paper based activities. As a result, an exclusive work book was created from Creative Park where children were assisted in conducting activities on the stand which could later be taken home to do with their family as well. The event also included 'Wellness Screening' lectures by SEHA, an Arts' and Craft section, variety of fun classes comprising of yoga, fitness, zumba, an 'Organic Food Corner', a 'Beauty Corner, in addition to a 'Kids' Corner with Canon providing fun activities and entertainment for kids.

Anurag Agrawal, Managing Director,

Canon Middle East said, "It is an honor for us to participate in 'Walk for a Cause' event which is in line with our 'Kyosei' philosophy to live and work together for the common good. Engaging with communities and helping to nurture talent globally has always been a key priority for Canon. We are happy to see everyone's enthusiasm and thank all the participants for making this event a success. This also wouldn't have been possible without the support of organizations like Etihad Aviation Group, who took the lead and helped us in implementing our CSR campaign." The event concluded with a "Live Classic Entertainment" segment dedicated to its music lovers which consisted of a grand Pianist, Violinist, Singer, Ballet, and a Zither/Qaunun.



SEOUL: This file photo shows people walking past the Samsung logo at the Samsung group headquarters in Seoul. — AFP

SAMSUNG PLANS TO SELL REVAMPED GALAXY NOTE 7S

TECH GIANT TO RECOUP LOSSES THROUGH NOTE 7S

SEOUL: Tech giant Samsung Electronics plans to sell refurbished versions of the Galaxy Note 7 smartphones, the company said late on Monday, signaling the return of the model pulled from markets last year because of fire-prone batteries. Samsung's Note 7s were permanently scrapped in October after some phones self-combusted, prompting a global recall roughly two months after the launch of the near-\$900 devices.

A subsequent investigation found manufacturing problems in batteries supplied by two companies - Samsung SDI Co and Amperex Technology. Analysis from Samsung and independent researchers found no other problems in the Note 7 devices except the batteries, raising speculation that Samsung will recoup some of its losses by selling refurbished Note 7s. A person familiar with the matter said in January that it was considering the possibility of selling refurbished versions of the device or reusing some parts.

Samsung's announcement that revamped Note 7s will go back on sale, however, surprised

some with the timing - only days before it launches its new S8 smartphone today in the United States, its first new premium phone since the debacle last year. Under pressure to turn its image around after the burning battery scandal, Samsung had previously not commented on its plans for recovered phones. "Regarding the Galaxy Note 7 devices as refurbished phones or rental phones, applicability is dependent upon consultations with regulatory authorities and carriers as well as due consideration of local demand," Samsung said in a statement.

Safe batteries

South Korea's Electronic Times newspaper, citing unnamed sources, said yesterday that Samsung will start selling refurbished Note 7s in its home country in July or August and will aim to sell between 400,000 and 500,000 of the Note 7s using safe batteries. Samsung said in a statement that the company has not set specifics on refurbished Note 7 sales plans, including what markets and when they would go on sale, though it also said it does not plan

to sell refurbished Note 7s in India or the United States.

The company said refurbished Note 7s will be equipped with new batteries that have gone through Samsung's new battery safety measures. "The objective of introducing refurbished devices is solely to reduce and minimize any environmental impact," it said. The company estimated that it took a profit hit of \$5.5 billion over three quarters because of the Note 7's troubles. It had sold more than 3 million of the phones before taking the model off the market.

Samsung also plans to recover and use or sell reusable components such as chips and camera modules, as well as rare metals such as copper, gold, nickel and silver from Note 7 devices it opts not to sell as refurbished products. Environment rights group Greenpeace and others had urged Samsung to come up with environmentally friendly ways to deal with the recovered Note 7s. Greenpeace said in a separate statement on Monday that it welcomed Samsung's decision and that the company should carry out its plans in a verifiable manner. —Reuters

COLOMBIA'S GPS-ENABLED PANIC BUTTONS EXPOSE ACTIVISTS

NEW YORK: It is supposed to help protect human-rights activists, labor organizers and journalists working in risky environments, but a GPS-enabled "panic button" that Colombia's government has issued to about 400 people could be exposing them to more peril. The pocket-sized devices are designed to notify authorities in the event of an attack or attempted kidnapping. But the Associated Press, with an independent security audit, uncovered technical flaws that could let hostile parties disable them, eavesdrop on conversations and track users' movements.

There is no evidence the vulnerabilities have been exploited, but security experts are alarmed. "This is negligent in the extreme," said Eva Galperin, director of cybersecurity at the nonprofit Electronic Frontier Foundation, calling the finding "a tremendous security failure." Over the past four years, other "distress alarms" and smartphone apps have been deployed or tested around the world, with mixed results. When effective, they can be crucial lifelines against criminal gangs, paramilitary groups or the hostile security forces of repressive regimes.

Reason for panic

The panic button, or "boton de apoyo," distributed by Colombia's Office of National Protection is a keychain-style fob. Its Chinese manufacturer markets it under the name EV-07 for tracking children, pets and the elderly. The device operates on a wireless network, has a built-in microphone and receiver and can be mapped remotely with geo-location software. A button marked "SOS" calls for help when pressed.

But some features could be turned against the user, the security audit done for the AP by the Boston-based security firm Rapid7 found. The AP tested two devices issued in Colombia, while Rapid7 bought buttons directly from the manufacturer. The most serious vulnerability lets anyone with the device's phone number remotely disable it and surreptitiously take control. Simple text messages can reset it or activate the microphone remotely, turning it into a listening post,



BOGOTA: In this photo, an Associated Press employee in Bogota, Colombia holds a GPS-enabled panic button that Colombia's government has issued to labor, community and human rights activists to use in risky environments. —AP

the audit found. Built-in GPS pinpoints the user's location. Because the device can be remotely wiped, it can also be reconfigured from afar, said Derral Heiland, the researcher with Rapid7 who performed the audit. Obtaining the Colombian device's phone number is not easy, and the government said it alone knows to whom each device is assigned. But security experts said there are ways a sophisticated adversary could obtain the numbers, including fake cell tower technology that captures numbers and bribes to cell company or government employees.

Office of National Protection Director Diego Mora called the flaws identified in the AP audit overblown. He said activists given the device are at such low risk there would be little interest in eavesdropping on them. "It's a very, very basic protection measure for people whose risks aren't very complex," said Mora. "Supreme Court judges, ministers, prosecutors, they don't have this

device." Recipients said the dangers they face should not be underestimated. Some have received death threats, been kidnapped or forced into exile. They complain that the body armor and cellphones assigned with panic buttons are inadequate. "What am I going to do with body armor riding the bus?" said Amalfi Rosales, a journalist from the northeastern Guajira region whose exposes of corruption forced her to flee. "How does that protect me?"

Easy-to-find instructions

Instructions for resetting the Colombia-issued panic button and activating its "silent phone" function were easy to find. They are spelled out in a user manual posted online by the manufacturer, Eview Industrial Ltd. A company official, John Chung, acknowledged that Rapid7 notified him of the flaws in December. In keeping with standard industry practice, Rapid7 waited at least two months before publicly disclosing the vulnerabilities to give the manufacturer time to address them.

Chung told the AP that Eview was working to update the EV-07's webserver software, where Rapid7 found flaws that could allow user and geolocation data to be altered. The audit confirmed suspicions that arose after independent Colombian journalist Claudia Julieta Duque reported in August that the devices have built-in microphones. The government had not told recipients, and many stopped using the panic buttons.

"To me, it's just a device to spy on you," said Rocio Campos, an activist in the Magdalena River refinery city of Barrancabermeja whose brother was disappeared in 1998 and who has been helping prosecutors search for unmarked graves. Mora denies that the devices can listen in on users. The device's local provider, cellular carrier Comcel SA, "made the necessary modifications so that one could not activate the microphone or know the device's location without pressing the button," he said. AP's findings contradict that claim. —AP

TWITTER TO LET ADVERTISERS BUY VIDEO ADS ON PERISCOPE

NEW YORK: Twitter Inc, trying to boost its sagging advertising revenue, will allow brands to buy commercials on its video streams for Periscope, signaling a major push to make money off the live-streaming platform, the company announced yesterday morning. With sponsors growing more wary of exactly what kind of online videos their ads are being placed against, Twitter is allowing a select group of advertisers to purchase pre-roll videos, meaning those that run prior to the publishers' content, on Periscope streams.

Twitter acquired Periscope in 2015. Google's YouTube, long the dominant force for online video ad dollars, has seen an exodus from brands upset to find their ads running alongside anti-Semitic and other videos that shocked customers. Companies that left included Verizon Communications Inc, AT&T Inc and Johnson & Johnson.

YouTube's selling process automatically places ads next to videos that meet the criteria for the audience advertisers want to reach, but the Alphabet unit has had difficulty policing the vast array of videos that are uploaded. Twitter is only offering up a select group of publishers for brands to buy ads against, which will let advertisers know exactly where their ads are showing up. "This is the solution to that problem," Matthew Derella, Twitter's vice president

of global revenue and operations, told Reuters. "We believe the advertiser should have control."

The video ads will only be seen when viewed within Twitter's platform. Twitter allowed for Periscope streams to be integrated within Twitter last year. The advertisers will be able to purchase ads on Periscope videos through Twitter's Amplify program. Until now, Twitter has monetized Periscope by relying on brands to purchase Promoted Tweets, which are placed in user feeds, even for those who do not follow the company on Twitter. The goal is to draw more attention whenever the company is live-streaming something on Periscope.

Twitter is looking to turn around its sagging fortunes. Its stock has slumped 8 percent so far this year as investors have worried about slowed user and advertising revenue growth, along with mounting competition from Facebook Inc's Instagram, and Snap Inc's Snapchat. In the fourth quarter of 2016, Twitter posted the slowest revenue growth since it went public four years earlier, and revenue from advertising fell from a year earlier. The company warned that advertising revenue growth would continue to lag user growth during 2017. The company is also considering a paid subscription offering. —Reuters

UBER HALTS SERVICES IN DENMARK AFTER TAXI LAW

STOCKHOLM: Ride-sharing group Uber yesterday said it would temporarily withdraw its business in Denmark, where a new taxi law restricts cab services. "Uber has decided that we are closing in Denmark, and we do this because of the new taxi law," Uber spokesman Kristian Agerbo told a press conference in Copenhagen.

"This is not necessarily a farewell to Denmark, but a message that we cannot live with the legislation that's in the field now," Agerbo was quoted as saying by the Danish Ritzau news agency. Uber will officially end its activities in Denmark on April 18. In February the

Danish parliament passed a reform changing the regulations for taxis, following pressure from cab drivers. The new law requires mandatory fare meters in cabs and seat occupancy detectors to activate the airbags.

Uber launched an online petition, signed by nearly 40,000 people, against the proposal. "The requirements are unnecessary because technology already provides better and more affordable solutions for driver and rider safety," Uber said. Uber has boasted 2,000 drivers and 300,000 customers since launching in Denmark in 2014. —AFP

VPN USERS IN CHINA'S CHONGQING FACE FINES

BEIJING: People in the Chinese megacity Chongqing could be fined for using VPNs to jump over the country's "Great Firewall" that blocks access to forbidden websites from Google to Facebook. The punishment would be meted out to people using virtual private networks to access banned sites for commercial purposes, but Amnesty International said the wording was vague enough that it could affect any business or individual.

Anyone who skirts censorship controls in the southwestern metropolis of 30 million people will receive a warning to disconnect from the internet, the Chongqing government said Monday. Those who make a profit of more than 5,000 yuan (\$730) while using VPNs will be fined 5,000-15,000 yuan, according to the updated internet security regulation which came into effect in July but only announced this week.

The move is a departure from authorities' previous approach of reinforcing the government's "Great Firewall" to block VPN providers, who provide virtual tunnels that allow users to evade China's vast censorship system. "It looks like such practices might be extended to other parts of China if Chongqing police succeed in punishing

people using VPNs," Amnesty International's China researcher Patrick Poon told AFP. In January Beijing launched a campaign to crack down on such tools.

While China is home to the world's largest number of internet users, a 2015 report by US think tank Freedom House found that the country had the most restrictive online use policies of 65 nations it studied, ranking below Iran and Syria. But China has maintained that its various forms of web censorship are necessary for protecting its national security. Sites blocked due to their content or sensitivity, among them Facebook, Twitter, Google Search and Gmail, cannot be accessed in China without VPNs.

The national VPN crackdown and Chongqing campaign come after the passing of a controversial cybersecurity bill last November that tightened restrictions on online freedom of speech and imposed new rules on service providers. Earlier this month, Beijing said it would push a "China solution" to global cyber governance after releasing a strategy paper outlining a vision of the web where individual countries control the information that flows across their borders. —AFP

ELON MUSK HINTS AT NEW BRAIN-COMPUTER PROJECT

WASHINGTON: Tech entrepreneur Elon Musk hinted yesterday that he is working on a new startup focusing on brain-computer interface, part of his vision to help humans keep up with machines. Musk, the founder of electric carmaker Tesla and exploration firm SpaceX, referenced the new company called Neuralink in a tweet, a day after a Wall Street Journal report saying the company had been formed.

Musk's tweet said he would elaborate his plans in a blog post soon. "Long Neuralink piece coming out on (blog platform) @waitbutwhy in about a week.

Difficult to dedicate the time, but existential risk is too high not to," Musk tweeted. The Journal reported that the new startup will focus on "neural lace" technology which involves implanting tiny brain electrodes capable of uploading and downloading thoughts. The report said Musk has taken an active role setting up the company and may play a "significant leadership role" even as he runs two other large companies. Musk has previously spoken about the idea of neural lacing, claiming it can magnify people's brain power by linking them directly to computing capabilities. —AFP

CAMBODIA BANS EXPORT OF BREAST MILK BY US COMPANY

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia has permanently banned the export of human breast milk by a company headed by a former Mormon missionary that pioneered the business two years ago. A letter issued yesterday by the Cabinet to the Health Ministry said Prime Minister Hun Sen has ordered a halt to US-based Ambrosia Labs Ltd. buying and exporting the milk. The product is marketed as food for babies and as a supplement for adults with special needs, such as bodybuilders, and sells for as much as \$4 an ounce.

The letter gave no legal reason for the ban, but indicated that national pride was at stake. "Even though we are still poor, we are not so poor that we have to sell human breast milk," said the statement, signed by Secretary of State Ngor Hongly. The milk's export was recently suspended while the Health Ministry investigated the health effects on babies of nursing mothers selling their milk and whether the business violated a law on trafficking in human organs. Ambrosia Labs founder Bronzson Woods once

served in a Mormon mission in Cambodia.

The company's co-owner, Ryan Newell, said last week when the suspension of business was announced that mothers were allowed to sell their milk only twice a day and were required to wait until their children were at least 6 months old, the age at which the World Health Organization recommends that parents begin adding supplementary food to baby diets. "We're not taking away from those children," Newell said from the company's offices in Orem, Utah,

south of Salt Lake City. "We're just taking the extra that those mothers would be losing at that point if they start weaning their children." Newell said the women who sold milk may have to go back to working long shifts at garment factories or on the streets. "We've been able to offer these women work where they are earning two to three times what they would be making elsewhere," Newell said. "They're able to stay home with their kids more because they are not working the insane hours." —AP

POOR FARMERS FACE UPHILL BATTLE WITH PAKISTAN'S CLIMATE EXTREMES

ERRATIC WEATHER MAKES AGRICULTURE UNRELIABLE SOURCE OF INCOME

BAKRANI: Since his father died in 2011, Moez Assadullah has been looking after his family's farm alone. The 21-year-old tends the 3 hectares of land without the help of his two brothers, who lost interest in farming when they realized that more erratic weather was making agriculture an unreliable source of income. They now work at a brick kiln in the nearby town of Larkana. But Assadullah has taken a risk, and come up with his own plan to adapt to shifting weather patterns.

Three years ago he stopped growing rice on the farm in Bakrani, a village a few miles from Larkana, in southern Pakistan's Sindh province. The crop was too labor intensive, and took too long to get to harvest, he said. Now he squeezes out a living for his family cultivating vegetables that grow more quickly and require less water. "In view of the rapidly changing weather and upheaval in it, growing a six-month rice crop that requires huge irrigation and care was not a viable option compared to growing vegetables," he said.

Many of Pakistan's farmers are trying to adapt to changing climate conditions - a process that can prove difficult for those with little in the way of education or savings to help them make the required switches. Richer farmers, with more land, money and education, meanwhile, are finding the switch easier. That reality suggests Pakistan may face a future where an uncertain climate forces the poor - who cultivate over 80 percent of the country's agricultural land - out of farming unless they get help, experts say.

Failing small farms could undermine government efforts to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security, and to eradicate poverty, hunger and malnutrition, experts warn. "Providing the poor farmers with required technical, financial and institutional support ... is key," said Khuda Bakhsh, an agriculture scientist at the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology in Vehari, in Punjab province.

Drip irrigation, laser leveling

In Bakrani, Assadullah, after abandoning rice, is growing traditional varieties of cauliflower, spinach, green chili, cabbage, tomatoes and

onion. He says that in his village many farmers with larger plots of land are adopting water conservation technologies, such as drip irrigation. He would like to join them, but the installation costs - up to \$700 per hectare - are too high, he says. But 80 km east, in Khairpur, 38-year-old Nawaz Somroo is using lasers to grow more cotton on his father's more than 80 hectares of land.

Unlike the self-trained Assadullah, Somroo is a graduate in agricultural science from Faisalabad Agriculture University, one of the Pakistan's top agricultural schools. With his education and access to more money, Somroo has been able to adopt improved cotton varieties with higher yields. He uses the latest laser technology to make his fields level, which helps him reduce water consumption by nearly 60 percent. Somroo said that until 2012 his father cultivated a traditional cotton variety.

But at the university, Somroo learned about a seed variety bio-engineered to be pest resistant and introduced it on the family farm. Yields jumped by about a third. Now, he says, other farmers consult him about ways to achieve similar improvements. Akhter Ali, an agro-ecologist and food security expert at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre's (CIMMYT) office in Islamabad said Pakistani farmers who want to adopt climate-smart agriculture are hindered by a lack of technical know-how and financial resources.

But resource-poor farmers could be encouraged to stay in farming through things like on-farm demonstrations, help diversifying crops and adjusting the timing of cultivation, and better access to new crop varieties and water management techniques, he said. Credit schemes for small-scale farmers and subsidized access to technology could also help, he noted. He said a recent CIMMYT study showed that farmers who adapted to changing weather had achieved 8-13 percent better food security than those who did not, and poverty was 3-6 percent lower.

Efforts to help

Pakistani provincial agriculture departments have launched a few programs to boost farmers'

ability to cope with climate change. Starting this year, a three-year World Bank-funded effort is underway to help 16,000 small-scale farmers in Sindh province adapt their livestock and vegetable farming, said Sohail Anwar Syal, the Sindh provincial agriculture minister. The \$88 million scheme aims to improve the productivity and market access of small- and medium-scale farmers by improving their knowledge and access to technology.

Late last year, Punjab's chief minister also launched programs to help farmers with everything from new financial support to a distribution of more than 5 million smartphones. Apart from making up-to-date weather forecasts accessible, the phones will be used to send information about the latest cultivation technologies, farming methods, potential disease outbreaks due to abrupt weather changes, and measures to protect against extreme weather, he said. The province will also make 1 million interest-free loans available to small-scale farmers and give free farmland to graduates of agriculture universities.

In 2016, the Gilgit-Baltistan provincial government similarly launched a seven-year, \$120-million initiative for economic transformation through climate-resilient mountain farming, in collaboration with the UN's International Fund for Agriculture Development. The effort has focused on everything from organizing farmers into producers' groups to introducing high-value climate-resilient cash crops, said Rai Manzoor, Gilgit-Baltistan's food secretary.

Such measures are seen as key in Pakistan as summer monsoon rains, which have traditionally come in late June or early July and ended in September, have for several years arrived only in mid or late August and lasted into October. "Focusing on young smallholder poor farmers and imparting to them new knowledge about coping with climate change impacts" - as well as helping with subsidized technology and small loans - is "critical for achieving household food security and poverty alleviation," said Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan, Pakistan's minister for national food security. —Reuters



FRANCE: This file photo shows a dolphin stranded on the coast of Charente-Maritime near La Rochelle following the winter storms. — AFP

10 DOLPHINS SAFE AFTER BEING STRANDED ON MASSACHUSETTS SHORE

DUXBURY: Animal rescuers have saved 10 of 12 dolphins that were stranded along the Massachusetts shoreline. The Boston Globe reports the stranding in Duxbury was reported around 5 pm Sunday. Six dolphins were able to get back into the water as the tide rose. Rescuers managed to help two others return to deeper water, but two died.

A spokesman for the New England

Aquarium says rescuers didn't have time to examine the animals because of the urgency required to get them back into the water. International Fund for Animal Welfare officials say a team collected and released another two dolphins found stranded in Barnstable around 4.30 pm. The dolphins were healthy. Officials say the IFAW has rescued a total of 152 stranded animals this year. —AP

BIRD FLU FOUND IN CHICKEN FLOCK AT NORTHWEST GEORGIA FARM

SUMMERVILLE: About 18,000 chickens were destroyed at a northwest Georgia poultry farm after tests confirmed avian influenza in the flock, the first time the disease has been detected in commercial birds in the state, authorities said Monday. The infected chickens were flagged by routine screening at a poultry breeder in Georgia's Chattooga County, said Julie McPeake, a spokeswoman for the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

Surveillance monitoring of all other commercial operations within a 6-mile radius found no further infections. State officials also planned to check all backyard breeders within 2 miles. Poultry is the No. 1 agricultural sector in Georgia, with breeders and processing plants having an estimated annual \$25.9 billion impact statewide. "We have never had avian influenza in a commercial flock in Georgia," McPeake said. "This is the first one."

Chattooga County, about 90 miles northwest of Atlanta, is on the Georgia-Alabama state line and not far from Tennessee. Both neighboring states, along with Kentucky, also have reported

bird flu in poultry flocks in recent weeks. Officials in Georgia and the other states say no infected birds have entered the nation's poultry supply, and the US food chain isn't at risk. While the disease can devastate bird populations, it rarely jumps to humans.

None of the infected birds in Georgia showed any symptoms, McPeake said, leading officials to believe they had a low-pathogenic form of the disease like those in Alabama and Kentucky. High-pathogenic bird flu, a deadlier form of the illness, was detected this month in Tennessee, where 145,000 birds were destroyed.

Overall, more than 225,000 birds have been euthanized because of the disease in the four Southern states. In addition, the US Department of Agriculture said earlier this month a flock of 84,000 turkeys had been confirmed with a low-pathogenic bird flu virus in Wisconsin. The viruses in the current outbreaks are different from the high-pathogenic virus that resulted in the loss of nearly 50 million birds in the Midwest chicken egg and turkey industry in 2015. —AP



MUNICH: A bee collects pollen from a flower in Munich, southern Germany. —AFP

MEDICINAL PLANT PRESCRIBED TO CURE KENYA'S HEALTH WOES

BUSIA, Kenya: Colletta Anyango saunters around a large, well-kept garden, carefully identifying and plucking the leaves of plants ranging from herbs and vegetables to fruit bushes and trees. Some have shed their leaves in defense against the dry weather typical of western Kenya early in the year, while others are lush green. Anyango belongs to Farmers with a Vision, a community organization based in Busia County that created the garden for medicinal plants, which it processes into treatments and other products.

The group's aim is to help preserve these plants, not only to fight diseases but also for the purpose of research, while producing income for its members. They make anti-fungal and bacterial soaps, oils, ointments, mosquito-repellent jelly, anti-malarial tea, and black stones to extract snake-bite venom, marketed under the registered label Didasco Products. They also sell detergents, washing-up powder, liquid floor cleaner and disinfectants. Anyango, who is involved in sales, said uptake is high. The high cost of conventional medicine, coupled with inadequate public health service delivery, has driven people towards herbal medicine, she added.

The group members, who number more than 30, have one communal garden, while individuals cultivate their own gardens too. They receive

training to plant, care for and harvest the medicinal and fruit plants which are then made into products by members. Mercy Odhiambo, who is in charge of promoting Didasco Products, said mosquito repellent is popular due to the high prevalence of the biting insects in Kenya. "It is bought mostly by people who work on night shifts. It is obtained from the Artemisia plant, which has properties for treating malaria, among other ailments," she explained.

Growing demand

Grace Ngugi, head of economic ethnobotany at National Museums of Kenya (NMK), the state custodian of Kenya's natural and cultural heritage, said growing use of herbal treatments is an opportunity for the traditional medicine industry to expand. To take advantage of that, more medicinal plant nurseries and gardens could be established, including contracting farmers to supply herbs, she said. The development of urban markets for herbal medicines has increased the number of dealers selling both raw and semi-processed preparations.

But Ngugi highlighted potential challenges to safety and quality due to weak guidelines, regulations and standards for the products, practitioners and retailers. Increasingly, recognition of tradi-

tional medicine by the scientific community and media is leading to its inclusion in government development plans and policies, she added. For example, the state is making an effort to register and license practitioners.

Farmers With a Vision CEO Didasco Odhiambo said the group is working to ensure standardization and good practices in its production processes, and has approached the Kenya Bureau of Standards for certification. The organization is conducting joint seminars with Action for Natural Medicine, an international Christian group that raises community awareness about the use of medicinal plants, and is also working with the ministry of health, he added. "We train people about the cultivation of different medicinal plants in gardens, as well as hygienic production of effective natural medicines from the plants," said Odhiambo.

Farmers with a Vision also works to identify and document herbs and other medicinal plants for posterity. In the near term, it plans to purchase a soap-making machine for 200,000 Kenyan shillings (\$1,946), and train several young people to use it so they can earn a living. Group members have learned how to make perfumes but cannot buy the necessary equipment due to a lack of funding. — Reuters

PAKISTAN LAUNCHES SPECIAL ANTI-POLIO DRIVE IN ISLAMABAD

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani health official says a special anti-polio drive has been launched in Islamabad after traces of the polio virus were found in the city's sewage system. The virus was detected weeks ago but so far no cases have been reported in Islamabad. Dr. Rana Safdar, who coordinated Pakistan's polio eradication center, says the three-day vaccination campaign started on Monday. Safdar says police have

taken steps to protect the polio workers. Islamabad registered its last polio case 10 years ago. The Taliban and other militants have in the past attacked vaccination centers and health workers because they perceive the vaccination drives as part of a Western conspiracy to sterilize Pakistani children or collect intelligence. Pakistan is among a few countries in the world where polio is endemic. —AP



ISLAMABAD: A health worker gives a polio vaccine to a child in Islamabad, Pakistan, yesterday. — AP

WILD THAI TIGER CUB FOOTAGE SPARKS HOPE FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES

BANGKOK: Conservationists yesterday hailed the discovery of a new breeding population of tigers in Thailand as a "miraculous" victory for a sub-species

nearly wiped out by poaching. Images of some tigers including six cubs, captured by camera traps in an eastern Thai jungle throughout 2016, confirm

the presence of what is only the world's second known breeding population of the endangered Indochinese tiger. The only other growing population—the largest in the world with about three dozen tigers—is based in a western forest corridor in Thailand near the border with Myanmar.

"The extraordinary rebound of eastern Thailand's tigers is nothing short of miraculous," said John Goodrich, the tiger program director at Panthera, a wild cat preservation group that backed the survey. The camera trap footage, which shows female tigers and their cubs traipsing through the leafy jungle, was captured with help from the anti-trafficking group Freeland and Thai park authorities. Indochinese tigers, which are generally smaller than their Bengal and Siberian counterparts, once roamed across much of Asia.

But today only an estimated 221 remain, with the vast majority in Thailand and a handful in neighboring Myanmar. Aggressive poaching, weak law enforcement and habitat loss has rendered the animals all but extinct in southern China, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, according to scientists. Tiger farms around the region have

also boosted the trafficking trade by propping up demand for tiger parts, which are treasured as talismans and used in traditional medicines popular in China.

Conservationists and park officials attributed Thailand's success story to a rise in counter-poaching efforts over the past few decades. But they warned that the breeding populations remained vulnerable and would not thrive without a sustained commitment to busting poachers and taking down the lucrative trafficking trade. The Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai forest complex, where the latest young cubs were caught on some of the 156 cameras, still hosts a only modest tiger density of 0.63 tigers per 100 square kilometers.

It is a ratio on par with some of the world's most threatened tiger habitats, according to Freeland, but still means there is a population of at least 23 of the big beasts roaming wild. "It's crucial to continue the great progress made by the Thai government to bolster protection for tigers at the frontlines," said Kraissak Choonhavan, the group's board chairman. "As long as the illegal trade in tigers continues, they will need protection." —AFP



THAILAND: In this photo, an Indochinese tiger roams the forest in Eastern Thailand. —AFP

MICE INFESTED HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, 15,000 YEARS AGO IN THE MIDDLE EAST

MIAMI: Mice began infesting human settlements some 15,000 years ago in the Middle East, said a study Monday that suggested the little rodents have been scurrying underfoot far longer than previously thought. As soon as hunter-gatherers began settling down rather than roving from place to place, house mice began to edge out their wild counterparts, said the study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), a peer-reviewed US journal.

"The research provides the first evidence that, as early as 15,000 years ago, humans were living in one place long enough to impact local animal communities—resulting in the dominant presence of house mice," said co-author Fiona Marshall, a professor of anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis. Previous research has pointed to the rise of farming as the starting point for transforming human relations with the animal world—particularly small mammals like mice.

But this study suggests "that the roots of animal domestication go back to human sedentism thousands of years prior to what has long been considered the dawn of agriculture," said Marshall. In hunter-gatherer villages in the eastern Mediterranean region, house mice were common more than 3,000 years before the

earliest known evidence for agriculture, said the findings. When hunter-gatherers settled in one place, they provided shelter and regular access to crumbs and scraps. Mice would learn to benefit from this and would stick around, marking an early phase of domestication.

Researchers focused on an ancient Natufian hunter-gatherer site in the Jordan Valley of Israel, where excavations have shown a wildly swinging ratio of house mice to wild mice during different prehistoric periods. They studied variations in the molar shapes of fossilized mice teeth going back as far as 200,000 years. At times when people were more likely to settle for long periods, the house mouse (*Mus musculus domesticus*) reigned over the short-tailed field mouse (*M. macedonicus*), and pushed most of them outside the settlement.

In periods of drought or food shortages, when hunter-gatherers were forced to move more often, the populations of house mice and field mice reached a balance. "The findings provide clear evidence that the ways humans have shaped the natural world are tied to varying levels of human mobility," said Marshall. The study included researchers from the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris, France, and Lior Weissbrod of the University of Haifa in Israel. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: In this photo, Royal Palms Beach in the San Pedro area of Los Angeles is protected by boulders placed there to forestall erosion. — AP

STUDY PREDICTS SIGNIFICANT S CALIFORNIA BEACH EROSION

CALIFORNIA: Using a new computer model to predict shoreline effects caused by the rise of sea levels and changes in storm patterns from climate change, the research found that with limited human intervention, 31 percent to 67 percent of the beaches could vanish over the next eight decades with sea-level rises of 3.3 feet to 6.5 feet. Human efforts will likely need to increase to preserve the beaches, study lead author Sean Vitousek said in a statement.

"Beaches are perhaps the most iconic feature of California, and the potential for losing this identity is real," he said. "The effect of California losing its beaches is not just a matter of affecting the tourism economy. Losing the protecting swath of beach sand between us and the pounding surf exposes critical infrastructure, businesses and homes to damage." Vitousek was a post-doctoral fellow at the US Geological Survey at the time of the study and is now a professor in the Department of Civil and Materials Engineering at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The study was published in the American Geophysical Union's Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface. The computer model looks at how sand is transported parallel and perpendicular to beaches as well as historical positions of shorelines and changes caused by waves and cycles such as the ocean warming phenomenon El Nino. According to the researchers, its reliability was shown by accurately reproducing shoreline changes seen

between 1995 and 2010.

Patrick Barnard, a USGS geologist and study co-author, said it shows that "massive and costly interventions" will be needed to save the beaches, which he described as both crucial to the Southern California economy and the first line of

defense against coastal storm impacts. Losing so many beaches would be unacceptable, said John Ainsworth, executive director of the California Coastal Commission. "The beaches are our public parks and economic heart and soul of our coastal communities," he said. —AP

FRUIT FUELLED EVOLUTION OF A BIGGER BRAIN: STUDY

PARIS: Humans likely developed large and powerful brains, researchers said Monday, with the help of what is today the simplest of snacks: fruit. Eating fruit was a key step up from the most basic of foodstuffs, such as leaves, and provided the energy needed to grow bulkier brains, the scientists argued. "That's how we got these crazy huge brains," said the study's corresponding author Alex Decasien, a researcher at New York University. "We have blown up the quality of our food that we are eating."

The study published in Nature Ecology and Evolution looked at the staple foods of over 140 species of primates, and assumed their diets haven't changed much over the course of recent evolution. According to the research, the animals which feast on fruit have brains that

are about 25 percent bigger than those filling their bellies primarily with leaves. The results call into question the theory that has prevailed since the mid-1990s, which says bigger brains developed out of the need to survive and reproduce in complex social groups.

Decasien said the challenges of living in a group could be part of getting smarter, but found no link between the complexity of primates' social lives and the size of their grey matter. What did correlate strongly with brain size was eating fruit. Foods such as fruit contain more energy than basic sources like leaves, thus creating the additional fuel needed to evolve a bigger brain. At the same time, remembering which plants produce fruit, where they are, and how to break them open could also help a primate grow a bigger brain. —AFP



KUWAIT CITY: This file photo shows two cats watching a mouse walking on the pavement in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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ACK SIGNS STRATEGIC PARTNERING AGREEMENT WITH ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) has signed a Strategic Partnering Agreement with the Engineers Australia Association (EA). The Partnering Agreement consents ACK to become EA's Primary Partner in the Middle East and North African countries as well as Cyprus and Turkey. The signing ceremony was held at ACK in the presence of Abdullah Al-Sharhan, Chairman of ACK, Prof. Isam Zabalawi, President of ACK as well as John McIntosh, Engineers Australia National President.

Dr. Mohamed Gaith - Associate Dean of the School of Engineering at ACK, stated: "The Partnering Agreement is a first step in establishing Engineers Australia overseas chapters in Kuwait and other countries in the region. ACK and EA will work collaboratively towards joint community and government engagement initiatives to raise quality and perception of engineering in the Middle East. This includes conferences, hosting of renowned international speakers, online professional development, as well as online and digital presence in the region."

Dr. Gaith emphasized that this Partnering Agreement is very crucial to ACK as it will not only serve professional engineers in the region, but will also act as a catalyst for professional development of ACK's engineering students and faculty. The presence of EA in the region will facilitate non-Australian engineering professionals who are keen to advance their career and get their experience recognized by a reputable engineering body such as EA and work towards EA chartered status.

ACK is honored of this achievement and is looking forward to work with engineering professionals, regional engineering firms as well as local companies and agencies for the best interest of the engineering community in the region.



QNB KUWAIT ORGANIZES BLOOD DONATION DRIVE

QNB Kuwait has recently organized a blood donation campaign under the theme "One drop of blood saves a life," in which a large number of the Bank's employees took part. The initiative comes as part of the Bank's CSR program and expresses the Bank's keenness to play a role in society. The campaign has a dual purpose of enhancing blood bank stocks and raising awareness of the importance of donating blood and the resulting health benefits to society.

Samir Salman, General Manager of QNB Kuwait, explained that all the Bank's employees are aware of the importance of donating blood, as it helps save patients' lives and instills the voluntary spirit in the service of society. For their part, officials at the blood bank expressed their appreciation of this initiative, calling on other institutions to follow suit. The health sector is one of six key areas that QNB Group focuses on to reflect its values and goals, and to emphasize its keenness to support such events that benefit society.

The employee blood donation campaign is one of several local and international initiatives in the health sector sponsored by the Bank. QNB Group is present, through its subsidiaries and associate companies, in more than 30 countries across three continents providing a comprehensive range of products and services. QNB Group staff exceeds 28,000, operating through 1,200 locations with a network of 4,300 ATMs.

MARINA HOTEL KUWAIT SUPPORTS EARTH HOUR 2017

Demonstrating its commitment to protecting the environment and mitigating climate change, Marina Hotel participated for the sixth consecutive year in the important worldwide event "Earth Hour". Marina Hotel Kuwait marked Earth Hour 2017, by turning off the lights of the hotel on 25 March 2017 for an hour. By this action, the hotel joins the efforts of many organizations around the world to draw attention to the worldwide issue of global warming. The activity has a great impact and involves everyone in the hotel to switch off the lights in all guestrooms and public areas.

As a symbolic gesture to warn against global warming for 60 minutes, non-essential lighting and electrical appliances around the property were switched off in an effort to reduce their

environmental impact and draw attention to environmental issues. In addition there was a spectacular display made up of candles illuminating the lobby.

Employees of each department including Sales and Marketing, Front Office, Food and Beverage, Housekeeping, Engineering, Finance, IT, Admin, Human Resources along with the General Manager, Nabil Hammoud were present, assisting with candles set-up around the hotel and creating awareness for guests to contribute to global environmental change.

"Earth Hour is one of the ways we show our commitment to energy conservation," commented Nabil Hammoud, General Manager, Marina Hotel. "We are dedicated to actively participate and support any programme which works to pre-

serve our planet. Observing Earth Hour is one of the activities we uphold in relation to our corporate responsibilities to help raise awareness for climate change with our employees and guests."

Participating in the Earth Hour, Marina Hotel Kuwait joins the growing list of supporting businesses that are committed to take a stand on climate change and create a cleaner, safer and more secure future. Earth Hour is an annual international event created by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), to raise awareness towards the need and take action on climate change. With the challenges of the global economy, leaders and people remain focused on the growing threat of climate change and place a high priority on environmentally-friendly solutions as one of the ways to overcome those challenges.



LOYAC LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO SAVE YEMEN CHILDREN



In collaboration with the CPS Company, LOYAC Aden launched a package of creative solutions to psychologically and mentally treat children of the devastating effects of war in Yemen. The training program launched under the title of 'I Will Be Fine' aims to help children get over the shocks of war and alleviate the sufferings they have been through during the war. Notably, through its resident Representative to Yemen Michelle Rilano, the UNICEF had made several calls to save Yemeni children from the atrocities of war noting that a large segment of Yemeni children were at the verge of famine and are subject to various diseases due to the lack of proper medical care.





Photos by Joseph Shagra

NEW CROWNE PLAZA HOLDS GALA RECEPTION

Crowne Plaza, Al-Thuraya City invites their clientele to a gala reception at the new Crowne Plaza, where more than 300 invitees enjoyed the event by a warm welcomed at Silk Restaurant from Antoine Flouty Area General Manager, Zaid Mashini Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing and the rest of their colleague from different department.

The entertainment section threw extra ordinary stations in the lobby of the restaurant where they displayed assorted of scrumptious foods from their seven restaurants. Additionally, different stations for beverages were serving; soda, juices from Caribbean Island, Indian coast, Jamaican drinks, and a variety of ice tea. The event started at 7 pm and ended at 10 pm.



BRITISH COUNCIL CELEBRATES SUCCESS OF HIGH ACHIEVERS IN EDEXCEL EXAMS

British Council hosted a felicitation ceremony for students from their Partner School Global Network who performed exceedingly well in their Cambridge or Pearson Edexcel Exams. British Council celebrated this achievement with their partner schools, students and their families. This was an occasion to highlight the benefits of the UK qualifications and to strengthen their relationship with the schools and students in Kuwait. The event was held in the Dasman Hall at the Radisson Blu Hotel on the evening of March 27, 2017. The eight students who were awarded are:



Qualification	Syllabus	Student's name	Centre name
Top In World			
IGCSE	English as a Second Language (Speaking Endorsement)	Omar Ashraf Ahmed Hussein Elsaadani	British Council, Kuwait
High Achievement			
IGCSE	Environmental Management	Kwangmin Nam	The English School Fahaheel
IGCSE	Islamiyat	Syed MujtabaHaider	Jabriya Indian School
Top In Country			
IGCSE	First Language Arabic	Hadil Mohamed EzeldinSamy	Pakistan English Academy
IGCSE	Mathematics (Without Coursework)	Hadi Mohammad Mahmoud Tobi	Jabriya Indian School
IGCSE	Mathematics (Without Coursework)	Omar Abbas AbbasSharafeddeen	New Pakistan International School
IGCSE	Sociology	FidaWasqueChoudhury	International School of Pakistan
Pearson Edexcel	3 Grade A's- International Advanced Level	Shams KhaledElhossenGhazyEssawy	Pakistan English Academy

To congratulate the students and encourage them, members from the Ministry of Private Education, representatives from the UK embassy and decision makers from the partner school network attended the event. Grant Butler, the country director - British Council congratulated the students for their achievement and thanked the Partner Schools Global Network (PSGN) for the support they have been providing to teachers and students. He said, "Congratulations to all the students for their incredible results. I wish them all the very best with their careers." "I would also like to congratulate the teachers and parents who have helped these learners with their preparations. I

hope their success story serves as inspiration for other students across Kuwait. British Council has over the years built a network of 16 schools in Kuwait and we have delivered over 10,000 school exams last year. We will continue to support education and student development in Kuwait by offering UK qualifications with the highest standards of exams security and test day management." The Partner Schools Global Network (PSGN) is the community of schools that offer a UK curriculum leading to exams such as IGCSE and A level, administered in cooperation with the British Council. It is aimed at offering high-quality products and services that support our leaders,

teachers, learners and parents through Quality Assurance self-assessment tools and an excellent suite of in-service teacher-training workshops for both primary and secondary teachers, providing access to online educational support. In Kuwait there are 16 schools which are a part of this network with approximately 1100 students pursuing UK qualifications and the numbers are steadily rising over the years.

The awards were distributed to the students and the event concluded with a cultural performance by students from the Pakistan English Academy. British Council was established in Kuwait in 1955 and has strengthened the ties and relations between the UK and Kuwait ever since. Sixty two years of examinations delivery has allowed thousands of Kuwaiti and expatriate students to reach their goals in education and move towards inspiring career and study opportunities. Through their work, the British Council has touched the lives of many young people and has provided opportunities to grow and build connections.

In 2016, British Council Kuwait delivered over 25,000 examinations and supported 16 schools as attached centers in Kuwait. The range of examinations includes IELTS, Cambridge and Pearson Edexcel, Apts and UK Qualification & professional exams. The British Council's examination department aims to provide positive and fair examinations for all candidates along with support for teachers and learners of English through trainings and free Learn English resources available online.

MILLENNIUM HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER KUWAIT CELEBRATES THE EARTH HOUR 2017

In efforts to join many institutions in drawing attention to the issue of global warming, Millennium Hotel and Convention Center Kuwait actively contributed during the International Earth Hour - March 25th - by switching off the non-essential lighting for one hour and light candles, leading the way to a sustainable future. This positive initiative from Millennium Kuwait came as part of its incessant commitment to realize its corporate social responsibility.

During the event, Dani Saleh - Area General Manager of the Millennium and Copthorne Hotels Kuwait, met with the team at the hotel lobby, and together they lit a bunch of candles to form the number 60, symbolizing the Earth Hour in minutes. Hotel guests were also invited to take part in this initiative, and many actually welcome the idea and participated.

"The Earth Hour is an opportunity for each of us to come together and unite our voice in expressing our support for the planet we live in and our determination to take action to reduce the negative effects of climate change," said Dani Saleh. Earth Hour is a global initiative launched by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and is considered

one of the largest and most effective movements to protect the environment against climate change. The movement began in 2007 and followed by 1.8 billion people worldwide.

Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre is one of the grandest emerging 5-star quality business hotels in the country strategically located on the 4th ring road in the heart of Al-Salmiya area, close to the main shopping malls, dining and entertainment spots around the block. It is also home to business conferences and trade exhibitions with varying capacities.

The hotel is designed for business and leisure travelers, offering 295 rooms and suites equipped with state-of-the-art technology, complimentary high speed Wi-Fi and luxury amenities. Millennium Hotel facilities also include a health club - with modern Techno-gym brand machines, an outdoor swimming pool, and sauna/steam rooms. The hotel's integrated business center offers secretarial services and comprehensive office facilities. With 3 different cuisines and a pool bar, guests are spoiled for choice when it comes to dining in the hotel's world-class restaurants.



OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 00:15 Dead Drop
- 02:15 Black Rose
- 04:15 Beverly Hills Cop 3
- 06:15 Last Action Hero
- 08:45 The World Is Not Enough
- 11:15 Real Steel
- 13:30 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I
- 15:45 I Am Number Four
- 17:45 Die Another Day
- 20:00 Fury
- 22:15 Wild Card

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:15 Snake Sheila
- 00:45 Bondi Vet
- 01:40 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 02:35 Tanked
- 03:25 Orangutan Island
- 03:50 Orangutan Island
- 04:15 Gator Boys
- 05:02 Snake Sheila
- 05:27 Snake Sheila
- 05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 06:36 Gorilla School
- 07:00 Gorilla School
- 07:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 08:15 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 09:10 Orangutan Island
- 09:35 Orangutan Island
- 10:05 Tanked
- 11:00 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 11:55 Bondi Vet
- 12:50 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 13:45 Gator Boys
- 14:40 Orangutan Island
- 15:05 Orangutan Island
- 15:35 Tanked
- 16:30 Snake Sheila
- 16:55 Snake Sheila
- 17:25 Restoration Wild
- 18:20 The Pool Master
- 19:15 Tanked
- 20:10 Orangutan Island
- 20:35 Orangutan Island
- 21:05 Restoration Wild
- 22:00 The Pool Master
- 22:55 Gator Boys
- 23:50 Snake Sheila

BBC FIRST

- 00:00 Doctors

- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 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 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 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 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 17:00 Zoltan The Wolfman
- 17:50 Finding Bigfoot
- 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 Zoltan The Wolfman
- 22:00 Finding Bigfoot
- 22:50 What Happened Next?
- 23:15 What Happened Next?
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival



- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:00 Violetta
- 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:45 The Hive
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:30 Violetta
- 03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:15 The Hive
- 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 Zhuuzus
- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Bunk'd
- 09:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place

- 07:00 Zou
- 07:15 Calimero
- 07:30 Loopidoo
- 07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 08:05 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 08:15 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 08:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 08:45 Goldie & Bear
- 08:55 The Lion Guard
- 09:20 PJ Masks
- 09:35 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 09:50 Doc McStuffins
- 10:00 Goldie & Bear
- 10:15 PJ Masks
- 10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 10:35 The Lion Guard
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins
- 11:55 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 12:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 12:50 Loopidoo
- 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 Unbungaleivable
- 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 Unbungaleivable
- 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 The Wheel: Survival Games
- 02:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 02:50 American Tarzan
- 03:40 Fast N' Loud
- 04:30 Storage Hunters
- 05:00 How Do They Do It?

- 21:10 Walk The Prank
- 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:45 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
- 22:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
- 22:35 Booster
- 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



- 00:05 Botched
- 00:55 Botched
- 01:50 El News
- 02:50 WAGs
- 03:45 WAGs
- 04:40 WAGs Miami
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 06:55 El News
- 07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 08:10 El News
- 09:10 WAGs Miami
- 10:05 WAGs
- 11:00 WAGs
- 12:00 El News
- 12:15 WAGs
- 13:10 WAGs
- 14:05 WAGs
- 15:00 El News
- 15:15 Celebrity Style Story
- 15:40 Celebrity Style Story
- 16:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 18:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 19:00 El News
- 20:00 So Cosmo
- 21:00 So Cosmo
- 22:00 So Cosmo
- 23:00 El News
- 23:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian



- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Man Fire Food
- 01:30 Man Fire Food
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 10:00 Siba's Table
- 10:30 Siba's Table
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 13:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 17:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Iron Chef America
- 20:00 Chopped
- 21:00 The Great Food Truck Race
- 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:00 Guy's Grocery Games



- 00:10 The Chase
- 01:00 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coronation Street
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 03:25 Murdoch Mysteries
- 04:20 Brief Encounters
- 05:15 Broadchurch
- 06:10 The Chase
- 07:05 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 08:00 Murdoch Mysteries
- 09:00 Brief Encounters
- 10:00 Broadchurch
- 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 Grantchester Christmas Special
- 17:20 Gino's Italian Escape
- 18:35 Home Fires
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Coronation Street
- 19:45 Coronation Street
- 20:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 21:00 Grantchester Christmas Special
- 22:20 Gino's Italian Escape



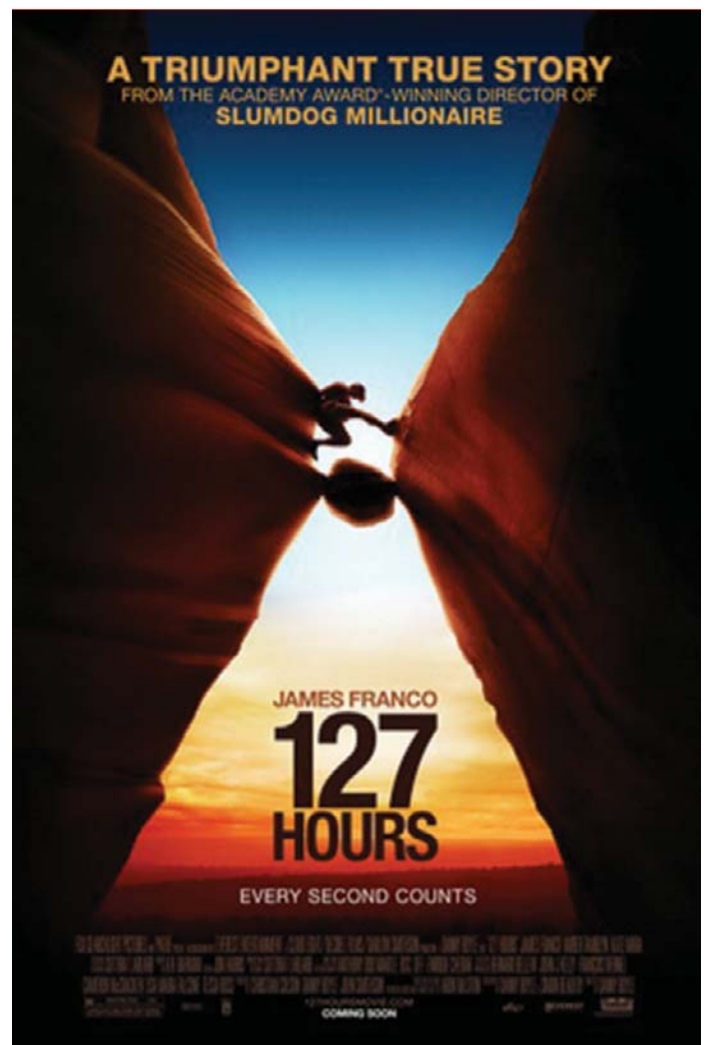
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Coronation Street
- 23:40 Coronation Street
- 00:00 World War II: Lost Films
- 01:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 02:50 Ancient Aliens
- 03:40 Ancient Aliens
- 04:30 The Universe
- 05:20 World War II: Lost Films
- 06:10 The Universe
- 07:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 09:00 Ancient Aliens
- 10:00 Ancient Aliens
- 11:00 The Universe
- 12:00 World War II: Lost Films
- 13:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 14:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 15:00 Ancient Aliens
- 16:00 Ancient Aliens
- 17:00 The Universe
- 18:00 World War II: Lost Films
- 19:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 20:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 21:00 Ancient Aliens
- 22:00 Ancient Top 10
- 23:00 The Universe



- 00:20 Forged In Fire
- 01:10 Fifth Gear
- 02:00 Swamp People
- 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 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Hunting Hitler
- 11:50 Time Team
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 16:00 Counting Cars
- 16:25 Counting Cars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Fifth Gear
- 18:30 Swamp People
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Counting Cars
- 21:25 Car Hunters
- 21:50 Forged In Fire
- 22:40 Forged In Fire
- 23:30 American Pickers



- 00:15 The Food Files
- 00:40 The Food Files
- 01:05 Route Awakening
- 01:30 Dog Whisperer
- 02:20 Bangkok Airport
- 03:10 Grandma's Boy
- 03:35 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 04:00 Mega Food
- 04:55 Chasing The Sun
- 05:20 Chasing The Sun
- 05:45 The Food Files
- 06:15 Eat Street
- 06:40 Eat Street
- 07:10 Route Awakening
- 07:35 Dog Whisperer
- 08:30 Bangkok Airport
- 09:25 Grandma's Boy
- 09:55 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 10:20 Mega Food
- 11:15 Chasing The Sun
- 11:45 Chasing The Sun
- 12:10 The Food Files
- 12:40 Grandma's Boy
- 13:05 Dog Whisperer
- 14:00 Bangkok Airport
- 14:55 Route Awakening
- 15:25 Croatia's Finest
- 15:50 Chasing The Sun
- 16:20 Chasing The Sun
- 16:45 Mega Food
- 17:40 What's For Sale?
- 18:10 Eat Street
- 18:35 Eat Street
- 19:05 Route Awakening
- 19:30 Croatia's Finest
- 20:00 Chasing The Sun
- 20:25 Chasing The Sun
- 20:55 Mega Food
- 21:45 What's For Sale?



127 HOURS ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 22:10 Eat Street
- 22:35 Eat Street
- 23:00 Grandma's Boy
- 23:25 Dog Whisperer



- 00:45 Columbus in the Last Journey
- 02:30 Marco Macaco
- 04:15 Miffy The Movie
- 06:00 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 07:30 Egon And Donci
- 09:15 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 11:00 Columbus In The Last Journey
- 12:45 Marco Macaco
- 14:15 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 16:00 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 18:00 Doctor Proctor's Fat Powder
- 20:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 21:45 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 23:15 Egon And Donci



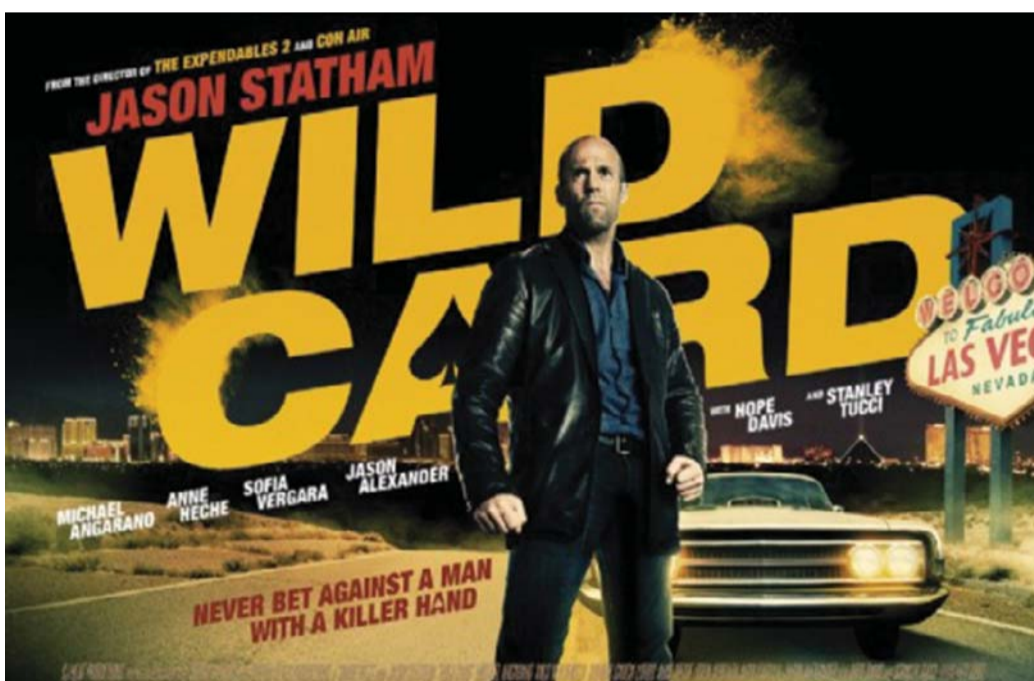
- 01:30 127 Hours
- 03:30 Faster
- 05:30 Barely Lethal
- 07:30 While You Were Sleeping
- 09:30 People Like Us
- 11:30 127 Hours
- 13:15 Goosebumps
- 15:15 Orange County
- 16:45 Independence Day
- 19:15 The Hurricane
- 21:45 Public Enemies



- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
- 00:55 Food Factory
- 01:20 Sport Science
- 02:10 How The Earth Works
- 03:00 The Big Brain Theory
- 03:48 Mythbusters
- 04:36 How Do They Do It?
- 05:00 Food Factory
- 05:24 Sport Science
- 06:12 How The Earth Works
- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 07:26 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 08:14 Mythbusters
- 09:02 How The Earth Works
- 09:50 How Do They Do It?
- 10:14 Food Factory
- 10:38 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 11:26 The Big Brain Theory
- 12:14 Mythbusters
- 13:02 How Do They Do It?
- 13:26 Food Factory
- 13:50 How The Earth Works
- 14:38 The Big Brain Theory
- 15:26 Sport Science
- 16:14 Mythbusters
- 17:02 How The Earth Works
- 17:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 18:40 Mythbusters
- 19:30 Strip The Cosmos
- 20:20 How Do They Do It?
- 20:45 Food Factory
- 21:10 How The Earth Works
- 22:00 Strip The Cosmos
- 22:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 23:40 Mythbusters



- 00:20 The Day I Almost Died
- 01:10 Monsters Inside Me
- 02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 02:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 02:50 Love At First Swipe
- 03:15 Cake Boss
- 03:35 Little People, Big World
- 04:20 Little People, Big World
- 04:45 Little People, Big World
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Dare To Wear
- 06:50 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 07:40 Iyanla: Fix My Life
- 08:30 Little People, Big World
- 08:55 Little People, Big World
- 09:20 Kate Plus 8
- 10:10 Love At First Swipe
- 10:35 Cake Boss
- 11:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 11:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 11:50 Dare To Wear
- 12:40 Little People, Big World
- 13:30 Save My Style
- 13:55 Save My Style
- 14:20 Little Miss Atlanta
- 15:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 16:00 Little People, Big World
- 16:25 Little People, Big World
- 16:50 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
- 17:40 Love At First Swipe
- 18:05 Cake Boss
- 18:30 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 19:20 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 19:45 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 20:10 Convy Brides
- 20:35 Convy Brides
- 21:00 I Know What You Weighed Last Summer
- 21:50 An Hour To Save Your Life
- 22:40 Botched Up Bodies
- 23:30 I Know What You Weighed Last



WILD CARD ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 00:35 Frankie
- 01:35 The Level
- 02:25 DCI Banks
- 03:15 DCI Banks
- 04:05 Doctors
- 04:35 Doctors
- 05:05 New Tricks
- 06:00 Doctors
- 06:30 Doctors
- 07:00 Holly City
- 07:55 Father Brown
- 08:45 Doctor Who
- 09:35 New Tricks
- 10:30 Doctors
- 11:00 Doctors
- 11:30 Father Brown
- 12:20 Doctor Who
- 13:10 New Tricks
- 14:10 Doctors
- 14:45 Doctors
- 15:20 Father Brown
- 16:10 Doctor Who
- 17:00 New Tricks
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Father Brown
- 20:00 Poldark
- 21:00 Last Tango In Halifax
- 21:55 DCI Banks
- 22:45 DCI Banks
- 23:35 Doctors

- 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 Ranks
- 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 Zhuuzus
- 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
- 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 22:30 Jessie
- 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 22:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 23:00 Kirby Buckets
- 23:35 Binny And The Ghost

- 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 The Wheel: Survival Games
- 11:25 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 12:15 American Tarzan
- 13:05 How Do They Do It?
- 13:30 Storage Hunters
- 13:55 Storage Hunters
- 14:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 15:10 Venom Hunters
- 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 Venom Hunters
- 20:10 Storage Hunters
- 20:35 Storage Hunters
- 21:00 Made By Destruction
- 21:25 Made By Destruction
- 21:50 You Have Been Warned
- 22:40 Impossible Engineering
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud



- 06:00 Gravity Falls
- 06:25 Counterfeit Cat
- 06:50 Atomic Puppet
- 07:15 Milo Murphy's Law
- 07:25 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 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 Elite Force
- 13:20 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 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 Walk The Prank
- 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



- 01:00 Killer Kids
- 02:00 The First 48
- 03:00 Footsteps In The Snow
- 05:00 Killer Kids
- 06:00 Crime Stories
- 07:00 Crime Stories
- 08:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 09:00 Homicide Hunter
- 10:00 Campus Nightmares
- 11:00 Campus Nightmares
- 12:00 Campus Nightmares
- 13:00 Holloway: Women Behind Bars
- 14:00 Crime Stories
- 15:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 16:00 Homicide Hunter
- 17:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 18:00 It Takes A Killer
- 18:30 It Takes A Killer
- 19:00 The First 48
- 20:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 21:00 Crime Stories
- 22:00 My Crazy Ex
- 23:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera



- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:35 The Hive
- 04:05 Loopidoo
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:15 Calimero
- 04:30 Art Attack
- 04:55 Zou
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou
- 06:00 Art Attack
- 06:30 The Hive
- 06:40 Loopidoo
- 06:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:10 Art Attack
- 07:35 Loopidoo
- 07:50 Calimero
- 08:05 Art Attack
- 08:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:45 Zou
- 09:00 Art Attack
- 09:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 09:45 Loopidoo



- 00:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 01:20 Race To Escape
- 02:10 World's Funniest Fails
- 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



LOVE, ROSIE ON MOVIES COMEDY HD



- 01:00 Chicken Little
- 03:00 Houdini On The Trail Of Marsupilami
- 05:00 Toy Story 2
- 07:00 Beverly Hills Chihuahua
- 09:00 The Incredibles
- 11:00 Toy Story 2
- 13:00 Bark Ranger
- 15:00 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash
- 17:00 Toy Story 3
- 19:00 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
- 21:00 House Arrest
- 23:00 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash



- 00:00 The Night Before
- 02:00 Outside Bet
- 04:00 Accidental Love
- 06:00 It Boy
- 08:00 Outside Bet
- 10:00 Accidental Love
- 12:00 It Boy
- 14:00

CLASSIFIEDS

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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	COLLIDE FANAR-1 POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS LIFE POWER RANGERS	12:30 AM 11:30 AM 2:00 PM 4:30 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 11:45 PM
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	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
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	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 FANAR-4 COLLIDE COLLIDE COLLIDE LIFE COLLIDE COLLIDE KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu COLLIDE	11:45 AM 2:15 PM 4:00 PM 5:45 PM 8:15 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM 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
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	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
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 MUHALAB-3 COLLIDE COLLIDE BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO COLLIDE COLLIDE KATAMARAYUDU - Telugu	12:30 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 9:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM 11:45 AM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 1:45 PM 5:45 PM 7:30 PM 9:30 PM 9:45 PM	MARINA-1 POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO BARBIE VIDEO GAME HERO POWER RANGERS POWER RANGERS MARINA-2 COLLIDE COLLIDE	12:00 PM 2:30 PM 1:30 PM 3:15 PM 5:00 PM 6:45 PM 9:15 PM 11:45 PM 1:45 PM
		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	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 9:30 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	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

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AN ACCOUNT MANAGER

Indian nationality

- Prefer Arabic & English speaking
- Transferred residency 18

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PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	04:22
Shorook:	05:42
Duhr:	11:53
Asr:	15:23
Maghrib:	18:04
Isha:	19:22



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)											
DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION											
Flight Schedule											
Arrival Flights on Wednesday 29/3/2017											
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	KAC	502	Beirut	15:25	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:50
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	KAC	118	New York	15:40	KKK	6505	Istanbul	02:55
KAC	102	London	00:55	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	PGT	831	Istanbul	03:10
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	SAW	705	Damascus	15:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	RJA	640	Amman	16:00	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	SVA	504	Madinah	16:00	Luxor	607	Muscat	04:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50	MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10	OMA	644	Doha	04:05
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	FDB	051	Dubai	16:15	QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05	JZR	125	Bahrain	16:25	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35	KAC	417	Manila	04:20
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05	JZR	560	Sohag	04:45
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	KAC	103	London	05:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	CEB	0019	Manila	05:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35	QTR	1077	Doha	05:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	177	Dubai	17:45	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	QTR	1080	Doha	18:05	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:30	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	512	Mashhad	18:40	KAC	501	Beirut	07:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05	BAW	156	London	08:20
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10	KAC	741	Dammam	08:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
IRC	6511	ABD	09:10	KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30	KAC	773	Riyadh	08:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40	KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	08:40
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	08:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50	KAC	101	London	09:00
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	KAC	620	Doha	19:50	KAC	117	New York	09:00
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	JZR	356	Mashhad	09:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	104	London	20:00	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05	KNE	381	Taif	20:10	KAC	691	Muscat	09:30
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15	KAC	561	Amman	09:30
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:40
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	KAC	564	Amman	21:00	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:05	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15	IRC	6522	Lamerd	10:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:15	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	13:15	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50	QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
IRC	6521	Lamerd	14:00	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10	IRM	1189	Mashhad	11:10
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	BBC	043	Dhaka	22:30	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	JZR	185	Dubai	22:55	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	JZR	241	Amman	22:55	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:20	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:05
IRC	526	Mashhad	14:30	FDB	071	Dubai	23:35	KAC	511	Mashhad	12:45
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:35	PIA	239	Sialkot	23:40	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
JZR	357	Mashhad	14:50	Departure Flights on Wednesday 29/3/2017							
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
KAC	692	Muscat	14:55	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	JZR	124	Bahrain	13:30
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30	THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	TXC	1623	IAQ	14:00
KAC	562	Amman	15:10	ICV	675	Hong Kong	01:35	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
OMA	645	Muscat	15:10	THY	773	Istanbul	01:40	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30
				DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00	IRC	6512	ABD	14:50
								KAC	673	Dubai	15:00

CROSSWORD 1562



ACROSS

1. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
4. That part of the ovary of a flowering plant where the ovules form.
12. Inquire about.
15. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
16. The act of removing.
17. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
18. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
19. Divination by the letters of a name.
20. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
21. A sweet cake flavored with sesame or caraway seeds and lemon.
23. Being nine more than ninety.
25. Make attractive or lovable.
26. Corrupt morally or by intemperance or sensuality.
28. The visible part of a television transmission.
30. (biology) The normal rigid state of fullness of a cell or blood vessel or capillary resulting from pressure of the contents against the wall or membrane.
34. A bowl-shaped vessel.
38. A covered passageway.
39. Any of numerous ornamental shrubs grown for their showy flowers of various colors.
42. Widely known and esteemed.
43. A unit of heat equal to the amount of heat required to raise one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit at one atmosphere pressure.
44. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
47. A fatal disease of cattle that affects the central nervous system.
48. A general anesthetic (not a barbiturate) that is administered intravenously or intramuscularly.
51. Convert into ions.
53. Any organic compound formed by adding alcohol molecules to aldehyde molecules.
54. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
55. Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
56. Type genus of the Anatidae.
59. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
62. Joyful religious song celebrating the birth of Christ.
65. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
69. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
73. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
74. Extremely pleasing.
75. An underground tunnel with recesses where bodies were buried (as in ancient Rome).
76. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
77. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
78. Goddess of love and beauty and daughter of Zeus in ancient mythology.
79. A young woman making her debut into society.

DOWN

1. Lower in esteem.
2. Filled with a great quantity.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Early morning time is yours and it may be the only time today that you will experience a quiet time, so enjoy. This is a great time for memories and phone calls, especially to follow through on plans previously made and confirmation. A guest in your work place today may play a joke on you and your co-workers but shake hands, smile and don't be fooled, this may be a test-be ready to pull out a prank or joke for a return complement. This may be a person your office hires to serve notices and if your group gets along with him, he will be available to help more often. This person is good and has a good record for what is needed. This may mean repositioning of cars, rental places, rent equipment, etc. Smile, it is contagious.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may have the day off for some reason today. One of the best things about not having to work this day is that you can enjoy the celebrations of spring around your city. Having been so busy with a heavy workload, you may now move fun and frivolity to a better position on your list of activities. You are probably in the service position type of work and in a rotation of work and days off. If you are tempted to buy pretty things, remember that all that glitters is not necessarily gold. Readjust your priorities without delay. You and your loved one may decide to have a party for your friends this evening. This is a favorable time to repair any broken relationships. There is good news among your friends this evening. Romantic feelings are deepened.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are unusually talkative this workday. You have a zeal to sample the new and unique that is all around you. Perhaps sales is the most important for you in your profession. If you are the buyer in the store where you work, new ideas and products are available for the public to see and samples always bring a lot of attention. This day may give you new ideas on how to discover what people are interested in and which items to buy that will bring people into your place of business. This afternoon you have quite a few business associates that want to visit with you in order to pick up some ideas and they may have a few ideas for you. Teamwork always helps the whole picture. After work you may be able to exercise the body through some competitive sport.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Travel could be available at this time, if that is what you wish. Enlightenment in many areas of your life gives you a greater understanding of many life matters. Look well groomed if you are meeting for a job interview-you may be more pleased with the results than you thought. If you are looking for a job, today just might be your day. If you are looking for a raise, a loan or someone to pay top price for something you own, you will see positive results. If your friends could read auras, yours would be shining gold and green today. Curiosity and good feelings promote healing and positive thinking. Your inner resources and emotions are emphasized. Good relationships are the keys to emotional satisfaction, be thankful for these relationships.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A management meeting will soon have everyone looking at you and perhaps your presentation or your issue. You have learned well over the time within your business and you speak well for your client or for your presentation. The exchange of ideas becomes a focal point of your day. When the day comes to a close, you are quite pleased with the experience you have had that helps you to see situations from all angles-you can debate well. A planned vacation will give you an opportunity to enjoy a new hobby, a new experience or a new country. Be sure to put in your wishes for this vacation time to higher-ups for approval. Learning, knowing a little about a lot of things, staying in touch and on top of the latest developments are the things that satisfy you most.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Helping your co-worker friends, even in the subtlest manner, should prove successful this day. When you support each other in helpful ways, your day and their day ends successfully. If you are a maid and a client is giving you trouble, the other maids will step in and come to find solutions for your client. If you are a photographer, a wedding this next weekend may weigh on your mind as being a little bigger than you usually handle-call in your photographer friends and set them to do dressing room pictures while you work the spectators. Look at whatever project is before you and decide how you can best accomplish what you want to accomplish. Your inner resources are accentuated. Fasten your seat belt; your luck is about to improve in many areas.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A celebration that brings family and friends together has you eager to lend a helpful hand. Much of your workday is in taking phone calls, making phone calls and writing down the things that you can do to help towards the celebration. After today, your duties toward this celebration will lessen as you tend to take care of many things on your list quickly. You could be preparing to sing, speak or host a presentation of sorts. You usually get things done quickly, and you are fortunate that this is a light workday, as you can work as well as help plan a family celebration. Close personal ties to people are a strong pull this day and most times-you enjoy being needed. You have the energy that matches the demands of your lifestyle-be smart in your food choices.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

A surprise bit of information may stop you in your walk through your day. This may not be sad or happy, just insightful. The sort of information that says, "did you know that whatever is really whatever this may be a discovery under the sea, in the earth or about volcanoes, who owns what or what happened to priceless artifacts. Your workday moves along quickly and lunchtime proves to contain some interesting discussions. Keep your diary updated with a simple log of your activities with outstanding experiences noted. In no time at all you will see a book emerging from your daily doodles. A conversation with old friends may bring up old memories and give you plenty to write about in your diary or rather, daily doodles.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Everything you see or do this day depends on your compassion and brings out your unique and unusual qualities. Someone may need you to help him or her get to work and while you cannot afford take the time to go into a different direction you may stop and buy them a tram, city bus or train ticket to their work. You enjoy helping people, and the clients or patrons that come to you sense automatically that when they ask you if something makes them look too fat or too thin, you will tell them the truth. You could come up with new solutions to something simple or complicated. You may enjoy looking at new houses later this afternoon. The layout of other homes and the smell of fresh wood are creatively stimulating as well as physically relaxing.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Work may be heavy now but if you can break things up into sections of time or prioritize subjects by urgency, you will find very little overtime is needed. You should take your lunch away from work. This way you can separate any worries and enjoy the "eye candy" for a short time. Walking or climbing stairs is a good alternative during a break time. You are the go-to-person for getting things accomplished; unfortunately, the public may not take into account that someone was before him or her. You are excellent in determining who might help you and you may be pleased at the reaction from higher-ups to help you. Your psychic abilities are high and not one person would dare to try and fool you. Keep up with your physical exercise!



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This whole day is exciting in that you complete your work chores early and you are helpful to those around you. This makes a big difference when it comes time for an employee review. You may want to make a note on your work calendar who, how and what work you did to help a co-worker. When it is time for your review, take your calendar in to the meeting and you won't have to toot your horn, your calendar will tell the tale. You keep busy and your attitude is positive. Later today is a good time to just relax and enjoy yourself, perhaps in reading or enjoying a movie, music or strolling through the neighborhood. You may find an animal relaxing this evening. There is a bit of cheerful laughter.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Early morning quandaries set the tone for a somewhat strange day. You may be busy with a few complicated cases but calling a meeting to gain the wisdom of the group, you may pick up a few new ideas and you are appreciative. You can dive in with little doubt as to how you proceed with these cases and today is successful. You are pleased that the people you work with will stop for twenty minutes; listen and advise. This may be what attracted you to the business in the first place-everybody works together. You may be in lab work, cabinet making, building management or any other creative problem-solving profession. You are successful. After work you will find yourself trying to catch up on home chores such as cooking, and paying the bills.

WORD SEARCH

Songs From the Year 2002

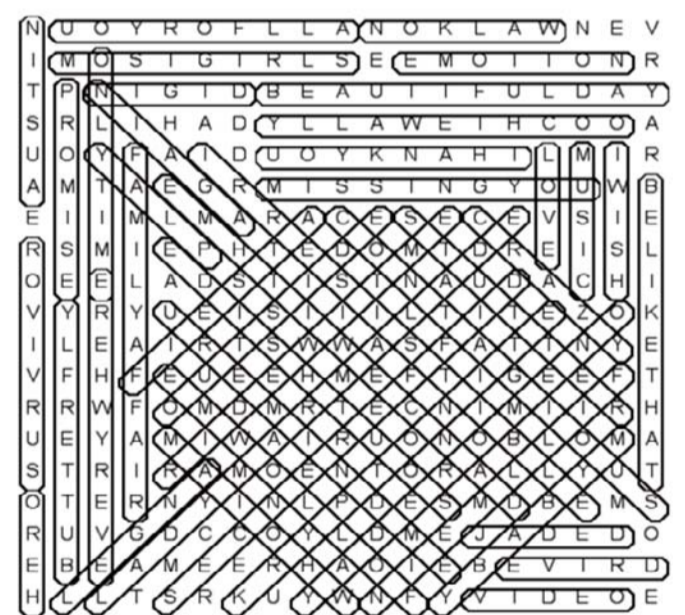
Find and circle all of the songs from 2002 that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 21 letters spell an additional song title from 2002.



- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| ADDICTIVE | ESCAPE | HEAVEN | NOTHIN' |
| ALL MY LIFE | EVERYDAY | HELLA GOOD | OH BOY |
| BABY | FOOLISH | HERE I AM | RAINY DAYZ |
| BLURRY | FOR YOU | HERO | SPIN |
| BY THE WAY | FULL MOON | HEY MA | STILL FLY |
| COMPLICATED | GIRL TALK | IN MY PLACE | THE MIDDLE |
| DAYS GO BY | GIRLFRIEND | LOSE YOURSELF | TOXICITY |
| DILEMMA | HALFCRAZY | MOTIVATION | UH HUH |
| DISEASE | HANDS CLEAN | MY LIST | WITHOUT ME |
| | HAPPY | MY SACRIFICE | WORK IT |

Yesterday's Solution

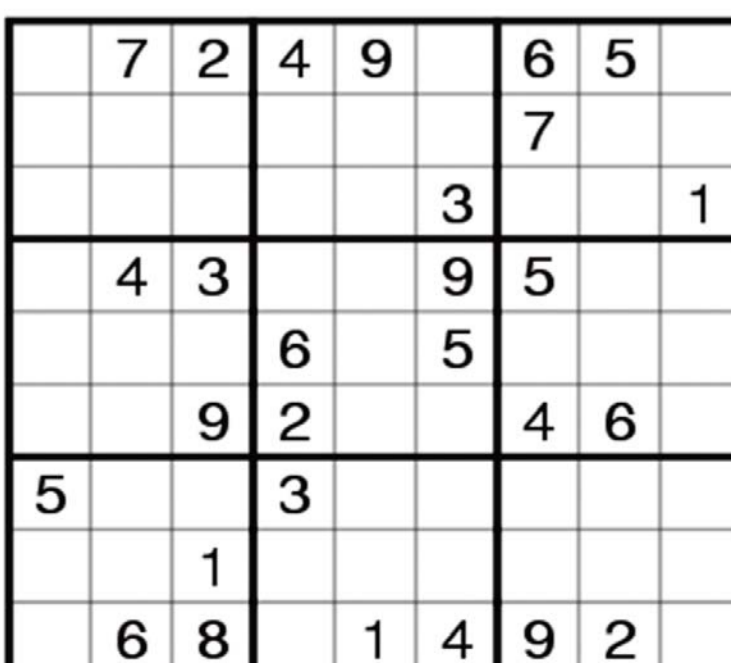
Songs From the Year 2001



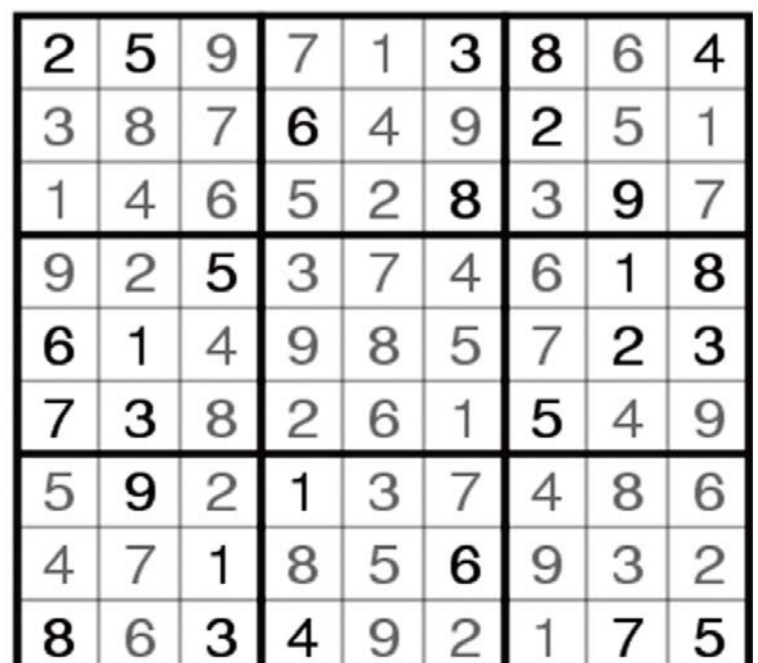
- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| AGAIN | DRIVE | KRYPTONITE | PLAY |
| ALL FOR YOU | EMOTION | LADY MARMALADE | PROMISE |
| ANGEL | EVERYWHERE | LOVE | RIDE WIT ME |
| AUSTIN | FAMILY AFFAIR | MISSING YOU | SOUTH SIDE |
| BE LIKE THAT | FIESTA | MOST GIRLS | STUTTER |
| BEAUTIFUL DAY | FILL ME IN | MUSIC | SURVIVOR |
| BUTTERFLY | FOLLOW ME | MY BABY | THANK YOU |
| CONTAGIOUS | HERO | ONE MORE DAY | U REMIND ME |
| CRAZY | I WISH | ONLY TIME | VIDEO |
| DANCE WITH ME | IRRESISTIBLE | OOCHIE WALLY | WALK ON |
| DIFFERENCES | JADED | OUTSIDE | WHO I AM |
| DIG IN | | | |

The hidden song title is: NEVER HAD A DREAM COME TRUE

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
Khalidiya	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 Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy to cloudy with moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered rain that might be thundery at times

BY DAY: Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate south easterly to easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 38 km/h with a chance for scattered rain that might be thundery at times

WEATHER WARNING			Thunder Rain		
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 28/03/2017 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	28 °C	18 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	27 °C	15 °C			
ABDALY	27 °C	15 °C			
BUBYAN	27 °C	15 °C			
JAHRA	29 °C	17 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	25 °C	18 °C			
SALMIYAH	25 °C	19 °C			
AHMADI	23 °C	20 °C			
NUWAISIB	28 °C	14 °C			
WAFRA	29 °C	13 °C			
SALMY	27 °C	16 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	03/29	Clouds to increase + scattered rain	27 °C	14 °C	SE-E	15 - 38 km/h
Thursday	03/30	Partly cloudy + scattered rain	29 °C	18 °C	SE	12 - 35 km/h
Friday	03/31	Partly cloudy + thunder rain	27 °C	19 °C	SE-S	15 - 40 km/h
Saturday	04/01	Partly cloudy+Thunder rain	32 °C	19 °C	SE-NW	15 - 40 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:23
Sunrise	05:43
Zuhr	11:53
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:04
Isha	19:21

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	28 °C
MIN. Temp.	14 °C
MAX. RH	92 %
MIN. RH	23 %
MAX. Wind	N 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



PRIVATE CLINICS

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

Soor Center Tel: 2290-1677 Fax: 2290 1688

info@soorcenter.com www.soorcenter.com

Kaizen center 25716707

Noor Clinic 23845955

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677 Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677

'The Zookeeper's Wife' tells a riveting true story

In German-occupied Poland during the darkest days of World War II, a zookeeper and his wife managed to save the lives of hundreds of Jewish people, many of whom were detained in the Warsaw Ghetto, by giving them shelter and refuge on the zoo grounds. This extraordinary true story is dramatized rather effectively in director Niki Caro's "The Zookeeper's Wife," based on the non-fiction book by the naturalist writer Diane Ackerman. Caro, who directed "Whale Rider" and "McFarland, USA," imbues the production with a glossy sheen, which in the confines of trailers and advertisements might make this look dismissible. In mining the drama of WWII for cinematic stories, audiences have rightfully been trained to be suspicious of those that look too pretty. You're certain that "The Zookeeper's Wife" is doomed to suffocating sentimentality, emotional blackmail and too-neat resolutions.

But despite a romanticized beginning, in which our heroine Antonina (Jessica Chastain, affecting an accent that you'll get used to, I swear) seems to live the most picture perfect life that's ever existed (frolicking with the free-roaming zoo animals, sipping tea on her balcony and gazing lovingly at her doting husband and son), Caro keeps the action and emotion real and grounded throughout. She chooses silences and understatement over heightened stakes. This inherently dramatic and amazing story doesn't need dressing up - it just needs to be told. The stage-setting is a necessary evil, but used wisely enough to introduce the characters and set up what will be an ongoing personal conflict that will serve as a sort of microcosm for the war - the friendship with a German zoologist, Lutz (Daniel Bruhl), that turns into an increasingly uneasy alliance when the war starts.

Bombed and destroyed

Chastain's Antonina is ethereal, motherly and tenacious. She might be the zookeeper's wife, but she has just as much if not more of a command over the place as her milquetoast husband. In fact, she treats the animals in the zoo as she would her own child. When an elephant's baby is in distress and near death, Antonina rushes to their aid, calling each by name and telling the mother elephant that everything will be OK if she just gives her space to free the baby's airway.



This image released by Focus Features shows Jessica Chastain in a scene from "The Zookeeper's Wife." — AP photos



This image released by Focus Features shows Johan Heldenbergh in a scene from "The Zookeeper's Wife."

Don't worry, this isn't a Disney movie, there's no sign that the elephants are responding to the names, but there's a fundamental comfort between the human and animal that's undeniable. By the time the invasion starts and the zoo is bombed and destroyed, you feel the loss of something that was once just good and pure. It's distressing to watch the occupying soldiers shoot animals whether out of fear, wartime necessity or just plain evil and a reminder that humans are not the only ones who suffer in war.

Tense situation

The animal metaphors can be a little on the nose, though, and

the script makes Antonina over-explain her fondness for the creatures over humans ("you can see exactly what's in their hearts"). But the real power of the story is in what Antonina and her husband Jan (Johan Heldenbergh) do for the persecuted Jews - risking their lives to stage elaborately planned extractions from the ghetto and provide refuge for those they saved in their own home. An already tense situation is made even more heightened when Lutz, now Hitler's chief zoologist, takes a special interest in their zoo (and Antonina). His constant presence threatens to derail the entire operation and causes strife in Antonina's marriage when Jan's jealousy gets the best of him. It's a tawdry sideshow, but Chastain and Bruhl make it capti-

ating. Look past the sepia and the dreary title, "The Zookeeper's Wife" is riveting both inspiring and comes as a welcome reminder in this time of uncertainty that even in the face of astonishing evil, humanity and goodness can also rise to the occasion. "The Zookeeper's Wife," a Focus Features release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "thematic elements, disturbing images, violence, brief sexuality, nudity and smoking." Running time: 124 minutes. Three stars out of four. MPAA Definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. — AP



(From left) Actors Jack Black, Karen Gillan, Nick Jonas, and Dwayne Johnson speak onstage during the CinemaCon 2017 Gala Opening Night Event. — AFP photos



(From left) Actor Ansel Elgort, director Edgar Wright and actor Jon Hamm speak onstage.

Box Office Top 20: 'Beauty' adds \$90.4 million in weekend 2

Disney's live-action "Beauty and the Beast" performed even better than expected in its second weekend in theaters, adding \$90.4 million to its North American grosses, which now tally at \$319 million. "Beauty and the Beast" easily topped the crop of newcomers - including Lionsgate's "Power Rangers," which got off to a solid start with \$40 million - and a few less successful debuts as well. The sci-fi thriller "Life," starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Ryan Reynolds opened in fourth place, behind "Kong: Skull Island," with a middling \$12.5 million, while the big screen take on "CHIPS" only managed to bring in \$7.7 million in its first weekend in theaters for a seventh place start.

The top 20 movies at US and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by comScore:

1. "Beauty And The Beast," Disney, \$90,426,717, 4,210 locations, \$21,479 average, \$319,032,604, 2 Weeks.
2. "Power Rangers," Lionsgate, \$40,300,288, 3,693 locations, \$10,913 average, \$40,300,288, 1 Week.
3. "Kong: Skull Island," Warner Bros, \$14,670,653, 3,666 locations, \$4,002 average, \$133,747,891, 3 Weeks.
4. "Life," Sony, \$12,501,936, 3,146 locations, \$3,974 average, \$12,501,936, 1 Week.
5. "Logan," 20th Century Fox, \$10,334,390, 3,163 locations, \$3,267 average, \$201,644,986, 4 Weeks.
6. "Get Out," Universal, \$8,851,845, 2,474 locations, \$3,578 average, \$147,669,880, 5 Weeks.
7. "Chips," Warner Bros, \$7,722,802, 2,464 locations, \$3,134 average, \$7,722,802, 1 Week.
8. "The Shack," Lionsgate, \$3,859,551, 2,330 locations, \$1,656 average, \$49,146,595, 4 Weeks.
9. "The Lego Batman Movie," Warner Bros, \$2,100,951, 1,638 locations, \$1,283 average, \$170,972,203, 7 Weeks.
10. "The Belko Experiment," OTL Releasing, \$1,878,370, 1,341 locations, \$1,401 average, \$7,648,935, 2 Weeks.
11. "Hidden Figures," 20th Century Fox, \$753,140, 640 locations, \$1,177 average, \$167,015,012, 14 Weeks.
12. "The Last Word," Bleeker Street, \$535,493, 380 locations, \$1,409 average, \$988,218, 4 Weeks.
13. "John Wick: Chapter Two," Lionsgate, \$457,414, 403 locations, \$1,135 average, \$90,851,421, 7 Weeks.
14. "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," Disney, \$446,992, 267 locations, \$1,674 average, \$531,314,491, 15 Weeks.
15. "Passengers," Sony, \$397,472, 506 locations, \$786 average, \$99,886,692, 14 Weeks.
16. "Lion," The Weinstein Company, \$394,481, 320 locations, \$1,233 average, \$50,736,321, 18 Weeks.
17. "T2: Trainspotting," Sony, \$389,453, 59 locations, \$6,601 average, \$622,727, 2 Weeks.
18. "Wilson," Fox Searchlight, \$336,227, 310 locations, \$1,085 average, \$336,227, 1 Week.
19. "The Sense Of An Ending," CBS Films, \$276,816, 235 locations, \$1,178 average, \$1,031,040, 3 Weeks.
20. "Phyllauri," Fox International Productions, \$260,982, 74 locations, \$3,527 average, \$260,982, 1 Week. — AP

SONY OPENS CINEMA CON WITH STUNNING SHOW OF NEW FOOTAGE

Sony kicked off the annual CinemaCon convention in Las Vegas Monday with an array of stars and plenty of thrills in never-before-seen footage of its upcoming slate of movies. Hollywood decamps to the Nevada desert for four days every year for the gathering, where theater operators are offered exclusive previews the movies they can expect to be showing over the coming year. Sony set the tone for what is expected to be a week of surprises with exclusive footage from "Blade Runner 2049," "Spider-Man: Homecoming," "The Dark Tower" and many other blockbusters due to hit theaters over summer and beyond.

Among the stars presenting on stage at Caesar's Palace were Jon Hamm, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Tom Holland, Nick Jonas and Jack Black. The presentation kicked off with the opening minutes of heist thriller "Baby Driver," with Sony announcing they were moving the film's release forward six weeks to June 28. Director Edgar Wright ("Shaun of the Dead") revealed he had risked life and limb to make sure he got the perfect shots of the getaway car during high octane chase scenes filmed in Atlanta, Georgia. "I took to strapping myself to the car, on the outside of the car like Mad Max," Wright, 42, told the audience. "I was genuinely suffering for my art, so I could see the actors' faces... I now know what it is like to go backwards at 70 miles per hour."

Crowd-pleasing

Next up was a look at the big screen treatment of horror novelist Stephen King's fanta-



Actor Ryan Gosling at the CinemaCon 2017 Gala Opening Night Event.



Actor Dwayne Johnson speaks onstage during the CinemaCon 2017 Gala Opening Night Event.

sy series "The Dark Tower," starring Idris Elba and Matthew McConaughey and due out in July. The project has been shrouded in secrecy, with plans for a trailer shelved last year, so it was an exclusive for the CinemaCon delegates, who were treated to plenty of crowd-pleasing slo-mo shoot-outs. Sony lightened the tone with footage from its upcoming animated slate, including "Smurfs: The Lost Village," Christian comedy "The Star" and "The Emoji Movie," which appears to put the "poop" emoji front and center.

Then Marvel chief Kevin Feige introduced footage from "Spider-Man: Homecoming" which gave the audience a first look at

six months ahead of its release, but that didn't stop Rothman taking a swipe at new kid on the block Netflix.

DiCaprio's 'whining'

The internet streamer has found itself in conflict with movie theater operators in the past because its original content goes straight to viewers' TVs and mobile devices. The comic highlight of the evening came with Dwayne Johnson bringing on castmates Nick Jonas, Karen Gillan and Jack Black to present footage from "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle," a remake of 1995's "Jumanji" starring Robin Williams. The segment started off respectfully enough, with Johnson paying tribute to the late Williams and recalling his nerves at meeting his comic hero.

But then Black hilariously brought down the tone by complaining about harsh conditions - the mosquitoes, the heat, the hellish terrain - during the shoot in Hawaii. "A lot of people make a big deal about how awesome it was that Leonardo DiCaprio braved the ice-cold tundra in 'The Revenant,'" he ventured. "I don't want to hear his whining. You try to make a movie in Hawaii... We got centipedes nipping at the sack, so I don't wanna hear it, DiCap!" In an action-packed presentation lasting almost two hours, Sony also squeezed in footage from Diether Van Rooijen's horror "Cadaver," Taraji P. Henson's starring role as an assassin in "Proud Mary," and a remake of 1990 horror "Flatliners," starring Ellen Page and Diego Luna. — AFP

Michael Keaton as the webslinger's arch-nemesis The Vulture. Sony movies chief Tom Rothman came to the stage to present stunning new footage from "Blade Runner 2049," showing a darker-looking movie than Ridley Scott's 1982 original. "Netflix my ass," he quipped after wowing the crowd with bleak scenes from Los Angeles and a snow-bound Las Vegas, all of which were filmed in Budapest. Denis Villeneuve's "Blade Runner 2049" stars Ryan Gosling as the LAPD's Officer K while Harrison Ford reprises his role as Rick Deckard from the original. It is already one of the most hotly anticipated movies of the year

Taiwan director's courageous tale of family strife

Filmmaker Huang Hui-chen felt bound by labels while growing up in Taiwan-impoverished, a school dropout and daughter of a lesbian Taoist priestess who she yearned to understand. Her award-winning directorial debut "Small Talk" is the culmination of two decades of filming their fraught relationship and was named best documentary last month at the Berlin International Film Festival, winning the LGBT-focused Teddy Award. Set to hit the big screen in Taiwan in April, it comes as the island's parliament prepares to vote on a final bill to legalize same-sex marriage.

A landmark case currently in the constitutional court could also lead to a change in the law, making Taiwan the first place in Asia to allow gay couples to legally tie the knot. But three decades ago, when Huang was a child, homosexuality was much less accepted. She recalls vividly how, as an 11-year-old, she overheard two elderly acquaintances calling her mother abnormal, a "tongzhi"-the Chinese term for someone who is gay. Until then, Huang had not thought twice about her mother's relationships with women. "My impression when I was little was that she was always surrounded by girlfriends. That she liked girls and was friendly with them," she told AFP. "That one sentence sowed a seed of doubt in me. Why is that called abnormal?"

On the outside

Huang, 39, says she also felt like an outsider due to her family's unconventional lifestyle. From the age of six, she and her younger sister worked in the capital Taipei with her mother as part of her duties as a priestess for Taoism-Taiwan's dominant religion. The family specialized in a ritual called "leading the dead," a song and dance performance believed to guide the soul to salvation and staged at funeral parlors and gravesides. Huang says the occupation is considered a lowly blue-collar job and she felt her peers looked down upon her. By the time she was 10, she had stopped attending school. Her mother left Huang's abusive father-who she had been married off to at a young age-and did not enroll her in classes in their new neighborhood. Her film is an attempt to encourage younger generations who feel isolated or undervalued, she says. "Kids who don't go to school, people who 'lead the dead,' a child with a tongzhi mother-all of them are worth more than the label society gives them," Huang told AFP.

Violent undercurrents

Huang's mother-Hung Yue-nu, known as Anu-never tried to hide her sexuality after splitting from her husband and only had relationships with women after that. But equally she never dis-

cussed it with her daughter, who says her mother was always distant. While the pair did not fight, Huang felt ignored as her mother lavished attention on her girlfriends. She was also resentful about not attending school like other children.

"Our relationship seemed peaceful on the surface, but violent undercurrents raged beneath," Huang said. In her film, she tries to broach the divide. The film was described as a "courageous portrayal" of her family's story by Berlin's Teddy Award jury. Huang narrates the movie and her mother, ex-girlfriends and family members are all interviewed. Renowned Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien, who made award-winning film "The Assassin", is executive producer. Anu first watched herself in the film's world premiere in Taipei, ahead of Taiwan's 2016 Golden Horse Awards, where it was nominated for best documentary. "She sat next to me and I could tell she was holding back tears," Huang said.

Gay marriage debate

Huang became interested in filmmaking at the age of 20, when a director came to shoot her as part of a piece about young funeral performers. She then took film courses at a community college and began to explore her emotions about her mother for the first time. "I learned another way to observe the world," she

told AFP. Huang, who is now mother to a five-year-old daughter, says communication with Anu is still not perfect, but is better than in the past. "The film was not only about me understanding my mother, it was about her understanding me," she says. — AFP



This picture shows Huang Hui-chen, director of "Small Talk", displaying the film's poster during an interview at a cafe in Taipei. — AFP



Film festival opens in cinema-less Saudi Arabia

A picture taken on Monday shows Saudi actors posing before the opening ceremony of the fourth Saudi Film Festival held in Dammam City, 400 kilometers east from Saudi capital Riyadh. — AFP photos



Saudi actor Saed Khader (center) waves his honor award for his achievements at the opening ceremony of the fourth Saudi Film Festival held in Dammam City, 400 kilometers east from Saudi capital Riyadh.



Saudi actor Saed Khader waves his honor award for his achievements at the opening ceremony.



Saudi film directors, actors and actresses pose with their awards during the opening ceremony.

The Saudi Film Festival opened Monday with 58 homegrown cinematic works to be screened in the ultra-conservative kingdom that continues to ban public cinemas. "Welcome to all of you, filmmakers, makers of art and makers of hope," festival director Ahmed Al-Mulla told participants at the opening ceremony, which was broadcast online. The fourth edition of the festival had been slated to run from March 23-28 in the Gulf coastal city of Dhahran,

but it was pushed back due to stormy weather.

This is the third consecutive annual film festival in Saudi Arabia after a hiatus of seven years. The festival includes four competitions for feature films, documentaries, student productions, and unproduced scripts. It is scheduled to open with a drama that resonates, as the kingdom's tentative efforts to expand entertainment face resistance from conservatives. "Wasati" directed by Ali Al-Kalthami is based on the true story of

extremists trying to disrupt a play at a university theatre in Riyadh 10 years ago. Saudi Arabia late last year began a cautious push to introduce entertainment, despite opposition from Muslim hardliners. Other events on offer for Saudi spectators have been the New York theatrical group iLuminate, the Comic-Con pop culture festival, and WWE wrestling. — AFP



Saudi actress Mariam Al-Gahmudi poses for a picture upon her arrival at the opening ceremony.



Saudi actress producer Abir Al-Juleih poses for a picture upon arrival for the opening ceremony.



Saudi actor Yusef Al-Khamis poses for a picture upon arrival for the opening ceremony.



Saudi film director Mohammed Saed poses for a picture upon arrival for the opening ceremony.



Saudi film director Yusef Athniyan poses for a picture upon arrival for the opening ceremony.

From Syria to Detroit, we are all migrants, sings bluesman Bibb

"Migration Blues", a new album from veteran bluesman Eric Bibb, uses the sounds of the American South to tell the tale of everyone from 1920s farmers fleeing the Dust Bowl for California to refugees crossing the Mediterranean to Europe in the 2010s. Along the way are Mexicans seeking a future in the United States, families moving from land the government has just seized for corporate expansion, and a Cajun jig reminding listeners of the expulsion of French Canadians south down the Mississippi.

"We are all linked by one migration or another. We are all connected to migrants," Bibb told Reuters ahead of the album's release on March 31. "The hysterical reaction against migrants is really hard to understand. Have we really forgotten our history?" The album's most contemporary subject is to be found in "Prayin' For Shore", a blues about the plight of millions of Syrians and others who have fled civil wars in the Middle East on sometimes fatal journeys to Europe across the

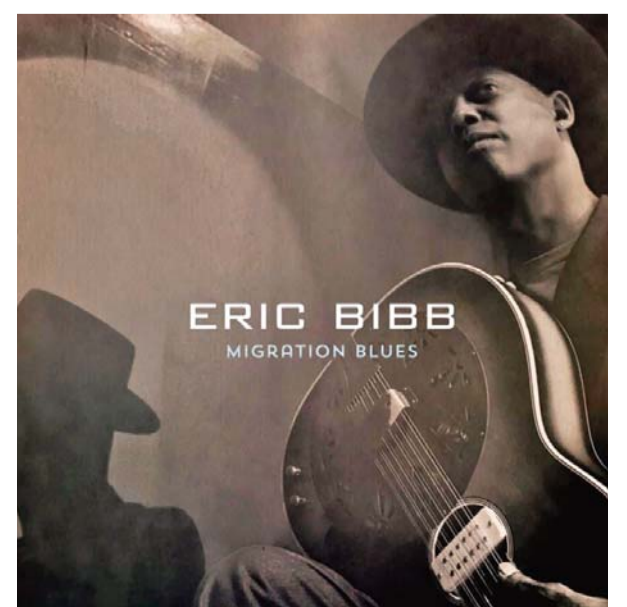
Mediterranean. "In an old leaky boat, somewhere on the sea/trying to get away from the war/Welcome or not, got to land soon/Oh lord, prayin' for shore," run the lyrics.

The song, Bibb writes in an accompanying booklet, is about remembering the drowned. But the fleeing migrants of today are nothing new. For Bibb, an African American, another key moment in history was "The Great Migration" of millions of southern blacks away from America's segregated South. By some estimates, more than 6 million left the rural areas for industrial places like Detroit, New York and Chicago between 1910 and 1970. "(They were) not just looking for jobs but fleeing racial terror," Bibb said. Such a point is made in his mellifluous rendition of "Delta Getaway" about a man fleeing a lynch mob to Chicago.

"Saw a man hanging from a cypress tree/I seen the ones who done it/now they coming after me". The album is being released as anti-immigrant politics is on the rise across much

of the world, including the United States where US President Donald Trump wants to build a wall on the Mexican border to keep out immigrants.

Bibb said it was all laid down and finished before Trump's election, but that he was nonetheless "astounded by the synchronicity of it". Most of the songs on the album are Bibb's, although he offers covers of Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land", originally an angry riposte from the dispossessed, and Bob Dylan's "Masters of War", about the merchants of destruction. Bibb said that apart from "Prayin' For Shore", his favorite composition on "Migration Blues" is "Brotherly Love". He said it reflected his personal belief. It offers more hope for the future, one in which people can live in peace. — Reuters



FASHION



Iris Law

Iris Law fronts Burberry Beauty's new make-up campaign

Iris Law fronts Burberry Beauty's new make-up campaign. The 16-year-old model - who is the daughter of 44-year-old actor Jude Law and his ex-wife Sadie Frost - was announced as the new brand ambassador for the British fashion house's cosmetics line earlier this year, and stars in her second commercial for the luxury label's new "prime, contour and highlight" collection. The brunette beauty took to social media to tease her latest fashion venture with a string of images from the adverts. She captioned the Instagram posts: "Me for #burberrybeauty thank you @burberry (sic)." Iris has shared more imagery of her and the new beauty items in a variety of short clips on her Instagram Story, which last on the photo-sharing site for 24 hours.

The fashion house has also shared a string of photographs from the photoshoot, as well as behind the scenes footage, starring Iris on their account. The uploads read: "The law of @Burberry beauty: prime, contour and highlight. #IrisLaw for The Essentials make-up collection Shop the new Essentials make-up collection "Glow all day. @IrisLaw behind the scenes for The Essentials Shop the new Essentials make-up collection "Introducing The Essentials. All you need for an effortless glow Starring #IrisLaw for #BurberryBeauty. Shop the new Essentials make-up collection (sic)." And the British star is "honored" to join forces with Burberry and to follow in the footsteps of models Kate Moss and Cara Delevingne to represent the company. Speaking previously about the partnership, she said: "Burberry is such an iconic brand and it's an honor to be part of the Burberry family and to be starring in a global campaign for them. It's a real honor for me to be part of the Burberry family now and follow in the footsteps of women like Kate [Moss], Cara [Delevingne] and Lily [James]." - Bang Showbiz

Natalia Vodianova

struggled to deal with fame

Natalia Vodianova has struggled to deal with fame. The 35-year-old model has admitted she "lost [her] head" when she began earning a large amount of money from her modeling campaigns and found it difficult to adapt from being conscious about how little money she had, to then being "extremely wealthy" and being able to party with fashion designers. She said: "It's a strange feeling not knowing where your food will come from, and then I ever could have imagined, and more than my family in Russia can conceive of. I lost my head for a little while with the fame. It was hard not to when we were getting invited everywhere. I was partying a lot. It was like, 'OK, I'm so bored. Let's have some drink with Chanel at 6am.'"

However, Natalia had a change of heart at the age of 22 years old when she found she wasn't "motivated" by money. She said: "I rethought my goals when I was 22 - I wasn't motivated by money, parties or modeling anymore." And the blonde beauty - who has Maxim, two, Lucas, 15, Neva, 10, Viktor, nine, and nine-month-old Roman - has revealed she has come a long way since she her "tough" childhood, and is proud of her progression. Speaking about her upbringing to Elle magazine, she said: "My younger sister is autistic. My mother could barely afford to raise us. I must have been smart though, because I managed to get through school without doing my homework. We were so poor - it was tough. We lived near Moscow, and sold fruit on the street, whatever the weather, from 6pm to 9pm." — Bang Showbiz



Natalia Vodianova



Zoe Kravitz's cool clothing

Zoe Kravitz says people think she's "cool" just because of her tattoos and clothing choices. The 28-year-old actress has a number of inkings all over her body and believes some people perceive her in a different way because of the clothes she wears and the tattoos on her skin. She told The Times: "People think I'm cool because I wear certain clothes and I have tattoos. I've got 20-something [inkings] and I actually stopped counting. When people get to know me, they're always surprised by how nerdy I am." Meanwhile, Zoe previously admitted she adopts a "low maintenance" beauty regime because she wants to be "natural and silly looking". She said: "When I was younger, I had this incredibly rebellious spirit. I just wanted to be natural and silly-looking and not appear perfect all the time - because it's a lot of pressure, you know? On the red carpet, everyone started to look the same, like a Barbie doll, and it made me really uncomfortable."

"So I think I was just about claiming, 'OK, if I'm going to be a part of this world, I want to do it in my own way.' But I think I've found a way to feel comfortable, looking like I put effort into the way I look and still feel like I'm being myself. My braids are really low-maintenance so I use very little hair product. This has a nice scent and is good for freshening everything up." Zoe doesn't opt for foundation and instead uses YSL's Touche Eclat to "brighten" her face. She explained: "I don't wear foundation on a daily basis so this is just wonderful for highlighting and covering. It brightens without looking like you're going out-out. If I'm eating too much sugar or not sleeping enough, I see it in my skin." — Bang Showbiz



CHINA FASHION WEEK



Models parade creations from MUXU Collection designed by Yang Shan.

Models parade creations from Chantel Gong Collection designed by Gong Hangyu at China Fashion Week in Beijing yesterday. — AFP photos

FEATURES

Siblings, partners, or rivals?

By Yalda Golsharifi



Being a mom of two little girls definitely comes with its challenges. Most of the time, Lilly and Sasha are the best of friends. They love playing together and are obsessed with each other, however sometimes they do tend to fight, which is so common between young siblings. I'm sure most moms understand what it's like when you have more than one child and the jealousy and rivalry that can come along with that. Competing for parent's attention is one of the main reasons why jealousy begins between siblings and what I notice the most with my girls. It's sometimes hard to know how to stop the fighting, and or even whether you should get involved or let them learn how to resolve things without parents interfering, but there are certain steps you can take

to encourage peace in your household and help your kids get along.

The reason why I say not to get involved only when necessary is because your kids will start expecting that anytime they act out you will come to their rescue rather than learning to work it out on their own. Also, it can create resentment between siblings if one child is usually blamed and not the other and the child that is not blamed will feel like they can get away with more because they are always being "saved" by a parent. Don't focus too much on who to blame because keep in mind that any child who is involved in a fight is partly responsible. Another thing that I've noticed that separating my kids when they fight and giving them space to think about what they've done can help calm things down.

One of the most important things you should

remember to do to avoid your kids getting into fights is setting ground rules for acceptable behavior. They need to have clearly know what is acceptable and what is not. Once these ground rules are broken is when there is consequences. Another thing is making sure you have one on one time with each child directed to their individual interests and needs. Also, planning things together as a family teaches your kids how to get along with one another and relate to each other and is something that I've found really helps reduce conflicts between my kids in the future. Keep in mind that your kids also need their own individual space too, so it's all about finding the right balance and finding what works best for your kids!

Rooftop shanties top once iconic Casablanca buildings

Shanties have mushroomed on the rooftops of historic apartment buildings in Casablanca, as the Moroccan city's once-prestigious center crumbles below. Clotheslines, satellite dishes and tangled cables have sprouted on the deteriorating facades of the buildings, constructed nearly a century ago under French rule. What was once a feted blend of Moroccan and European architecture is falling apart under the weight of an expanding urban population and neglect.

The city "was once at the forefront of world architecture," architect Rachid Andaloussi says. But today its early 20th-century residential buildings have been "abandoned by landlords tired of seeing them deteriorate", says Andaloussi, the head of Casamemoire, an association to protect the city's architectural heritage. And a housing crisis in the traffic-clogged economic hub has led Moroccans with nowhere else to live to cobble together makeshift homes on rooftop terraces. "They've squatted in public infrastructure, factories and now they've moved on to the terraces," Andaloussi says.

Building themselves shelter from corrugated iron, bits of wood and plastic bags, they have come to occupy what were once emblematic architectural spaces. Casablanca, known by the

Spanish translation of its Arabic name Dar Al-Bayda ("White House"), greatly expanded under the French protectorate from 1912.

North Africa's first skyscraper

French architect and urban planner Henri Prost presented his first plan for the Moroccan city in 1915. In the 1920s and 1930s, Prost and mostly fellow French architects built the city that has become the country's economic heart. They created the city's unique style by blending traditional Moroccan elements like mosaics, stucco and sculpted cedar wood with the European trends of Art Deco and Art Nouveau. Their work includes the Lincoln Hotel, an Arabesque Art Deco building that was built in 1916 and used by American spies during World War II. But it closed in 1989 and today stands largely in ruins. The Liberty Building, also called "The 17th Floor", was North Africa's first skyscraper when it was built between 1949 and 1951.

And the Wilaya, a former town hall, is an example of the mixed architecture typical of many administrative buildings under the French protectorate. Architect Driss Kettani says the Casablanca city center was once a "feast of architecture and urban planning", "with its wealth of neo-Moorish, Art Deco and



The rooftops of old buildings in central Casablanca where poor locals have built shanty homes.

Modernist architecture". "What was a few decades ago the indisputable heart of the city has today suffered from a lack of maintenance," Kettani says.

'Extraordinary potential'

Tenants in these buildings often pay "ridiculously low" fixed rents, and landlords can only remove them if they pay a huge relocation fee.

Neither the tenants nor the owners pay for the upkeep of the buildings. The city's old core is also threatened by real estate speculation, as developers look to buy historic properties to tear them down and build modern apartment blocs instead. Urban planner Mostafa Kheireddine explains that Casablanca's housing crisis stems from a booming population from successive migration flows to the city in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

"Over the years, it experienced pressure on the urban planning sector that was unprecedented in the history of Morocco's cities," he says. As all of Morocco's social tensions came to the fore in 1980s Casablanca, "quality urban housing was not given priority," Kheireddine says. But times are changing, raising hopes of an urban revival. The authorities have started upgrading the city center after what Kettani calls "a realization of the extraordinary potential of this part of the city". The opening of a tram line has given the area's buildings added value. And wealthier Moroccans are increasingly buying apartments in the Art Deco buildings, as they become fashionable and the area gentrifies. — AFP



These pictures show the rooftops of old buildings in central Casablanca where poor locals have built shanty homes. — AFP photos

Nobel laureate writes disparaging play about Trump

American theater-goers got a small taste Monday of a new play by Nobel laureate Elfriede Jelinek that tries to understand President Donald Trump and what he says about today's society. Jelinek, an Austrian, won the world's top literature prize in 2004 and is known for writing the novel "The Piano Teacher," which became a movie of the same name in 2001. Entitled "On the Royal Road: The Burgher King," her new play tries to make sense of Trump's election as president of the United States. Excerpts were read on Monday night at the Martin E. Segal Theatre at City University of New York.

actress Masha Dakic, who did the solo reading on Monday. The play's main character is Miss Piggy, she of the Muppets. But in this case, she is blind, her eyes streaming blood, as she wonders aloud about Trump.

Trump has destroyed the past and hijacked the future so as to make everything all about the present-the world of the tweets of which he's so fond, Jelinek has said. Director Stefan Dzeperovski said he staged the play in short segments that "behave almost like news bursts, like breaking news," he told AFP.

'How can you get a hold on Trump?'

"Everything has this punching rhythm so you can never have a moment to think. There is no time to think," he added. Gitta Honegger, who translated the play from German into English, said the election of Trump was a gut punch, something hard to digest and likened it to the rise to power of the Nazis. She said just that like intellectuals in that period, she watches those of today who were "not thinking that it's even possible that somebody with a brain like this and behavior like this and emptiness like this can be a president."

Honegger, pressed to say what the play is about, said: "How can you get a hold on Trump?" "You can't get a hold on stupidity," Jelinek says in a yet unpublished interview in the US magazine Theater, in which a shortened version of the text of the play will be published. Jelinek did not come to New York for the reading on Monday. She suffers from acute anxiety and does not go out, spending her time at home in Vienna, said Honegger. Honegger said that when she learned Jelinek was writing something about Trump, whom Honegger focused on closely as soon as he was elected, she proposed to the writer translating it into English and performing it in America. The actual premiere is scheduled for October in Hamburg, Germany. — AFP



This file photo taken on January 1, 1997 shows Austrian writer Elfriede Jelinek in Vienna. — AFP

As with other works by Elfriede, the play is dense, written in language in which each word or sentence seem to be key pieces in the task of solving a puzzle. "When I first read the text, it felt like abstract painting," said

'Fearless Girl' extends face-off with Wall Street's 'Charging Bull'

The "Fearless Girl" statue in New York City, whose face-off with Wall Street's "Charging Bull" won her legions of fans in just three weeks, will hold her ground for at least another 11 months. The 50-inch (127 cm) bronze statue of a defiant girl with fists on hips was installed to mark International Women's Day on March 8 under a lease due to end April 2. The two statues stand on a patch of cobble stone in the financial district near Bowling Green.

After at least two petitions, generous press attention and ebullient interest on social media, the attraction for tourists and locals will keep its place at least through the end of February 2018. "She has clearly struck a nerve," said US Rep Carolyn Maloney on Monday as she stood on the steps of City Hall with other women politicians to

announce the statue's extended stay. Maloney, a New York Democrat, said the bronze girl was a testament to the power of art in society. It was created by artist Kristen Visbal and commissioned by asset manager State Street Global Advisors as part of a campaign to increase gender diversity in business. "She has really, really become a meaningful part of the community of New York," Maloney said. "Everyone sees their own dreams and aspirations in the strength of this little girl." Supporters now aim to convince New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio to let "Fearless Girl" permanently stare down "Charging Bull," which its creator said was meant to show US economic strength but also symbolizes all things Wall Street and all things male. "The importance of empowering women is not temporary, and it's not something that can last for 11 months,"

New York City Public Advocate Letitia James said. "It's something that needs to be made permanent."

But "Fearless Girl" has opponents, among them Arturo Di Modica, who sculpted "Charging Bull" and dropped it in front of the New York Stock Exchange in the middle of the night in December 1989. "That is not a symbol! That's an advertising trick," he told the financial news website MarketWatch last week. The gender diversity campaign by State Street Global Advisors, a subsidiary of State Street Corp, aims to highlight the need for more women on corporate boards. Twenty-five percent of the largest 3,000 U.S. companies have no female directors, the company noted on its website. — Reuters



New York City Mayor Bill De Blasio poses for a photo with the 'Fearless Girl' statue during a press availability in New York City. — AFP

Lifestyle

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Rooftop shanties top once iconic Casablanca buildings

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(From Left) The hair on the back of the head of a horse and the tail of an army horse is decorated during the Ghode Jatra festival, an annual horse festival in Kathmandu, Nepal, Monday. According to legend, the festival is held to celebrate the victory over a demon named Tundi and people believe that the clamor of horses' hooves during the festival keeps the demon's spirit away. — AP



Antonio Vietri, artisan and founder of A&V Fashion, shows men shoes as part of his collection "Gold" on in his workshop in Turin. — AFP photos



Antonio Vietri works in his workshop in Turin.



Antonio Vietri works in his workshop in Turin.

Gilt-y pleasure: Italian artisan crafts 24-carat gold shoes

Filthy rich and already boast enough glass slippers to win a dozen princes? Italian shoemaker Antonio Vietri has the thing for you: 24-carat gold shoes. Vietri, from Turin in northern Italy, hopes to attract shoppers from wealthy Gulf countries with his blue or black suede moccasins with stitched gold-plated uppers. "These are the first shoes in the world in 24-carat gold," he told AFP. "The particularity of these shoes is that gold is not simply applied, it is not like an accessory or a button. Gold is an integral part of the shoe."

Small strips of gold are woven by hand and sewn with leather to ensure the moccasin uppers are comfortable. Vietri is just one of a wave of "Made in Italy" producers seeking to tap into the high-end Gulf fashion market, particularly in oil-rich states such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. His men's gold line was launched in 2016 "after eight months of studies and attempts," Vietri said. The women's followed this year. "The difficulty was in finding the right balance between the strength of the gold and the flexibility of the shoe," he said. "If the shoe is too light, the gold will bend. If the shoe is too heavy, it hurts."

Each pair of shoes, made with 230 grams of gold, is one-of-a-kind and is made to measure using 3D foot scanners. They retail for up to 25,000 euros (\$27,000) for the men's collection, and 30,000 euros for the women's line. The price includes delivery by helicopter, and the shoes are presented in a black lac-



Antonio Vietri shows a man shoe as part of his collection "Gold" in his workshop in Turin.

quered box. Vietri also does a traditional line with prices starting at 250 euros, and another in which shoes feature designs by international artists. The luxury collection features silk pumps embellished with gold or silver and customers can decorate their chosen model with pearls or diamonds. — AFP



Women shoes with gold dust patterns and Swarovski crystals made by artisans for A&V Fashion.

Bizarre News

Hotel chain offers divorce guarantee

A hotel chain is offering refunds to couples who divorce within a year of staying at their hotels. Sweden's The Countryside Hotels group want to encourage people to stay together and work on their relationship so are offering to hand back the money of their two-day stay if they break up within 12 months, BBC News reports. Petra Fagrell Jansson, who is responsible for one of the hotels, shared: "Everyone needs a bit more time for their relationships and a little break from everyday life." Couples who want to take up this offer should already be married and will have to stay in the same room as well as referencing the offer at the time of booking.



Burglar caught with his pants down

An alleged burglar was left red-faced after his trousers fell down when he got stuck on a set of railings. A man was spotted trying to jump over the gate to get into Miles Elementary School in Tucson, Arizona, and in a bid to get away quickly, he caught his trousers on the top of the railings and was left hanging from the fence, the Daily Telegraph newspaper reports. Jesse Sensibar photographed the whole thing, uploading it to Facebook, where he later shared: "One more reason not to jump fences in baggy pants. I saw this homie hanging around at the Miles School this morning when I was rolling eastbound on Broadway Avenue. I was going to help him off the fence but by the time I got back around the block the cops were rolling up two cars deep. I don't know what his story was but it must not have been good enough, fifteen minutes later when I went back by the other direction going home he was cuffed up in the backseat. He smiled for the camera."



Prankster eats breakfast in busy road

A man has been arrested after eating breakfast in the middle of a busy road. Prankster Kiaron Thomas pitched up a table and chair on a busy highway and proceeded to tuck into a stack of pancakes with bacon, scrambled eggs and maple syrup as cars and lorries sped past him, the Daily Record reports. The whole video was captured by pals and uploaded to Facebook but Kiaron was later arrested and charged with obstructing the roadway and disrupting traffic. When asked how he felt about being arrested, he simply said: "[I]t's what comes with fame."

Bosnian boy performs flipping, brick-smashing feat

A Bosnian teenager has performed an impressive, if painful to watch, stunt, breaking 111 concrete blocks with his head in a mere 35 seconds. Forward flipping his way down a line of 20 stacks of six blocks each, Kerim Ahmetspahic, a young taekwondo martial artist, smashed the blocks with his head in front of a cheering crowd in the Bosnian city of Visoko at the weekend. He appeared to falter on the 18th stack, but then recovered and finished to loud applause. Ahmetspahic received a certificate recording his achievement and thanked his parents, his coach and his friends for helping him succeed in the unusual accomplishment. — Bang Showbiz